

Latest News

Date: 2018/09/15

Time: 11:43

By: Hossein Mousavian

The Iran-Saudi/Arab Conflict and the Path to Peace

Tehran, Sept 15, IRNA - Iranian ex-diplomat and former nuclear negotiator Hossein Mousavian has reviewed the path to maintain peace with Saudi Arabia and Arab countries.



Mousavian recently addressed 'West Asia Conference' on Changing Security Paradigm in West Asia: Regional and International Responses which was held with the attendance of scores of resident diplomats, authors, research centers and Indian media in New Delhi.

The following is the full text of Mousavian's speech:

The West Asia is in the midst of a historic tumult. As conflict and terrorism have spread, some historic regional powers have collapsed and the geopolitical landscape that underpinned the regional order for decades has been

upended.

Among the seminal factors contributing to regional instability and the spread of radicalization have been:

1. The continuing Israeli occupation of Palestine,
2. Saddam's invasion of Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990,
3. The 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan,
4. The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq,
5. The outbreak of the "Arab Spring" in 2011,
6. NATO-GCC war on Libya in 2011,
7. Orchestrating and recruiting tens of thousands of terrorists from over 80 countries to bring regime change in Syria, and
8. The 2015 Saudi-US war on Yemen.

These developments have effectively:

1. Torn up much of the Arab world;
2. Dragging major Arab powers Iraq, Libya and Syria into civil war and terrorism,
3. The collapse of U.S. regional allies in countries like Egypt and Tunisia,
4. The flow of tens of thousands of terrorists into the region and beyond,
5. The advent and spread of ISIS and other terrorist groups in the region and beyond.

As traditional Arab powers Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Syria have fallen into disarray, Saudi Arabia—today effectively led by the 33-year-old Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman—is attempting to take the mantle of leadership over the Arab world.

The new regional power dynamic has in effect seen the formation of two major blocs, one comprised of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Israel, and the United States under President Donald Trump, and the other including Iran, Russia, Syria, Hezbollah, Iraq and other popularly-mobilized militias such as the Hashd Al-Sha'abi in Iraq and the Syrian Defense Forces.

While the United States and Russia are, the two most consequential global powers affecting the fate of the Middle East, at the regional level Iran and Saudi Arabia are the main actors.

Saudi Arabia has in recent years veered away from its traditionally conservative and behind-the-scenes foreign policy approach to a far more assertive and openly hostile to Iran strategy

It is a fact that Saudi-Iran have influence on crises in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar, and elsewhere in the region. However, the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia blame Iran for the discord in the Arab world and instability in the region despite the success of the Iran nuclear negotiations in alleviating international concerns of Iran's potential pathways to nuclear weapons.

But from the Iranian point of view, the real reasons behind flailing Arab unity and the crises in the region have little to do with Iran and lie closer at:

1. Dysfunctionalities of Arab states,
2. Decades of dictatorship and corruption in Arab countries,
3. The spread of Wahhabism,
4. Arab-Arab wars such as Saddam invasion of Kuwait, GCC invasion of Libya and Saud-UAE invasion of Yemen, and
5. Riyadh's doorstep in many cases.

For instance, the cause of Palestine which for years was the top source of angst and unity in the Arab and Muslim world, has today lost its significance to such a degree for the Saudi government pressuring Palestinians to accept maximalist Israeli demands.

In December 2017, the New York Times, citing "Palestinian, Arab, and European officials," stated that Mohammad bin Salman had presented Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas with "a plan that would be more tilted toward the Israelis than any ever embraced by the American government."

On December 6, 2017 President Trump formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, reversing nearly seven decades of American foreign policy because he was sure Bin Salman is committed to confront Iran and to push Palestinians to compel to Israeli demand.

In short, the reality is that the Arab world, led by Saudi Arabia, is seemingly on the verge of historic capitulation to Israel.

The (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is for all intents and purposes now also defunct. This too is not for anything to do with Iran, but chiefly due to the smaller Persian Gulf states' perennial fear of falling victim to hegemonic Saudi aspirations—as exemplified by Saudi Arabia effectively turning Bahrain into its own province and most recently with the Saudi-led blockade of Qatar.

Doha officials now regularly proclaim before the world that Saudi Arabia seeks to turn them into a puppet state.

The chaos that has engulfed Libya in crisis, has also had nothing to do with Iran, but is due to the regime change military operation that overthrew Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 led by NATO and U.S. Arab allies, including the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

In Yemen, the narrative of “Iran-backed” Houthis instigating a civil war is simplistic and ignores any historic context. The fact is that the Saudi assault on Yemen, has resulted in thousands of civilian deaths, triggered an unprecedented cholera epidemic, and taken the country to the edge of widespread famine in what has become the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe.

Saudi Arabia's regional strategy can be encapsulated into five points:

1. Endeavor to keep American military, security, political, and economic dominance over the region.
2. Ally with Israel to gain the support of the powerful international Zionist movement.
3. Confront Iran and its regional allies on all forces and instigate a U.S. war with Iran.
4. Pressure Palestinians into accepting Israeli demands, effectively eliminating the issue of Palestine and marking official recognition of Israel by the Arab world.
5. Dominate the smaller Persian Gulf states and muster an Arab coalition in the form of an “Arab NATO” or other means to isolate and confront Iran.

In response, Iran's strategy can also be summarized in five points:

1. Resist U.S. hegemony in the Persian Gulf and improve its relations with other global powers.
2. Resist Israeli occupation and support Palestinians and resistance groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah.
3. All-out confrontation with takfiri terrorist groups, whose root ideology is Wahhabi Salafism, such as al-Qaeda, Jabhat al-Nusra, ISIS, etc.
4. Act as a counterbalance to Saudi efforts to impose hegemony over the smaller Arab Persian Gulf sheikhdoms. After the Saudi blockade of Qatar, the small state's only access to the outside world was through its air and sea border with Iran—which Iran kept open for its use. To this end, Iran has sought to maintain normal ties with the GCC states who have no appetite for Saudi hegemony, including Oman and Kuwait.
5. Confront Israel's strategic aim to disintegrate four Islamic countries—Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran—by supporting Kurdish separatist aspirations. All four of these countries share many interests and with the resolution of the Syrian crisis, the grounds will be created for broader cooperation between them.

Given these conflicting strategies, Saudi Arabia and Iran have two choices:

The first is to continue the status quo of confrontation. The chief implications of this option will be that the unstable regional status quo will continue to deteriorate, any prospect of eliminating terrorist groups in the vein of ISIS will be diminished, sectarianism will increase, and there will be a real risk of a disastrous war that will not only engulf regional powers, but also global powers—especially the United States and Russia.

The other option is for Saudi Arabia and Iran to pursue avenues of cooperation. To do this, Riyadh and Tehran must first gain substantive and sincere understanding of each other's security threats and concerns, and then explore mutually acceptable paths to alleviating them. The cooperation option should entail:

1. Riyadh and Tehran to openly and without preconditions enter into bilateral dialogue and put all of their security concerns and aims on the negotiations table.
2. Forums for Iranian-Arab dialogue should be convened by figures with technocratic backgrounds ranging from scientists to diplomats.
3. To decrease sectarianism in the Muslim world, Sunni-Shia dialogue forums should take place that see the participation of Sunni scholars from al-Azhar in Cairo and religious leaders from Saudi Arabia and other Sunni countries, as well as Shia clerics from the Qom and Najaf seminaries.
4. Dialogue between the six GCC states, Iraq, and Iran should take place without preconditions and at the foreign-minister level, with the aim of creating an institutionalized security and cooperation system in the Persian Gulf. The foreign ministers should hear each other's concerns in a constructive dialogue and take steps towards producing tangible and fair solutions.

A potential model can be the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU. One foundation for immediate negotiations can be U.N. Security Council Resolution 598, which laid the basis for the end of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War and requests the UN secretary-general “to examine, in consultation with Iran and Iraq and with other states of the region, measures to enhance the security and stability of the region.”

Any sustainable partnership between the Persian Gulf states must address eight principles:

1. Respect for sovereignty,
2. Non-use of force,
3. Respect for borders and territorial integrity,
4. Peaceful settlement of disputes,
5. Noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries.
6. Commitment to the UN Charter and its principles,
7. Refraining from exacerbating sectarian differences and
8. Respecting each other's political systems

Over time, a gradual process that begins with simply holding regular meetings wherein all countries can communicate their security grievances can result in more institutionalized cooperative relationships.

9376**1397

Follow us on Twitter @IrnaEnglish



(<http://www.farhabet.com/forums/showthread.php?p=1341>)

u=http://www.inhainet.net/News/88076509/News/88076509&urlfa&subject=Title

+The Iran- Iran- Saudi/Saudi/ Conflict Conflict and the Path to Peace)	+The Iran- Iran- Saudi/Saudi/ Conflict Conflict and the Path to Peace)	Iran- Saudi/Arab Conflict and the Path to Peace) +http://www
---	---	--



Tags

Mousavian (/en/key/Mousavian) 

Arab (/en/key/Arab) 

Path (/en/key/Path) 

Photo Gallery



(<http://img8.irna.ir/1397/13970624/83033599/83033599-72547479.jpg>)

➤ Most Viewed



🕒 Al-Abadi orders troops deployment along border with Turkey (/en/News/83035537/)



🕒 Falling Iran oil supply cannot be offset: Bloomberg (/en/News/83035532/)



🕒 World will be listening to Iran's president at UN: Fmr US official (/en/News/83036246/)



🕒 Yemen busts espionage network affiliated to UAE (/en/News/83035520/)



🕒 Karbala police rejects news on conflict between Iranian, Iraqi pilgrims (/en/News/83035582/)

➤ Latest News



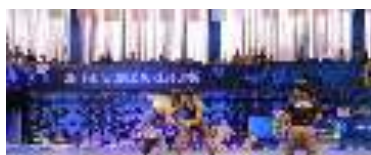
🕒 UN urges Israel to stop demolition of Palestinian village (/en/News/83036709/)



🕒 Putin, Erdogan: Demilitarized zone in Idlib (/en/News/83036705/)



🕒 Source: Air defense system intercepts missiles in Latakia (/en/News/83036702/)



🕒 3 Iran wrestlers advance to finals of world championships (/en/News/83036701/)



🕒 Russia: IAEA reports shows Iran's full compliance with JCPOA (/en/News/83036684/)



Related Categories

» Politics (/en/services/161/Politics)



(/)

Islamic Republic News Agency - IRNA Email: irna@irna.ir (<mailto:irna@irna.ir>)

Copyright © <http://www.irna.ir> All Rights Reserved



(<http://www.nofasoft.com>)