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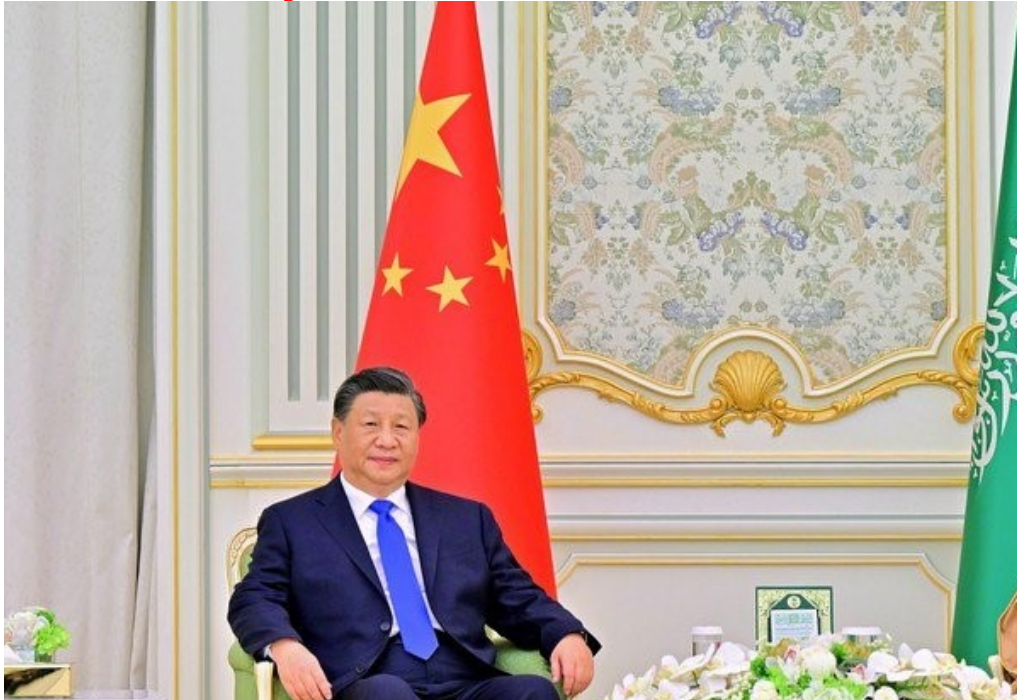
European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Marc Vandepitte

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## China facilitates Iran-Saudi Arabia deal



**Sources:** By Wereld Morgen [Photo: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Saudi Crown Prince bin Salman (Xinhua/Yue Yuewei)]

Translated from English for Rebellion by Paco Muñoz de Bustillo

*Although it has barely appeared in the mainstream media, Iran and Saudi Arabia have reached an important agreement with far-reaching implications not only in the region, but far beyond. It is an important step in the alignment of world relations.*

After seven years of estrangement and very tense relations, Saudi Arabia and Iran have agreed to restore diplomatic relations. Within two months both countries will reopen their respective embassies and have pledged to respect each other's sovereignty and not

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interfere in their internal affairs. In a joint statement, they also say Riyadh and Tehran will resume security cooperation.

### **The fracture**

Shiite-majority Iran and Saudi Arabia Sunni-majority Saudi severed ties in 2016 after Iranian protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran. Protesters were outraged by the execution of a cleric Shiite by the Saudi kingdom.



Iran in green and Saudi Arabia in orange. Map: GregRoquette, Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 4.0

Saudi Arabia also accused Iran to support the Houthi rebels in Yemen, against whom it is waging a Bloody war for more than seven years with the support of United Arab Emirates and the West. Apart from that war, in 2019 saw a brutal drone attack on a facility Saudi oil company that temporarily paralyzed half of the production. Tehran was accused of orchestrating the attack.

In addition to the war in Yemen, Iran and Saudi Arabia also clashed in Syria. Iran and Russia supported Assad, who has retaken much of the country from the opposition. On the other side were Saudi Arabia, Turkey and The West, which supported the jihadist rebels and the terrorist organizations that wanted to overthrow Assad. Both countries also supported rival formations in Lebanon.

Last year tensions between the two countries intensified following mass protests in Iran. Tehran accused Saudi Arabia of funding the media of communication that fueled the riots.

## **China's role**

The dispute now seems resolved. In recent years there have been attempts at mediation between the two countries under the auspices of Iraq and Oman, but failed. This The agreement has been mediated by Beijing. Therefore it is a important victory for Chinese diplomacy that illustrates the China's growing influence in the Middle East.

Last month the Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi visited Beijing and Chinese President Xi Jinping, was in Riyadh in December to attend meetings with States oil-rich Gulf Arabs. China already had very good ties with Iran and this agreement strengthens ties with Saudi Arabia. Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, Saudi Minister of Affairs Foreign Ministry declared in early March: "China is ours. largest trading partner. It is also the largest trading partner of the most countries. And that is a reality with which we will have to tell. For us, China is an important and valuable partner in many areas. We have excellent working relationships in many sectors'.

Also noteworthy is the fact that that the United States did not participate in this agreement, since until Washington had little influence in the Middle East. Give the impression that this era is over.

## **Implications for Iran**

This agreement could have far-reaching implications, not only for the region but for the international scope in general. Iran is strengthening its position And this agreement could be a springboard for better dialogue and cooperation with other Gulf States, such as Qatar and the Emirates United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The agreement comes at a time of rising tensions between the Islamic Republic and the West account of the sale of combat drones to Russia, the development of its nuclear program and the vigorous repression of protests in the country. There is a good chance for investments to be made Saudis in Iran, which would reduce Western attempts to Economically isolate the country through sanctions. It will also give Iran is stronger in its negotiations with the West aimed at reach an agreement on its nuclear program.

*Al Jazeera* reports that there is a possibility that Saudi Arabia will put a brake on its broadcaster London-based *Iran International* satellite show popular in Iran for siding with the protesters.

## **Implications for Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia also benefits of the agreement. The country has been immersed in a war against North Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels. Until Now the attempts to end this war through negotiations closed with the Houthis in Oman have failed. Saudi Arabia waits

that Iran can make a constructive contribution to the negotiations with the Houthis and ending drone attacks and Houthi missiles over the Saudi kingdom.



Arabian Peninsula. Map: NordNordWest, Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 3.0

This agreement, which leaves completely on the side of the United States, it also shows the new determination of Saudi Arabia to conduct an independent foreign policy of the West. In the past, this dependence was very pronounced.

At the end of World War II World President Franklin Roosevelt reached an agreement with Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia for oil transactions to be liquidate only in dollars in exchange for military protection and politics. As a result, the Saudi kingdom was heavily dependent on Washington, both economically and militarily.

Given the balance of power in that At the time, it was a favorable treatment for the kingdom. But the China's rise and America's relative decline have changed profoundly that balance of forces, so that dependence of the United States is no longer so big.

It is no coincidence that the traditionally strong relations between Riyadh and Washington have been recently cooled. In early October 2022, for example, There was a serious confrontation between the two countries. The President Biden was outraged by Saudi Arabia's decision to Reduce oil production by two million barrels Daily. That reduction sent world crude prices soaring. which would help Russia, the world's second-largest oil exporter, to continue their war in Ukraine despite sanctions International.

### **Other implications in the region**

In addition to the war in Yemen, Iran and Saudi Arabia are also fighting in Lebanon and Syria. Improvement of relations between Tehran and Riyadh could guarantee the emergence of commitments in these countries. According to *Al Jazeera*, "This agreement can lead to the creation of a better Security situation in the region. They have a lot of influence on these countries'.

The agreement could also benefit the Palestinians. Iran is one of the main defenders of the Palestinian cause. In recent years Israel has tried to isolate Tehran in the region and this agreement is a It strikes hard in that regard and weakens Tel Aviv's position. Not anymore much remains of the "regional alliance" against Iran.

### **Implications for the United States**

The dominant position of States United States relies heavily on the dollar as the world currency and this It is only possible because oil is sold in dollars. In fact Countries that want to import oil are obliged, therefore. reason, to establish dollar reserves in US banks. On the one hand this gives the United States unlimited possibilities of pay for your government's deficits by printing money and, on the other, You can freeze or confiscate assets from other countries you have political disputes, as has happened with Iran, Venezuela, Afghanistan and now Russia.

This exorbitant advantage and its power Financial depends on oil being paid in dollars. And that It is precisely what is increasingly being questioned. Sanctions against Russia after the war in Ukraine will only accelerate this process.

Russia and Saudi Arabia represent Together a quarter of global oil exports (in dollars). Russia is already asking for gas to be paid in rubles and not in dollars. If the same happens with oil, and Saudi Arabia and other countries join in, the dominance of the dollar will end, with the that the United States will lose a lot of power and influence. Countries like Venezuela and Iran have been wanting it for some time. And other great countries oil exporters such as Iraq and Libya considered it in the past.

If this event were to occur, The dollar would lose its status as a key currency or, as a director. of the Institute for Global Security Analysis told the *Wall Street Journal*, "If we remove that brick from the wall, the Wall will start to crumble."

The Iran-Saudi Agreement Saudi Arabia has not been great news in the mainstream media of Conventional communication. But one thing is certain, it is a Extremely important step and one more step in the alignment of world relations in which the West no longer has the monopoly of power.

Source: <https://www.dewereldmorgen.be/artikel/2023/03/13/kantelende-wereldverhoudingen-china-bewerkstelligt-akkoord-tussen-iran-en-saoedi-arabie/>

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