

Saudi-Iran rapprochement: A Dawn of a new Era

Saudi and Iran are both Sunni and Shia majority states respectively. The long standing rivalry of both nations especially after Iranian Islamic revolution has been shaping Middle East. The sad state of Affairs has brought Middle East to a launchpad of proxies. The main affectee countries of these proxies are Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon and Syria.

Iranian ~~IRG~~ IRG (Islamic Revolutionary Guards) have been accused of involving in proxy game against its rivals. Since Iran is a Shia majority country, it has great influence on Shia majority population of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. It supports Hamas in Lebanon, Al-Asad's regime in Syria, Houthis rebels in Yemen and other groups in Iraq.

Iraq claims to be the only country standing on orthodox Islamic teachings, that's why it needs to be respected and revered in Islamic world.

Saudi-Arabia on the other hand has adopted a defensive strategy to keep Iran at bay, while funding Shia rival Sunni groups in aforementioned countries. Saudi-Arabia led coalition started military operation against Iranian backed Houthi Shia rebel groups in Yemen after it claimed control of Sana'a, the capital of Yemen. The operation has been ongoing since 2015, in which Saudi Arabia was accused of civilian killings, ~~and~~ it faced further backlash when USA refused to be involved in Saudi led operation in Yemen. The killing of Journalist Jamal ~~Khashoggi~~ Khashoggi in Turkey allegedly on the orders of MBS further dented US-Saudi relations. This was seen too when Biden's visit to KSA in 2023 after post-Ukrainian invasion, called on Saudi-Arabia to expand its production of oil, since EU countries are dealing with rising energy prices, but the meeting was not fruitful.

The US withdrawal of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2021 and 2011 respectively along with lesser dependency of US on Saudi Oil further highlighted the fact that America has no big interest in Middle East. USA is shifting its core interests in Eastern Europe, South-China and Indo-pacific theatre.

~~At the~~ Meanwhile, a new power was rising on the global stage and it was China.

China is the biggest importer of Saudi Crude oil surpassing USA. While the same is with Iran and Russia. Since China is a world 2nd biggest economy, it has expanded its ^{interests} ~~network~~ to erstwhile US playground the Middle East.

But the Chinese approachment is solely based on bringing peace and development to the region contrary to US who was long been involved in wars. China was able to bring back the two rivals (Saudi & Iran) to table of dialogue which was surprising to the world.

Since USA has no diplomatic relations with Iran since 1979, China was able to carry out its interests. In March, 2023, China announced the resumption of diplomacy between archrivals Saudi-Arabia and Iran.

Experts believe that the Chinese strategy was a proof that US power in the region has been receding, while the Chinese sphere of influence is growing all along.

The Sand-Iran rapprochement will further enhance bi-lateral relationship and will bring peace to the region. The growing dependency of ~~the~~ Saudi-Arabia and Iran will allow China to rapidly expand its interests in the region countering USA. The resumption of diplomacy between the two countries has irked Israel as it was longing for diplomatic recognition and trade opportunities. The relations will have positive and developmental impacts on Middle East.