

Deal with Saudis signifies Iran's dynamic diplomacy: Foreign Ministry

The Iranian Foreign Ministry hailed the agreement on the resumption of ties with Saudi Arabia as a testimony to Tehran's balanced foreign policy, dynamic diplomacy, smart interaction and materialization of the good neighborliness policy.

The Foreign Ministry made the remark in a statement issued on Saturday night in relation to the rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Tasnim News Agency reported.

It said that Iran's foreign policy took another important step forward during the tenure of President Ebrahim Raeisi, in line with the doctrine of a balanced foreign policy, dynamic diplomacy and smart interaction, with the aim of materializing the policy of neighborliness and completing the previous effective steps.

Thanks to intensive and pragmatic negotiations, the Beijing-brokered agreement was made in order to put back relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia on their normal track, the statement added. With this momentum, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran showed that it is firmly resolved to safeguard the interests of the Iranian people and friendly, Muslim, neighboring nations, and use regional possibilities to achieve and strengthen inclusive peace and stability and guarantee the collective interests of regional governments and nations, the ministry added.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry is confident of the positive role and implications of this agreement in ensuring the mutual interests of Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as other regional nations, the statement said. Hence, the Foreign Ministry believes it is necessary to appreciate China's initiative in hosting the talks, and its role in the conclusion of the agreement, as well as the effective role of the friendly, neighboring governments of Iraq and Oman in this regard.

Following days of intensive talks in Beijing, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed on Friday to resume their diplomatic relations and reopen their embassies and diplomatic missions within the next two months.

Yemen cease-fire
In a separate statement on Saturday, Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations said the recent conclusion of a detente deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia stands to contribute to the cease-fire in Yemen, according to Press TV. The statement by the Iranian mission said the reinstatement of the ties would have "positive" implications on the bilateral, regional, and international levels.

Raeisi: Boosting ties with neighbors pillar of Iran's foreign policy

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi (R) meets Uzbekistan's Acting Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov (L) in Tehran on March 12, 2023. **PRESIDENT.IR**

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi described plans for stronger relations with neighboring countries as an essential element of his administration.

He made the remark in a meeting with Uzbekistan's Acting Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov in Tehran on Sunday, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Raeisi said one of his administration's main objectives is to strengthen convergence with neighboring countries.

Hailing the good measures for the promotion of relations between Iran and Uzbekistan, the president said the two sides need to step up their efforts to broaden ties considering

their mutual capacities.

Raeisi pointed to his visit to Uzbekistan in September 2022 for participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, calling for the implementation of the bilateral agreements signed during the trip.

For his part, Saidov expressed Uzbekistan's resolve to broaden cooperation with Iran in various fields.

Highlighting the deep-rooted cultural and civilizational bonds between Uzbekistan and Iran, the acting foreign minister said the Iranian president's trip to Samarkand opened a new chapter in the bilateral relations.



He also referred to plans to boost the activities of the Joint Economic Coop-

eration Commission and hold a trade conference between the two countries,

saying Uzbekistan will do its utmost to carry out the agreements with Iran.

Iran FM: Initial agreement reached with US for prisoner swap



MARZIEH SOLEIMANI/IRNA

The Iranian foreign minister said Tehran and Washington have reached an initial agreement to exchange prisoners.

"We reached an agreement in recent days on the issue of prisoner swap," Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Sunday, adding if everything goes well by the American side, the exchange would take place soon, Press TV reported.

He noted Iran regards the case as a "completely humanitarian issue," adding that a document has

"indirectly" been signed and approved between Tehran and Washington since March last year in this regard.

"The ground for its implementation has been prepared now, and from our point of view, everything is ready while the US is currently working on the final technical coordination," the top Iranian diplomat explained.

Talking to AP later in the day, U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price did not confirm the deal. Turning to the talks on

the revival of a 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Amir-Abdollahian said indirect exchange of messages between Tehran and Washington is underway.

Commenting on the cooperation between the Islamic Republic and the United Nations nuclear watchdog, he stressed that what matters to Iran greatly is that the baseless allegations against Tehran at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) must be dismissed, according to Tasnim News Agency.

Pointing to the "strong cooperation" between Iran and the IAEA, Amir-Abdollahian said such interaction will have a positive effect on the negotiations on the removal of the sanctions. "In the sanctions removal talks, the American side has lacked the courage to make the final decision so far, while Iran has proposed the ideas very transparently at the negotiating table," he stated.

Iran-Saudi deal, a turning point for Mideast



REUTERS

A new-found maturity has surfaced among Arab countries, prompting them to redefine their ties with Iran based on shared necessities and interests. And this agreement could have wider implications, including the normalization of relations between Iran and Egypt. It would have far-reaching consequences for both countries, allowing Cairo to expand its influence beyond North Africa and strengthen its economic and international capacities.

China's role in mediating this agreement is also significant. As China has become an increasingly influential global player, it has taken on a more active role in international affairs, including in the Persian Gulf region. Its involvement in normalizing relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia marks a shift away from American influence in the region, emphasizing that international security is no longer solely dependent on the United States.

The curtailment of American influence in the West Asian region is the most important international message conveyed by the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran Judiciary confirms death sentence for Sweden-backed terrorist ringleader

Iran's Judiciary confirmed a death sentence for the ringleader of a separatist group behind the 2018 deadly terrorist attack in the country, among other terrorist operations.

Mizan News Agency, affiliated with the Iranian Judiciary, reported on Sunday that the verdict was upheld for Habib Farajollah Chaab, the ringleader of the Harkat al-Nazal terror outfit, which killed dozens of people in an attack on a military parade in the southwestern province

of Khuzestan in 2018 and several other bombings, Press TV reported.

"The death sentence of Habib Farajollah Chaab on charges of corruption on earth through the formation, management, and leadership of a rebel group called Harkat al-Nazal, and the design and execution of numerous terrorist operations in Khuzestan Province was approved by the Supreme Court," the Mizan Online website reported.

Chaab, also known as

Habib Asyud, pleaded guilty and confessed last year to masterminding the 2018 atrocity, as well as many other acts of terror targeting the Iranian nation.

Chaab was arrested in November 2020 on the back of a set of "specialized and combined measures" by Iranian intelligence forces. The Harkat al-Nazal terror outfit has been pushing to separate Khuzestan Province - home to the country's Arab population - from the rest of Iran.