

Dialogue channels with Iran not closed: Egypt



A source familiar with the mediated talks between Iran and Egypt said on Tuesday that channels of communication between Tehran and Cairo have not been stopped and the talks are ongoing within the "framework of special departments". The source declined to provide further explanation about these special departments.

The source told Asharq Al-Awsat that Iran "expressed its great respect for Egypt and its political leaders."

However, the source added, it is difficult to predict when Egypt will take a step towards resuming relations with Iran and how quickly it will respond to the proposal made by Iran.

The source elaborated that there are no major differences between the two countries and the differences between the two sides are related to Tehran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad and the general principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Arab countries and issues related to the national security of Egypt and the Arab world.

Responding to the question of whether the restoration of relations with Egypt is on the agenda, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said on Monday, "Egypt is an important country and the two countries value each other in the region. The region needs the positive capacity and synergy of Tehran and Cairo."

Recalling that the last bilateral talks between the two countries took place in Amman this fall and on the sidelines of the Baghdad II summit, Kanaani said, "Brief but positive talks were held with Mr. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the President of Egypt, on the sidelines of the Baghdad II summit. We believe in the need to take new steps to improve the relations between the two countries."

He added that political relations between countries are "always a two-way street, and we must see what the other side do in this two-way street."

Earlier, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian announced the Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani's plan to start negotiations with Egypt through Iraqi mediation.

Syria, Turkey seek to normalize ties after Iran-Saudi rapprochement Middle East on path to peace, stability



Iran's SNSC Secretary Ali Shamkhani (3rd right), Mohammed bin-Mosaed (3rd left), Saudi Arabia's National Security Advisor and Wang Yi (C), Chinese State Councilor in Beijing on March 10 prior to the signing of Tehran-Riyadh agreement.

● XINHUA

After an agreement was struck between Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore relations, the Middle East and West Asia region is on the verge of another agreement, namely the normalization of relations between Turkey and Syria. Of course, the good news is not limited to these two things. Russia's Sputnik news agency has reported that talks are underway between Iran and Bahrain to reestablish diplomatic relations.

Concurrently, the former deputy foreign minister of Egypt called the development of relations between Tehran and Cairo beneficial for both countries. The meeting of Hans Grundberg, the

UN special envoy for Yemen, with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in Tehran should also be considered as good news. According to official media, on March 15 and 16, the deputy foreign ministers of Russia, Iran, Turkey, and Syria will meet in Moscow to discuss the normalization of Turkish-Syrian relations. Iran and Russia play the role of mediators between Turkey and Syria.

After 12 years of fundamental differences, Ankara and Damascus have now come to the realization of the necessity of establishing diplomatic relations. A possible agreement between Turkey and Syria, like the agreement between Tehran and Riyadh,

will be of utmost importance for the West Asia region.

Before this and especially after the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, many Arab countries that have not had friendly relations with Damascus took advantage of the opportunity and sent delegations to Damascus in an effort to help the Syrian victims. The foreign ministers of Jordan and Egypt visited Syria after many years as well as a delegation from Arab countries. By highlighting such news, many experts announced the Arab countries' desire to return to normal ties with Syria. Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, visited Oman for the first time in a decade after the earthquake and was warmly welcomed by the Omani officials.

Turkey's possible agreement with Syria can be the final puzzle piece that completes the positive developments of recent months in West Asia - a region that has been in turmoil due to intense hostilities and disputes for years because of foreign interference and some internal

disagreements.

Iran has always emphasized regional integration, stressing that the countries of the region can resolve their differences through dialogue and replace conflicts with security and stability using internal capacities.

According to various experts, the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to normalize relations will definitely play a positive role in strengthening security and resolving some regional disputes. Tehran and Riyadh, as two big regional powers, have the capacity to play a role in managing regional disputes. Cutting the cords between Tehran and Riyadh was a diplomatic vacuum that pushed the regional capacities toward enmity or escalation instead of convergence. In this regard, IRNA news agency quoted informed sources as saying that Saudi Arabia has invited Iran and Turkey as guests to hold the upcoming meeting of the Arab summit in Riyadh to be attended by all Arab countries, including Syria. Now, it seems the normal-

ization of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as Turkey and Syria, has created an opportunity to use the capacities of the regional countries more than the past to maintain stability, strengthen security, and develop economic cooperation. The mediation of Iran and Russia to normalize the relations between Turkey and Syria, as well as the mediation of China to normalize the relations between Tehran and Riyadh also indicate the important point that the destructive role played by the West in the West Asia region is under a decreasing trend.

It is now appropriate for the countries of the region to seize this opportunity and pay more attention to regional capacities through dialogue. Decision-making for the the region within the regional capacities will definitely have more benefits than extra-regional decision-making.

These developments collectively promise better days through achieving greater peace and calm for the Middle East and West Asia region.

Iran, Kuwait hold high-level legal consultations



Iran's Deputy FM Ali Bagheri Kani (r) shaking hands with his Kuwaiti counterpart on March 13, 2023 in Tehran.

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Political Desk

A high-level Kuwaiti delegation held important consultations with their Iranian counterparts on Monday night in order to explore ways of boosting bilateral and regional ties. The delegations of Iran

and Kuwait respectively headed by Reza Najafi, Director General of the Iranian Foreign Ministry for Legal and International Affairs, and Mansour Ayyad al-Otaibi, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister held necessary consultations in order to boost legal, political and security interactions, to expand border cooperation between Iran and Kuwait and to strengthen shipping safety and security as well as regional stability.

In the meeting of the joint legal committee, hosted by the Director General of the Iranian Foreign Ministry for Legal and International Affairs, the two sides exchanged views about the latest state of legal and border ties in terms

of demarcating maritime borders and exploiting common regions.

The Iranian and Kuwaiti delegations agreed to regularly continue their legal consultations. They also agreed to hold the next round of talks in Kuwait. Prior to the meeting, al-Otaibi met his Iranian counterpart Ali Bagheri Kani.

The two deputy foreign ministers held talks over bilateral issues, regional and international cooperation, as well as cooperation between Iran and Kuwait in world bodies.

Bagheri pointed to the foreign policy of Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi's administration which is based on expanding ties with neighbors, noting that Iran is firmly resolved

to boost ties with regional countries, especially Persian Gulf states, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry. He noted that stability and security is less a product of machtpolitik than political prudence and strategic rationality of officials in regional countries, especially those involved in foreign policy. The Iranian deputy foreign minister stressed that continued consultations and brotherly and candid negotiations among regional nations would bolster mutual political trust between leaders of countries in the region.

Kuwait's deputy foreign minister also referred to the historical bonds between Iran and Kuwait and hailed the Raeisi ad-

ministration's policy of neighborliness. Otaibi expressed hope that this policy will help expand bilateral and regional cooperation and improve regional stability and security. He also welcomed the recent agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic ties and reopen their embassies.

Otaibi further pointed to the Kuwaiti Emir's invitation of President Raeisi in 2021 to visit the Arab country, saying, "We are still looking forward to greeting His Excellency in Kuwait."

He declared Kuwait's readiness to host a new meeting with Iran for political consultations.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran, Russia FMs discuss upcoming Syria meeting in Moscow

Political Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov held talks on Monday night over the phone regarding various issues.

During the conversation, Lavrov welcomed the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic ties.

The two top diplomats further expressed their

views about a long-term comprehensive partnership deal between Tehran and Moscow.

Elsewhere in the call, Amir-Abdollahian and Lavrov discussed the holding of the four-way meeting between Iran, Russia, Syria and Turkey in order to resolve disputes between Damascus and Ankara. The meeting will be held on March 15, 2023 with the presence of the four countries' deputy foreign ministers.

Another issue that was raised was the latest developments in the Ukraine conflict. The Iranian foreign minister underlined Iran's principled view about the need to focus on dialogue and a political solution to resolve the crisis.

Meanwhile, Amir-Abdollahian and Lavrov exchanged views about the technical cooperation between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).