

Pakistan welcomes Iran-KSA agreement



International Desk

In a phone call initiated by the Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Pakistan's top diplomat hailed the recent agreement struck between Iran and Saudi Arabia and congratulated his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan on the recent achievement. During the conversation, the two sides emphasized the positive effects of the resumption of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Riyadh on regional peace.

Iran and Saudi Arabia had suspended diplomatic relations since 2016. Following five rounds of talks in Baghdad, Iraq, the two countries agreed last month to resume bilateral relations with the mediation of China.

Raeisi to visit several African countries

Political Desk

Director-General of the Department of Africa at Iran's Foreign Ministry says that Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi will visit several African countries in the first half of the current Iranian year. In an interview with ISNA, Valiollah Mohammadi Nasrabadi said that according to agreements reached between Iran and the countries Raeisi plans to visit, the president will visit several African countries in the first half of the Iranian year (starting on March 21). The presidents of these African countries have also been invited to visit Tehran, he added, saying that some high-ranking officials from some of the countries of the African continent have expressed their interest in visiting Tehran.

Iran reaffirms support for Palestine

International Desk

Iran has reaffirmed its commitment to the Palestinian cause, saying it will continue to support the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli regime's acts of aggression. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remark in an early Monday phone call with Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political bureau of the Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement.

Iran sanctions UK, EU individuals, entities for supporting terrorism

Political Desk

The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stipulated individuals and legal entities from the EU and the UK in its sanction list for supporting terrorism and terrorist groups, instigating and encouraging terrorist acts and violence against Iranian people, interference in Iran's domestic affairs, fomenting violence and unrest in Iran, dissemination of false information about Iran and participation in the escalation of cruel sanctions against Iranian

people as "economic terrorism."

The Foreign Ministry also condemned the actions of the EU and the UK for supporting, facilitating and not countering the destructive acts of individuals and legal entities and the violation of international obligations regarding combatting terrorism.

The UK government on Monday toughened its sanctions against Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as part of new restrictions on Tehran for alleged hu-

man rights violations. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly announced a travel ban and assets freeze on four individuals and the IRGC "in its entirety," AFP reported. Cleverly said the ban was made in coordination with the United States and the European Union, without giving further details. Similarly, the EU Council decided to impose restrictive measures on eight additional individuals and one legal entity. The EU Council sanctioned Ariantel, an Ira-

nian mobile service provider. New listings also include lawmakers in the Iranian Parliament, members of the IRGC and the IRGC Cooperative Foundation, which is the body responsible for managing the IRGC's investments. EU's restrictive measures now apply to a total of 211 individuals and 35 legal entities, according to the EU Council's statement. They consist of an asset freeze, a travel ban to the EU and a prohibition to make funds or economic resources available to those listed. A ban on



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exports to Iran of equipment which might be used for internal repression, and of equipment for monitoring telecommunications is also in place, the statement noted.

Iran's de-escalation triangle



Iran's SNSC Secretary Ali Shamkhani (R), posing for a commemorative photo to celebrate a Chinese mediated rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia with his Saudi counterpart Mosaed bin Mohammed (L), and China's State Councilor Wang Yi in Beijing on March 10, 2023. AP

Within this new competition (i.e. the competition to become the hegemon), dominance is no longer as important as it was in the past. Rather, what is important is the handling of relations and

tensions, and any powerhouse that can better manage relations and tensions will be more successful. Accordingly, in its road map for the future, China has tried to smooth the tensions and obstacles with new initiatives and plans. Although the United States is trying to portray the Chinese government as violent, China is moving forward by introducing new initiatives and reducing tensions.

Now, the question is: What policy should Iran, as an influential power in the Middle East, adopt in the midst of the competition between China and the United States? To answer this question, we can cite the Tehran-Ri-

yadh agreement, which was signed in Beijing, as an example. It is an agreement that will definitely have positive effects for all three countries involved as well as the entire region, of course. However, it seems that while China and Saudi Arabia are reaping the fruits of the agreement, Iran has not yet achieved its main objective of signing the deal. China was seeking to stabilize its position and play a greater role in the world and the Middle East, while Saudi Arabia was seeking to distance itself from the blast zone of possible oncoming tensions in the region. Meanwhile, Iran was mainly pursuing economic goals and trying to circumvent sanctions.

The international environment, where the aforementioned competition is taking place, is a flexible one. Now, countries have to remove obstacles by using this flexible global environment to secure their interests, presence, and influence. After the agreement was struck between Iran and Saudi Arabia, some analysts believed that de-escalation between the two is enough for Tehran, and there is no need to resolve other tensions, especially its tension with the West over the JCPOA, in particular. However, I believe that Iran should finally draw the third side the de-escalation triangle, completing it in the process. The first

side of this triangle was resolving its dispute with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The second side was striking an agreement with Saudi Arabia. Lastly, the third side is pursuing de-escalation in other disputed areas, especially with the West over the JCPOA. It seems that after the Tehran-Riyadh agreement was reached and more importantly, China secured a more firm foothold in the region, Americans have been forced to adjust their stance towards Iran. Now that the agreement with Riyadh is signed, Tehran has been given an opportunity to solve its tensions with the West as well and settle the issue of the JCPOA.

Iran hacked into hostile planes: Commander

Iran has recently hacked into three enemy planes that were flying near the country's air border for espionage, a commander announced.

In an interview with Tasnim, the managing director of Iran Electronics Industries – a subsidiary of the Ministry of Defense – highlighted the country's advances in countering the electronic warfare waged by the enemies.

Brigadier General Amir Rastegari said the Iranian experts have developed state-of-the-art equipment used for detecting and acting against a range of wavelengths and frequencies in the electronic warfare. Iran is now able to monitor all electromagnetic spectra and take the necessary offensive action against them, he added.

The general said a hostile aircraft

was flying within the aerial borders of Iran recently and spread waves to gather information, but the Iranian servicemen jammed the plane's signals.

The hostile plane's pilot thought the aircraft systems have been having technical problems, so he called the base to inform on a return from the mission, General Rastegari noted, adding that Iran has a record of his conversations.

The general stated that two other enemy planes flew towards Iran a day later and carried a reconnaissance mission together, but the Iranian systems jammed both of them again, because Iran has gained the capability to take action in that specific bandwidth. He said the two planes realized that they were being jammed by Iran's ground systems and reported to their base that they

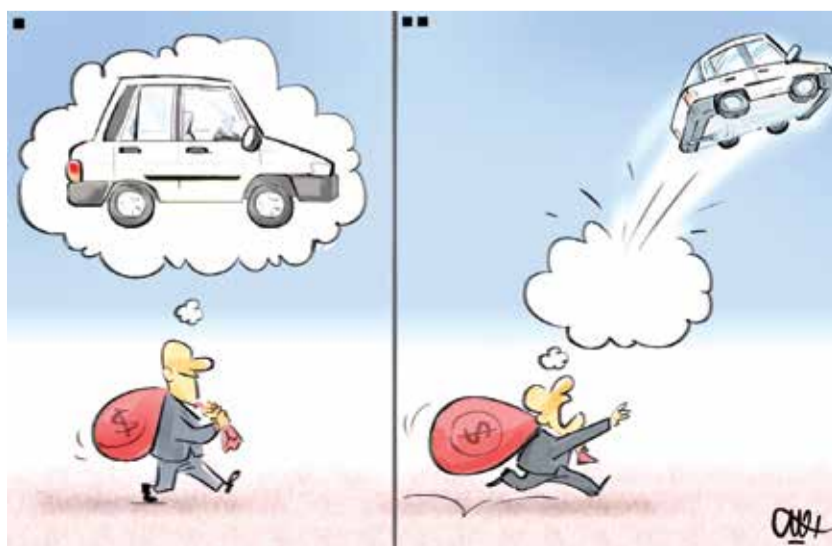
could not continue with the mission.

The general explained that Iran can combat threats from hundreds of kilometers away.

In October 2022, an Iranian deputy defense minister highlighted the country's great progress in the air defense industry, saying the military forces have jammed a hostile reconnaissance aircraft at a distance of 400 kilometers.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Russia to host quadrilateral meeting on Syria

A meeting of defense ministers and intelligence chiefs of Türkiye, Russia, Syria, and Iran will be held in Moscow on Tuesday, the Turkish national defense minister said on Monday. Hulusi Akar said Turkish, Russian, and Syrian defense ministers and intelligence chiefs met in Moscow on Dec. 28 last year and concluded to continue the meetings, Anadolu Agency reported. "Later, views were exchanged on the participation of Iran in these meetings. This was approved by the relevant authorities. As a continuation of that ses-

sion, this time as a quartet, we are preparing for a meeting to be attended by defense ministers and intelligence chiefs," said Akar. "This meeting is scheduled to be held in Moscow on April 25. Our aim is to solve the problems through negotiations and bring peace and tranquility to the region as soon as possible." Akar said several positive steps are expected after the meetings. He added that Türkiye is determined in the fight against terrorism and aims to ensure that Syrians in Türkiye will return to their

land voluntarily, safely, and with dignity.

"We have Syrian brothers and sisters with whom we are together, whether they are in Türkiye or Syria. It is out of the question for us to take any decision that will put them in trouble," the Turkish defense chief said.

A quadrilateral meeting of the deputy foreign ministers of Syria, Russia, Iran and Turkey, regarding the developments in Syria and Ankara's rapprochement with Damascus was held on April 4 at the Russian Foreign Ministry guesthouse in Moscow.