

# Iran's foreign policy outlook in light of new world order

Against this backdrop, governments worldwide strive to exert influence and secure a prominent position in the new international landscape. The current Iranian government faces these challenges amid a rapid acceleration of global developments, surpassing the pace seen in previous eras.

Iran's government has achieved a significant milestone by successfully joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization after years of arduous efforts. Alongside this achievement, Iran's foreign policy agenda includes collaboration with the BRICS member states, aiming to diversify access to international resources and means to meet economic, monetary, and financial requirements. By becoming a member of these leading political-security and economic mechanisms, Iran demonstrates its unwavering determination to play a consequential role in shaping multilateral structures and mechanisms.

The SCO comprises member states that represent approximately 40% of the global population and possess 20% of the world's gross domestic product. These countries engage in trade surpassing \$650 billion annually. A main motive behind countries' efforts to join the SCO lies in their desire to counter unilateral policies and actions, particularly from the West, notably the United States. Unilateral sanctions, with their extensive global ram-

ifications and violations of human rights, have undermined trust in the Western financial mechanism. As a result, countries worldwide have adopted preemptive and retaliatory measures. Contrary to Western expectations, globalization has initiated a process of "self-destruction," prompting rational coordination of joint efforts and collective responses to regional challenges and threats.

Iran, recognizing the shifting dynamics of the international arena, has strategically entered the SCO with a resolute and steadfast will, aligning with the organization's vision of "progressive and independent development." This move comes as power gradually transfers from the West to the East, with America and Europe experiencing a decline in their ability to control international developments. Meanwhile, China, Russia, BRICS members, and influential Asian regional powers have capitalized on these opportunities and assumed more active roles in global affairs.

The Iranian government has prioritized long-term cooperation with China, leading to the successful implementation of strategic agreements between the two nations. This collaboration has resulted in a notable surge in bilateral economic relations, positively impacting Iran's GDP growth and trade balance. Furthermore, political engagements with China have expanded across various domains, allowing

Iran to establish a meaningful presence on the global stage. Defense cooperation has also flourished, evident through joint military exercises involving Iran, Russia, and China, highlighting the commitment to safeguard regional and international peace.

The Russia-Iran relationship holds crucial importance in shaping future international developments, with institutionalized and strategic ties between the two nations.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, a crisis with global ramifications, is an ongoing concern that we aspire to see resolved promptly, with the West stopping its interventions. Irrespective of this conflict, Russia possesses the capacity to assume a renewed role in forthcoming international developments and the global multipolar order.

The Iranian government has placed significant emphasis on deepening interactions with Russia, seeking to establish the North-South transit route as a prominent agenda item in foreign policy discussions. Bilateral trade and investment have increased substantially, fostering enhanced international cooperation. Defense collaboration has also advanced, bolstering the defense capabilities and deterrence capacity of Iran. Russia plays a pivotal role in peaceful nuclear energy, particularly in the construction of nuclear power plants in Iran, further strengthening cooperation in this area. At the regional level, devel-

opments have provided an opportunity for interactions and cooperation among regional countries. The Iranian government embraces a strategy of good-neighborliness to strengthen relations, promote peace, counter extremism and foreign interference, and resist coercion and excessive demands and undue pressure. Iran has paid dearly and endured sacrifices, exemplified by the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, who played a central role in countering extremism of the Daesh terrorist group. His assassination, at the hands of hegemonic powers and America, remains an unforgivable transgression.

After several years of diligent negotiations, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have reached a conclusion. The involvement of China in finalizing bilateral agreements has led to the resumption of political relations between the two countries. This strategic move sets the stage for further regional developments, enhancing their political stature in the region. The positive consequences of this agreement are expected to benefit both nations, contributing to the prosperity, peace, and stability of the region.

The incumbent Iranian government has been keenly aware of the threats posed by the Zionist regime of Israel and has actively confronted and prevented their terrorist activities, tension-inducing tactics, and

inhumane policies. As the emerging world order takes shape, the ability of the Zionist regime to disrupt regional order and security is expected to diminish significantly. The United Nations' recognition of "Nakba Day" as a significant event in the organization's history reflects the international community's response to the crimes committed by this regime. The "theory of resistance" emerges as an effective strategy for fostering stability and peace in the region, and Iran remains committed to countering the hostilities propagated by the Zionist regime with utmost seriousness.

Iran maintains a balanced approach, neither exclusively aligning with the East, nor the West, while actively strengthening relations with the East. Simultaneously, Iran upholds engagements with the West, particularly Europe, based on principles, values, and international norms. However, certain European countries have recently disrupted bilateral relations, citing alleged human rights violations and Iranian involvement in the Ukraine conflict. Such interruptions are detrimental to their own interests, as these countries have the potential to play a constructive role in the new world order. The Iranian government seeks equitable dialogue and constructive interaction to address differences and cultivate mutual relations. However, Iran is resolute in defending its national interests and security when faced with

threats from other nations. The United States, experiencing a decline in its influence in the international arena, maintains an ambiguous and perplexing strategy toward Iran; a dual-pronged policy of "deterrence and diplomacy".

While emphasizing Iran's threats and the threat posed by Daesh, the organization effectively neutralized by Iran's efforts, the US policy of maximum pressure and comprehensive sanctions contradicts its professed emphasis on diplomacy. Consequently, America's conduct toward Iran can be characterized as hostile and confrontational.

However, Iran adopts a contrasting approach to the United States' antagonistic stance, focusing on enhancing economic resilience by mitigating the impact of sanctions with full force. The country prioritizes sustaining and expanding its peaceful nuclear program. Iran advocates for diplomatic mechanisms to achieve foreign policy objectives, viewing the US return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as a test to address the harm it inflicted. It is evident that the unilateral and hegemonic behavior exhibited by the United States will not be well-received in the emerging global trajectory and new world order. Further decline for the US is a plausible prognosis if left uncorrected.

To safeguard national interests and realize foreign policy objectives, Iran ef-

fectively utilizes its diverse capacities, particularly the Iranian expatriates. This segment of Iranians, consisting of intellectuals and elites, plays a significant role. The Islamic Republic recognizes the importance of serving the Iranian diaspora, welcoming their constructive engagement, participation, and cooperation in the country's development and progress.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, guided by the teachings of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini, is actively working to safeguard national interests and security in the complex international landscape. The diplomatic apparatus welcomes the engagement of the nation's elites, seeking their contribution and discerning perspectives to shape foreign policy goals through a consensus-based framework. It is emphasized that internal political disputes should remain separate from matters of foreign policy and diplomacy. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is organizing a gathering of ambassadors and heads of foreign missions, during which comprehensive discussions on global developments and their implications for foreign policy and diplomacy will be held. The insights and perspectives of the country's political elite from diverse backgrounds are valued and exchanged, enriching the discourse on diplomatic endeavors.

## Iran warns Afghanistan ...

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry, in a statement, rejected as "contradictory and false" a statement by Afghan ruling authorities that blamed lack of precipitation for a halt to the flow of water to Iran. "The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to take the necessary measures and emphasizes the full responsibility of Afghanistan in this regard,"

the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "In practice, the rulers of Afghanistan have not honored the commitments under the treaty and have not offered the necessary cooperation in supplying Iran's legal water rights," the ministry said. "The non-implementation of the treaty and non-provision of Helmand water rights by Afghanistan, while issuing political

statements without practical action are not acceptable in any way," Iran's Foreign Ministry said. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a tweet that Kabul was "committed to fulfil its obligations," but argued that due to "severe drought," water levels have decreased. He added, "inappropriate statements" made by Iran in this regard can harm ties between the two countries.

## Taliban responsible for water ...

Should the governing authorities of Afghanistan demonstrate adherence to the existing treaty as articulated in their official statement, the dispute would be easily resolved. Over the past decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has shown its goodwill to the Afghan nation through manifold means and currently harbors no excessive demands. If it can be substantiated that the lack of water, attributable to ongoing drought conditions, prevents the procurement of Iran's designated share as stipulated in the treaty, the two parties can amicably deliberate upon a mutually agreeable arrangement concerning the precise volume of water Iran shall receive during arid years. However, the Taliban's claim about the insufficiency of water in Hirmand needs to be investigated by experts. Incidentally, the matter is highlighted in the treaty itself and is further enshrined in Article 5 of Protocol No. 1, prompting Tehran's inclination to dispatch experts for an on-site assessment of the Hirmand's route and upstream region.

alluded to the aforementioned matter and underscored that "the determination of water availability or scarcity hinges upon a technical and impartial assessment, rather than the issuance of a politically-motivated announcement." Furthermore, recent reports and satellite images concerning the water conditions at Afghanistan's Kajaki Dam, which stands as an obstruction along the Hirmand River, directly contradict the Taliban's assertion of water scarcity. Hossein Dalirian, the spokesperson for the Iranian Space Agency, tweeted: "Through the Khayyam satellite, the Iranian Space Agency has diligently monitored the Hirmand River. Satellite images irrefutably reveal that the Afghan government, by diverting the natural course of water and erecting numerous dams, has deliberately impeded the flow of water to Iran in certain areas." Consequently, it becomes patently evident that the contentious issue rests squarely in the hands of the Taliban. Merely reiterating their commitment to the Hirmand Treaty, while simultaneously neglecting its



practical implementation, fails to compensate Iran, which has put forward a rational, well-informed, and unbiased proposition for consideration. However, it appears that the Taliban have categorically rebuffed Iran's proposal, drawing a stern warning from Tehran. In fact, Tehran has diligently pursued its legitimate claim with an unwavering commitment to upholding good neighborly relations, thereby placing the responsibility on the Taliban to opt for the path of amicable coexistence or to embrace a political approach driven by flawed assessments or external instigation. These matters can be logically addressed by expert deliberation. The unequivocal involvement of President Raisi in asserting Iran's water rights

and issuing a warning to the rulers of Afghanistan underscores the paramount significance of the matter for Tehran, exemplifying Iran's serious commitment to upholding its rights. As a matter of fact, comprehensive evaluations have been undertaken, envisioning potential scenarios and devising necessary measures to address them. The Islamic Republic of Iran has chosen the path of dialogue and mutual understanding predicated on the principles of good neighborliness. However, if the Taliban, for any reason, reject Tehran's goodwill and opt for an alternate course of action, they must assume accountability for the ensuing consequences. Tehran has repeatedly asserted that it does not compromise when it comes to safeguarding its national interests.

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