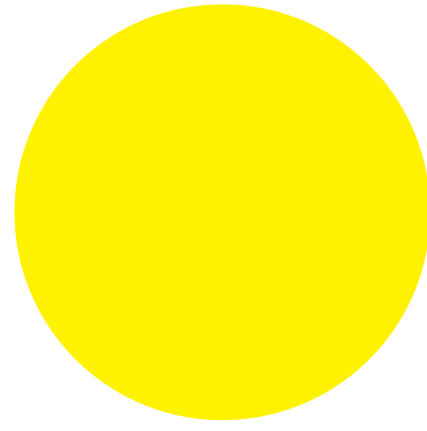




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Managing tensions with West



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EXCLUSIVE OPINION

During the current Persian calendar year ending on March 19, we saw a major crisis unfold known as the Gaza War, which had ripple effects on Iran's foreign policy. The aftermath of the bloody conflict extended beyond the Gaza Strip, encompassing Iraq, Lebanon and Syria as well as the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

As the war erupted and Israel's atrocities against the innocent and vulnerable people of Gaza came to light, numerous accusations were hurled at Iran. Israel, in turn, took aggressive actions against Iran's interests in Syria and Lebanon, going as far as carrying out terrorist acts within Iran. This led to immense internal and external pressure aimed at luring Iran into a confrontation with Israel. Obviously, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu personally tried to drag Iran into the war so as to provoke the United States to step in his assistance to pit Washington against Tehran. Despite the relentless push, Iran's foreign policy and decision-makers navigated the situation skillfully, steering clear of such a precarious scenario. The strategic approach stands out as a triumph in foreign policy.

In the realm of regional dynamics, particularly concerning Saudi Arabia, this year showcased a positive performance in foreign policy. The landmark agreement to normalize relations between Tehran and Riyadh eased many tensions in the region, serving as a trump card for Iranian diplomacy. While expectations were set for a swifter pace of progress and collaboration between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the anticipated developments did not materialize. The lack of progress in Tehran-Riyadh cooperation had repercussions, with statements made within the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council challenging Iran's territorial integrity. It is evident that engaging in more dialogue with Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations in the region, coupled with efforts to resolve lingering disputes, is imperative.

This year which is coming to an end soon, an unwritten deal emerged between Iran and the US to reduce tensions, if not prevent them from spiraling out of control altogether. Consequently, Iran's oil sales surged, and some of its assets frozen in South Korea were released conditionally.

While the deal had the potential for further development, the Gaza war hindered its progression. The recent meeting between Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri-Kani and Enrique Mora, the European Union's political director, could mark the initiation of a fresh round of talks between Iran and the West to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA.

To attain further success in the upcoming year, it is necessary to explore avenues to defuse tensions with the US and Europe, averting any escalation. The political climate in the US presents an opportunity for Iranian diplomacy to resume negotiations on the nuclear issue. At the same time, dialogue with Europe should be pursued vigorously. Countries neighboring Iran deserve more attention for fostering relations and cooperation. India emerges as a nation with significant potential for collaboration with Iran, while Turkey stands out as another crucial partner necessitating well-thought-out plans for advancing economic cooperation.

Researcher on Israeli affairs and author of the book on settler colonialism:

Israel is Limited by Palestinian, Regional Resistance

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

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Iran Daily wishes a happy Nowruz for its readers. Our next issue will be published after the New Year holidays, on April 13.