

Good neighborliness policy in effect

Why is Larijani's trip to Muscat, Doha significant?

OPINION

The scheduled trip of the secretary to Iran's Supreme National Security Council to Oman and Qatar, at a juncture fraught with regional vicissitudes, conveys an unequivocal message regarding the enduring primacy of the neighborhood policy for Tehran: namely, to circumscribe the escalated tensions fomented by the United States and the Israeli regime, and to underscore that the resolution of West Asian security problems must transpire through endogenous regional mechanisms. On Tuesday, February 10, the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council departed for Oman and then Qatar in a prearranged trip intended to reiterate and elucidate the policy of good neighborliness of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Concurrent with the ascent of the aircraft conveying Ali Larijani, a torrent of conjecture concerning the objectives and minutiae of these visits commenced — an unsurprising phenomenon given the prevailing national and regional circumstances.

General Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, minister of the royal office of Oman, received the secretary at Muscat Airport, after which Larijani was hosted by Haitham bin Tariq, sultan of Oman. The 3-hour cordial meeting witnessed both parties accentuating the paramount bilateral commonality: the imperative of safeguarding regional security.

The most headline-generating encounter was the dialogue between the Iranian secretary and Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Omani foreign minister; disseminated images intensified speculation regarding the transmission of written messages from the senior authorities of the two states. Subsequent to the meeting, Larijani declared that diverse economic deliberations — including investment and the resolution of mutual issues — had been conducted with Omani officials, and that the Sultan had articulated lucid and supportive positions concerning the augmentation of Iran-Omani economic cooperation. In consonance with antecedent diplomatic itineraries of Iranian officials, Larijani also met Mohammed Abdulsalam, spokesperson of Ansarullah (Houthis) of Yemen, and thereafter attended the National Day ceremony of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Muscat.

Describing the aggregate of his visit and consultations with Omani authorities as "fruitful and auspicious," the secretary, in an interview with Al-Alam television network, stated that his trip to Muscat occurred within the framework of historically robust Iran-Oman relations and encompassed discourse on Iran's expectations for the amplification of commercial relations and developmental cooperation, as well as consultations regarding regional and international issues.

On Wednesday morning, February 11, Larijani, escorted by General Al Nu'amani, departed Muscat for Doha, the second destination of his tour. In the Qatari capital, he was received by officials and subsequently conferred with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, emir of Qatar, and thereafter with Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, prime minister and foreign minister of Qatar.

Conjectures surrounding Larijani's presence in Muscat, Doha

"Regional war" is a succinct yet momentous catchphrase employed by



numerous regional and international analysts to denote any military confrontation between Iran and the United States — implying that tensions initiated by the United States through the deployment of warships to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman would not culminate in a circumscribed military engagement. For Iran, any conflagration instigated by Washington would constitute authorization to target American bases at any locus within the region, thereby precipitating comprehensive military turbulence across West Asia.

This alarm, resonant and admonitory for regional capitals, catalyzed endeavors to attenuate and arrest the escalation from the earliest days of intensification. Among regional actors, Oman, Qatar, and Turkey manifested the most conspicuous diplomatic exertion. The commencement of a new round of Iran-United States negotiations in Muscat, attended by Abbas Araghchi, Iran's foreign minister, and Steve Witkoff, special envoy of the US president, may be construed as one immediate corollary of these regional initiatives.

Nevertheless, regional relations in their totality — transcending merely the question of engagement with the United States — necessitate manifold exchanges at diverse levels. The predominant axis of such consultations, notwithstanding the discourse on negotiations, still revolves around regional relations and bilateral cooperation: precisely the objective pursued by the secretary through his presence in Oman and Qatar.

On Monday, Esmail Baqaei, spokesperson of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, clarified that the visit had been prearranged and constituted a continuation

of prior travels and consultations by the secretary, who had previously visited Russia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq to meet counterparts. These dialogues align with the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to fortify relations with neighboring states. The policy of good neighborliness and the consolidation of regional cooperation constitute cardinal pillars of Iran's foreign policy; thus, the visit in question must be evaluated within this paradigm. Across the waters of the Persian Gulf, both the sultan of Oman and the emir of Qatar reiterated the same principle. Oman's official news agency announced that the two sides emphasized the salience of resolving divergences through peaceful modalities to establish peace and security regionally and globally. The Amiri Diwan of Qatar likewise declared that the emir discussed regional conditions and endeavors to mitigate tension with the Iranian secretary.

Tehran's security message to regional capitals, Washington

The significance of nuclear negotiations with the United States must not eclipse other foreign policy priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly coordination with neighboring states. This axiom constitutes the principal objective of the secretary's trip to Doha and Muscat, especially as Benjamin Netanyahu hastens to the United States to destabilize the tenuous security equilibrium of the Middle East and to impel Donald Trump toward a renewed regional conflagration. For Netanyahu, any diplomatic accord — even one consonant with American interests — is unacceptable as it imperils his political survival within the Israeli regime. Consequently, he will exploit American scandals

and fabricate scenarios about Iran's move toward nuclear weapons to persuade Trump.

Trump's prior acquiescence to Netanyahu in June of this year has compelled Tehran to reiterate admonitions to the United States while augmenting preparedness for any war scenario. From Muscat, Larijani conveyed to the White House that Netanyahu is en route to America and that Americans must deliberate sagaciously and not permit him, prior to departure, to insinuate that "I want to go and teach the Americans the framework of nuclear negotiations"; They must remain vigilant regarding the pernicious role of Zionists.

Baqaei likewise affirmed that Iran's negotiating party is the United States, and it is incumbent upon that country to decide whether to act independently of pressures detrimental to the region and even to its own interests. As far as Iran is concerned, prior experiences — particularly the June episode, characterized as profoundly negative — are meticulously considered. In light of these experiences, Iran remains resolute in securing national interests through diplomacy.

Another dimension of the secretary's visit to the two regional capitals is the invalidation of certain speculative claims propagated by some media outlets and analysts concurrent with the announcement of the new negotiation round. Istanbul and Ankara had been advanced by predominantly Western outlets as potential venues for Iran-United States negotiations, despite Tehran's abstention from any decision regarding location or procedural modalities. The confirmation of Muscat as the venue and the bilateral nature of the talks, mediated by the Omani foreign minister, prompted assertions that the Islamic Republic had marginalized regional states. The secretary's presence in Oman and Qatar, together with the Foreign Ministry spokesperson's clarifications, refutes this allegation.

Baqaei, while expressing gratitude for the goodwill and good offices of all regional and neighboring countries, stated that no arrangement existed to convene the meeting outside Oman. Moreover, all regional states that facilitated the process had offered to host, and Iran remains in communication with all regional friends and neighbors.

The secretary's presence in two pivotal regional states, at a time when the Israeli regime and certain American officials contend that Iran's regional presence should constitute an axis of Tehran-Washington negotiations, is significant because the logic of the Islamic Republic maintains that regional issues — across every domain and category — must be resolved and negotiated within the region and among its states.

It appears that one of the paramount objectives of this visit is the attainment of a framework for regional dialogue capable of generating a rational solution to extant challenges among neighboring countries. Tehran is not merely prepared but eager to deliberate upon all reasonable concerns of its neighbors; however, it is equally determined to share this eagerness with regional states rather than extra-regional powers.



Secretary to Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani (front-left) shakes hands with Omani Minister of the Royal Office General Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani on February 11, 2026, before departing Muscat for Doha, Qatar's capital and the second destination of his tour.

The confirmation of Muscat as the venue and the bilateral nature of the talks, mediated by the Omani foreign minister, prompted assertions that the Islamic Republic had marginalized regional states. The secretary's presence in Oman and Qatar, together with the Foreign Ministry spokesperson's clarifications, refutes this allegation.

Qatari and Iranian officials await Secretary to Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani (not pictured) to disembark the aircraft after landing in Doha, Qatar, on February 11, 2026.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.