**Tectonic shift in the Middle East**

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March 16, 2023

Immediately after the third inauguration of Chinese President Xi Jinping, there was a surprise announcement that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have decided to open a new era of peace and prosperity in the region. As per Reuters, the agreement, signed by Iran’s top security official, Ali Shamkhani, and KSA’s national security adviser Musaed bin Mohammed Al-Aiban, agreed to re-activate a 2001 security cooperation accord, as well as another earlier pact on trade, economy, and investment. China’s top diplomat, Wang Yi, described the deal as a victory for dialogue and peace, adding that Beijing would continue to play a constructive role in addressing tough global issues. This news came against the backdrop of when the world was observing the completion of the first year of war in Eastern Europe. Hasan Illiak, while writing for the Citadel magazine has put up a profound commentary on the parlays; he posits that agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, two longtime rivals in the area, to resume diplomatic relations on March 10 in Beijing under Chinese sponsorship follows a seven-year hiatus. The agreement can be interpreted as a historic strategic agreement in the most positive light, showing the significant changes taking place in West Asia and around the globe. At worst, it could be seen as an “armistice agreement” between two significant rivals, opening up a valuable channel for ongoing, direct contact. Beyond the declaration of the restoration of the diplomatic ties that had been severed between Tehran and Riyadh since 2016, the joint statement from China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran on Friday had significant ramifications.

[Punjab Governor urges to bring children suffering from autism into social circles](https://www.nation.com.pk/02-Apr-2023/punjab-governor-urges-to-bring-children-suffering-from-autism-into-social-circles)

The Guardian suggests that the deal demonstrates Saudi Arabia’s renewed resolve to pursue an independent foreign policy from the west and could have significant ramifications for the Iran nuclear agreement as well as the civil war in Yemen, where the two sides are engaged in a proxy conflict. The two nations concurred to respect state sovereignty and refrain from meddling in one another’s domestic affairs, according to the Saudi Press Agency, which also verified the agreement. Has the developing world fostered the real maturity and statesmanship needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century?

For the Middle East; there is a golden opportunity to shed the hostile relationship and open new vistas of cooperation and economic development. Within the larger MENA(Middle East and North Africa) region plagued by conflicts and internecine wars, this could be the deal of the decades. Imagine the effects of proxy wars and the devastated landscape of the region, MENA region houses approximately 600 million people including some of the richest oil giants as well as poor countries. These Islamic states could not draw economic benefits due to conflicts in Libya, Palestine-Israel, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and even Somalia. The deal could also affect the Abraham accord and Iran’s nuclear deal; although not much is known about what was agreed on Iranian nuclear deal and what guarantees have been offered to Iran’s brothers across the Gulf, it is expected that the new arrangement would build a new structure of security in the Middle East as well as its periphery. A gradual but sure waning of conflicts has the potential to turn this zone into a multi-trillion dollar economy; the demographic potential of this area can make it the workshop of the world. Additionally, the region controls some strategic choke points like Gibraltar, Suez, Bab al Mandab and the Strait of Hormuz. These choke points in the past were always projected as friction points due to proxy wars and conflicts. Any easing of tensions in the MENA region can turn these choke points into maritime highways of peace and prosperity. For West Asia and South-Central Asia; the deal provides enormous opportunities to Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Central Asian Republics and even Caucasian countries. Geographically Pakistan-Afghanistan provides major trade and energy corridors; TAPI and IPI could increase the flow of oil and gas across this region and turn Pakistan into the zipper of the region.

[Imran Khan responsible for ‘economic, political & constitutional crises’: Marriyum](https://www.nation.com.pk/02-Apr-2023/imran-khan-responsible-for-economic-political-constitutional-crises-marriyum)

The greatest prize for the Islamic World will be the easing of sectarian tensions and real brotherhood between two major denominations of Shias and Sunnis, this could unleash astronomic energy, where states affected by sectarian tensions could divert this energy into collective development. Globally, the deal has indicated that the developing world could create alternate structures to resolve regional and interstate disputes. Let’s hope that these winds of change during the spring season in Asia bring in good tidings for the region and the larger world.