
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Iran's Relations with China under the Influence of Two Regional Events

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| ABSTRACT

China's increasing role in the Middle East has gained importance. Beijing has played an influential role in mediating disputes and fostering negotiation among the region's states. In late 2022 and the beginning of 2023, the Middle East region experienced some changes and developments; among them, two were most remarkable: The December 2022 China-Arabs summit and its final statement and the development in Iran-Saudi relations mediated by China in March 2023. Both of these changes have influenced Iran-China relations. This paper addresses how these changes affected the relations between Iran and China. It explores Iranians' assessment of both changes and developments.

| KEYWORDS

China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Arabs statement

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1. Introduction

In recent years, China's rising role in the Middle East has gained prominence. Beijing has vigorously pursued its politico-economic and strategic interests in the region as the world's second-largest economy and a major player in international affairs. During these years, China has played an influential role in mediating disputes and fostering negotiation among the region's states. In late 2022 and the beginning of 2023, the Middle East region experienced some changes and developments; among them, two were most remarkable: The December 2022 China-Arabs summit and its final statement and the development in Iran-Saudi relations mediated by China in March 2023.

From December 7 to 10, 2022, a summit between China, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries was held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Saudi Arabia was followed by a joint statement. Four of the eighteen points that comprise the joint statement directly pertain to Iran.

After the issuance of the declaration, Iranians started to criticize both China and Iran's governments, particularly for the endorsement of a GCC claim over three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. Yet, a few months later, in March 2023, the world observed a significant change when Iran and Saudi Arabia revealed that they had reached an agreement to resume normalized relations through a negotiation mediated by China in Beijing.

The China-backed agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia was well-received by Iranians. Intellectuals, the media, Iranian politicians, and the general public have all enthusiastically embraced and supported the Chinese-supported deal.

This paper aims to explore relations between Iran and China under the influence of these two changes. It addresses Iranians' valuation of both changes: China-Arabs summit outcomes and the China-backed agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia after seven years of conflict.

2. Major points that dealt with Iran in the China-Arabs statement

The China-Arab joint statement on December 9, 2022, contained 18 points, four of which directly pertained to Iran:

Three Iranian Islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa, in the Persian Gulf: the bone of contention unearthed by the Chinese-Arab joint statement was the Iranian ownership of three islands. The China-Arabs joint statement pledged support for efforts by the United Arab Emirates to open formal negotiations about the sovereignty of three islands in the Persian Gulf, an especially sensitive topic for Iranians. The statement sparked a huge uproar in Iran's public opinion as it called for negotiations over an issue Iran considers non-negotiable. Some officials, newspapers, and media expressed their worries about the joint statement regarding these islands. The Iranian Foreign Minister tweeted: The three islands of Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb, and Greater Tunb in the Persian Gulf are integral to Iran's territory and will always belong to its motherland. Iran will never compromise with any country on the importance of respecting the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This means that despite item 12 in the declaration, which emphasized negotiation and stated, "The leaders affirmed their support for all peaceful efforts, including the initiative and endeavors of the United Arab Emirates to reach a peaceful solution to the issue of the three islands; Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa, through bilateral negotiations by the rules of international law" from the Iranian perspective, these islands are not subject to negotiation. The Iranian Foreign Minister Spokesman reaffirming the principled positions of Iran described the three Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Little Tunb as an integral and eternal part of the Land of the Islamic Republic of Iran and added: "The Islamic Republic of Iran considers any claims on these islands as destabilizing, interfering in its internal affairs and territorial territory and strongly condemns it" (Prensa Latina, December 11, 2022). According to the Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA), in a meeting on Saturday, December 10, 2022, the Chinese Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chang Hua, met Iran's Asia-Pacific Assistant Foreign Minister, who expressed deep dissatisfaction with the arrival of the statement "China-GCC Joint Statement" on the issue of Iran's territorial integrity and stressed that "the three Iranian islands of the Persian Gulf are an integral part of the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which like any other part of the land of Iran has never been the subject of negotiations with any country. It hasn't and won't be." (Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA), December 10, 2022).

Yet some media had mild reactions, believing that while the statement does not go so far as to declare that the three Iranian islands belong to the UAE, the call for negotiations over their status inherently undermines Iran's claims.

It is believed that the declaration regarded Iran as a destabilizing country in the region and interfering in the region's countries affairs. In paragraph 11 of the declaration, the leaders affirmed the "importance of a comprehensive dialogue with the participation of the countries of the region to address the Iranian nuclear file and destabilizing regional activities, address support for terrorist and sectarian groups and illegal armed organizations, prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles and drones, ensure the safety of international navigation and oil installations, and adhere to UN resolutions and international legitimacy"(Joint Statement, December 9, 2022). Iranians believed this statement declared that Iran is:

- a-destabilizing country in the region
- b-supporting terrorist groups and militants in the region
- c-making problem for shipping oil from the Persian Gulf
- d-interfering in the region's countries' affairs
- e-not concern about UN resolutions and international legitimacy.

To the Iranians, the Islamic Republic not only has not supported terrorist groups but also has fought against terrorists, and many Iranians have been victims of terrorism. Mohammad Jamshidi (2022), Iranian Deputy Political Director of the President's Office, wrote on his Twitter account: "A reminder to Chinese colleagues in Beijing. While Saudi, along with the US-backed ISIS and Al-Qaeda in Syria, brutalized Yemen, Iran fought terrorist groups to restore regional stability and security and to prevent the spread of insecurity toward both the East and the West".

The joint statement also targeted the Iranian peaceful nuclear program. The Iranian Foreign Minister Spokesman, Nasser Kanaani, rejected the statement on issues related to the country's nuclear program and added that countries that had done their best to defeat the nuclear deal are now protesting Iran's legitimate actions by ignoring Iran's full adherence to the JCPOA and international law. Kanaani reiterated Tehran's commitment to the international 2015 nuclear deal. The spokesperson added Iran never abandons the negotiations to revive the JCPOA, noting his country regards dialogue as the sole means to lift anti-Iran sanctions (Kanaani, December 11, 2022).

Interference in Iran's internal affairs: the statement is regarded by Iranians as an interference in Iran's internal affairs. Because the statement has referred to Iran's territorial rights, nuclear program, regional policy, and missiles and security and defense policy, this regard, the Iranian Foreign Ministry urgently invited the Chinese ambassador to Iran, Chang Hua, and stated that Tehran is

concerned about two core issues. First, solving the power problem is an internal affair, and we hope China will not interfere." The second is "the territorial dispute between Iran and the UAE, which is an internal dispute between Iran and Arab countries, including the three islands in the Strait of Hormuz and which are Iran's inherent territory. We also hope that the Chinese side will not interfere." (Akhbar Rooz, December 11, 2022)

3. Why China has taken such a stance?: The Iranian assumptions

According to the Iranian scholars and media, there are several reasons for China's stance in contradiction of Iran's interests in the China-Arab joint statement:

China-US competition: Iranian scholars believe China's priority in the region is the United States. Yet, one can assume that China's improving relations with Persian Gulf Arab states does not mean that US influence in the region will diminish. Particularly, the US military and security relations with the region's Arab states are far more extensive to be affected by developments such as China's extended trade presence in the region.

China, in its relations with the region's Arab states, is concerned with economic interests and, particularly, maintaining its energy supply. The dollar volume of contracts signed between Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries with China is very high. According to some Iranian analysts, China has signed a statement with Saudi Arabia and the GCC with careful knowledge and information because Beijing is looking for its national interests and benefits and wants to gain a broader market for supplying its products.

After the Ukraine war and the escalation of China's rivalry with the United States, Beijing is changing its foreign policy and intends to enter beyond the economic and trade equations in political and security disputes between the countries of the region.

China might have been forced by Saudi Arabia and other countries, including the UAE. They would sign a cooperation agreement with China on the condition that they comment on the three Iranian islands (Ghahramanpour, 2022). In a similar statement, Ali Bigdeli (2022) said the Chinese president signed these statements in the presence of all officials from Arab countries in the Persian Gulf and has no escape.

4. Iranians' Reactions to the China-Arabas Joint Statement

China and Arabs' joint statement was questioned and criticized by officials, scholars, and national media in Iran, yet with a different tone. In a meeting with the Chinese Vice Premier, HU Chun Hua, in Tehran on December 13, 2022, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said that relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and China have been expanding ever since the victory of the Islamic Revolution and stated that some of the positions raised during the Chinese president's visit to the region (referring to China-Arabas joint statement) have caused dissatisfaction and complaints from the Iranian people and government, and the serious demands of Iran have been compensated for the positions expressed (Tehran Times, December 14, 2022). Needless to say, the visit of the Chinese vice Premier to Iran has been evaluated positively and negatively by Iranian newspapers and Media. Some officials and state newspapers saw his visit to Iran as an important and effective move.

Generally, according to analyses, China's warm relationship with the Saudi government, which, in addition to establishing radicalism in the region, helps to perpetuate it while not abandoning hostility to Iran, is not good news for Tehran. The statement stance against Iran's regional, nuclear, and territorial is a new and troubling phenomenon. Saeed Ajourlu, an Iranian expert on International Relations, raised two main questions: why is China willing to be part of the traditional Arab policy against Iran? And is the benefit of political participation with Arabs more than the cost of Tehran's annoyance? His answer to these questions is that "the fact is that China's behavior toward Iran is shocking and incomprehensible because our view of the East (China) is an idealistic and identity perspective, while China's understanding of politics, such as Russia, is profit-driven." (Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA), December 11, 2022). According to Ajourlu, since President Raisi came to power, Tehran has relied solely on an identity and value attitude on the Chinese issue, while in the Chinese view, unlike many countries, "economy" is a priority over "value." Basically, China's peaceful uprising is formed on this basis and has economic and profitable settings, and in practice, until further notice, it is neither involved in liberalism nor socialism. He stressed: "Now is the time to determine the task of the Chinese case in Iran, which should start from changing attitudes at the domestic policy level and lead to the foreign policy strategy and the proper implementation of this strategy. The three sides of the real, targeted policy-making, professional, and powerful broker are the grounds for passing the identity literature of Shanghai to the "profit-oriented" of these relationships. There is time, but little; it is neither so far-reaching nor lost. (Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA), December 11, 2022).

Despite such sharp criticism, Kayhan Newspaper, a semi-governmental newspaper, wrote on December 11, 2022, "The expansion of ties between Beijing and Riyadh is more a strategic challenge for the undisputed dominance of the US rather than being a challenge for Iran." It added that "China is entering a region that has always been considered the backyard of Washington" (Kayhan, December 11, 2022).

5. Criticisms of the Iranian Government's pro-China Policy

Some Iranian newspapers, particularly the moderates, reacted to the joint statement by questioning Iran's dependence on China. Iranians on social media criticized their government for what they saw as a slap in the face by an ally. They asked the government how China could have acquiesced to such a statement that undermines Iran's national interests. Moineddin Saeedi (2022), a member of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis Shorai Islami) from Chabahar in Sistan and Baluchistan Province, said at parliament: "Unlimited trust in China and Russia is sheer stupidity." Ali Bigdeli (2022), one of the reformists, said interestingly that Iran's deputy foreign minister asked the Chinese ambassador very cautiously and did not even use the word summons for this matter but declared the cause "dialogue and negotiations." Even Mr. Amirabdollahian, the Iranian Foreign Minister, made no mention of China's name in response to the statement issued. Moreover, about the presidential administration's cautious stance toward China, Bigdeli stated: "We have unaccompanied because of hatred of the West, and we have thrown our book into the arms of the East, while China and Russia are none of our strategic friends and are trying to reduce the level of relations with us to meet the Persian Gulf's Sheikhs' demands and reach a wider market" (Bigdeli, 2022). He affirmed China's axis of power is based on trade and added: "Today China has signed these statements indicating that it has distanced itself from us. And with the Iranian government's cautious stances, the Chinese distance from us is expected to deepen and widen. One example of that could also be that China is reducing the amount of oil we buy; maybe our government is worried about the same thing that didn't react very strongly because it doesn't want to lose China" (Bigdeli, 2022).

Jamaran News Agency, in a statement issued on December 15, 2022, by Iran's Reforms Front, an umbrella organization of several reformist groups and political parties, called China's stance "interventionist". Meanwhile, the Reform Front said, "This has been one of the worst and the most humiliating developments in which Iran's tattered foreign policy has damaged the country's national authority" (Jamaran, December 15, 2022)

The unprecedented criticism of the government's 'Looking East' policy by the Reformists continued with an article in the reformist newspaper, Etemad, by Esmail Gerami-Moghaddam (2022), the deputy leader of the reformist National Trust Party. He wrote that China's stance about the three islands sent a signal to the United States that, like Washington, Beijing also believes Tehran's regional ambitions should be checked. Gerami-Moghaddam added that China preferred trade deals with Arab countries. "This shows that Tehran's policy of supporting stronger ties with China and its Looking East policy was a serious strategic miscalculation." In an interview with Sharq Daily, Ali Fekri, the chairman of the Iranian Organization for Investment and Economic Assistance, stated that China chose not to invest in Iran and to transfer its capital and investments to other Persian Gulf states (Sharq Daily, December 15, 2022).

The Iranian Newspaper, Jomhuri-e Eslami (December 14, 2022), criticized the authorities' reaction to the joint statement, stressing the need for reconstruction in the country's foreign policy. The newspaper went on to say that "National interests are funded only by balanced politics, which Imam Khomeini, former supreme leader, called "neither Eastern nor Western politics" and the basis of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. It seems that we need a serious restructuring of our country's foreign policy to protect this basic policy" (Jomhuri-e Eslami, December 14, 2022).

Yet, the government's official Newspaper, Iran (2022), tried to present a positive image of China's position in the joint statement. The Newspaper stated Beijing officials are ready to spend more on developments related to Tehran than ever before and to strongly support the political and economic interests of each member of their strategic allied network. But it should not be forgotten that although countries pursue common goals in their international relations at times commensurate with developments, in principle, each country adjusts its relationship with other countries, taking into account strategic, economic, and political priorities and conflicts of positions and interests on certain issues in the reconciliation process resulting from understanding the power equation in strategic relations are acceptable. Therefore, we must not analyze that part of the joint statement by the leaders of Beijing and Riyadh on Iran's historic and unmissable right to its islands to the level of ignoring the realities of the deep relationship between Iran and China in alignment with Riyadh.

6. Iran-Saudi deal and China's mediation from Iranian perspectives

Although the China-Arabs statement influenced the Sino-Iranian relationship, the mediation of China in the new development of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia is viewed as a good move. Xi's visit to Saudi Arabia at the end of 2022 and the China-Arabs summit pushed China-Arab relations toward institutionalization. That, in turn, spurred Iran to strengthen cooperation with China and encouraged President Ebrahim Raisi to visit China in February 2023. These two top-level diplomatic visits played a key role in improving the relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia (Raine, March 15, 2023). Not to forget that regional neighbors strongly desired Riyadh and Teheran's rapprochement.

A significant development in global diplomacy was reported on March 10, 2023, when Iran and Saudi Arabia disclosed that they had reached an agreement to resume normalized relations through a negotiation mediated by China in Beijing. After several days

(March 6-10) of intensive negotiations between the Iranian Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Admiral Ali Shamkhani, and his Saudi counterpart, Musaad bin Mohammed al-Aiban, in Beijing on March 10, an agreement was made to reestablish relations between the two countries, in a ceremony signed by a joint statement between Iran, Saudi Arabia and China. The two largest Middle Eastern countries by area and oil production, Iran and Saudi Arabia, announced the agreement in a joint statement. The signed agreement includes the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the reopening of embassies, mutual respect for national sovereignty, and non-interference in internal affairs (Pierson, March 111, 2023). After suspending diplomatic ties in 2016, the move facilitated the restoration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia and is expected to have long-term ramifications for the Middle East and beyond. By this development, the tensions between Tehran and Riyadh will be ended after seven years, with the two actors reviving diplomatic relations with China's role in mediation.

Indeed, the deal was a great development for the region and the globe. The agreement was one of the outcomes of the February 2023 talks between President Ebrahim Raisi and President Xi Jinping in Beijing, which laid the groundwork for the establishment of new, extremely serious negotiations between the Iranian and Saudi Arabian delegations. Intellectuals, the media, Iranian politicians, and the general public have all enthusiastically embraced and supported the Chinese-supported agreement.

The Iranians have appreciated China for its constructive role in promoting the development of countries' relations, which is required to address challenges, increase peace and stability, and promote international cooperation. By refusing to take sides in the Saudi-Iranian conflict, Beijing has established itself as a player capable of resolving disputes rather than simply selling weapons to the opposing parties. On the international stage, Iranians see the development as a significant victory for China. One could argue that this is China's first effective attempt to take on a transregional role in the Middle East, which the US had previously held (Hosseini, 2023). Acceptance of China's initiative by Tehran and Riyadh is another indication of the US government's decline and the direction the new global order is taking. A world whose quirks are probably still unclear but of which Washington is no longer the goddess. China will now replace the United States in that role and will benefit from the confidence that the surrounding nations already had in the US, but this time, it will be directed towards China. Stated differently, China is poised to displace the United States as the dominant power in the Middle Eastern region. Iranian analysts claim that Beijing's opening of the seven-year-old knot between Tehran and Riyadh and China's increasing influence in the area signals a change in political calculations that no longer see Western capitals as the route to regional agreements.

The recent diplomatic relations initiative between Iran and Saudi Arabia, mediated by China, has improved the outlook for future peace. Despite high tensions and ongoing efforts to resolve the conflict between the two countries by other regional (such as Iraq and Oman) and global powers (such as Russia), China's engagement could have important implications for regional stability and global politics. China is a potentially significant player in resolving this long-standing dispute due to its strong economic ties to both nations and its expanding regional influence (Ullah, 2023).

This achievement demonstrates China's rising influence in defining regional dynamics and represents an important diplomatic success for the country.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other Middle Eastern countries have shown that they require a guardian or a mediator, and this is no different in the eyes of Iranians. The Chinese type is currently being activated in place of its US counterpart as the United States' role is diminished. Previously, there was this hope, and most notably, it was the demand of the Islamic Republic of Iran that countries in their region cooperate without the interference of foreigners and transregional countries and resolve their disputes. At some point, Iraq played a role as a regional country that they both trusted between Iran and Saudi Arabia, but in the end, we see that such a demand was not met, and a transregional country of the new superpower has played a role (Hosseini, 2023).

Several rounds of continuing negotiations held in Iraq and Oman and China's entry into the Iran-Saudi conflict have added to the importance of this issue, and on the other hand, some changes in the chess of global developments have brought the two sides to the point of convergence. The agreement was a significant development, both regionally and globally. It was one of the outcomes of President Xi Jinping and President Ebrahim Raisi's talks in February 2023, which provided the basis for the formation of new and very serious negotiations between the delegations of Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Beijing's serious entry into the Middle East and its long-term investments, along with its interest in playing an effective role in the future world equations, all reflect recent changes in the international system, from the war in Ukraine to the development of NATO and the imposition of European sanctions, and the involvement of certain countries in these developments. Globally, then, in such a setting, the world is confronted with novel and exquisite variables. In other words, it seems that the continuation of international conflicts such as the Ukraine crisis, financial and trade issues, and the possibility of escalating some crises in the world have led Chinese leadership to set a vision for a future in which international and regional actors can play a role even with conflicts of interest (GT staff reporters, 2023). This is a win-win game. China's attempt to resume the deal, from analysts' point of view, is a sign of changes taking place in the world order.

The China-supported agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia is described by Iranians as an earthquake in the political sphere and an end to US hegemony in the region, and it is believed that with this agreement, the post-US era in the Persian Gulf region has begun. Certainly, China will become an influential player in the region. Indeed, China has expanded its geo-economics sphere from the China Sea to the Persian Gulf with a clear strategy. China has succeeded in replacing the United States and has played an important role in resolving one of the Middle East's most important regional tensions as an alternative to America and presenting itself as the guarantor of this political agreement (Faraji Rad, 2023).

Moreover, China's mediation proved more and more that the era of Western unilateralism and totalitarianism was over with the US focus, demonstrating that Asian countries can form a strong global alliance.

China's involvement in the negotiations and agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia demonstrated that, in the current environment, other countries have more influence over the balance of power and security in the region than just the United States. China can also effectively participate in the initial phase of international competition aimed at establishing stability and balance in the region. The biggest proof that China is pursuing a more proliferative, benign image in international diplomacy is the surprise news that Beijing used to successfully undermine the US. The Chinese intervention in the agreement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran is generally regarded as a startling move that strengthens Beijing's capacity to project soft power internationally at the expense of the United States.

Iranian scholars believe that the existing process reflects the fact that new waves of cooperation between Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, and other regional powers and major powers are emerging, and more stability to nuclear diplomacy and Vienna talks they will.

At the regional level, the emphasis on the two countries' strategic security agreement in January 2001 and the General Agreement on Economic Cooperation, Commerce, Investment, Technical, Scientific, Cultural, Sports, and Youth in March 1998 is more important than simply establishing a relationship. This demonstrates that Riyadh has come to the full realization that it must build positive relationships and increase its capabilities with Tehran. Reductions in hostilities between Tehran and Riyadh will also benefit Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and—possibly most importantly—Yemen (Mostafaei Dehnavi, 2023). Moreover, this China-mediated agreement will influence the growth of economic and trade exchanges amongst the countries of the region, aside from its significant contribution to regional stability and security.

At the national level, in general, the relationship with the Saudis is positive and welcomed by Iranians, provided it serves the interests of the country.

To sum up, the Iran-Saudi deal, with the help and support of China, is a major development that will have several regional and global impacts:

- a- It demonstrates China's growing influence on the world stage
- b- It reduces tensions in the Middle East between two regional powers
- c- It could help lead to the end of the war in Yemen
- d- It could complicate the normalization of Saudi-Israeli relations
- e- It may cement the Assad's government position in the Syrian
- f-It would influence the world order
- g-It provides a ground for a new wave of cooperation between Iran, China, and Saudi Arabia.
- h.It ensures the national interests of both countries
- i-It changes the regional order and arrangements

Generally, as experts have noted, the world has praised the China-mediated talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia as a watershed moment in de-escalating conflicts and restoring peace in the Middle East, as well as injecting stability into an unstable geopolitical landscape. This demonstrated that China's diplomatic philosophy of promoting peace and development is far more appealing than some countries' tactics of inciting conflict to expand their political sphere in the Persian Gulf (Fandi and Shumei, 2023).

7. Conclusion

The issuance of the China-Arabs joint statement in December 2022 led Iranians to criticize China, believing that by signing such a statement, Beijing had shrewdly distanced itself from Iran. Most sharp criticisms have been made by some officials and, in particular, those who are labeled reformists in Iran on the Chinese government for signing such a joint statement. They have also questioned

and criticized the Iranian government for its policy towards China and its "look east" strategy.

Despite some sharp and mild criticisms of the Chinese-Arabs joint declaration, it should be noted that Iran still has a sense of proportion in its diplomacy with China. It is not a "direct summons" in Western countries such as the United States. It proves that even though Tehran is dissatisfied, it still attaches great importance to its relations with Beijing and does not want to create unnecessary estrangement with China. For China, Iran is also an important country in the region. What is significant in Sino-Iranian relationships is that if China wants to strike a balance between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other GCC states, it needs to also pay heed to Iran's sensitivities. Iran has expressed its strong desire to upgrade relations with China. Therefore, China and Iran have an opportunity to strengthen their relations if both sides' sensitivities are respected.

China's mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia in March 2023 to get rid of seven years of conflict between the two countries has been evaluated positively by Iranians. The Iranians have appreciated China for its constructive role in promoting the development of the two countries' relations. The development would have a great positive impact regionally and globally. In particular, at the regional level, the Iran-Saudi agreement will have a significant contribution to the peace, stability and security of the Middle East and China's growing role in the region's affairs.

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