

# How Far Will the 'Friendship' of Israel and Saudi Arabia Go?

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*Recently, Israel and Saudi Arabia began to demonstrate their mutual readiness for proximity or even collaboration based on the joint opposition to Iran. So far, these two ferocious geopolitical enemies of Tehran are trying to stick to the policy of confidentiality in the conducted negotiations and have not entered the level of official inter-state contacts yet. However, even now, many things testify to the readiness of Tel-Aviv and Riyadh to go towards 'bold decisions', to the extent of making visits of official persons and establishing diplomatic relations.*

The evidence of such a trend became obviously unprecedented with regards to the two countries, judging by the interview with the Chief of General Staff (Israel) Gadi Eizenkot given to the Saudi online newspaper Elaph and published on 16<sup>th</sup> November, where the Israeli military commander appealed to Saudi and other 'involved stakes' for the mutual inhibition of 'aggressive Iranian influence' in the Middle East region. Whereby the Chief of General Staff (Israel) noted the readiness of Tel-Aviv to exchange intelligence data with Riyadh to neutralize the threats on part of Tehran.

Not so long ago, the Jewish state was visited by the Saudi delegation headed by the Saudi general Dr. Anwar Eshki, the former advisor of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, who met Dore Gold, Director-General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The negotiations of Eshki were, first, concerned the sphere of military collaboration. In this respect, we would like to remind that in May in London, the electronic intifada Al-Rai al-Youm already informed us that Israel offered its famous air-defence system 'Iron Dome' to Riyadh.

Earlier, the Arab mass media already widely quoted Yisrael Katz, Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Intelligence, who suggested in June that King of Saudi Arabia, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud "could have invited" the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pay a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and establish 'diplomatic relations on a full scale".

Whereby it is quite remarkable that until recently, in Saudi Arabia it was officially prohibited for the Israelites to be on their territory. Saudi Arabian Airlines do not only refuse to sell tickets to the citizens of Israel on their flights, but refuse entry on board to those Israelites who hold citizenship of other countries, if in their luggage a kippah, a Jewish cap, would be found, the Torah or any other paraphernalia testifying to affiliation to the Jewish religion.

The daily Arabic newspaper '[Al-Akhbar](#)' (Lebanon) recently informed us that it has a secret document in possession regarding the covert negotiation between Saudi Arabia and Israel, during which both sides talk terms of establishing mutual diplomatic relations. This

document presents a letter of Adel al-Jubeir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohhammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, where the negotiations with the participation of the USA are mentioned regarding the issue of international recognition of Israel by Riyadh and creation of a coalition together with it, against Iran in the Middle East, with the approval of Washington. As a 'contribution' to the covert alliance of Israel-Saudi Arabia, Riyadh expresses willingness to support Jerusalem division and placing it under international regime, per the plan adopted by the General Assembly. It being understood that the Palestinian refugees living on the territory of the Arab League, at the suggestion of Riyadh, should be granted citizenship of these countries, whereby the Israeli-Palestinian conflict itself would be 'turned into a cinder and a memory', and, according to arrangements between Riyadh and Washington, the USA would openly support Saudi Arabia in creating a military alliance against Iran with the participation of Israel.

As per another statement by the Wall Street Journal, Riyadh is prepared to withdraw the demands to Jerusalem to freeze the construction in the parts of Judea and Samaria, located beyond the settlement 'blocs'; however, it also demands from Israel to increase the humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

The rapprochement of the Arab world and Israel is in many aspects related to the creation of the 'front' to stay united against Iran. The Saudis are intending to become masters of the whole Middle East, just as the Israelis.

The government of Israel admitted having confidential consultations with Saudi Arabia, the major part of which is devoted to the co-operative deterrence of Iran threats. The fact of secret contacts between Tel-Aviv and Riyadh was also confirmed recently by Yuval Steinitz, Energy and Water Resources Minister of Israel.

In relation to the anti-Iran sentiments actively demonstrated recently, we would like to remind of the history and the development of the region and Israel itself. When the Biblical Israelites emerged, Persia was a civilised country already.

Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, assisted the Jews in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, in essence, having founded what they now call 'the Jewish people'. That is why he is so praised in the Jewish sources, as he marked a great epoch in the history of the Jewish people, being a 'great benefactor'. Partly due to this reason, when the establishment of the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, David Ben-Gurion, former Prime-Minister of Israel, saw in Iran a natural ally. That is why, back at that time, most Iranian Jews said they viewed Iran as their home, whereas Tehran became heaven (kind of 'Mecca') for many Jewish businessmen. The experts from the Israel Security Agency Shin-Bet even trained the secret police SAVAK, domestic security and intelligence service of Pahlavi dynasty, whereas the high-ranking commanders of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at the time could travel unchecked through Iran to Iraqi Kurdistan to train Peshmerga - the military forces of the federal region of Iraqi Kurdistan, who have played a key role in the mission to capture Saddam Hussein. Israel also supported Iran in the Iran-Iraq war of eight years with 'Ba'athist Iraq'. Thus, at that time Israel eliminated the obstacle for Iran's domination in the Middle East.

Indeed, the times change, so do politicians and political ambitions. By intending nowadays to take the place of the regional hegemon, with the support of Washington, the current Israeli politicians, due to U.S. pressure, decided to correct their previous mistakes in 'Iran's Regional Position Strengthening', being poised to concluding an alliance with their

opponents from Saudi Arabia. However, even this temporary political-military alliance between the Jews and the Saudi looks highly suspect. In long run, Arab regimes still cannot tolerate the State of Israel, although they are trying in their convoluted comments, so peculiar to them, to convince the Israeli that they “are now united with them in their goals: to reflect the threat from the common enemy and withstand in the atmosphere of chaos”. In actual practice, although Riyadh does not declare open its intention to destroy the ‘Jewish state’, it supports the terror groups that are acting exactly in this direction, and tomorrow, with the prompt from Riyadh, might divert their anger against Israel.

The East is a delicate matter, indeed!

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