

The US Kept the Middle East Destabilized to Profit the Military-Industrial Complex: Interview with Kevork Almassian

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Global Research, June 29, 2023

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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The Middle East is entering a new era, which is has seen the US side-lined while China and Saudi Arabia take new leadership positions. Gone are the days when a Middle Eastern monarch marched to orders written in the Oval Office. Newly exerted independence and diplomacy tracks have led to paths designed to support peace and prosperity in the region.

Steven Sahiounie of [MidEastDiscourse](#) has interviewed [Kevork Almassian](#), Syrian political commentator and founder of [Syriana Analysis](#).

Steven Sahiounie (SS): Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia has taken an abrupt turn eastward. He has normalized his relationship with Iran, which was brokered by China. The US was taken by surprise by the Chinese diplomacy. In your opinion, has the US been sidelined in the Middle East?

Kevork Almassian (KA): The United States policy toward the Middle East is based on three pillars: First, The Carter Doctrine which allows Washington to use military force, if necessary, to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf. Second, the security of Israel. Third, the divide and conquer strategy among Arab countries. These foreign and security policies have kept the Middle East destabilized for decades for the financial interests of the U.S. and the security interests of Israel. However, the position of U.S. in 2023 is different from the era that followed the Soviet Union when the U.S. emerged as an absolute hegemonic power with excessive force to project on the world.

In 2023, the U.S. must to be careful with its checks and balances due to the emergence of rivals on the international scene who are willing to challenge the American hegemony. Therefore, the U.S. had to withdraw from Afghanistan to focus on the struggle of power with Russia in the Eurasian region and with China in the far east from the gate of Taiwan.

This policy shift opened the opportunity for China to present itself as a peace broker in the Middle East. Hence, Beijing's role in striking a deal between foes like Iran and Saudi Arabia will have positive reflection on the region where the U.S. intentionally destabilized it because wars are profitable for the military industrial complex.

Consequently, I believe the U.S. has been sidelined from this important deal, but that does not mean Washington lost its grip over the region yet.

SS: Saudi Arabia and Iran have begun a new chapter in peaceful coexistence. In your view, how will this new relationship affect the various crisis areas in the Middle East, such as: Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Libya?

KA: Winston Churchill once famously said about the desirability of dialogue over destruction in the conduct of relations between states "Jaw Jaw is better than War War." This quote perfectly applies on the struggle of power between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the region, where neither Riyadh nor Tehran can eliminate the other side. And since diplomacy is the continuation of war by other means, the China-brokered deal is already reflecting positively on different hot spots in the region. For example, the Yemeni war has been halted and negotiations reactivated, Syria returned to the Arab League and negotiations are going on for a political solution to the war that harvested the lives of over half a million people, and Lebanese parties are talking to finally select a President.

SS: Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has not bowed to pressure from US President Biden to pump more oil to reduce global prices. In your opinion, what will be the US response to Saudi Arabia's new foreign policy which is independent of US coercion?

KA: Saudi Arabia's approach toward the U.S. under the de-facto rule of Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) is different from his predecessors. MBS is more like the Trump of Arabia who told the Americans: my country comes first! And that implies a few things: First, Saudi Arabia is willing to capitalize on its enormous economic strength to project its power on the region and abroad through soft tools. Second, when Saudi interests do not match with the U.S., the kingdom is not willing to sacrifice for the sake of Washington that could not or is not willing to protect its ally against Houthi attacks on Saudi oil fields. Third, MBS has an economic vision and a plan to develop the Kingdom to the ranks of developed countries. Therefore, he is not willing to waste his country's money or effort on endless wars for the sake of a tiny elite a few thousand miles away.

The U.S. knows Saudi Arabia is too important to lose and eventually, politicians in Washington have decided to refrain from coercion and counter-productive approach toward the Kingdom. The U.S. will continue dealing with Saudi Arabia because antagonizing the Kingdom can lead to losing it as an important partner and allowing Russia and China to fill the power vacuum in the region.

SS: UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg and said he was under immense western pressure because of his good relationship with both Russia and China. In your view, will the western media seek to demonize the UAE and its leader?

KA: Mohammed bin Zayed's (MBZ) talk with Putin was intentionally recorded and posted. If MBZ did not want to send a message to the collective West, he would not have allowed this video segment to be published. This is a big deal because historically, the UAE revolves in

the American orbit, but Abu Dhabi just like Riyadh have a new approach toward Washington: our countries come first!

However, we should not quickly jump to the conclusion that the UAE and KSA are ditching the West. In my opinion, both Abu Dhabi and Riyadh are perfectly willing to deal with the US and the EU but they want the West to treat them with respect and for the relations to be at the same eye-level. The Gulf monarchies have concluded that the U.S. did not spare anyone, even its allies. See what is happening in Ukraine and how the U.S. policy there is harming European interests. All European economies are suffering nowadays because of the United States. Therefore, the rational policy is to diversify the relationships between the West and East just like the Gulf countries have.

SS: Saudi Arabia and Algeria have both recently expressed interest in joining the organization known as BRICS. In your opinion, what is their potential benefit from joining, and what is the US response?

KA: The BRICS countries consist of 42 per cent of the global population, around 27 per cent of the world's growth products and economists predicting that the BRICS might be the leading economy by 2050. This represents a huge economic and investment opportunities for the developing countries.

In my opinion, what the BRICS lack right now is a common currency which can be the last nail in the coffin of the American hegemony. Due to its status as a global reserve currency, the Dollar is the one of the most important guns in the hands of the United States which uses it for economic monopoly, bullying and targeting other countries via unilateral sanctions.

But, once the Dollar loses its status as a global reserve currency, no country will be afraid of the United States because the latter will not be able to harm the economies of its rivals and foes via sanctions, such as the cases of Syria, Iran, Russia, Venezuela, Cuba, and a long list of nations.

Let us remember what happened to Libya when Gaddafi proposed a plan to present a unified golden currency for the African continent and what happened to Gaddafi? NATO mercenaries murdered him.

Consequently, the rise of the BRICS and the candidacy of new countries to the economic block can be seen as a serious challenge to the U.S. hegemony in the decision making corridors in Washington.

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This article was originally published on [Mideast Discourse](#).

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