

Will Regime Change Now Come to Riyadh?

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Friday's [announcement](#) that Iran and Saudi Arabia had restored bilateral ties for the first time in seven years marks a major geopolitical development in the Persian Gulf.

As the region's two main powerhouses, Tehran and Riyadh had found themselves supporting opposing sides in conflicts in both Syria and Yemen over the past decade, resulting in tensions that would culminate in the ending of diplomatic relations in January 2016, following the execution of Shia cleric **Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr** by Saudi Arabia; seen as the dominant Sunni power in the Islamic world, with Iran regarded as the Shia equivalent.

Thus, the restoring of diplomatic relations between both nations should lead to increased stability in a region beset by conflict over the past two decades.

Reaching beyond west Asia, Friday's announcement also signifies the establishment of a new multipolar world order, with China having brokered the deal between both countries. With Saudi Arabia being a key US-ally and trading partner in the region, this may also indicate that should Washington now feel that Riyadh is moving into Beijing's sphere of influence, it may vie for regime-change in Saudi Arabia in a bid to maintain hegemony in west Asia.

Indeed such an occurrence has a historical precedent.

In July 1979, the-then US administration of Jimmy Carter would launch Operation Cyclone, a covert CIA programme which would see the arming, funding and training of Wahhabi militants known as the [Mujahideen](#), who would then go on to wage war on the Socialist government of previously Western-friendly Afghanistan, which had come under Soviet influence following the 1978 Saur Revolution.

Five months prior to the commencement of Operation Cyclone, Iran - also a former Western ally in the region - would come under the leadership of **Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini**, following the Islamic Revolution which saw the overthrow of the US and UK-backed **Shah Pahlavi**. A major threat to US hegemony in the region, the Iranian Revolution was a key

factor in the White House's decision to arm the Afghan Mujahideen, lest its influence be weakened even further in west Asia, as well as drawing the Soviet Union into a [costly](#) military misadventure.

Should the United States now feel that Saudi Arabia is slipping away from its sphere of influence into China's instead, and decides to pursue regime-change in response, one of the first steps it may take is a significant overhaul in corporate media coverage of Saudi Arabia's brutal war on neighbouring Yemen.

In March 2015, following the seizure of the capital Sana'a by the Ansar Allah movement, Riyadh would begin an air campaign in a bid to restore the government of **Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi** to power.

Using US and British-supplied bombs, and with [military advisors](#) on hand from both countries to assist in the selection of targets, Saudi Arabia has laid waste to the agricultural, medical and water infrastructure of Yemen over the past eight years, resulting in widespread starvation and the largest [recorded](#) Cholera outbreak in history in what is already the most impoverished country on the Arabian Peninsula. A situation exacerbated even further by a Saudi blockade preventing food and medical supplies from entering the country.

Despite the brutality of the Saudi campaign, it has received scant coverage from the corporate media over the past eight years, owing to the lucrative arms trade between Riyadh and the West, as well as the use of Saudi Arabia as a bulwark against Iran in the region, with Tehran long being accused of providing military aid to Ansar Allah.

Should the Chinese-brokered détente between Saudi Arabia and Iran now result in tensions between Washington and Riyadh however, and especially in a scenario where the Gulf Kingdom may decide to purchase weapons from China rather than the United States, a newfound concern for the situation in Yemen may arise amongst the western media, in a manner not dissimilar to their sudden coverage of the war in Ukraine following the Russian intervention last February, in spite of their miniscule coverage of the conflict during the previous eight years it had actually been taking place.

Such coverage of Saudi war crimes in Yemen may pave the way for a colour revolution attempt in Riyadh with the intention of bringing a more US-aligned leadership to power.

Indeed such an attempt is currently taking place in Iran, where the US has been [supplying arms](#) to the 'Iranian opposition' in a bid to install a client regime, and with officials from US-ally Israel already expressing their [opposition](#) to the Iran-Saudi deal, it may only be a matter of time before something similar occurs on the other side of the Persian Gulf.

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