

### III. Breakout in Southwest Asia and Africa

# A New Paradigm in International Relations Springs from West Asia

by Hussein Askary

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“The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is today!”

—Chinese proverb

April 14—The world and the region of West Asia, falsely called “Middle East” by the British Empire, lost 20 years of time, millions of lives, and trillions of dollars, between the time Lyndon LaRouche spoke in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in May 2002, and today.

Visiting the UAE’s Zayed Center for Coordination and Follow-Up (ZCCF) as guest of honor and keynote speaker in an international conference on the future of oil and gas in world politics, LaRouche advocated a new economic and security architecture for the (Persian/ Arab) Gulf region. It was based on turning this region from a British geopolitical cockfighting pit into a “crossroads of the continents,” utilizing its exceptional geographical position and natural and human resources to industrialize its nations on a massive scale—building infrastructure including nuclear power, for petrochemical industries and desalinating seawater for greening the deserts.

LaRouche’s [plan](#) was intended to salvage the economies of the region from the slavish reliance on export of a single commodity—crude oil and gas—and also

from being a tool of geopolitics. At the same time, LaRouche denounced and advised against the intention of the George W. Bush/Tony Blair alliance to violate the sovereignty of Iraq and other nations. LaRouche’s ideas gained a great deal of popularity both among the leaders and populations of the Gulf and Arab world, with wide coverage in the mass media of his and his associates’ (including this author’s) work and initiatives.



Courtesy of the Zayed Centre

*Lyndon LaRouche, speaking at the UAE’s Zayed Centre for Coordination and Follow-Up in an international conference titled, “On the Role of Oil and Gas in World Politics,” advocated a new economic and security architecture for the Gulf region. Abu Dhabi, June 2002.*

However, in the following weeks and months, as the United States and Britain were preparing the illegal invasion of Iraq, a major counteroffensive was launched by those two powers, to intimidate the governments of the Gulf to abandon such visionary ideas as LaRouche’s and fall in line supporting the imminent invasion.

The orders to the Gulf nations were uttered through an intelligence mouthpiece disguised as a journalist,

Jamal Khashoggi. From his official position in London as advisor to the Saudi Ambassador, Prince Turki Al-Faisal (also former Intelligence Director of the Kingdom), Khashoggi penned an op-ed Feb. 5, 2003, published simultaneously in all the major newspapers and websites of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The article, “LaRouche and His Associates: Abandon Them Before They Make You Crazier!” pointed to the event at the ZCCF as a grave mistake that should not be repeated. A few months later the Zayed Center itself was shut down following a massive disinformation campaign in America and Europe. Later, Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed, chairman and founder of the ZCCF, was dethroned from his position as Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE and replaced by Mohammed bin Zayed.

### Twenty Years Later

Two decades later, and a century since the British Empire secretly reached the 1916 Sykes-Picot Pact with the French Empire for carving up the “Middle East” into separate colonies and satrapies, Chinese and Russian diplomatic and economic efforts are potentially putting an end to this hundred-year bloody divide-and-conquer strategy. That strategy witnessed its most violent aspect in the Shi’a-Sunni sectarian divide following the illegal British-American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The two poles of this divide in the region, Iran and Saudi Arabia, finally reached a China-brokered rapprochement on March 10 of this year and restored diplomatic ties. They had been severed since 2016, when Saudi Arabia executed a Saudi Shi’a cleric, prompting Iranian protesters to storm and burn the Saudi embassy in Tehran.

It is of great importance to mention that these diplomatic efforts took almost seven years to come to fruition, since Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt in January 2016. The U.S. administrations under both Trump and Biden made efforts to sabotage this process, including the assassination of Iranian military leader Qasim Soleimani in Baghdad on Jan. 3, 2020, as he was carrying a message from Tehran to Saudi Arabia via the Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi, who was mediating the contact between the two rivals.

But China continued to press ahead with economic cooperation deals with both sides, and with all other countries in the region. Two major “comprehensive

strategic agreements”—with Saudi Arabia in December 2022, and Iran in February 2023—and President Xi’s summits with the King of Saudi Arabia, the leaders of GCC and Arab countries in December 2022, re-defined the whole regional development perspective, orienting it towards economic cooperation and integration of the region into the new paradigm of cooperation along the Belt and Road Initiative.

Russia too has been mediating contact between Syria and Türkiye, to end the chaotic security situation in Syria’s northwest Idlib province where terrorist groups and armed extremists backed by the United States and NATO have been destabilizing both countries. U.S. boots on the ground in the eastern part of Syria remain a major destabilizing factor in this whole situation, but an agreement between Türkiye and Syria could bring this under control. A Russia-brokered meeting between the foreign ministers of Syria and Türkiye is scheduled to take place in early May, according to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov. The foreign ministers and defense ministers of both countries have already held online talks.

Syrian President Bashar Assad also visited the United Arab Emirates in mid-March, to meet with its leader Mohammed bin Zayed after a break of 12 years. A meeting between Assad and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is also in the making. In Riyadh last week, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad met with his Saudi counterpart Faisal Al-Farhan for the first time, in preparation for the Assad visit, which will coincide with Arab League Summit in the Saudi capital May 19.

This event would signal the recovery by Syria of its legitimate seat in this pan-Arab organization. Syria lost its seat in 2011 at the encouragement of Qatar. Saudi Arabia and the UAE were instrumental in the anti-Syrian Anglo-American regime change operation against Assad launched in 2011. But now the tide of history has turned.

Yemen, too, is being affected by this spree of Chinese-Russian peace diplomacy. The first major prisoner exchange was successfully brokered by the UN Envoy to Yemen April 10. The first round of negotiations with the Saudis was conducted last week in Sana’a in an extraordinary visit by a Saudi envoy to the Yemeni capital. A ceasefire has been in place between Saudi Arabia and the Sana’a government since April 2022 and has been holding. It is believed that Iranian influence over the Yemeni Houthis may bring an end to the war launched



China Foreign Ministry

*China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, flanked by the senior security officials of Saudi Arabia (left) and Iran (right), announces that the two countries have agreed to restore diplomatic relations. Beijing, March 10, 2023.*

by Saudi Arabia in March 2015 with devastating consequences for the Yemeni people and economy.

### **It Is the Economy!**

The Chinese policy, with its roots in the Belt and Road Initiative, started moving diplomatically in January 2016 with a tour by President Xi Jinping to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

While China coordinated separately with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, gradually reaching comprehensive strategic agreements with each of the three regional powers, its friendly and increasingly tight economic relationship with all of them enabled it to become a trusted broker in the region. While China has been conciliatory towards the West in this and other initiatives, a sharper tone came when it realized that engaging with the West in resolving the crises in West Asia—crises that were in reality a creation of the policies of the West—was obsolete.

The new Chinese position that “people in the Middle East are the masters of their own fate” and that “they are the ones who should take the lead in the region’s security affairs” was first pronounced by Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in the second Middle East Security Forum held by the China Institute of International Studies in Beijing in September 2022. This position was again reiterated by President Xi in his speech at the above-mentioned

China-Arab Summit in Riyadh in December 2022.

To understand the shift in the attitude of the GCC countries towards the West, it is important to look at the different economic, financial, and finally political motivations.

Economically, the GCC economies were rocked by an existential crisis in the past decade emanating from periodic collapses of oil prices. The first jolt followed the global financial crisis in 2008. Prices fell from \$140/barrel to near \$30; then in 2014 to below \$30; and in the pandemic year 2020 to near \$20. For the oil exporting countries to stay afloat economically and fiscally, they need a stable oil price at \$60–70

per barrel.

The need for a new economic orientation toward industrialization and diversifying their income sources, as advised by LaRouche in 2002, found a true partner in China and Asia. Saudi Arabia, under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also launched [Vision 2030](#), pointing to this same direction of policy.

Financially, the massive sovereign wealth funds of the GCC (now valued at about \$4 trillion), resulting from export of oil and gas for decades, have historically been invested in financial and banking sectors, or real estate in the City of London, Wall Street, and in Europe. These Western “markets” have become a great source of loss and risk for the Gulf countries due to the sustained financial and banking crises hitting the trans-Atlantic system since 2008, with demands that the GCC states contribute to bailing out the Western banking system.

This black hole opened again recently, with the collapse of American and European banks, prompting Saudi Arabia, for example, to declare that it was not going to pour more money into the failed Credit Suisse, in which Saudi Arabia owns a major stake. The GCC countries are realizing that their valuable wealth could be safer and more profitable if invested in real and productive economic projects at home, in China, and in countries along the BRI.

The tight relationship between the Gulf countries

(GCC plus Iraq and Iran), and China and all of East Asia, both as secure petroleum suppliers to the East, and as the largest markets for Chinese products, have necessitated the upgrading of these relations from a mere import-export relationship to a long-term, stable and dynamic industrialization process extending to science and technology, and even cultural cooperation.

### Xi Jinping's Proposals

The general framework for this relationship for the next decades was outlined in the proposals presented in President Xi Jinping's keynote [address](#) to the China-GCC summit in Riyadh in December 2022.

Xi's first proposal was a new paradigm of all-dimensional energy cooperation. China will continue to import large quantities of crude oil on a long-term basis from GCC countries, and purchase more liquefied natural gas (LNG), settling payments in Chinese renminbi through the Shanghai Petroleum and Natural Gas Exchange platform. A China-GCC forum on peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and a China-GCC nuclear security demonstration center should be jointly established. China will provide 300 training opportunities on peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

Second, the Chinese President proposed new progress in finance and investment cooperation. China and GCC countries could collaborate on financial regulation and facilitate entry into China's capital market for GCC companies. China will work with the GCC to set up a joint investment commission and support cooperation between sovereign wealth funds from both sides. A China-GCC forum on industrial and investment cooperation could be set up.

Xi's third proposal was to expand new areas of cooperation on innovation, science, and technology. China is ready to build big data and cloud computing centers with GCC countries and strengthen 5G and 6G technology cooperation.

Fourth, the Chinese President proposed to seek new breakthroughs in aerospace cooperation. China will carry out a string of cooperation projects with GCC countries in remote sensing and communications satellites, space utilization, and aerospace infrastructure. The two sides could select and train astronauts

FIGURE 1  
Transportation Integration of West Asia



*Saudi Arabia is carrying out a large-scale project to connect all of its cities and industrial zones, making it a hub for transcontinental transport and logistics.*

together, and China welcomes GCC astronauts to its space station for joint missions and space science experiments with their Chinese colleagues.

Finally, Xi proposed nurturing new highlights in language and cultural cooperation. China will cooperate with 300 universities, and middle and primary schools in GCC countries on Chinese language education, and work with GCC countries to set up 300 Chinese-language smart classrooms.

Saudi Arabia, in cooperation with China, is carrying out a massive industrialization process, including a large-scale infrastructure project connecting all its cities, and existing and planned industrial zones, with a modern rail and road network. This will make Saudi Arabia a hub for transcontinental transport and logistics along the Belt and Road, as shown in **Figure 1**.

*EIR* recently republished the introduction to Lyndon LaRouche's 1983 [essay](#), "Saudi Arabia in the Year 2023," a prophetic vision of what the Kingdom may look like today, based on certain investments in sectors that are emerging now as the priority of the Kingdom and its partners, especially China.

## Shenanigans Lose America the Region's Trust

The main political factors pushing Saudi Arabia and the UAE to closer relations with China and Russia are the ill-advised policies of the U.S. administrations since President Obama. The waging of the war on Yemen in March 2015 not only was militarily and morally flawed, but it became a huge drain on the faltering economy of the Kingdom. Instead of the imagined cake-walk, the war on Yemen became a nightmare lasting seven years.

In addition, while China and Russia were moving to broker peaceful cooperation in the region, the Trump Administration was busy engineering an anti-Iranian "Arab NATO" that would include Israel. President Trump insisted, in a rather insulting manner to the Saudis and the UAE, that they pay for this quixotic adventure, and also pay protection money, otherwise, as Trump once put it, the Kingdom would dissolve in a matter of weeks. For Arab tribal chiefs, which the leaders of the GCC are, this is the ultimate insult.

When the Biden Administration took over, it left a vacuum in the region and clearly antagonized Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt over their prosecution of Muslim Brotherhood activists, and in the case of Saudi Arabia, it insisted that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman must come clean about the case of the disappearance of "Washington Post journalist" Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

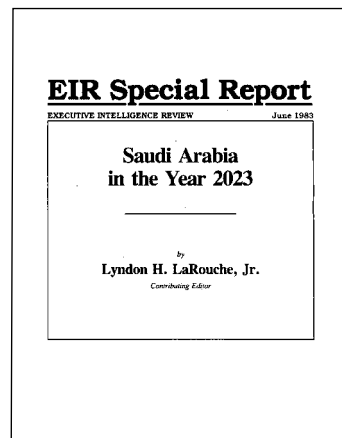
Even earlier, America under Obama was perceived by the GCC countries and Egypt as playing a double game during the "Arab Spring" color revolutions. While the GCC countries' services were welcome in destabilizing Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Iran, they were not considered as true allies, but mere tools. This became more and more evident as the operations against Syria collapsed and the Muslim Brotherhood backed government of Mohamed Morsi in Egypt was overthrown by a combination of popular uprising and military intervention by Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, backed by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The Obama Administration, Türkiye, and Qatar created an open front against the former three.

What role Jamal Khashoggi was pulled into playing in the operations against Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt might answer key questions regarding his tragic end. President Trump, although with an inclination to work more closely with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, did

not make matters easy for Mohammed bin Salman with Trump's reckless statements about the existential dependency of the Saudi Crown on U.S. protection. The United States, thus, has been deemed untrustworthy by Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

While volumes could be written about this dirty handling by the Anglo-American elites, it is more important to focus on the new paradigm of peaceful resolution of conflicts, based on economic cooperation and a Westphalian Peace notion, that may finally be embraced in this region—the very spot which British Prime Minister Tony Blair had intended to become the end of the Westphalian principle. That principle is the sovereignty and independence of nations and their cooperation for mutual benefit of all parties.

The living ideas of Lyndon LaRouche, even though he himself has "shuffled off this mortal coil," have found the right moment in history to become a reality. Many of the reconstruction plans designed by LaRouche and associates for Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan are still circulating in those countries. It is better to plant a tree today than argue about the missed opportunity of the last 20 years.



Can a policy written 40 years ago, be so prescient, that it is still as visionary and path-breaking, as well as specific for what might be accomplished today? In "Saudi Arabia in the Year 2023," written by LaRouche in 1983, LaRouche anticipated the mind-set of China's

Global Civilization Initiative, as well China's recent successful diplomacy in Southwest Asia, based in a respect for the long arc of civilization, a concept utterly anathema to the mad members of today's U.S. State Department.

See the review by Gail G. Kay in *EIR*, Oct. 18, 1983, "[Saudi Arabia: a Generation beyond the Dark Ages](#)"

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