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Will Iran and Saudi Arabia Go Into War?

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First, it was the Egyptian embassy, second the American embassy, later Denmark, then the British embassy was ransacked by mostly Basijis, and now, it is the turn of Saudi Arabia's embassy to be attacked by crowds of Iranians. What kind of diplomacy is Rowhani's government referring to?

These kinds of assaults on foreign embassies and diplomats have several dimensions; they appear to be a systematic reaction as they follow strong remarks from Iran's Supreme Leader. Iranian media outlets normally refer to these attackers as passionate young people or "followers of the Imam's route," rather than aggressors.

In addition, it is intriguing that Iranian forces which are very quick at identifying demonstrations, are always late to act when it comes to these types of pre-organized and sophisticated attacks on embassies. Moreover, the perpetrators of these attacks generally attempt to show their loyalty to the ideals of the Supreme Leader and the Islamic Republic's revolutionary principles. As a member of Iran's semi-militia group, the Basiji, pointed out: "We will stand by the Supreme Leader against any country which he views as the enemy."

After the strong and provocative rhetoric from Iran's Supreme Leader on his social media outlets and website, and after he urged "the Muslim world" to act, an Iranian crowd, broke into the Saudi embassy chanting slogans against Saudi Arabia. They ransacked, smashed furniture and windows, and set fire to the building. Another crowd attacked the Saudi Consulate in the city of Mashhad and tore the Saudi flag.

Has assaulting embassies turned into an inherent and symbolic tactic in the Islamic Republic's political establishment to indirectly express Tehran's rivalry towards other countries and to show disrespect to them?

The Islamic Republic, which considers itself the leader of Islamic world. The underlying issue which should be addressed is Iran's escalating sectarian agenda in the region and its heightened military interventions in other nations. It is incumbent on other nation-states to have a proportionate response to these issues, otherwise latest developments can escalate the regional conflict into conflagration. With the U.S. and the West turning a blind eye on the Islamic Republic' increasing interventionist operations in the region, Tehran has been emboldened and empowered on unprecedented level.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and its elite branch, the Quds force, has significantly increased their influence in various Arab nations through boots on the ground, military assistance, and Shiite proxies. Iran's support for militia groups across the region has exponentially increased. While one country, Iran, supports approximately 25 percent of world's designated terrorist groups, overwhelming majority of Iranian-backed groups are in the Middle East. This follows that the IRGC and Quds forces are currently the forerunners of financing, arming, and backing militia groups in the Middle East. According to the report by the State Department, even under the Presidency of the moderate, Hassan Rouhani, "Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism worldwide remained undiminished". Iran has not even begun taking serious actions against senior al-Qaeda leaders who are in the Islamic Republic.

Iran is assisting the Alawite regime of Assad -- militarily, financially, with advisors and intelligence -- against the Sunni oppositional groups. The IRGC forces are increasing their influence in Iraq fueling the Shiite vs. Sunni tensions by supporting the Shiite militia groups and the Shiite ruling clerics. Tehran is interfering in Yemen's domestic affairs through their support for the Houthis. In Bahrain and Lebanon, Iranian leaders continue to influence domestic politics and incite instability by their support of Shiite groups.

The nuclear deal between the P5+1 countries and the Islamic Republic will further boost Tehran's ability to spread its influence. If the international community or a regional coalition do not take serious action, Iran will further consolidate its hegemonic influence in other nations and continue to create political realities out of its proxies, ie, the Shiite militia groups.

Due to the nuclear deal and U.S. appeasement policies towards Iran and Khamenei, the hardliners sense they are invincible and immune to any kind of robust pressure from powerful nation-states.

In closing, a military war between Iran and Saudi Arabia is less likely since it will end up in a stalemate and have severe repercussions domestically, regionally and globally. However, in order to avoid escalation of the regional conflict, this necessitates an independent regional leadership to counterbalance IRGC's military and political interference in other countries. While Obama's administration does not appear to show any concern about Iran's hegemonic ambitions, and while other European nations are not going to pressure Tehran for the sake of preserving their economic interests after the nuclear deal's implementation, other regional players ought to take the initiative. Alleviating the regional conflict will be in the interests of all regional actors, including Iran.