



Causes behind the Abraham Accord and its consequences for the Peace Process in the Middle East

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Abstract

The Palestinian-Israeli problem has been the most significant obstacle in the peace process in the Middle East. The Balfour Declaration between the British Empire and the Zionists in 1917, which explicitly declared support for creating a "national home for the Jewish people" at the expense of the Palestinians, began after the Jewish exodus to Palestine after WW1. There have been three wars between Arab-Israel and Zionist imperial control over the Palestinians, resulting in the displacement of millions of refugees and hundreds of thousands of deaths of the Palestinians. Since the 1948 war, there have been no official Arab-Israeli relations except for Egypt and Jordan. However, geopolitical changes over the last decade have completely disrupted the Middle East and North Africa's conventional political order thanks to the Arab Spring, the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood and ISIS, and new non-Arab hegemonial forces like Iran and Turkey. Over the last decade, these developments have altered the perspective of the Arab monarchies towards the Palestinian issue, which they conceive as a mere distraction from real immediate threats. It finally contributed to Abraham's agreement between the United Arab Emirates and Israel and then the agreement between Bahrain and Israel. While there is the considerable fuss about the agreement, it will only lead to more conflict and chaos in the MENA region from a pragmatic point of view, as has emerged in the recent developments in Libya and the Mediterranean Sea.

Keywords: Abraham accord, Colonialism, Human rights, Israel, Middle East, Palestine, Refugees.

Introduction

For several years, Israel and many Gulf Arab states have had backchannel relations. In 2015, Ambassador Dore Gold began a discussion with Saudi Major-General Anwar Eshki, and they met in Rome regularly and discovered an enormous shared currency. For the last five years, Israel has been able to maintain contact with every Arab power. Israel could also send a high-level official from the security system, and almost every Arab leader can speak to him (David, 2015). The desire to do so in public is what was fresh and changed the country's situation. Following the official visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Oman in October, the first for an Israeli head of State since 1996, he was outspoken in his efforts to expand on this by improving relations with other nations, including Bahrain (Kerr & Mehul, 2018). In 1979, the first Arab State who make peace treaty with Israel was Egypt, followed in 1994 by Jordan. The UAE became the first Gulf Arab state of striking an agreement with Israel, and just the third Arab country to have successful diplomatic relations with Israel (Bahrain became the fourth). Israel's attempts to occupy vast portions of the disputed West Bank will be halted under the resolution (Gardner, 2020). The latest UAE-Israel and Bahrain-Israel treaties are a cruel, challenging diplomatic move taken at the Palestinians' loss. It is a political theatre that offers a pleasant context for Palestinians and their homeland (HARKOV,

2020). The UAE may wish to present itself as the Arab protector of Palestine, dragging Israel back from the verge of unlawfully annexing more Palestinian territory. However, the fact is that it has nothing to do with the Palestinians and their interests. The UAE has appreciated, albeit behind the scenes, the rewards associated with the military, intelligence, and technical collaboration with Israel for years (Holmes, 2020).

During the George W. Bush presidency, the neoconservative line was 'The path to Jerusalem runs through Baghdad' (that is, you need friendly Arab regimes if you want peace in Israel) (Luce, 2009). That did not work as expected, so why not instead allow our diplomatic GPS to redirect us from Abu Dhabi? The Gulf monarchies are at least able to negotiate. They have some confidence that Trump will give them the support they need to survive the international and domestic opprobrium that will come after the cause of Palestinian independence has been sold out. The aggression of the Trump administration toward Iran is trustworthy for the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia — and since the probabilities in the second Trump term are declining, leaders in both countries can explore ways for the Biden-Harris administration to continue to indulge (Wood 2020). Trump's friendship for the UAE is simple. However, the UAE forces every U.S. president to weigh the implications of opponents or attempts to expel by making peace with Israel. This contract is a scheme of insurance. (Mazzetti & Wong, 2020)

Reasons behind the deal

While it is possibly far-fetched and cannot be isolated from a political position in Israel, it is not hard to distinguish why both sides are contending in the Middle East today. There are several explanations for getting both sides closer together. The more west you go into Egypt, the more interest is geared toward counteracting ISIS. While on the east you find that Iran is the main thread (Tabrizi & Pantucci, 2016).

SAUDI-UAE-Bahrain

Since 2011, there has been no doubt that Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have an eye-to-eye vision of their shared nemesis in the region, which has provided common ground for the establishment of deeper security relations. Israel, the largest military in the region, and its only nuclear force have been recognized in its war against the threat of Iranian expansionism by the Saudi-Arabia and the UAE Gulf alliance. For Israel, too, the Islamic Republic is becoming a regional challenge instead of facing off against Iran alone, giving Israel more authority on how it reacts. Excessive regional volatility and mistrust, especially with Iran's adversaries, are growing tensions between states (Azodi, 2020). Iran sees itself as the region's hegemonic forces. Iranians in the Arabian Peninsula have been busy for years, seeking to expand their power through Hezbollah. The Iranians are attempting to take over Bahrain, where the United States has a Fifth Fleet base which was one of the significant cause of Bahrain deal with Israel. Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province has an immense Shiite population. Probably 50 percent of Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province is Shiite. Hezbollah affiliates work in the eastern area, and this must be handled by the Saudi security forces (Robinson, 2020)

Second, it is the threat of hegemonism emanating from the Middle East's non-Arab forces that gives Arabs-Israel a common ground to talk of, whether from Iran or Turkey. Having a specific form of political partnership in which they continue to see things in a very similar way will influence all side nations (Wilf, 2017). Third, these countries lack any form of collective security structure. After almost two decades of fighting, America's demand for additional military intervention in the area has decreased, leaving a significant security vacuum. At the heart of the Gulf, Overture to Israel is salvaging America's defense interest. Therefore, the essence of this relationship, its relative importance, and the potential risks it poses for both sides, particularly for the Gulf states, should be considered (Rahman, 2019). Fourth, and perhaps most notably, the Gulf States have retained strong relations with Washington for many decades, based on the common interests of guaranteeing peace and in the Gulf and the safety of oil routes. However, their underlying transactional and the focus on establishing personal relationships with influential people in Washington as a replacement for the lack of comprehensive support within the American public have always constrained those bonds. In comparison, the mistrust of Israel's staunch backers in Washington, who are significantly active in America's Middle East diplomacy, has always impaired the Gulf states and Arab states in general (Telhami, 2002).

Fifth, in the aftermath of the regional uprisings, the Gulf States' increasing need for advanced defense and monitoring systems to protect their citizens is the cause. The experience of Israel, in this respect, mastered its 51-year colonization of the Palestinian territories, is as mature as it can be. Moreover, despite the likelihood that Israel has installed backdoors into all its networks and other sellers are available, as a corollary of their newfound relations, several Gulf states have become ready buyers of Israeli technology (Kane, 2016). Sixth, Netanyahu has faced constant skepticism that his Palestinian policies would lead to Israel's isolation abroad. Netanyahu has made fostering ties with unfriendly states a vital element of his foreign policy to address the charge, especially in recent years. Undoubtedly, the prime minister has accomplished a fair degree of success in capitals across Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, while moving Western Europe away from making trouble for Israel. However, the Gulf Arab states remain the holy grail of that endeavor (Ronen & Goren, 2019).

Seventh, the UAE also shares Israel's mistrust of Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which rejects the monarchy and aims to democratize the country, and the Hamas militant party, which maintains strong ties with Iran in the Gaza Strip (Gambrell, 2020). Eighth, in Syria and Yemen, Sunni jihadists' rise is also a threat to the monarchies, particularly ISIS and other radical groups that want to eliminate Arab monarchs (ICG, 2017) (McCants, & McCants, 2015). Ninth, the seeds of Palestinian disenchantment originated in the Arab Spring, when the Arabs and their governments realized that their most significant challenges were internal rather than external (FEITH, 2020). Tenth, the current system of Arab leaders such as Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed of the UAE is getting more assertive, and the commitment of their public to the Palestinian cause seems to have diminished. The fatigue and discontent with the long-standing Palestinian cause, amid this, has led Arab states to feel a little more at liberty to follow their interests (MILLER, 2020). Eleventh, it would also opened the door to sell military equipment (particularly F-35 jets) that the U.S. can sell only to an Arab nation at peace with Israel. (LEAF & STROUL, 2020)

Israel

First, without alienating his right-wing foundation, Netanyahu will not deliver on his approval of the proposal. In itself, the Abraham Accord does little to promote an Israeli-Palestinian dispute settlement. Indeed, Netanyahu is now busy telling the Israelis that the UAE paradigm should now demand 'peace for peace,' and that territorial sacrifices no longer need to be made. Second, a way out of the annexation pit he had clumsily managed to set for himself was also required. Forced by his right-wing to make good on his pledge, but without the Trump administration's green light forced him to make a deal (Halbfinger, 2020). Thirdly, at a better time, his announcement could not have arrived. Netanyahu wanted a lift with COVID 19 resurgent, Israel in decline with a high unemployment rate, and facing proceedings. Today, for an utterly remarkable occurrence, the first normalization of relations between Israel and a Gulf State, he can take credit (Arab News, 2020).

Fourth, Netanyahu will then be able to bank the increase in his popularity to crack Arab resolve over Israel's normalization. He will utilize the moment to secure every fourth Israeli election that might soon come. When Israel's coalition government faces infighting and the prospect of early elections, the agreement gives Netanyahu a domestic boost (France24, 2020). Fifth, Netanyahu's broad outreach to the Arab world is part of his broader effort to globally expand Israel's political image through historical trips to Latin America, Asia, South Asia, and Africa. In the international community, Israel today has more diplomatic support than at any time since independence. His outreach in the Middle East seeks to prove that Israel can do business with key Arab states without sacrificing the Palestinian problem and assisting Arab states in its fight against Iran (Wermenbol, 2019).

USA

First, the administration has assiduously cultivated the Gulf states on the question of Israel to its credit. In contrast, U.S. interests have been harmed by its inability to curb Saudi Arabia in Yemen and reluctance to levy any costs on the Crown Prince for the killing of Khashoggi (Goldberg, 2020). Second, the government is overselling the declaration. National Security Advisor Robert C. O'Brien has advocated on Trump to be nominated for this and his other Middle East initiatives for the Nobel Peace Prize. Nevertheless, the declaration is excellent news for the President and rewards him first from a stream of negative ones about

Israel (SAMUELS, 2020). Third, for the time being, it defuses the issue of annexation and rewards the President with a remarkable instance of good diplomacy. Fourth, the acknowledgment gives U.S. President Donald Trump a political victory ahead of the November election (Dahan, 2020).

Fifth, he could say a political effect victory instead of a Trump peace initiative that went nowhere and an occupation that would have disrupted U.S. relations with his Arab mates. In the meantime, Kushner pivoted to broker the agreement, placing the final nail in the Trump peace plan's coffin. The plan was still in trouble: the Palestinians had not found an opportunity to be biased in favor of Israel. By providing for annexation upfront in exchange for an weakened Palestinian state far later, Kushner had at least gained Netanyahu's support (Kushner, 2020). Sixth, Trump was eager to undo his predecessor's policies on Iran and the peace process that had alienated both Israel and Saudi Arabia, making both countries central to his policies in the Middle East. In order to develop strategic ties with both nations (Kazim, 2019). Seventh, Saudi intervention will build Americans' jobs after normalization, and billions in weapons purchases will be additional (Vittori, 2019). Eight, Administration's attempts to facilitate Israeli-Arab state cooperation were at the center of the project, consolidating a popular front against Iran and creating power to persuade the Palestinians to come to the negotiation (Indyk, 2019).

Criticism

Many analysts in the region found this agreement to be bad faith for Israel, the Emirates, and the America's normalization-plan is a gift for Israel for nothing in return. Israel should have no diplomatic recognition abroad if it did not fulfil these requirements: firstly, it cede East Jerusalem; secondly, it acknowledges Palestinian right of return; and returns to its 1967 borders. For years this has been the mission of Palestinian leaders, but it has not been too good (Stover & Mankaryous, 2008).

Possible Impacts

This deal does not mean a greater degree of regional integration for Israel or has any positive effects on the Peace process in the Middle East. Moreover, the short- to medium-term effects that are not pleasant for the Middle East and North Africa region are more probable.

Immediate impacts

First, we should expect the UAE and Bahrain to be pursued by some nations and some to remain behind. There is a list of States like Saudi Arabia, Oman, Sudan, Mauritania, and Morocco. Indonesia and Somaliland have had covert relations with the Jewish State outside the Arab world for a long time, among other rivals in succession. Saudi Arabia is a long shot. Muhammad bin Salman, the crown prince and de facto ruler of the kingdom, said formal ties could be of mutual benefit. He appears envious of the economic and technical might of Israel. Both countries are now cooperating in order to fight Iran. However, for the conservative monarchy, formal relations are still perhaps a step too far (Rubin, 2020). Second, it avoids what many believed would be the immediate Israeli occupation of West Bank areas captured in the 1967 war, at least for now (Al-Jazeera, 2020). Third, the full overhaul of Israeli politics, the downturn in Prime Minister Netanyahu's political fortunes, and the growing speculation that he will eventually have to call the fourth round of polls after recently forming a cabinet. Netanyahu is today an Israeli hero who has taken an enormous step in lifting the historical isolation of Israel (BBC, 2020).

Fourth, Netanyahu his establishment of relations with Russia, China, and India is one thing while relations with Arab as former Prime Minister Shimon Peres called it, the imminent possibility of official relations with the first Gulf Arab state offers Israelis great optimism for a "Modern Middle East," without making the profound sacrifices Peres felt would be appropriate (Lewis, 1986). Fifth, for the Trump administration, which has not had many them, it is also a major political success (Crowley & Halbfinger, 2020)). Sixth, the President has sought negotiation with North Korea, leading to talks. However, no resolution, and Iran, leading to no talks and no compromise, has seen rising tensions with Europe's allies. Seventh, this deal results from a long-term attempt to get two nations to do something none of them was willing to do at first. (CFR, 2020).

Eight, without actually clinching so much in exchange that they do not already have by default, the Gulf Arab states win a precarious alliance with Israel (Berger, 2020). Ninth, the Gulf States should be cautious of what they want to connect their defense with Israel's, who has been pressing for years to come under the influence of the United States Central Command, which manages U.S. Middle East military activities. The Arab states fear seeing their defense needs subsumed by Israel's peculiar security lens if such a thing comes to pass, which they are likely to regret (HATUQA, 2019).

Long-Term impacts

First of all, any improvement in the Gulf and Israel relations will only take place at the Palestinians' costs. The goal of Israel's normalisation push is to abandon once and for all the Saudi-brokered Arab Peace Effort backed by the Arab League in 2002, pushing for the normalisation of relations between the Arab world and Israel in return for Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied territories (including East Jerusalem) and a "just resolution" of the Palestinian refugee crisis (Al-Jazeera, 2010). As seen in MBS 'latest threat (April 2019) that Palestinians "support or shut up Trump's plans,"-suggesting that Riyadh is no longer seen as an impassable barrier to normalization by the continuing occupation (The News, 2018). Second, as a populist leader, Netanyahu is well aware that global public sentiment is increasingly turning against Israel in the era of social media, thus there is need to move forward cautiously (Barakat, 2018).

Third, there is a lot at stake in Tehran. The wall of Arab unity against Israel could begin to break, on the one hand while cooperation in terms of security between the Gulf Arab countries and Israel is growing. However, Iran can not behave too impetuously, considering its ample economic relations with the UAE. At a time when Iran faces strong sanctions, it can not jeopardize its remaining trade ties. Ali Motahari, an Iranian parliamentarian, and reformist, recently blamed Iran for the agreement, saying that we are all responsible because we terrified the Arabs and led them to look like a shield to Israel (Azodi, 2020)). Fourth,, this deal does not mean that a greater degree of regional integration for Israel, even for the Palestinians, will have positive side effects. However, the prospects are infinite and impossible to foresee. Moreover, the short- to medium-term effects that are not pleasant for the Arabs are more probable. Fifth, On the optimistic side, it might lead the country squarely in the path of regional dialogue. Non-Arab countries are three of the most strong regions (Israel, Iran, and Turkey), and relations have always been non-existent. A deeper and more inclusive regional dialogue may be a suitable means of easing tensions (Alterman, 2020).

Impacts on Palestine issue

First, a Gulf state's decision to normalize relations with Israel is a stunning blow to the Palestinian issue and a direct representation of how much the country and Arab interests have shifted (MILLER, 2020). Second, it seems like many Arab states can realize that they are prepared to disengage themselves from the Palestinian cause. The Arab world should not and will not leave this cause altogether, but the announcement of deals made it stunningly clear that they will no longer allow their interest to suffer because of it (MILLER, 2020). Third, the lack of the Arab world's willingness to an end to the occupation of Israel as a precondition for stability in the Middle East would spell the death knell for a diplomatic settlement to be negotiated. Fourth, Europe or other multilateral processes will not replace the leveraged Palestinians got under the united Arab front (HASSAN, 2020).

Fifth, In past, there was well established and functional Palestinian Liberation Group which struggled for Palestinian rights at regional and international forums. But now, there is no single united platform available for Palestinians which would only make their situation more grim. Sixth, the Palestinians will no doubt restore their popular resistance. However, in order to organize the 13 million inhabitants spread across the world and in the territory of colonial Palestine, Palestinians would have to adopt a vision of Peace that positions Palestinian citizenship in a country where there is freedom for everyone, regardless of religion or national origin (Schulz & Hammer, 2003). Seventh, sadly, it is also very far from considering a shared democratic society with equal rights for all or a separate sovereign Palestinian state for most Jewish Israelis (Hazony, 2009).

Dangerous impacts on the Peace Process in the Middle East

There are significant immediate risks involved with the Palestinian-Israeli-Arab agreement. Peace in the region may be precarious. Next, there will be a vote on the removal of the Palestinian Authority (P.A.). The Palestinian Authority is created as a transitional agency to Palestinian Statehood. Second, leadership may determine that the hope of some form of Statehood is a fool's order in the absence of Arabian solidarity (Albasoos, 2014). Third, the P.A. breakup would require Israel to assume directly essential security duties now performed by the P.A., thereby causing tensions (Amer, 2020). Fourth, though, it would be a folly to routinely ignore the enthusiasm of which specific individuals already approach Palestine's topic. Arab states need to recognize that any unconditional exchange of visits with Israel would ultimately intensify and empower the country's mighty right-wing powers to do more. If things escalate, say in the case of another intifada, and Arab public support for the Palestinians is reawakened, the Arab states with ties to Israel fear being trapped on the wrong side of a red line that they felt had relaxed and blurred (Izidorčik, (2009). Fifth, this change may also lead to a militant group attempting to carry out a large-scale terrorist act within the UAE (Alterman, 2020).

Sixth, Iran is likely to advance its regional image as the only nation that would stand up to Israel with some joint regional support. Iran is expected to continue to exacerbate the already deep divide between most Arab governments and communities. Many Arabs still consider Palestine a spiritual issue, although they do not generally perceive it as a political issue (ICG, 2018). Seventh, this agreement empowered their regional rivals, Iran and Hezbollah, and domestic opponents, particularly radical Sunni Islamists, and even many liberals and pan-Arabists, the very forces they are trying to counter by allying with Israel (Kramer, 1993) (Al-Anani, 2016). Eighth, the most dangerous part is, Israelis could feel vindicated that they can normalise relations with the Arab world without resolve Palestinian claims, which may lead to considerable resistance to Palestinian negotiations, bolder language regarding annexation in the future, and more challenging times to fulfil Palestinian expectations. The Palestinians miss a critical power against Israel, are maybe more fractured than ever before (Tobin, 2020).

Way Forward

The agreement represents a big development in the Middle East politics. Though growing the region's economic development, improving strategic advancement and establishing stronger interpersonal links would lead to direct linkages between two of the most diverse cultures in the Middle East and developments in economic life. But to avoid complete tragedy and more misery in the region, the international community has to urgently force Israel to comply with Palestinian rights and international law. Moreover, Arab States need to be very cautious about unilateral agreements with Israel since past experience shows that it is almost impossible to get so easily out of the way of Palestinian cause. Any future violence or instability in Palestine would directly affect the Arab region. Thus, there is need of strong safeguards of Palestinian rights in any future agreement. In addition to this, these unilateral agreements would directly makes Iran the guardian of the oppressed Palestinians and broadly anti-monarchy forces in the region.

Besides, it will go a long way to convey an explicit U.S. declaration announcing its aim to reverse U.S. acceptance of Israeli jurisdiction over the West Bank that Trump may give to Israel as a parting gift. Biden should also explain how annexation would affect the U.S. relationship with Israel, including by expressing his intention to limit U.S. aid to Israel to promote West Bank settlement and annexation, as suggested by Senator Van Hollen and others. Besides this, it is not just about the Palestinians and Israelis and, after all, stability in the Middle East. It is about resetting the U.S. paradigm to act as a power that upholds in the region and beyond a rules-based international order and human rights and starts to reverse some of the harm done under the Trump Administration to the United States. U.S. needs to understand that sacrificing Palestinian rights at the expense of its strategic interests against Iran and Russia would only make situation worse. It would only lead to strengthening the case of Jihadi organizations that would results in more violence and instability in the future. Lastly, in worst case this deal could go against the very strategic interests of the USA in the region since give boost to anti-American and anti-monarchy forces in the Middle East that would be a serious danger to U.S. interests in the Middle East and North Africa.

Conclusion

Israel has developed a very delicate situation in the MENA region for negotiating with the Gulf States. It could have been also used as a chance for the US to push key players to turn it into a real step in the peace process, despite its negative impact, if Trump is to be a genuine peace maker. In that situation, he should compel these players to accept Palestinian independent State rights and to address the issue of refugees. Assuming that any potential peace process can take place only with the mutual consent of the Israelis and the Palestinians. If this is paired with a promise to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas that anything about his strategy can be discussed, Trump may encourage the Palestinians to take a second look. Furthermore, it could provide a framework to push the peace process with the next President.

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