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Abstract

This study is devoted to recent developments in the Arab-Israeli relations, namely – the signing the Abraham agreements of 2020 on normalization between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain. This event came as surprise not only to those who do not follow the regional developments carefully but for many experts on the Middle East. Since the research topic is quite recent for the academic community, the chain of events, reasons and factors leading to the signing of these agreements have not been studied sufficiently. In order to address the gap, the study will use (i) Barry Buzan's theory of securitization and (ii) the theory of new regionalization, which provide a wide range of tools that are necessary to uncover my argument. After the theoretical part, using the historical-descriptive method, dynamics and the international context of the Arab-Israeli conflict will be carefully analyzed, starting with the creation of the Zionist political movement until the recent days events. Then, analysis of the main factors that led to the Arab-Israeli normalization will follow: socio-economic and security factors, as well as the factor of American influence, where the impact of the six American administrations will be described starting from Ronald Reagan and finishing with Donald Trump. Concluding, this study suggests that the security system in the region has undergone certain changes, and the modernization processes have changed the socio-economic priorities of the countries of the region, that allowed the Trump administration to use the window of opportunity to conclude these agreements. This thesis is written in the two main disciplines: political science and history.

Abstrakt

Diese Masterarbeit widmet sich den jüngsten Entwicklungen in den arabisch-israelischen Beziehungen, nämlich der Unterzeichnung der Abraham-Abkommen von 2020 zur vollständigen Normalisierung der Beziehungen zwischen Israel und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten und Bahrain. Diese Abkommen überraschten nicht nur diejenigen, die die regionalen Entwicklungen nicht aufmerksam verfolgen, sondern auch viele Experten des Nahen Ostens. Da dieses Forschungsthema für die akademische Gemeinschaft noch relativ neu ist, wurden die Ereignisketten, Gründe und Faktoren, die zur Unterzeichnung dieser Vereinbarungen führten, noch nicht ausreichend untersucht. Um diese Lücke zu schließen,

wird die Studie (i) Barry Buzans Theorie der Verbriefung und (ii) die Theorie der neuen Regionalisierung verwendet, die eine breite Palette von Instrumenten bieten, die notwendig sind, um meine Argumentation abzusichern. Nach dem theoretischen Teil werden anhand der historisch-deskriptiven Methode Dynamiken und der internationale Kontext des arabisch-israelischen Konflikts sorgfältig analysiert, beginnend mit der Entstehung der zionistischen politischen Bewegung bis hin zu den Ereignissen der letzten Tage. Anschließend folgt eine Analyse der Hauptfaktoren, die zur arabisch-israelischen Normalisierung geführt haben: sozioökonomische Faktoren und Sicherheitsfaktoren sowie der Faktor des amerikanischen Einflusses, wobei die Auswirkungen der sechs amerikanischen Regierungen beginnend mit der Regierung unter dem 40. US- Präsidenten Ronald Reagan bis zum Präsidenten Donald Trump beschrieben werden. Zusammenfassend legt diese Arbeit nahe, dass das Sicherheitssystem in der Region gewisse Veränderungen erfahren hat und die Modernisierungsprozesse die sozioökonomischen Prioritäten der Länder der Region so verändert haben, dass diese Veränderungen der Trump-Administration die Gelegenheit zum Abschluss dieser Abkommen bot. Diese Arbeit wird in den zwei Hauptdisziplinen Politikwissenschaft und Geschichte verfasst.

I. Introduction

The Arab-Israeli conflict is now in its eight decade. This conflict has been one of the most complex and difficult international problems of the second half of the twentieth century and into the current century¹. For a long time, it has been significantly influencing international and regional relations and affecting the geopolitical reality of the Middle East.

Throughout the years and through a number of resolutions (242, 338, 1397, 1515, 1544, 1850), the Security Council and General Assembly have developed both the position and recommendations from the United Nations for resolving the conflict. A great number of peace conferences, various peace formats and international mediators have been attempting to find a solution. Still, although the progress of the peace process was uneven, it was incapable to produce a comprehensive settlement. The widely accepted principle “Land for peace” of the Arab-Israeli peace making was laid down in the UN Security Resolution 242, the principle of which consists of two steps and implies the application of both of them: withdrawal of Israel from the seized lands (giving Land) and recognition by Arab states Israel’s right to exist (receiving Peace).

The Abraham Accords of 2020 are a number of statements on normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco that were sponsored by the USA and were part of President Trump’s plan “Deal of the century” to resolve Arab-Israeli conflict. The statements marked the next phase of official normalization between Arab countries and Israel since that of Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

The peculiarity of these accords is that the Arab countries signed normalization not in exchange for territory and the settlement of the Palestinian problem, but to prevent the annexation of 30% of the West Bank by Israel. The annexation of these territories was repeatedly proclaimed unacceptable and violating international law. OHCHR called this plan “a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions, and

¹ Rabinovich, Itamar. *The Lingering Conflict: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East 1948 2012*. Brookings Institution Press, 2012.

contrary to the fundamental rule affirmed many times by the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly that the acquisition of territory by war or force is inadmissible”². The fact of signing these documents represents an unprecedented shift in fundamental principles and a devaluation of previous peace initiatives and resolutions. Consequently, the legal continuity of the whole peace process was disrupted and is hard now to overestimate the significance of these agreements as they consolidate a new geopolitical reality in the Middle East.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the Arab-Israeli relations were driven by the Arab League boycott of economic and other relations with Israel and specifically stopping all trade which adds to that country's economic and military strength³. The point of greatest escalation was the Oil Crisis of 1973, in which Saudi Arabia and other OAPEC (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries) countries first used “oil weapons” and imposed an embargo on oil supplies to the United States and Western Europe due to their support of Israel in the Yom Kippur war. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API) inspired by Saudi Arabia united demonstrated Arab solidarity and reiterated their commitment to land-for-peace and two-state solution principles. Over the past two decades, the countries have followed the terms of 2002 API, saying that any normalization of relations with Israel should go in conjunction with overall peace agreement between Israel and Palestinians, supposedly culminating in the establishment of the Palestinian state. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that consists of the six monarchies of the Persian Gulf (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait) is committed to coordination of the security strategy between Member States. In the GCC Charter Arab states of the Gulf have developed a common position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the principle of Arab solidarity (GCC Charter) and, Bahrain and UAE are considered to be the closest allies of Saudi Arabia in the GCC. Consequently, the signature of these agreements without Saudi Arabia’s consent and mutual consultations remains challenging to even imagine: what happened in between?

² “Israeli annexation of parts of the Palestinian West Bank would break international law – UN experts call on the international community to ensure accountability”, UNHCR, 16 June 2020,

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25960&LangID=E>

³ Turck, Nancy. "A Comparative Study of Non-United States Responses to the Arab Boycott." *Ga. J. Int'l & Comp. L.* 8 (1978): 711.

The main purpose of this work is to understand how and why these agreements were signed: (i) were there certain preconditions for the establishment of official relations between Israel and the Arab countries or (ii) this was a result of political pressure from the Trump's administration? The hypothesis suggests that the normalization was preceded by some large-scale processes that have been taking place in the region for a long time testifying to a change in geopolitical order of the Middle East. That said, it could have taken longer without a strong political will from the American President's.

Theoretical framework

To address the problem of rapprochement of Arab countries and Israel, the multidimensional analysis is required. The recent debate suggests that the Abraham Accords are the product of the changed order in the Middle East. For this reason, I will base my thesis on the theory of the new regionalism. The new regionalism is a comprehensive, multifaceted and complex process, implying a change of a particular region from relative heterogeneity to increased homogeneity with regard to a number of dimensions, the most important being culture, security, economic policies and political regimes⁴. This theory will allow me to analyze the preconditions of the signing process of the Abraham agreements from the different perspectives and describe political, socio-economic and security factors.

Moreover, this paper refers to the Copenhagen School of International Relations, namely to the Theory of Regional Security Complexes (RSC) and securitization by B. Buzan and O. Waever in order to analyze and provide more depth to the security aspect of change. RSC was chosen for identifying and analyzing the common threats facing Israel and the Gulf countries. According to the authors, securitization theory has the potential to be an effective tool for considering this RSC since it offers a multi-level analysis considering vulnerabilities at the national level, interstate interactions, the Middle East and inter-subregional interaction, penetration of global powers⁵. The latter is of particular importance as the given countries

⁴ Hettne, Björn, and Fredrik Söderbaum. "The new regionalism approach." *Politeia* 17, no. 3 (1998): 6-21.

⁵ Buzan, Barry, Barry G. Buzan, Ole W'ver, Ole Waever, and Ole Waever Barry Buzan. *Regions and powers: the structure of international security*. No. 91. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

are characterized by exposure to influence from the side of global players, in particular the United States.

There is no doubt that the logic of the balance of power operates in the Persian Gulf zone: the system of regional security in the Middle East now is characterized by a systemic struggle for regional leadership between the Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey.

Disciplines and methodology

With the help of event-interaction analysis, I will examine the political reality in the countries by reviewing interactions between political actors, using speeches, statements, and news articles on the selected events. Content analysis will allow me to systemically work with a number of original documents including strategies of international security of the US, founding documents of international organizations, UN Charter, UN resolutions, Abraham agreements, conference documents, interviews, social media posts, various news as well as WikiLeaks documents.

An interview with the UAE Ambassador to the US will serve as important source for understanding the official logic of the UAE behind the normalization. Another important tool that will help me to work with the original data sources is my ability to conduct the research in Arabic language. Additionally, this paper will refer to the source of sociological surveys to provide information about perception of the Accords in the region and perception of the annexation issue in Israel.

The cases of Morocco and Sudan will not be considered in this thesis since they have different reasons for the rapprochement with Israel and it is difficult to track down a trend. For the sake of the research quality and the accuracy of conclusions, it was decided to focus on Bahrain and the UAE. The choice of the UAE and Bahrain is because they have:

- Similar geographic location in the Persian Gulf;
- Common historical past;

- Participation in the same sub-regional integration organization - Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC);
- Potential for integration with Israel in the future;
- Similar alliances;
- Similar perception of threats.

Since my master thesis mainly contains the historical and the political parts, I have chosen political science and history as the main disciplines for the research.

Structure

After an introduction, the paper is planned to be logically divided into three parts and the conclusion.

1. The first part of the work consists of a theoretical section. In the theoretical section, the key terms will be described as well as main theories that are applied for this analysis: the new regionalism theory and the securitization theory.
2. The second part contains a historical section. Firstly, the paper will describe the background and roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict starting from the Zionist political movement and ending with the creation of the state of Israel. Secondly, the open phase of the conflict will be described mentioning international efforts to settle it. Lastly, an analysis of the active phase of the peace process from the peace agreement with Egypt in 1979 will follow till the stalemate in the peacekeeping.
3. The third chapter will mostly contain political analysis. Here, the main factors of the transformation of the regional system in the Middle East will be analyzed. In security factors, the analysis of the following will be given: Iranian regional influence and its nuclear program; the regional rivalry between Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey; shifts in threat assessment and threat perception in the region; the complementarity of the experience of Israel and the Gulf countries in ensuring security. Describing socio-economic factors, I will first look at the process of modernization in the Middle East,

its Western and Eastern character. Then, I take focus on shadow economic ties between Israel and the Gulf countries, as well as backchannel diplomacy relations. The perspective of integration processes between the GCC countries and Israel will be also mentioned. Finally, I plan to mention the importance of the American factor for both Israel and the Gulf countries, considering in detail efforts of six American presidents to settle the conflict beginning with Ronald Reagan and finishing with Donald Trump.

4. In the final part of the master thesis, I answer my research question and outline possible future developments.

Literature Review

There is a vast amount of literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict in contrast to the lack of literature on the current developments. Since in my historical part takes a close look the Arab-Israeli conflict and American policy towards it, it's planned to group literature in the following way, dividing it into three parts:

- i) Arab-Israeli conflict and its dynamics;
- ii) American role in said conflict

The first part would give a description of the Arab-Israeli conflict, its dynamics and features. Itamar Rabinovich in his book "The Lingering Conflict. Israel, the Arabs, and the Middle East 1948-2012" gives a detailed overview of the peace process from the Israeli side until 2012. Ian J. Bickerton and Carla L. Klausner in their book "The history of Arab-Israeli conflict" give a chronological overview of the Arab-Israeli conflict trying to take an impartial position although with visible a sentiment towards Palestinians. Jerome Slater in his article "What Went Wrong? The Collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process" expresses an opinion different from the prevailing views on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and believes that Israel is guilty of the failure of the peace process since 1948.

The second part would concentrate on uniting a number of literature on the American factor that consists of relevant books and memoirs. In William B Quandt's "American Diplomacy and

Arab-Israeli Conflict” provides a history of the American involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1967 and contains recently declassified documents and other materials related, among others, to George W. Bush’s first term which is relevant for this work. Daniel Kurtzter in his book: “The Peace Puzzle : America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989–2011”, writes about American diplomatic efforts on resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict with inclusion of the considerable number of interviews with important players in the peace-making process and covers the period till 2011. “Indecision Points: George W. Bush and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by Daniel E. Zoughbie that refers in its title to the memoirs of Bush, analyses from a critical point of view the policy of Bush’s administration towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Since the Abraham Accords were concluded only in 2020, there is no full-scale research or literature on this topic. Most of the works describe only the apparent reasons for the signing of these agreements, while my focus would be on analyzing the reasons within the framework of the larger processes taking place in the region.

II. Theoretical aspects

There is no doubt that the signing of the Abraham agreements marked a historical moment in Arab-Israeli conflict development and demonstrated a certain change in the regional settings of the Middle East. The question remains open whether the Accords reflect this change or create it. In order to analyze the basis of which Israel and the UAE, Bahrain went to rapprochement, and take into account the whole complexity of relations between countries of the region, it is beneficial to consider the Middle East as a system.

First of all, the definition of ‘system’ should be given. The very concept of ‘system’ has many connotations and has no generally accepted definition. The Austrian biologist and founder of the General Theory of Systems Ludwig von Bertalanffy describes it as simple as follows:

System is a set of elements that are in certain relationships with each other and with the environment⁶.

In his studies, Ludwig von Bertalanffy argues that identifying patterns in particular cases, one can understand how more general systems function. Elements interact with each other and with the environment, and through this interaction acquire new qualities that they did not possess before. Thus, Bertalanffy takes the approach of open systems, which means that systems interact with other systems and environment outside. Due to the possibility of complex and multi-level analysis, the systems approach has become a universal tool in many fields. It became widespread in socio-political sciences after the publications of American scientists Talcott Parsons and David Easton. In his book "A Systems Analysis of Political Life"⁷, Easton examines political systems as a certain set of relations, being in continuous interaction with the external environment through the mechanisms of "inputs" and "outputs". He argues that a political system is functioning as a result of inputs that it receives from the environment, and after processing these inputs, the system converts them into a certain output in the form of rules to be enforced and policies to be implemented. The output in turn influences the environment and can even modify the input.

System analysis regarding the Middle East is one of the most applicable approaches. However, there is still an ambiguity among researchers and practitioners of what countries (elements) should be included in the Middle East system. The UN⁸ adds countries of North Africa in the African regional group, and the countries east of Egypt - in Asian and Pacific group. A number of international organizations (World Bank⁹, UNHCR¹⁰, UNICEF¹¹) uses in their documentation acronym MENA (Middle East and North Africa) that has no standardized definition. The geographical coverage of MENA region usually includes Arabic speaking countries of North

⁶ Von Bertalanffy L., Sutherland J. W. *General systems theory: Foundations, developments, applications* //IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics. – 1974. – №. 6. – C. 592-592.

⁷ Easton D. *A systems analysis of political life*. – 1965.

⁸ "Regional groups of Member States", *UN, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management*, <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups>

⁹ "Middle East and North Africa", *World Bank*, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/ZQ>

¹⁰ Laura van Waas, "The situation of stateless persons in the Middle East and North Africa", *UNHCR*, October 2010, <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/4ce63e079.pdf>

¹¹ "Middle East and North Africa", *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/northafrica.html>

Africa and Arabic countries east Egypt and Iran, almost always excluding Turkey and questioning Israel. Barnett¹² argues that the Middle East should consist of only Arabic countries-founders of the Arab League (Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and PLO), while Brown¹³ refers only to the countries of former Ottoman empire, thereby not including Iran and Morocco in the system. Arab researchers Matar and Hilal¹⁴ include in the region all Arab states, excluding regional or great powers. Thus, the definition of elements of the Middle East system is very subjective and relative and varies greatly from the needs of a particular study. This paper will stick to the approach of including in the Middle East region Arab-speaking east of Egypt, Turkey and Iran, since this research will focus on this particular geographical area.

In order to examine the hypotheses that the rapprochement between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain has happened on the basis visible preconditions, this paper uses the theory of new regionalism. The theory of 'new realism' was elaborated by Swedish scientists B. Hettne and F. Soderbaum in the 80s of the XX century. They give the following definition of 'new regionalism':

The new regionalism is a comprehensive, multifaceted and complex process, implying a change of a particular region from relative heterogeneity to increased homogeneity with regard to a number of dimensions, the most important being culture, security, economic policies and political regimes¹⁵.

Comparing to old regionalism, new regionalism assumes that the process of regional rapprochement can be facilitated not only by superpowers but also by states themselves and even non-governmental actors, and not only "from above", but "within" and "from below".

¹² Barnett, Michael N. "Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order." System 37 (1993): 271-96, p.16.

¹³ Brown, Carl L. "International politics and the Middle East." (1989): 201, pp. 7-1.

¹⁴ Matar, G., & Hilal, A. A. D. (1983). *The Arab regional order*, p.57.

¹⁵ Hettne, Björn and Söderbaum, Fredrik, "The New Regionalism Approach" (1998). *Politeia*, Vol 17, No 3, pp. 6-21, 1998, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2399180>

In addition to that, new regionalism is a more comprehensive and multidimensional process, not necessary specific to a certain objectives¹⁶.

In the Middle East, it is obvious that so far the integration potential is being realized rather weakly. One from the list is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of 6 Arab Gulf states: Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar. At the moment, the GCC achieved the highest in the Middle East level of integration – political. The GCC countries hold almost half of proven global crude oil reserves and a fifth of the world gas reserves¹⁷. Moreover, considering the economic development, the UAE has achieved the level of postmodern country and others do have strategic development plans for diversification of economics (eg. Saudi Vision 2030). Postmodern explores new business practices, including new energy-saving technologies. Generally, economics of postmodern are tend to transit from industrial development to more flexible and resilient one with use of informational technology, innovations, high technology products and intensive business models¹⁸. Israel is an example of western postmodern country in the Middle East. The theory of new regionalism will allow us to consider economic, socio-political and security factors and state whether there were preconditions for the rapprochement of Israel and the UAE and Bahrain.

Since the Middle East is one of the most conflict-intense world regions, and security factors play a crucial role in the regional developments, it seems fair to consult the Copenhagen School of International Relations, namely to the Theory of Regional Security Complexes (RSCT)¹⁹ by B. Buzan and O. Waever. The theory is based on the assumption that the key

¹⁶ Bjorn Hettne, Andras Inotai, "The New Regionalism Implications for Global Development and International Security", The United Nations University, 1994, <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/RFA14.pdf>

¹⁷ "BP statistical review of world energy", 2019, London: BP, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2019-full-report.pdf>

¹⁸ Арутюнова, Галина Ивановна, and Артемий Николаевич Бузни. "Экономика модерна и постмодерна: проявления и тенденции." *ФУНДАМЕНТАЛЬНЫЕ ОСНОВЫ ИННОВАЦИОННОГО РАЗВИТИЯ НАУКИ И ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ*. 2019, https://www.elibrary.ru/download/elibrary_37355441_51647469.pdf

¹⁹ Buzan B. et al. Regions and powers: the structure of international security. – Cambridge University Press, 2003. – №. 91.

national security interests and the factor of geographic proximity are interrelated and interdependent, and security threats are easier to deliver over short distances rather than long. B. Buzan gives the following definition of the RSC: "The RSC is a group of elements, the main processes of securitization or desecuritization of which, or both processes at the same time, are so interconnected that the security problems of these elements cannot be solved or analyzed separately". Securitization means the state's perception of a process or subject as a threat - whether this threat is real or imaginary. Thus, the RSCT widely uses constructivist approach as the theory of securitization is based on analysis of socio-political processes that defines whether the subject/process is a security threat or not. In addition to that, the RSCT contains a number of neorealism elements: vivid geopolitical aspect, logic of balance of power, polarity. B. Buzan and O. Waever identify the Middle East as one of nine established regional security complexes. Along with RSCs the researcher recognize the existence of supersystems and subsystems (in the Middle East the scientists mention Levantine, Maghreb and Persian Gulf subsystems). One of the strongest features of this method is its multilevel analysis. B. Buzan and O. Waever suggests to analyze RSCTs on the 4 levels: i) internal problems of actors, ii) interaction between actors, iii) interaction between subsystems; iv) influence of global players.

The Arab-Israeli conflict and Palestinian problem have been a determining factor in the regional security system for a long time. Now, the Middle East system can also be characterized by the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran for regional dominance. This creates a certain polarization heated by Shia and Sunni division of Muslim communities. Turkey as well possesses a great potential as a regional power being the biggest Sunni country in the Middle East, a NATO member and pursuing an active policy in many regional conflicts (Syria, Iraq, Libya). The relationship between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain cannot be considered in isolation of their joint securitization of Iranian threat which allows to include them into one security cluster, although with certain limitations such as national security interests. The influence of global players, especially the US, is highly relevant for both the region and this research's key countries.

III. Arab-Israeli conflict in the regional system of the Middle East

The Arab-Israeli conflict can obviously be considered not only a regional conflict but the international one clashing interests and involving national motives of the most influential actors of the 20th and the 21st centuries. In addition, the conflict is very sensitive to the change of balance of power in the region and world. Following that, it seems fair to study the dynamics of the conflict inseparably with the international context.

1916-1948

The Jewish claim to the territory of Palestine was officially supported in 1917 with the famous letter from British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur James Balfour to Lord Walter Rothschild, the British banker and supporter of the Zionist movement: "His Majesty's Government view with

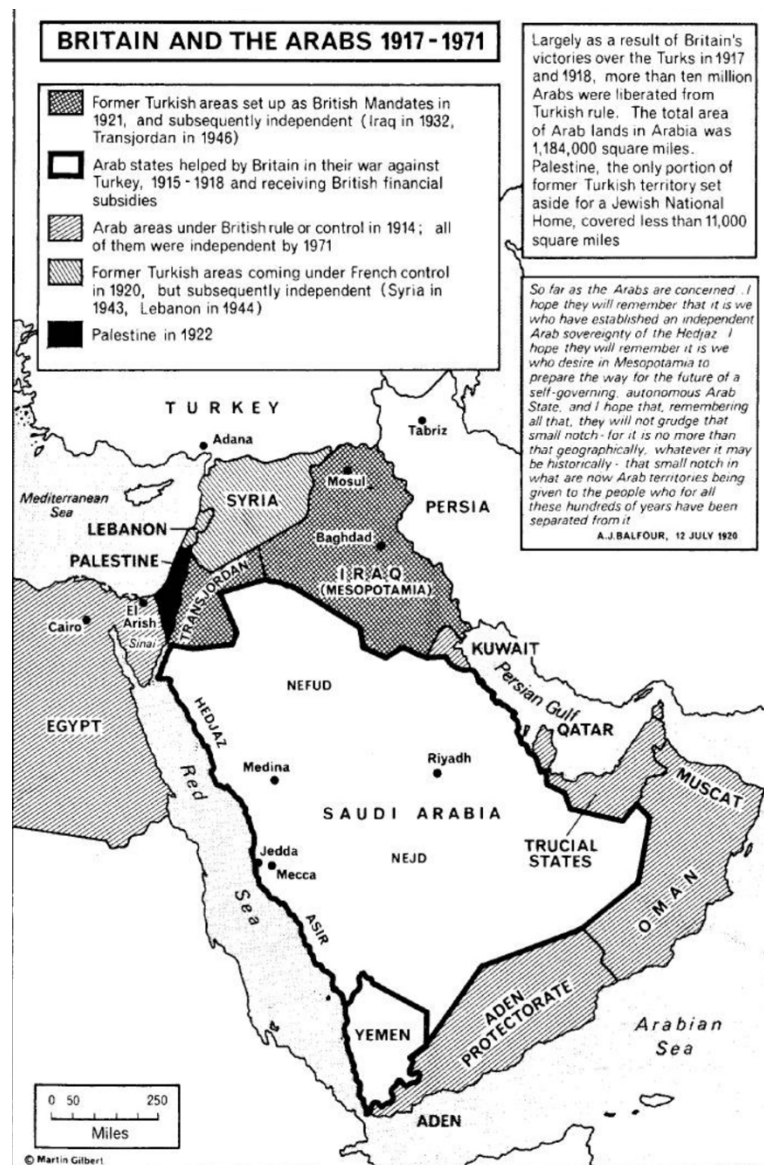
favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”²⁰. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 is seen by Arabs as a violation of another British commitment of 1915 between the Sharif of Mecca Hussein bin Ali and the British High Commissioner to Egypt Henry McMahon widely known as the Mc-Mahon-Hussein Correspondence. In the course of WWI, Britain followed its own interests towards the weakened Ottoman Empire striving to receive access to the Suez Canal that allows the pathway between Europe and India, control rich oil resources of the Middle East and widen its imperial interests. The correspondence assured the independence of Arabs and the creation of the Hashemite state on certain territories in exchange for the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. One of the points mentioned in the letter was the following: “Great Britain will guarantee the Holy Places against all external aggression and will recognize their inviolability”²¹. The vague reference to boundaries of the Arab state as “in the limits and boundaries proposed by Sharif of Mecca” except “portions of Syria” including “the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo” and “the special measures of administrative control” on Baghdad and Basra created a great controversy²². The exception of Palestine territories from the promised Arab state’s land was not mentioned in the document, and; this created the space for numerous misinterpretations serving the interests of the most powerful. The same undocumented although widely known promise to establish an Arab state in exchange for overthrowing Turks was given to local Arabs of Hijaz by British colonel, Lawrence of Arabia. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, which created the mandate system of Britain and France over the Arab states, reiterated the fact that Britain did not intend to fulfill its commitments (see Figure 1). Britain established its mandate over Palestine in 1920. Hussein was given only the control under the Muslim shrines in Arabia, and his sons were put at the head of Jordan (Abdalla) and Iraq (Feisal). Thus, the two controversial promises were given by the British Government official in the vaguest formulations without taking into account any conditions on which they would implement; consequently that created a chaotic situation in Palestine before 1948.

²⁰ Balfour Declaration: Text of the Declaration, November 2, 1917, Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/text-of-the-balfour-declaration>

²¹ The McMahon–Hussein letter, 24 October 1915, Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McMahon–Hussein_Correspondence#/media/File:McMahon–Hussein_Letter_25_October_1915.jpg

²² Ibid

Figure 1.²³



In his article “What Went Wrong? The Collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process”, Jerome Slater blames the conventional historiography of Israel that sees the roots of the conflict “in the mindless Arab anti-Semitism” and brings up the fact that “for over 1,300 years it [Palestine] had been overwhelmingly inhabited by Arabs, who in the twentieth century sought political independence in and sovereignty over their homeland”²⁴. His argument sounds fair; however, in the political realities of that time, before the results of WWII, the question of human rights, in

particular indigenous people, was not yet on the agenda. International relations had been developing on the basis of political realism theory and were still driven by the balance of power, national interests and new imperialism aspirations. Thus, for instance, the annexation of Ethiopia by Italy in 1936 was almost ignored by the Members of the League of Nations, as well as Austria was denied support in the times of Anschluss in 1938. The world was divided

²³ Gilbert, Martin. *The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁴ Slater, Jerome. “What went wrong? The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.” *Political Science Quarterly* 116.2 (2001): 171-199.

into two categories: the weak and the strong. In the case of the after-WWI developments, Britain was “the strong” and it did decide.

In the following years, between two World Wars, mandatory Palestine faced uncontrolled resettlement of Jews that obviously caused unrest among the Arab population. Ian J. Bickerton in his book “The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History”²⁵ gives the following number of the Palestinian population in 1918: 630,000-690,000 Arabs and 60,000 Jews; and in the space of thirty years, the total population more than doubled and the percentage of Jews had increased from 11% to 30%. Discontent over this issue eventually resulted in the violent Arab revolt of 1936-39, during which thousands of Jews were attacked or killed. In response, British authorities increased the number of troops in Palestine and, joined by Jewish militia, arrested, executed and deported Arab leaders and their followers²⁶. The consequences of the revolt were twofold: i) Jews realized the necessity to better defend their territories and create such underground militias as Irgun, Haganah, Lehi; ii) British government issued the White Paper of 1939 restricting Jewish immigration from Europe till 15,000.

In the course of the strengthening of anti-Semitic aspirations in Europe, the limit set by the British was quickly achieved. The Holocaust morally justified the further immigration of Jews to Palestine and even more strengthened Jewish eagerness to establish a National state. Jerome Slater although argues that the Palestinians were not responsible for the Holocaust and should not made to pay the price for western anti-Semitism²⁷. Nevertheless, the history decreed that the persecuted Jews at that time already had a national hotbed at the territory of Palestine and they used this window of opportunity. The Zionist movement invented a way of the illegal migration of Jews from Europe – the Aliyah Bet program, and; at the same time, Jewish underground militias organized a number of terrorist attacks on the British authorities desiring to lift the immigration restrictions. These events in the history are usually called the Jewish insurgency of 1944-48, and; they resulted in the decision of Britain to give the fate of Palestine on the decision of the UN.

²⁵ Bickerton, Ian J.. The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.52. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Slater, Jerome. "What went wrong? The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process." *Political Science Quarterly* 116.2 (2001): 171-199.

The establishment of the state of Israel was beneficial for both the US and the USSR as they desired Britain to reduce its influence in the Middle East. It is important to mention that the period until 1956 in the Middle East can be characterized by a rivalry between Britain and the US for the areas of influence on the one hand and rich oil concessions on the other. The US, having abandoned its protectionism strategy, strived to build its own security architecture in the region. The British foreign secretary Anthony Eden summed up the threat to Britain's position in the region as being "a major nationalistic revival... of two contending forces, Arabism and Zionism" stoked by "Zionist propagandists in the United States"²⁸. After WWII the bipolar system started to dominate in the world order being characterized by the confrontation between the western block led by the US and the eastern one led by the USSR. Stalin had aspirations that after the Soviet support for the creation of the Jewish state it will become its ally in the region. Soviet ambassador to the UN, Andrei Gromyko, said the following in support of Jews at the UN in 1947: "The Jewish people have been connected with Palestine throughout a long historical period"²⁹. Moreover, the USSR had become the first country to recognize Israel in 1948. This is due to, firstly, the fact that Britain has been for a long time a hostile state to USSR, especially after the Fulton speech of Churchill in 1946. Secondly, a huge number of Soviet immigrants and previous cooperation between nations in terms of arms gave him a strong hope to obtain a new satellite in the Middle East. However, sooner after Stalin's prohibition for further immigration of Jews to Israel, it turned the preference towards the Western camp. Accordingly, the USSR reoriented its policy towards the support of Arab states.

Figure 2³⁰.

²⁸ Barr, James, *"Lords of the desert: Britain's struggle with America to dominate the Middle East."*, Simon and Schuster, 2018.

²⁹ Yegorov, Oleg. Why did the USSR help to create Israel, but then became its foe. Russia Beyond. 15 December 2017 <https://www.rbth.com/history/327040-ussr-and-israel-from-friends-to-foes>

³⁰ Gilbert, Martin. *"The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict"*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.



The Zionist plan for Palestine, 'Paris Peace Conference', February 1919.

The United Nations decided in its resolution 181 (II) on the partition of mandatory Palestine and the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states and a special international regime for the city of Jerusalem³¹. It is important to mention the Zionist vision of the territories of the Israeli state that reflects the aspirations of Jewish authorities at that time. It should have included the territories "south from a line just north of Sidon (Lebanon), extending eastward to the Hejaz railway and then south along this railway on the eastern side of the River Jordan to the Gulf of Aqaba; the southern boundary was a line to include all the Sinai Peninsula to the western boundary of the Mediterranean sea; Jerusalem was of course included as a part of Jewish state³²" (Figure 2). In the

letter to his son in 1937, Ben-Gurion wrote: "A partial Jewish state is not the end, but only the beginning. The establishment of such a Jewish state will serve as a means in our historical efforts to redeem the country in its entirety... We shall organize a modern defense force... and then I am certain that we will not be prevented from settling in other parts of the country, either by mutual agreement with our Arab neighbors or by some other means... We will expel

³¹ General Assembly Resolution 181 (II). Future government of Palestine. A/RES/181(II) 29 November 1947. UNISPAL

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>

³² Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

the Arabs and take their places... with the force at our disposal.³³ Interestingly, during the numerous wars, Israel managed to seize all of these territories.

1948-1973

The Arab states refused to accept the UN resolution. Their joint forces including Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria invaded the territories of Palestine seeking to block the partition and establish a Palestinian state. However, during the war Israeli forces took almost 78% of mandatory Palestine west to the Jordan River, which is 25% more than the UN partition allotted it³⁴. This caused a problem of a huge number of Palestinian refugees that were never allowed back. Arabs managed to seize only parts of the territories that according to the resolution 181 were assigned to the Palestinian state: Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip while Transjordan – West Bank, a part of Jerusalem and its eastern suburbs. King Abdullah of Transjordan had plans to annex these territories to create a greater Transjordan thereby abandoning the creation of the state of Palestine. From the Israeli point of view, Arabs rejected the fair UN deal and then Israel justified its existence by fighting and survived alone against many Arab states. From the Palestinians' point of view, Israelis took their land, displaced their people, destroyed their villages, and did not agree to negotiate a fair deal that would be acceptable for the both sides. However, the "return" of Palestinian refugees after the violent actions of Israel would have fired mutual violence and hatred, as well as unending civil, religious, an ethic warfare³⁵. As Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli political scientist, fairly noted: "war is devoid of human values" and "it is also important to remember that had the Arabs won the war of 1948-9, it is unlikely that they would have been any more concerned with the fate of the Zionists than Israelis have been with the fate of Palestinians"³⁶.

³³ Quoted by Michael Bar-Zohar in his revealing biography of Ben-Gurion, *Facing a Cruel Mirr* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990)

³⁴ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

³⁵ Slater, Jerome. "What went wrong? The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process." *Political Science Quarterly* 116.2 (2001): 171-199.

³⁶ Ibid.

Resolution 194 by the UN General Assembly of 1948 suggested the return of Palestinian refugees and issuing compensation for them for their destroyed properties³⁷. On this matter David Ben-Gurion stated: They [the Palestinians] lost and fled. Their return must now be prevented... And I will oppose their return also after the war³⁸."

The 1950s - 1970s in the region were marked by the ideological confrontation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia for the regional influence. An American political scientist and specialist in the Middle East Malcolm Kerr called this confrontation the "Arab Cold War"³⁹. Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of Egypt, supported and promoted secular, pan-Arab nationalism and Arab socialism. His policy was supported by the USSR. Since 1955, Egypt had relied on Soviet arms and trainings; in turn, the Soviet Union also became Egypt's willing partner in many industrialization projects⁴⁰. Nasser criticized traditional monarchies for cooperation with Western imperialists, Islamism and rentierism. He earned wide regional support being an Israel's main adversary. Gradually, "nasserism" spreader to Syria, Iraq, Libya, North Yemen and Sudan. The President of Egypt hatched plans to create and lead a large alliance of a pan-Arab state. His plans, however, were limited to an alliance between Egypt and Syria within the UAR, which lasted from 1958 to 1961. The failed alliance of the project was largely due to the harmful accounts of Syria and other members of Nasser's excessive hegemony in common affairs. Since the discovery of huge oil reserves, Saudi Arabia, with its large sparsely populated territory and guarded borders, found itself especially vulnerable. Saudi Arabia sought to resist Nasser's growing influence, as it wanted to avoid a repetition of republican revolutions in its country and the overthrow of friendly monarchical regimes. So, it chose a policy of rapprochement with Jordan, Morocco and other Arab Gulf states. The confrontation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia ended in a limited but brutal war in Yemen, where the pro-Saudi

³⁷ General Assembly Resolution 194 (III). Palestine -- Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator. A/RES/194(III), 11 December 1948. UNISPAL <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/C758572B78D1CD0085256BCF0077E51A>

³⁸ Shaoul, Jean (January 22, 2001). "Zionism's legacy of ethnic cleansing". World Socialist Web Site. Retrieved November 24, 2020

³⁹ Kerr, Malcolm H. The Arab cold war: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and his rivals, 1958-1970. Vol. 358. Oxford University Press, 1971.

⁴⁰ Hasan, Elbahtimy. Did the Soviet Union Deliberately Instigate the 1967 War in the Middle East? Wilson Center. 5 June 2017 <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/did-the-soviet-union-deliberately-instigate-the-1967-war-the-middle-east>

monarchy was overthrown in 1962 in a military coup organized by supporters of Nasser. Egyptian troops were used to support the revolution in Yemen, and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia responded to that with even closer ties with the United States.

In these regional settings, the Suez crisis of 1956 had happened. Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal that had been administrated by the British. Later, the Sevres meeting was organized between Israel, which was prohibited to transport its goods by the canal after 1948, France, which was the main ally of Britain in the distribution of areas of influence in Sykes-Picot, and Britain itself. They elaborated the plan according to which Israel should have attacked Egypt, and the Western allies should have invaded Egypt and occupy the Suez Canal under the pretext of defending the freedom of navigation. As a result of the military actions, Israel occupied the whole Sinai peninsula and the Gaza Strip. This operation faced international criticism from the international community as, for instance, the US allies in NATO was not notified about this venture. The USSR leader Nikita Khrushchev threatened the trio with the most decisive measures until the use of nuclear weapons. Britain and France had found themselves under the threat of international isolation. The UN resolution 118 sponsored by the US and the USSR ordered to withdraw the trio's forces from Egypt, demilitarize the Sinai Peninsula and establish the United Nations Emergency Forces (UNEF) on its territory⁴¹. This operation led to twofold consequences: the international status of Britain and France had been declined, and the role of the UN in the mediation of international crises has been instrumentalized.

The Arab-Israeli war of 1967 was pivotal for the development of the conflict as it led to the Israeli occupation of the remainder of British-mandated Palestine east of the River Jordan, including East Jerusalem, but also the colonization of the conquered areas in the form of Jewish towns, called settlements⁴². The Six-Day war started from the series of clashes on the Israeli-Syrian border provoked by Palestinian guerrillas supported by Syria. Through diplomatic and intelligence channels, the USSR provided Egypt the information that Israel is concentrating its troops on the Israel-Syrian border, and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister

⁴¹ UN Security Council Resolution on 1955 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/112088?ln=en>

⁴² Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Vladimir Semyonov even said to Nasser the likely date of the attack⁴³. The intelligence did not prove to be right, and some scholars mention the role of the USSR in triggering the war. Nasser prohibited Israeli ships to go through the strait of Tiran and started preparing for the attack. He already had a defense pact with Syria and signed a new one with Jordan. Six months before the war, senior Egyptian authorities already had in mind the idea of remilitarizing and terminating the UNEF mission in the Sinai Peninsula⁴⁴. Thus the Egyptian military forces invaded the peninsula and evicted UNEF under the pretext of preparations for a defensive war against Israel⁴⁵. Israel decided not to wait until the joint Arab forces attack and launched a preemptive strike. During that air strike, Israel had destroyed most of the Egyptian Air Forces and military vehicles on the ground obtaining superiority in the air over the whole hostile countries. The Jordanian attack was successfully repulsed, and Israeli control over the West Bank and East Jerusalem was established. By the next step, Israel captured the Golan Heights of Syria. By the end of the war, Israel found itself on the territories three times bigger than in the beginning. For Arab countries, this war became the worst humiliation and sparked even more radical anti-Israel sentiments. Itamar Rabinovich in his book "Lingering the conflict" writes that "right after the war, Israel indeed considered the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights as, essentially, temporary holdings to be used to obtain a genuine peace" and that these "territorial assets could be used as bargaining chips in peace negotiations"⁴⁶. Paul Thomas Chamberlin adds to the previous thought that "Control of the Sinai, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank increased Israel's strategic depth dramatically: future wars, should they break out, would be fought on these battlefields rather than within Israel itself"⁴⁷. Following the results of the Six-Day War, the United Nations Security Council adopted the core for the Arab-Israeli further peace negotiations resolution 242 of 1967⁴⁸, that laid the ground for the principle "peace in exchange to territories". The resolution did not specify

⁴³ Golan, Galia. "Soviet Union and the Outbreak of the June 1967 Six-Day War." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8.1 (2005): 3-19.

⁴⁴ McNamara, Robert. "Nasser's Gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power." (2017): 500-502.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Rabinovich, Itamar. *The Lingering Conflict: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East 1948* 2012. Brookings Institution Press, 2012.

⁴⁷ Chamberlin, Paul Thomas. *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

⁴⁸ Security Council Resolution 242 (1967).S/RES/242 (1967). 22 November 1967. <https://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136>

what should come first: “Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict” or “right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force”. Israel interpreted the resolution as was expressed by Ambassador Abba Eban in the Security Council on May 1, 1968: “My government has indicated its acceptance of the Security Council resolution for the promotion of agreement on the establishment of a just and lasting peace. I am also authorized to reaffirm that we are willing to seek agreement with each Arab State on all matters included in that resolution⁴⁹.”; the PLO rejected the resolution. The Arab League conceptualized the Arab relation to the settlement with Israel issuing the “three noes” principle of no peace with Israel, no recognition, and no negotiation with it. For the Arab states, it was more beneficial to wait until the situation is changed than negotiate from such a weak position.

Israel blamed the Arabs that they consistently refused the two-state solution as well as Israel’s offer in 1967 in return for recognition and peace. Abba Eban expressed it as follows: “they [Palestinians] never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity⁵⁰”. In fact, Israel never missed an opportunity to prevent the establishment of the Palestinian state as it never recognized the territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as Palestinian. In 1967 Israel proposed to return occupied territories only to Egypt and Syria, never mentioning the Palestinian and Jordanian lands. The settlements were built in the occupied territories under the pretext of defending them; they were driven by economic interests that were provided by governmental subsidies. The settlements violated the UN resolutions and the international law, namely the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention in relation to the occupation of conquered territory by separating the status of people from the status of land. However, there was no country to enforce the international law as the US tacitly supported the Israeli policy, providing them funds.

The disaster of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war facilitated the increase in the revolutionary activities of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was created in 1964 in the refugee

⁴⁹ Bard, Mitchell. U.N. Security Council: The Meaning of Resolution 242. Jewish Virtual Library. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-meaning-of-un-security-council-resolution-242>

⁵⁰ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central. p.109

camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt as a reaction to the Palestinian refugee problem, and a measure of control over the Palestinians and the issue of Palestinian liberation⁵¹. The refusal of the Arab states from any negotiation with Israel left the room only for a military solution and guerrilla war against Israel. In the years between 1967 and 1973 Israel needed to find a new approach to the PLO and the Palestinians, as the complicated problem arose in the face of the Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan: how to effectively control Palestinians on the occupied territories and prevent the PLO attacks against Israeli civilians. Paul Thomas Chamberlin in his book "Global Offensive" gives the four-pillar plan from the Moshe Dayan memoirs:

"First, the control of Fatah "terrorists" was to be considered a Jordanian obligation under the most recent cease-fire agreements. Second, Israel would not stop at the Jordanian border; if the fedayeen crossed into Israeli-controlled territory, the IDF would not refrain from crossing into Jordanian territory. Third, counter guerrilla operations were to be understood as "military moves in a [prolonged] campaign." Finally, villages along the frontier must be militarized and integrated as part of a broader security network".

However, the main threat emanated not from the PLO military attacks, but its growing political influence. Firstly, the PLO consolidated the Palestinian society and gave the Palestinians official representatives of their interests in the international arena. Secondly, "in an open letter to the UN General Assembly in October 1968, Fatah claimed the status of a legitimate national resistance movement fighting for self-determination against a colonialist apparatus⁵²" acquiring the doze of legitimacy and the image of "freedom fighters". However, until the Madrid conference in 1990 the organization was recognized as "terroristic" by both the US and Israel. Thirdly, the Palestinian resistance movement obtained a leader - Yasir Arafat.

⁵¹ Chamberlin, Paul Thomas. The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order. Oxford University Press, 2012. p.24

⁵² Chamberlin, Paul Thomas. The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order. Oxford University Press, 2012.

With the death of Nasser and the coming to power of Anwar Sadat, the course of Egyptian foreign policy changes from exporting revolution to supporting Islamic values, economic liberalization and the attraction of the "oil weapons" of monarchies for a new fight against Israel. In 1972 he expelled all the Soviet troops and military advisers from the country. The hegemony of Egypt is being replaced by the alliance of Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which the Lebanese professor and researcher of the Middle East Fuad Ajami⁵³ called the "Arab triangle". These are three countries that shape the regional order after the 1973 war. It is important to emphasize that by the 1970s, Saudi Arabia is facing a security dilemma. How to cooperate with the West if it supports Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict? And how to stop cooperating with the West if it plays a decisive role in ensuring Saudi security? For the first time, the idea of distancing from the West sounded at the oil congress in Cairo, where the idea of "Arab oil is the property of the entire Arab people" was pushed forward. Further, this idea was developed in 1960, when OPEC was created, and the oil-exporting countries agreed to coordinate production volumes and oil prices. Then the Yom Kippur war of 1973 showed that Saudi Arabia no longer intends to put up with Western policies in the Middle East and is capable to defend Arab interests.

The main goal for Anwar Sadat was to return the Sinai Peninsula seized by Israel in 1967. He attempted to achieve a deal with Israel through diplomatic channels accepting "entering into a peace agreement with Israel in exchange of "withdrawal of its arms from Sinai and the Gaza Strip"⁵⁴, but the proposal was rejected. The Yom Kippur war of 1973 had started for Israel unexpectedly, even though Israeli intelligence repeatedly received data about the threat, Sadat himself urged Israel, and King Hussein of Jordan personally flew to Israel to warn about it. Mossad chief Zvi Zamir reacted on that: "We simply didn't feel them capable of war"⁵⁵. This reflects the belief that after a severe defeat in the 1967 war the Arabs will not try to tempt fate again. Egypt invaded Sinai, easily overcame the Israeli defense and destroyed a vast amount of Israeli tanks and aircrafts. On the Golan Heights, the Syrian army expelled Israeli forces and approached to Israeli settlements. However, Syria was not capable to keep the

⁵³ Ajami, F. (1977). Stress in the Arab Triangle. *Foreign Policy*, (29), 90-108. doi:10.2307/1148533

⁵⁴ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central. p.130

⁵⁵ Ibid

victory and was pushed back beyond Syrian boundaries. Jordan and Iraq joint forces saved Syria from even bigger territorial losses. On the Egyptian front, Israel managed to expel the Egyptian troops to initial starting points and surrounded the Third Egyptian Army in the city of Suez, having cut it from any supply. Both the USSR and the US assured their clients in the fast resupply of weapons; however, the continuation of the war could have escalated into a superpower contest. At this stage, Saudi Arabia first used "oil weapon" and imposed an embargo on oil supplies to the United States and Western Europe thereby facilitated the termination of the military actions and transition to the negotiation process. The UN Security Council issued resolution 338 that called the parties of the conflict to a ceasefire and "terminating all military activities immediately"; the parties should have immediately started negotiations based on the SC Resolution 242⁵⁶. This war brought to the Arabs a long-awaited satisfaction from the successful military actions on the first stage of the war, severe damage was done to Israel in terms of both casualties and military technic losses, and gave them a space to negotiate peace with Israel on more equal terms. For Israel, this war was a shock that showed that the Arab countries have the leverage to challenge Israel's military superiority in the region and influence its main ally – the US - cutting it from oil supplies.

Negotiation of Peace

Itamar Rabinovich calls the years from 1973-82 the Arab Decade when the rest of the world sought Arab oil and money, and Arabs could reasonably hope that as a result Israel's base of International support might be undermined⁵⁷. The US initiated and mediated peace negotiations between the parties of the conflict after the war of 1973. In 1974 Egypt and Israel signed a disengagement of forces agreement: it stipulated Israel's withdrawal from the Egyptian mainland and the banks of the Suez Canal⁵⁸. The agreement under the mediation of the US with Syria was later achieved and contained the provision of withdrawal of Israeli

⁵⁶ Security Council Resolution 338: Ceasefire in the Middle East. SCR338(1973). United Nations Peacemaker. 22 December 1973.

<https://peacemaker.un.org/middleeast-resolution338>

⁵⁷ Rabinovich, Itamar. *The Lingering Conflict: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East* 1948 2012. Brookings Institution Press, 2012, p.13

⁵⁸ Ibid.

troops from the Syrian territories beyond the Golan Heights. The peace negotiations resulted in the Camp David accords that consisted of two agreements: "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East" and "A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel"⁵⁹. On the conditions of the latter, Egypt received back the Sinai peninsula and signed the official peace agreements with Israel in 1978. "The Framework for Peace in the Middle East" was established on the following principles: implementation of all parts of resolution 242, providing self-governing autonomy to Palestinians within 5 years, determination of the final status of West Bank and Gaza in the course of further negotiations⁶⁰. However, the Accords had no information about Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. As a result of this, Egypt had been expelled from the Arab League, and the most of Arab states broke diplomatic relations with it. Even the pro-American royal family of Saudi Arabia – a country in which Islam dominated in whole spheres of life – could not endorse an agreement that did not mention Jerusalem⁶¹. Iraq's ruler, Saddam Hussein, who claimed to be the champion of Arab nationalism, could not support accords that omitted any reference to the recovery of Palestine⁶². Likewise, Syria could not subscribe to negotiations that did not refer to the Golan Heights. Moreover, Egypt lost its position as an influential regional power in the Middle East⁶³. On the regional level, these events affected the balance of power in the region and contributed to the emergence of a political vacuum that could be filled by Iraq, Iran or Saudi Arabia.

As the 1980s began, developments in the Persian Gulf region and Lebanon intruded into the conflict. In the Persian Gulf, the rise of Saddam Hussein to power in Iraq and the Islamic revolution in Iran. The Islamic Revolution threatened not only Israel but the Arab Gulf countries that had found themselves unprotected since the British withdrew their troops from the region in 1968. The Islamic Republic of Iran declared the Holy War to Israel as well as "export of the revolution" to pro-imperialistic regimes. The export of the Islamic revolution to oil-rich Gulf monarchies could significantly threaten the energy security of the West,

⁵⁹ Camp David Accords, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_David_Accords

⁶⁰ Framework for Peace in the Middle East/"Camp David" – Text/Non-UN document, 17 September 1978 <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-210245/>

⁶¹ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

especially the US. The sharp increase in the military presence of the USSR in Afghanistan faced opposition from the Islamic states. The region came under the scrutiny of superpowers. The United States reacted to such Soviet actions by proclaiming the Carter Doctrine in 1980: "An attempt by an external force to seize control of the Persian Gulf will be viewed as an encroachment on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an attack will be repelled by all necessary means, including military force." Thus, the US reassured its strategic support to the Arab Gulf countries. In 1980, the destructive and brutal Iran-Iraq war began, which also had a significant impact on the formation of the regional security system. The two regional powers, claiming leadership, were mired in hostilities, which strengthened the position of Saudi Arabia and made it possible to develop and lead integration processes in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

In 1987, Arabs and Israelis dived into a new round of violence that is called intifada (uprising) against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. In the course of the intifada Arabs were attacking Israeli militants by throwing stones and handmade weapons; Israelis, in turn, answered with rubber bullets, tanks and tear gas. Ian J. Bickerton writes that thousands of the 850,000 living in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip traveled daily through checkpoints to fill Israel's need for low-paid workers while Jewish settlers were backed by the Israeli military⁶⁴. Obviously, Palestinian people evicted from their homes and land, in need to deal everyday with the settlers, felt growing unrest and abandonment. According to the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories⁶⁵, during the intifada 94 Israelis and 1,376 Palestinians were killed. The high number of Palestinian casualties led to a number of draft resolutions of the UN Security Council condemning Israel for ignoring the previous Security Council resolutions and non-compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention; however, the US consistently blocked them. In resolution 608, the UN Security Council "calls upon Israel to rescind the order to deport Palestinian civilians and to ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied Palestinian territories of those already deported"⁶⁶. In 1988, General Assembly called for organizing an International Peace

⁶⁴ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central. p.160

⁶⁵ Fatalities in the first Intifada, B'TSELEM. https://www.btselem.org/statistics/first_intifada_tables

⁶⁶ Security Council Resolution 608 (1988). 14 January 1988. <https://palestineun.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/SC-608-1988.pdf>

Conference on the Middle East that should be based on all the previous international resolutions including the resolution 242 (“territories for peace”) and 194 (dismantling of the Israeli settlements)⁶⁷. The resolution received worldwide support and was rejected only by Israel and the US. International support granted Palestinians better conditions for negotiating peace. The intifada lasted for 5 years and resulted in the Madrid Conference of 1991, and the Oslo Accords of 1993.

The year 1987 was also the year when the Hamas Islamic movement had been formed. During the First Palestinian Intifada, Hamas competed with PLO for the leadership even more that expressed its anti-Israeli orientation. However, after 1988, when PLO officially refused from the terroristic activity, Hamas issued the Covenant of the Hamas, where stated its goals as the destruction of the state of Israel through Jihad and establishing on the Palestinian territories an Islamic state⁶⁸. Hamas is considered as a Palestinian filial of the Muslim Brotherhood, and even in its Covenant, one can find a citation of Hasan al-Banna: “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated other before it”⁶⁹. In the Covenant, Hamas accepts terror among other means of fighting and stands against any negotiations with Israel. As an Islamic movement, Hamas sympathized Iran⁷⁰. Thus, from this point, Palestine would have two political powers: Radical Islamic Hamas striving to destroy Israel and PLO seeking to negotiate with it.

The International Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 took place against the backdrop of major global shifts. The dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War left the US in the role of the only superpower. Likewise, in the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the US took a leading role. The Gulf war of 1991 demonstrated the strength of the US in the region and its abilities to protect Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as well as successfully mobilize the international

⁶⁷ GA Resolution 43/176 (1988). Question of Palestine. A/RES/43/176. 15 December 1988. <https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/8FF8AF940BEAF475852560D60046F73F>

⁶⁸ The Covenant of the Hamas, 1988, FAS <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/880818a.htm>

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Rabinovich, Itamar. The Lingering Conflict: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East 1948 2012. Brookings Institution Press, 2012, p.35

coalition in case of danger. PLO, on the other hand, made the wrong bet supporting Saddam Hussein during that war and thereby remained very unpopular in Washington in 1992-93⁷¹.

PLO had officially accepted a two-state solution only in 1998⁷², when Yasir Arafat agreed on the three conditions stipulated by the United States: recognition of Israel's right to exist, renunciation of terrorism, and acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338⁷³. Despite that, PLO was not allowed to exclusively represent the Palestinian people and was coupled with the Jordanian delegation. This fact significantly weakened the negotiation format and reduced its practical meaning to zero. Its only historical meaning consisted of bringing together for the first time irreconcilable opponents and laying the foundations of the negotiation process.

In December 1992 Israel and PLO started direct secret negotiations that resulted in the signing of the Oslo Accords. The accords called for the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO, and a five-year transitional period under which Israel would gradually withdraw its troops and administrative structures from the major Palestinian population centers in favor of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the interim Palestinian government until an independent state was established⁷⁴. At the end of the transitional period, there would be a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories conquered in 1967 in exchange for Arafat's promise to end anti-Israeli violence in the occupied territories and even to directly cooperate with Israeli security force⁷⁵. The weakness of these agreements was that they did not address the issues of settlements, water resources, the status of Jerusalem and refugee crisis and proposed the five-year period of implementation during which the situation might have changed significantly. Thus, Daniel Kurtzer argues that "the real reason for the idea of a five-year

⁷¹ Kurtzer, Daniel C., et al. *The Peace Puzzle : America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989–2011*, Cornell University Press, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dalib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3138405>.

⁷² Slater, Jerome. "What went wrong? The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process." *Political Science Quarterly* 116.2 (2001): 171-199.

⁷³ Kurtzer, Daniel C., et al. *The Peace Puzzle : America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989–2011*, Cornell University Press, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dalib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3138405>.

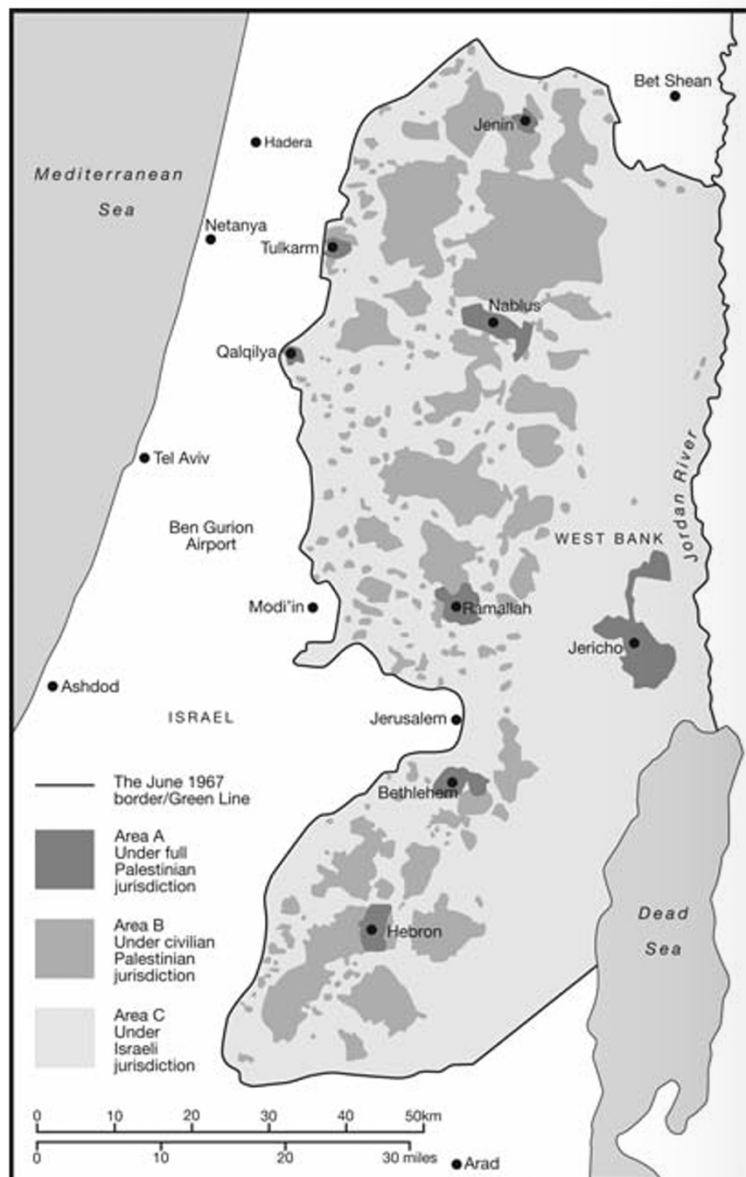
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⁷⁴ Slater, Jerome. "What went wrong? The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process." *Political Science Quarterly* 116.2 (2001): 171-199.

⁷⁵ Ibid

transition was not so much to build trust but rather to get to a post-Begin period that might see an Israeli prime minister who was less adamant about the status of the occupied territories⁷⁶. Nevertheless, as of 1994 the GCC countries states started negotiating with

Figure 3⁷⁷.



Oslo II Accords, September 1995.

Israeli officials regarding lifting the secondary Arab economic boycott⁷⁸. In 1994, a peace treaty between Jordan and Israel was signed. The Gaza Strip and Jericho were eventually handed over to the PLO and Palestinian policemen amid celebrations ending 27 years of Israeli rule over these territories, and Arafat with members of Palestinian National

⁷⁶ Kurtzer, Daniel C., et al. *The Peace Puzzle : America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989–2011*, Cornell University Press, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dalib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3138405>.

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⁷⁷ Gilbert, Martin. *"The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict"*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁷⁸ Arab League Boycott of Israel, Martin A. Weiss, FAS, 25 August 2017 <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33961.pdf>

Autonomy arrived and were sworn there⁷⁹.

In 1995 the Taba Accords were signed (Oslo) II to implement the 1993 agreements. According to the new Accords, control over Palestine was divided between zones of full Palestinian control, mixed control and Israeli control. Thus, Israel controlled approximately 30% of the West Bank and 65% of the Gaza Strip⁸⁰. In his speech to Knesset, Rabin stated that Palestinians will receive an "entity" that will be the "home to most of the Palestinian residents living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank...we would like this to be...less than a state"⁸¹. Jeremy Slater writes that the growth of the Jewish settlements at that time was even greater than under the previous hardline Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir⁸². The Oslo II caused unrest among Israeli right-wing elements for continuing cooperation with PLO and led to the assassination of Izhak Rabin in 1995 by a young Jewish extremist. The final settlement of the conflict in the prescribed in the Oslo agreements time did not happen.

A possible breakthrough in the Arab-Israeli peace process could have been achieved during the Camp David summit in 2000 under the mediation of US President John Clinton. At this summit, Ehud Barack offered the creation of the Palestinian state on 97% of the West Bank and Gaza. He proposed the immediate transfer of the Gaza Strip and 73% of the West Bank, and during the next 10-25 years to give under the Palestinian control the rest 20%. Israel also agreed to turn over parts of East Jerusalem for the establishment of the Palestinian capital and fly the Palestinian flag over the Muslim and Christian Holy places⁸³. Despite that, Yasir Arafat claimed withdrawal of all Israeli troops and settlements located on the territories seized in 1967. Moreover, Arafat demanded the right of all Palestinian refugees to return to their territories. Impotence to reach an agreement disappointed both Israeli and Palestinian extremists and gave a start to the next round of violence - the second Palestinian Intifada – Intifada Al Aqsa. The necessity to put an end to the violence brought both sides to the 2001

⁷⁹ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central. p.173

⁸⁰ Ibid

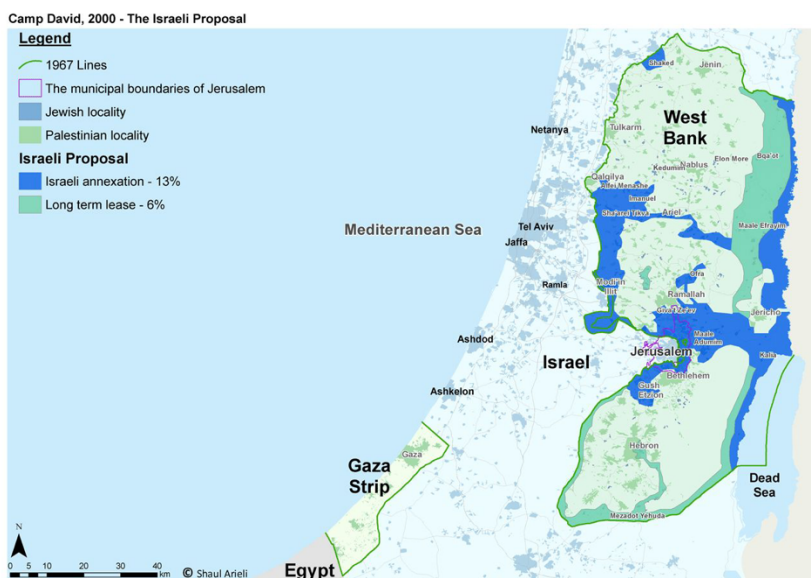
⁸¹ Speech to Knesset of 5 October 1995, printed in Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories 5 (November 1995)

⁸² Slater, Jerome. "What went wrong? The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process." *Political Science Quarterly* 116.2 (2001): 171-199.

⁸³ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, p.53. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Taba talks that can be considered as the most generous Israeli proposal in the history of the Arab-Israeli peace process. In addition to Camp David's proposal, Barak admitted the possibility of partial return of the Palestinian refugees in exchange for the concession of Jerusalem as Israeli. However, these negotiations had stalled giving a green light to extremists' actions from both sides. If to look at the map (Figure 4), the proposed territory of the Palestinian state should have consisted of four parts not related to each other and having boundaries with no other state but Israel that was of obvious concerns of Arafat.

Figure 4⁸⁴.



In 2002, delivering his speech George W. Bush initiated another format of Arab-Israeli peace settlement – Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East. The US activation in the Middle Eastern direction, in particular Palestinian, was also caused by the tragic

events of 11 September 2001. The Roadmap for the Middle East was supposed to be realized under the auspices of four guardians: the EU, Russia, the UN and the US, namely Quartet, and contain the sequence of steps on its realization⁸⁵. The plan was aimed at the establishment of an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel, reforms in Palestinian administration including the introduction of the premier minister post, ending violence and terrorist acts from the Palestinian side, dismantlement of the Israeli settlements and reaching the final peace by 2005. The Quartet's Roadmap also shared one of the flaws of the Oslo Accords, namely an "interim period", which would enable extremists on both sides to torpedo

⁸⁴ Gilbert, Martin. *"The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict"*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012. Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁸⁵ George W. Bush discusses roadmap for peace in the Middle East, The White House <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030314-4.html>

the plan⁸⁶. In 2003, Sharon met Abbas to propose the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the centers of the most Palestinian cities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in exchange for a commitment to end the terrorism from the Palestinian side⁸⁷; Abbas insisted on a formal acceptance of the Roadmap by the Israeli prior to this. Presenting to the Knesset the Roadmap principles, Sharon recognized the Israeli control over Palestinian territories as occupation: “yes, it is occupation; you might not like the word, but what is happening is occupation; it is bad for Israel, and bad for the Palestinians, and bad for the Israeli economy⁸⁸”. Later, facing the party criticism he changed his position saying: “We are not occupiers, this is the birthplace of the Jewish people, and in diplomatic terms, these are territories in dispute between two peoples⁸⁹”. The necessary trust to succeed in the negotiations was vanished by the terrorist attack in Jerusalem and the subsequent response of Israel with the Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank. Ariel Sharon decided to make unilateral concessions to Palestinians on the base of which the realization of the Roadmap plan was to be completed. Itamar Rabinovich sees this decision as truly historic and surprising as Sharon in many respects the architect and builder of Israel’s settlement project who stated: “Netzarim [a settlement in the Gaza Strip] is as important as Tel Aviv⁹⁰. In 2005, Israel dismantled 31 settlements in the Gaza Strip and evacuated its settlers. This decision was largely supported by the US, and Israel received significant compensation for this “unilaterality”: Bush’s administration accepted Israel’s large settlement block in West Bank as “faits accompli”, and “right of return” of Palestinian refugees on the territories of a future Palestinian state and to Israel⁹¹. In fact, doing so the US reconsidered resolutions 242 and 194 unilaterally. In 2006, Hamas unexpectedly won the elections in parliament. As a result of Hamas’ victory, the territories of Palestine were divided into two parts: with Hamas sitting in Gaza and Fatah – in the West Bank, with no further united party to negotiate on the Roadmap. On the contrary to Israeli expectations, rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip created a new front in the Israeli-Palestinian

⁸⁶ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central. p.173

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Rabinovich, Itamar. *The Lingering Conflict: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East 1948* 2012. Brookings Institution Press, 2012 p.156

⁹¹ Ibid.

conflict, culminating in an Israeli military intervention (Operation Cast Lead) in December 2008 and January 2009⁹².

In parallel with the Roadmap, the Arab Peace Initiative was developed by Saudi Arabia in 2002 and endorsed by the Arab League. Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, called for full withdrawal of Israel from the territories occupied in 1967, implementation of the Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, land for peace principle, Israel's accepting of the Palestinian State with East Jerusalem, and achievement of a just solution regarding Palestinian refugees in accordance with UN GA Resolution 194⁹³. Basically, this framework repeats the conditions of the unsuccessful Taba negotiations of 2001. The initiative was re-endorsed at the Arab League summits in 2007 and 2017. However, in 2007, the delegate from Hamas Ismail Haniyeh abstained from the voting in favor of the initiative⁹⁴. As well as the Israeli leader of the opposition from the Likud party Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the initiative referring to the unilateral dismantlement of the Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip saying: "The withdrawal from Gaza two years ago proved that any Israeli withdrawal – particularly a unilateral one – does not advance peace, but rather establishes a terror base for radical Islam"⁹⁵. In 2005, during the disengagement from Gaza, Benjamin Netanyahu, the minister of finance in Sharon's cabinet, resigned his post in protest⁹⁶. Since 2009, Netanyahu takes office as the prime minister of Israel leaving no room for further concessions to Palestinians.

After 2007, some minor attempts to manage the conflict took place. However, the Arab-Israeli conflict was not anymore on a high-priority agenda in the region. Anti-American sentiment was on the rise in the Arab world that time, fueled, perhaps, by a sense of vulnerability in a one-superpower world, and reflecting as well the growing appeal of Islamic radicalism, with

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Text of Arab Peace initiative adopted at Beirut summit. AFP.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/empa/dv/1_arab-initiative-beirut/_1_arab-initiative-beirut_en.pdf

⁹⁴ Arab states unanimously approve Saudi peace initiative, Haaretz, 29 March 2007.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20071221012236/https://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/843076.html>

⁹⁵ Kamel Hawwash, What better offer does Israel have than the Arab Peace Initiative?, The Arab Weekly, 20 August 2017

⁹⁶ Rabinovich, Itamar. The Lingering Conflict: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East 1948 2012. Brookings Institution Press, 2012. p.157

its anti-Western, anti-Israeli overtone⁹⁷. This trend was aggravated by the American overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003 in Iraq and the policy of unilateral imposition of the US' democratic attitudes. In 2011, the Arab Spring shook the region to a large extent bringing mainly Islamists to power. Five years after the start of the Arab spring, mainstream Islamist groups – which generally seek to operate within the confines of institutional politics – find themselves brutally repressed (Egypt), fallen from power (Tunisia), internally fractured (Jordan), or eclipsed by armed groups (Syria and Libya)⁹⁸. The Middle East obtained 3 more long-lasting conflicts: the Syrian crisis, the war in Yemen and the Libyan crisis. Moreover, the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq terrified the world. The Middle East started to be defined by rivalry for regional leadership between Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Turkey positioned itself as an Islamist power, supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Iran developed an axis of resistance or Shia crescent going through Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Gaza and named Israel as its main enemy. Saudi Arabia was concerned about the growing rise of Iran's influence especially within and close to the GCC countries' borders. The overall situation in the region decreased the attention to the Israeli-Palestinian problem focusing actors on more urgent developments and their own national interests.

The Arab-Israeli conflict arose and have been developing in condition of wide dependence on international settings. The British unilaterally promised the Palestinian land to ideologues of Zionism who initially hatched plans for a Greater Israel. Having received the official permission to colonize the Palestinian land from a that time great power, Jews started to come and settle there in uncontrolled numbers. Additionally, the boundaries and other conditions of the "establishment of a national home for Jews" were not clearly defined that created chaotic situation and subsequent issues. The Jewish and the world's psychological trauma of Holocaust justified the resettlement of Jews in Palestine, forced the creation of the state of Israel and provided it with a necessary international support. During numerous wars, Israel used every opportunity to receive better conditions for negotiation with Arab countries and

⁹⁷ Quandt, William B. Peace process: American diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1967. Brookings Institution Press, 2010, p. 299.

⁹⁸ Hamid, Shadi, William McCants, and Rashid Dar. "Islamism after the Arab Spring: Between the Islamic State and the nation-state." The Brookings Project on US Relations with the Islamic World-US-Islamic World Forum Papers 2015. 2017.
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/islamism-after-the-arab-spring_english_web_final.pdf

Palestinians by seizing territories and building settlements. The international community led by the US established a certain network and guiding principles for managing the conflict. Oslo Accords, Taba negotiations, the Roadmap, and the Arab Initiative largely complied with the base that was laid in the core UN resolutions 242, 338, 194. However, desiring to save the Roadmap format, the US granted Israel conditions that were not discussed multilaterally: the right to save settlements in the West Bank and reduce the right to return only till Palestinian land. This promise given by George W. Bush violated the previous principle of “peace in exchange for territories”. The lack of cohesion in Palestinian Administration divided between Hamas and Fath and inability to develop a common position towards the settlement of the conflict played in favor of Israel. Regional security focuses have changed significantly after the instability caused by the Arab Spring and regional rivalries for leadership. This historical developments laid the ground for the actual fixation of status quo by Donald Trump and the sponsored Abraham agreements.

VI. The Israeli-UAE and Israel-Bahrain rapprochement: Contributing factors

In the previous chapter, the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict from a historical perspective were analyzed. This chapter is devoted to the factors that were behind the Abraham normalization agreements between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain. Arab countries obviously have common strategic interests with Israel that outweighed the risks of signing the agreements and betraying in a way Palestinian aspirations. This chapter uncovers security and economic dimensions of the countries’ rapprochement and analyses whether the American factor played the crucial role.

Security factors

Talking about regional security architecture in the Gulf region, it is necessary to mention that Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman. The GCC was established as a regional

intergovernmental organization in 1981. Although military cooperation was not mentioned in the GCC Charter, the reasons for the creation of the organization were mainly security-related. Iran after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was perceived by Gulf countries as a major threat because of its revolution export agenda. The Iran-Iraq war and fears that hostilities could spread to the territories of Gulf countries forced them to move quickly to consider military integration. The GCC charter emphasizes that the establishment of the organization is in line with the goals of the Arab nation and it operates within the network of the Charter of the League of Arab States⁹⁹. In the Final Communiqué of the 1st Session of GCC, the two interesting facts were mentioned: Arab countries developed a common position on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem in line with Arab League, and rejected the presence of military bases and navies in the Gulf under the pretext of protecting the interests of the states of the region¹⁰⁰. The latter principle was soon reconsidered when GCC countries could not defend Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion of 1990 without help of the US-led coalition. Thus, this shows that the first principle could also be reconsidered in the future.

Regarding American military bases, at the moment, there are Shaikh Isa Air Base and Muharraq Air Base in Bahrain, and Al Dharamsala Air Base, Port of Jebel Ali and Fujairah Naval Base in the UAE¹⁰¹. In addition to that, the GCC countries created their own system of collective security that includes joint military forces (Peninsula Shield Force), mutual military assistance, regular joint military exercises and coordination in military industries. Furthermore, countries agreed to exchange on intelligence data and establish the Gulf Interpol. According to the recent SIPRI report, the UAE is on the 9th place among largest arms importers with the US supplying 64%, France 10% and Russia 4.7% of the total arms number¹⁰². After the normalization between the UAE and Israel, the US agreed to sell 50 F-35 combat aircrafts to the UAE¹⁰³, that is one of the most advanced and expensive American-made fighter jet. Israel, the only Mideastern country importing F-35, now could face a

⁹⁹ The Charter of GCC, <http://www.gcc-sg.org/en-us/AboutGCC/Pages/Primarylaw.aspx>

¹⁰⁰ Борис Маликов. Совет сотрудничества арабских государств залива. Москва 1994. С. 20

¹⁰¹ Matthew Wallin, "U.S. Military Bases and Facilities in the Middle East", *American Security Project*, June 2018, <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Ref-0213-US-Military-Bases-and-Facilities-Middle-East.pdf>

¹⁰² SIPRI Fact Sheet. Trends in international arms transfers, 2020. March 2021.

https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/fs_2103_at_2020.pdf

¹⁰³ Ibid.

competitor in the UAE. Besides that, the country enjoys the strongest conventional and non-conventional military capabilities in the Middle East and considered to be the only nuclear power in region¹⁰⁴. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in October said that there had been an ongoing discussion between Defense Ministry officials and the Pentagon and that Israel had received strong assurances about "the American commitment to preserve Israel's military qualitative edge¹⁰⁵." Bahrain is on the other hand is more dependent on Saudi Arabia in terms of security. Riyadh took responsibility for maintaining sovereignty and internal political stability of Bahrain during the 1981 coup attempt and the Shiite unrest in Manama during the 2011 Arab Spring.

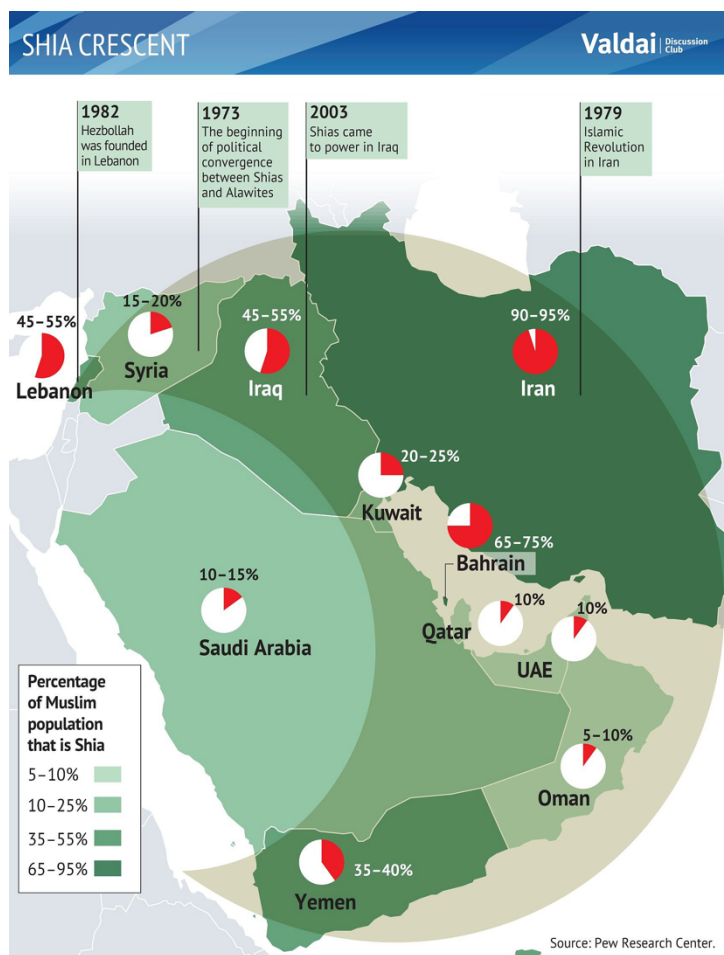
Indeed, the major external threat for both the UAE and Bahrain is Iran. Iran implements regional policy through Shiites and the Hezbollah armed group. In addition, Iran largely supports Hamas in the Gaza Strip. In geopolitical terms, GCC countries may in the

Figure 5. ¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Ferziger, Jonathan H., and Gawdat Bahgat. "Israel's Growing Ties with the Gulf Arab States." Atlantic Council (2020), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Israel's-Growing-Ties-with-the-Gulf-Arab-States.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ Biden Freezes F-35 Sale to UAE, Munitions Sales to Saudi Arabia, *Haaretz*. 27 January 2021. <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-report-biden-freezes-f-35-sale-to-uae-munitions-sales-to-saudi-arabia-1.9488780>

¹⁰⁶ Shia Crescent, Valdai Discussion Club. 21 July 2017, <https://valdaiclub.com/multimedia/infographics/shia-crescent/>



future be surrounded by the so-called "Shiite crescent" consisting of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Iran has influence on the Shiites in Bahrain and provides support to the Houthis in Yemen. Moreover, Iran possesses significant demographic, territorial and energy resources for implementing regional policy, and since the early 2000s it has been successfully developing its nuclear program. Concerns about the Iranian nuclear program are also added by Iran's withdrawal from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) after unilateral withdrawal from it of the Trump

administration.

Both the UAE and Bahrain, have historical territorial disputes with Iran. Even before the Islamic Revolution, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was stating in his book, 'Mission of My Country', that his divine purpose was to be the savior of both Iran and the Gulf¹⁰⁷. The Islamic regime strongly continued to consider the Gulf and its Arab countries as a sphere of interests. On the eve of Britain's departure from the territories of the Arab Gulf countries in 1971, Iran offered the Qawasim sheiks of the UAE price over \$3 millions for three islands: Abu Musa, and Lesser and Grater Tunbs. After the rejection of the Iranian offer, Iran duly invaded these islands and established the military control over them. The UAE tried to settle this dispute through the assistance of the international community, but it did not bring any result. It is

¹⁰⁷ Davidson, Christopher M., "Dubai and the United Arab Emirates: Security Threats." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2009, pp. 431–447. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40593284. Accessed 29 May 2021.

dangerous that the largest of these islands is in critical proximity to Dubai – only 60 miles. Bahrain, having 65-75% of Shiite population and located only 120 miles away, is particularly vulnerable for the influence of Iran. In 1981, shortly after the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution, Iran joined by Bahraini Shia radicals attempted a coup against the ruling family Al Khalifa. In 2011, during the Shia uprisings, only with the support of the UAE and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain managed to restore the internal stability. Certainly any instability in the Gulf countries can be exploited in the interests of Iran. Other than that, Iran is enhancing its sophisticated cyber security capabilities. Having used a computer virus Shamoon, Iran attacked Saudi Aramco and RasGas of Qatar in 2012 that put under threat energy security of the Gulf countries. Geopolitically, Iran controls the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil transit chokepoint, and can challenge the GCC countries' oil supply thereby undermining stability of world energy flows.

The Iranian threat is undoubtedly common for Israel and the two Gulf states. After the Islamic Revolution, Iran overtly set the goal to dissolve Israeli state and proclaimed Israel a "Little Satan" for its close cooperation with "Great Satan", the US, and the Arab-Israeli conflict that was perceived by Iran as a Holy War. Iran supports Hezbollah that has been periodically attacking Israel from the territories of the South Lebanon as well as finance the Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip. Israel is indeed concerned about Iranian developing nuclear program that if once implemented can wipe the country out of existence¹⁰⁸. On this ground, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan in 2017 stated that "We and the Arabs, the same Arabs who organized in a coalition in the Six-Day War to try to destroy the Jewish state, today find themselves in the same boat with us ... The Sunni Arab countries, apart from Qatar, are largely in the same boat with us since we all see a nuclear Iran as the number one threat against all of us¹⁰⁹". Israel openly called for the defense alliance with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain against Iran¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁸ Anastasia Perevalova, "Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation", Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

¹⁰⁹ "Ya'alon: No More Arab Coalition Against Us, Also Containment Is Victory". *The Jewish Press*. 5 June 2017. Archived from the original on 1 August 2019. Retrieved 9 June 2017.

¹¹⁰ *Daraj*, 1 April 2021, "على رغم التحديات، فإن العلاقات الإسرائيلية مع الكتلة السعودية-الإماراتية في تصاعد ونمو...", <https://daraj.com/69364/>

While countering numerous terrorist attacks taking place during its long-lasting occupation of the Palestinian Territories, Israel has developed the best practices of how to secure the state and ensure its very existence¹¹¹. That required sophisticated surveillance and intelligence technologies. The report of Haaretz, shows that Israel uses technologies of mass surveillance on Palestinians. This operation is “among the largest of its kind in the world. It includes monitoring the media, social media and the population as a whole¹¹²”. Jonathan Cook, journalist and author of three books on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, writes that Israel is famous by its trade of sophisticated weapons systems and belligerent cyber software¹¹³. This is obvious that surveillance technologies can be used not only against external threats and for terrorism prevention activities, but as well for controlling the population, track opposition and identify dissidents, and for commercial purposes¹¹⁴.

During the Arab Spring, the Arab Gulf countries have experienced unprecedented shocks, although not on the same scale as other countries in the region¹¹⁵. They did not lead to overthrow of government, although concentrated the focus of ruling elites on internal opposition, human rights activist and liberal movements¹¹⁶. As well as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the UAE considers political Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood an existential threat¹¹⁷. The UAE even perceived the reformist letter that was signed by 133 national figures demanding to expand the authorities of the appointed National Federal Council that has only consultative functions as a threat to the regime¹¹⁸. The country reacted by political repressions and a number of arrests¹¹⁹. Bahrain faced the biggest protests among the GCC

¹¹¹ Anastasia Perevalova, “Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation”, Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

¹¹² This Israeli Face-recognition Startup Is Secretly Tracking Palestinians, *Haaretz*, 15th July 2019 <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium-this-israeli-face-recognition-startup-is-secretly-tracking-palestinians-1.7500359>

¹¹³ J. Cook, “How Israel spy tech reaches deep into our lives”, *Middle East Eye*, 11th November 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-hand-israeli-tech-reaches-deep-our-lives>

¹¹⁴ Anastasia Perevalova, “Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation”, Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Abdullah, Abdulkhaleq. Report. Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2012. Accessed April 21, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12637>

¹¹⁹ Anastasia Perevalova, “Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation”, Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

countries¹²⁰. They were rooted in the refusal of the government to follow the amendments in the constitution of 2002 allowing to reform the political system of the country¹²¹. Many political associations (political parties are prohibited in Bahrain) were unable to participate in parliamentary elections in 2006 and 2010¹²². In addition, the majority of Shiites in Bahrain are deprived from political rights, and most government posts are held by Sunnis and members of the royal family¹²³. The Basioini report, conducted by international human rights organizations, recorded violations of Bahraini human rights and the abolition of citizenship for indigenous people for political reasons¹²⁴. Another report produced by Sarah al Bandar, reveals the governmental conspiracy policy to marginalize the Shia majority in the country that includes a secret intelligence unit spying on Shiites, subsidies for those converted from Shia Islam to Sunni Islam and payments for election falsifications¹²⁵.

Thus, theoretically cooperation between the two Gulf countries and Israel in terms of intelligence, surveillance and cyber security seems very beneficial. According to Yossi Melman, an intelligence columnist for Haaretz, "Intelligence was an early point of contact between Israel and the UAE, dating to at least the 1970s and continuing ever since¹²⁶". The fact that many intelligence officials left service and went to security businesses provided a way to sell goods and services to Emiratis privately¹²⁷.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Al-Serhan S. F., Mashagbeh A. A., Salameh M. T. B. Challenges facing national security in the Arab Gulf states: A case study of Bahrain // *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. – 2017. – T. 7. – C. 131-142.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohammed-Bani-Salameh/publication/322466366_Challenges_Facing_National_Security_in_the_Arab_Gulf_States_A_Case_Study_of_Bahrain/links/5aad42e5a6fdcc1bc0bad81d/Challenges-Facing-National-Security-in-the-Arab-Gulf-States-A-Case-Study-of-Bahrain.pdf?origin=publication_detail

¹²⁵ Dr. Salah Al Bandar, *Wikileaks*, https://wikileaks.org/wiki/Dr._Salah_Al_Bandar

¹²⁶ Steve Hendrix, "Inside the secret-not-secret courtship between Israel and the United Arab Emirates", *The Washington Post*, 15 August 2020,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/inside-the-secret-not-secret-courtship-between-israel-and-the-united-arab-emirates/2020/08/14/3881d408-de26-11ea-b4f1-25b762cddb4_story.html

¹²⁷ Anastasia Perevalova, "Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation", Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

One of the most famous surveillance company in Israel is called NSO that is licensed by the government to export its spyware. It produces the software Pegasus that allows to perpetrate cyber attacks on WhatsApp, an Israeli-invented messenger¹²⁸. The spyware installs on the mobile phones of targets without their knowledge, copies data and uses the microphone for wiretap. In 2019, NSO targeted mobile phones of more than 1400 users in 20 different countries, reports Guardian¹²⁹. The list of targets included popular human rights defenders and lawyers, important religious figures, journalists and officials in humanitarian organizations¹³⁰. For instance, Saudi Arabia was repeatedly accused of using these technologies to track dissidents and critics of the regime including Jamal Khashougi and Omar Abdulaziz¹³¹. It is striking that Haaretz reports that over past few years there have been sales worth hundreds of millions of dollar of spyware to Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the Emirates Abu Dhabi and Ras al Khaimah¹³².

To explain why Gulf countries that have long-established relations with the US cooperate with Israeli private company rather than with their old ally, the following illustration can be given¹³³. The Reuters' investigation reports about Emirati cyber surveillance department called DREAD – Development Research Exploitation and Analysis Department¹³⁴. It was built with the help of the famous former US counterterrorism specialist Richard Clarke in 2008¹³⁵. In the following years, especially after the Arab Spring, the department started targeting not only terrorist and extremists, but a Saudi women's right activist, UN diplomats, American

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ "WhatsApp sues Israeli firm, accusing it of hacking activist's phones", *The Guardian*, 29th October 2019v <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/oct/29/whatsapp-sues-israeli-firm-accusing-it-of-hacking-activists-phones>

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Anastasia Perevalova, "Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation", Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

¹³² "With Israel's Encouragement, NSO Sold Spyware to UAE and Other Gulf States", *Haaretz*, 25th of August 2020, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-with-israel-s-encouragement-nso-sold-spyware-to-uae-and-other-gulf-states-1.9093465>

¹³³ Anastasia Perevalova, "Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation", Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

¹³⁴ "US intelligence agents helped UAE build secret surveillance unit", *Al Jazeera*, 11th of December 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/11/us-intelligence-agents-helped-uae-build-secret-surveillance-unit>

¹³⁵ Anastasia Perevalova, "Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation", Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

companies and personnel at FIFA¹³⁶. Many US former specialists in cyber security were attracted by generous salaries provided by the UAE, and thereby sold their knowledge earned during the service for the US government for countries with a poor human rights background¹³⁷. In addition, DREAD had a prohibition to attack US citizens and US-owned email servers¹³⁸. However, Reuters states that hundreds of Google, Yahoo, Hotmail and Facebook accounts were hacked. According to the Times investigation¹³⁹, another US former intelligence specialist David Evenden was hired by the UAE government. His team were spying on Qatari officials, dissidents and opposition, until in 2015 it touched upon the communication of Michelle Obama regarding her visit to Qatar¹⁴⁰. At that moment, Evenden and his family decided to leave the country and report about the incident to the FBI¹⁴¹. One of the most high profile cases related to the detention of Saudi women's rights activist Loujan al-Hathloul that advocated for women's rights to drive a car¹⁴². She studied in Emirati university, were tracked and kidnapped by UAE security forces and transferred back to Saudi Arabia where she was jailed¹⁴³.

Thus, the US can not accept that Gulf countries use the US-produced surveillance technologies to spy on American companies and citizens, as well as to hunt human right activists and dissidents¹⁴⁴. Israeli companies, spying on and tracking occupied Palestinians, seem to be less demanding. Thus, Netanyahu showed his appreciation later after Khashoggi killing, when Muhammad bin Salman needed friends¹⁴⁵. The fact that the Democratic Party came to power in the US and that Biden is concerned about human rights violations in Gulf countries

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ "UAE hires US intelligence hackers for espionage against foes", *Daily Sabah*, 7th of February 2021
<https://www.dailysabah.com/world/mid-east/uae-hires-us-intelligence-hackers-for-espionage-against-foes>

¹⁴⁰ Anastasia Perevalova, "Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation", Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ferziger, Jonathan H., and Gawdat Bahgat. "Israel's Growing Ties with the Gulf Arab States." *Atlantic Council* (2020).

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Israel's-Growing-Ties-with-the-Gulf-Arab-States.pdf>

obviously more than Trump, creates more opportunities for cooperation between Israel, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE¹⁴⁶.

For many years, shadow diplomacy and backchannel ties between Israel and the Gulf countries have been developing. Thus, the Atlantic Council reports that the UAE and Israel have well-established weapons trade¹⁴⁷. WikiLeaks revealed 250,000 diplomatic cables between Israel and the UAE. In the cable dating back to 2009, the overview details a "good and personal relationship" to have been developed between then Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and U.A.E. Foreign Minister Abdullah Ibn Zayed, adding, however, that the two officials would not "do in public what they say behind closed doors¹⁴⁸." The persistent dialogue between the UAE and Israel was uncovered during the administration of Ehud Olmert. Middle East Eye reported in 2015 that an Israel-owned security firm was tasked with securing gas installations as well as setting up an Emirates-wide surveillance network called Falcon Eye, the brainchild of former Israeli intelligence agent Mati Kochavi¹⁴⁹.

To conclude, the main common threat that fosters the cooperation between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain is Iran. Countries share a common concern regarding the Iranian nuclear program that helps to coordinate a joint policy regarding that matter and strengthen military response capabilities. After uprisings of 2011, the Arab Gulf countries experienced an existential threat to ruling regimes and recognized the necessity to improve their intelligence capacities. In addition, they increased surveillance on the political opposition and dissidents severely violating human rights. This opened the room for closer cooperation between Israel and the Gulf countries as the US is largely concerned about human rights and the use of their surveillance technologies against their own interests. Likewise, the Gulf countries could receive sophisticated weapons through the trade with Israel, since the war in Yemen

¹⁴⁶ Anastasia Perevalova, "Israel-Gulf Intelligence Cooperation", Course Paper, submitted to the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 2021

¹⁴⁷ Ferziger, Jonathan H., and Gawdat Bahgat. "Israel's Growing Ties with the Gulf Arab States." *Atlantic Council* (2020).

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Israel's-Growing-Ties-with-the-Gulf-Arab-States.pdf>.

¹⁴⁸ Barak Ravid, "WikiLeaks Blows Cover Off Israel's Covert Gulf States Ties," *Haaretz*, November 29, 2010.

¹⁴⁹ Amandla Thomas-Johnson, "UAE-Israel deal caps years of growing ties and secret Netanyahu visits", *Middle Eastern Eye*, 14 August 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-uae-deal-netanyahu-secret-visits-growing-ties>

complicated the cooperation with the US. Although the open cooperation between countries has intensified in last several years, the backchannel ties and shadow diplomacy were always in place. This could be explained by the fact that these countries never was in a direct conflict with Israel.

Socio-economic factors

In terms of formational development, Israel and the UAE belong to postmodern countries: Israel to Western postmodern, and the UAE to Eastern postmodern. The postmodern paradigm criticizes the logic of positivism that is completely devoid of any positive social and moral perspective. The non-morality of postmodernism is sometimes interpreted as complete tolerance – openness to all diverse world value contexts and the ability to understand non-Western cultures and civilizations. In postmodernism, values are losing their absolute value, and continuity of development is denied. The economies of Israel and the UAE are of a post-industrial nature. In Postmodern, industrial capitalism is being replaced by a new economy based on knowledge and information technology in which the service sector dominates material production¹⁵⁰. Likewise, both countries have overcome the peak of their industrial development and concentrated on knowledge- and innovation-intensive practices. In Israel, the services sector contributes 66.1 percent to the country's GDP and employs 77 percent of the labour force¹⁵¹. In the UAE, as of 2019, the services sector constitutes 53 percent of GDP and employs around 78% of labour force. In Bahrain, 67% of labour force work in the services sector that constitutes 60% of GDP.

All GCC countries set the goal to overcome dependence on oil export and implement sustainable development plans by 2030. Despite each plan is tailored to the national peculiarities, overall they have the following common aims: diverse economic sectors, drive innovation and entrepreneurship, digital transformation, job creation and economic

¹⁵⁰ Румянцев Михаил Алексеевич Экономика общества Постмодерна: критический анализ // Христианское чтение. 2012. №6. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/ekonomika-obschestva-postmoderna-kriticheskiy-analiz> (дата обращения: 02.06.2021).

¹⁵¹ "Economy of Israel", *Fanack*, 6 June 2020, <https://fanack.com/israel/economy-of-israel/?cv=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAurjgBRCqARIsAD09sg>

growth¹⁵². The UAE can serve as one of the most successful examples of its implementation. The UAE invested petrodollars in new economic endowments and built a base for various new economic infrastructures. Dubai, which has significantly less oil reserves than Abu Dhabi, has been able to become an international business, financial and commercial center through modernization of transport and infrastructure and creation of free economic zones. The government of the UAE announced a number of initiatives that go in line with the UN 2030 agenda¹⁵³:

- **Dubai 3D Printing Agenda** is aimed at making Dubai and the UAE a leading hub of printing technologies for construction, medical products, consumer products.
- **Dubai Industrial Strategy 2030** has identified 75 industrial initiatives to transform Dubai into a global platform for industries based on knowledge, innovation and sustainability.
- **Dubai Autonomous Transportation Strategy** aims to transform 25 per cent of the total transportation reducing transportation costs, carbon emissions and accidents, and raising the productivity of individuals as well as saving hundreds of millions of hours wasted in conventional transportation.
- **Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030** is focused on knowledge-based industries in the future and lays the ground for a long-term plan of the transformation of the emirate's economy using Dubai's best practices.

Among the GCC countries Bahrain has the poorest oil reserves¹⁵⁴ that are almost exhausted so the country started the diversification efforts on the earlier stages than other countries. Bahrain is famous in the region as the most innovative financial and fintech services hub. Like other GCC countries, Bahrain also have its national development strategy – Vision 2030 that

¹⁵² Richie Santosdiaz, "Overview of The Economic Development Strategies In The Middle East's region", *The Fintech Times*, 12 December 2020, <https://thefintechtimes.com/overview-of-the-economic-development-strategies-in-the-middle-east-gcc-region/>

¹⁵³ Agenda 2021-2030. UAE Future. UAE Government, <https://u.ae/en/more/uae-future/2021-2030>

¹⁵⁴ "Crude Oil Reserves Metrics of GCC Members", *KAPSARC*, 16 March 2020, <https://www.kapsarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Crude-Oil-Reserves-Metrics-of-GCC-Members.pdf>

aims at building an economy that will be entrepreneurial, diversified, and with one of strong private sector investments and engagements¹⁵⁵.

Israel's economy on the other hand has never had significant energy resources so the country has developed capital-intensive and innovative strategies from the very beginning. Israel ranked fourth in the world in the scientific activity, as measured by the number of scientific publications per million citizens¹⁵⁶. In the last decade Israel has experienced a large high-tech boom. Its central high technology hub "Silicon Wadi" is considered second in importance after its Californian counterpart¹⁵⁷. In the past two decades, industrial output has made international-level strides in the fields of medical electronics, agro-technology, telecommunications, fine chemicals, computer hardware and software, as well as diamond cutting and polishing¹⁵⁸.

The economic ties between the Gulf countries and Israel have been developing in the conditions of Arab boycott imposed on Israel from its creation in 1948 – a primary boycott that prohibited direct trade with Israel. In a secondary boycott, Arab and other states threatened sanctions against firms that traded with Israel, dramatically limiting the number of companies willing to trade with the then-poor state¹⁵⁹. The tertiary boycott involves the blacklisting of firms that trade with other companies that do business with Israel¹⁶⁰. In 1994 as a result of the Oslo process the Gulf countries abandoned the secondary and tertiary

¹⁵⁵ Richie Santosdiaz, "In-Depth Analysis: The Fintech and Financial Services Economy of Bahrain", *The Fintech Times*, 12 September 2020, <https://thefintechtimes.com/in-depth-analysis-the-fintech-and-financial-services-economy-of-bahrain/>

¹⁵⁶ Ilani, Ofri (17 November 2009). "Israel ranks fourth in the world in scientific activity, study finds". *Haaretz*. Retrieved 17 October 2012
<https://www.haaretz.com/1.5222493>

¹⁵⁷ Dolmadjian, Katia (28 June 2011). "Israeli innovators build new 'Silicon Valley'". *Agence France-Presse*. Retrieved 17 October 2012

¹⁵⁸ "ECONOMY: Sectors of Israeli Economy", Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/economy/pages/economy-%20sectors%20of%20the%20economy.aspx>

¹⁵⁹ Dany Bahar, Nathan Sachs, "How much does BDS threaten Israel's economy?", *Brookings*, 26 January 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/26/how-much-does-bds-threaten-israels-economy/>

¹⁶⁰ Mitchell Bard, "Arab League Boycott: Background & Overview", *Jewish Virtual Library*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-of-the-arab-boycott-of-israel>

boycotts and opened market for Israeli companies¹⁶¹. The Abraham agreements have finally allowed countries to trade directly.

Now, Israel anticipates \$220 million in non-defense trade with Bahrain¹⁶². The Economy Ministry trade forecast expects growth on Israeli exports to Bahrain of diamonds and refined metals for chemicals, and of imports of oil and aluminum from Bahrain. In addition, Bahraini minister for industry, commerce and tourism Zayed al-Zayani expressed his positive vision for cooperation in terms of culture, sport, exchange and tourism¹⁶³. Regarding the UAE, already in 5 first months since the Abraham agreements the bilateral trade with Israel achieved \$280 million while the UAE attracted 130,000 tourists. In the medium-term the bilateral trade is expected to be between \$4 billion and \$6.5 billion. Israel has a strong comparative advantage in medical electro-diagnostic devices, chemical products and UN fermented fruit and vegetable juices¹⁶⁴. The UAE can export perfumery, plastics, Aluminum, cement and other construction materials. In addition to that, huge opportunities for investments to Israeli high-tech sector are open for the Gulf countries¹⁶⁵. In the best traditions of the New Regionalism theory, Israel strengthen and develop cooperation with the Gulf states by creating bussiness groups of interests so bussiness community promotes peace and reduces chances of conflict¹⁶⁶.

Polls that were conducted by the Washington Institute¹⁶⁷ in three Gulf countries (the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain) and Jordan, Egypt shows interesting statistics. Respondents were asked whether they approve bussiness and sports contacts with Israelis. The percentage of approval were 37% in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, with the UAE 2 percent higher. Comparing to Jordan

¹⁶¹ Elaine Sciolino, "Saudis and 5 other gulf nations will ease their boycott of Israel", *The New York Times*, 1 October 1994, <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/10/01/world/saudis-and-5-other-gulf-nations-will-ease-their-boycott-of-israel.html>

¹⁶² "Israel expects \$220 million in non-defense trade with Bahrain in 2021", *Arab News*, 2 December 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1771531/business-economy>

¹⁶³ Isaac John, "UAE-Israel trade can hit \$6,5b", 1 April 2021, *Khalej Times*, <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/business/uae-israel-trade-can-hit-65b>

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

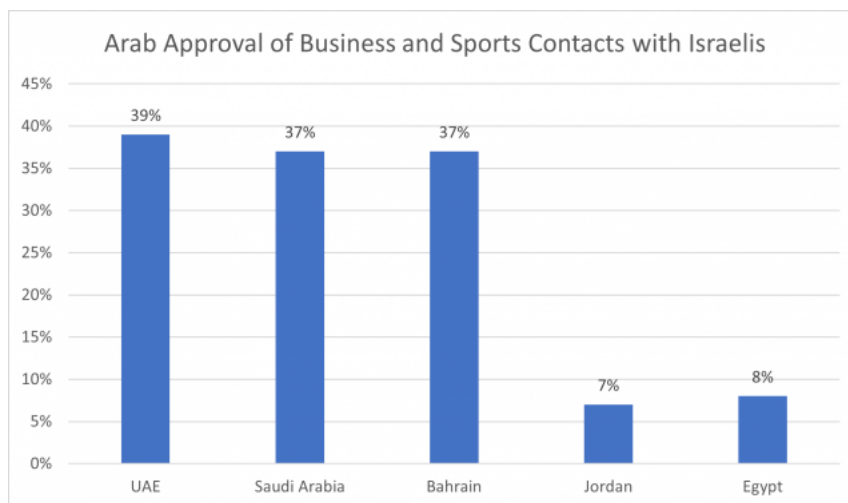
¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Daraj, 1 April 2021, "على رغم التحديات، فإن العلاقات الإسرائيلية مع الكتلة السعودية-الإماراتية في تصاعد ونمو...", <https://daraj.com/69364/>

¹⁶⁷ David Pollock, Catherine Cleveland, "UAE Public Shifts Toward Peace with Israel – and with Qatar", *Fikra Forum*, 10 December 2020, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/uae-public-shifts-toward-peace-israel-and-qatar>

(7%) and Egypt (8%), that signed peace treaties with Israel in 1978 and 1994, the difference is impressing. Gulf countries seem to have warmer attitude towards Israel and this gives a hope that the normalization agreements will not end up as a “cold peace”.

Figure 6¹⁶⁸.



Thus, the Abraham agreements unlocked the significant potential of highly beneficial economic cooperation between Israel and the GCC countries. Economic compatibility in the sphere of security, trade, investments, tourism opens new opportunities in the future to a preferential trade or an economic integration. Since the GCC countries have no taxes between each other, the Israeli goods can in fact be easily transported to the countries that have not yet signed a normalization treaty. The certain movement in that direction can be illustrated by the sign of tax treaty between the UAE and Israel under which tax deductions, dividends and royalties are capped. As Finance Minister of Israel Katz said: the agreement “provide certainty and favorable conditions for extensive business activity”¹⁶⁹. In the long-term, regional grouping of Israel and the GCC countries can establish an island of economic stability and prosperity in the Middle East cemented by the perception of same threats and alliance

¹⁶⁸ David Pollock, Catherine Cleveland, “UAE Public Shifts Toward Peace with Israel – and with Qatar”, *Fikra Forum*, 10 December 2020, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/uae-public-shifts-toward-peace-israel-and-qatar>

¹⁶⁹ “Israel, UAE sign tax treaty to encourage investment, boost economic cooperation”, *The Times of Israel*, 1 June 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-uae-sign-tax-treaty-to-encourage-investment-boost-economic-cooperation/>

with the US. The fact that the GCC countries never had any territorial disputes with Israel and never were in a direct military conflict can positively affect this process. The fact that the rich monarchies of the Gulf stand out significantly in all respects from their counterparts in the Arab world and also that Israel is the one of the most technologically advanced countries with a huge capital, makes the regionalization of these countries quite visible and predictable even before the Abraham agreements.

American factor

Being a superpower, the US have always played a significant role not only in the Arab-Israeli conflict but in the whole region. Often the policy line pursued in the Middle East on a large scale depended on the administration that was in power and security threats that were perceived by the US at that period. At different times, the US found its vital interests concentrated in the region including energy security, the Cold War rivalry with the USSR, containment of Iran and nuclear security, countering terrorism and ensuring democratization, etc. The region became a source of challenges that could undermine the US interests, for most of which the country found itself unprepared. Literally every American administration tried to make change in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Seriously, the US started considering Arab-Israeli peacekeeping after the oil blockade of 1973 that disrupted the stable energy flows to the West and posed a threat of a direct collusion with the USSR. In peacekeeping, the US tried to portray themselves as a neutral broker in the conflict. However, this neutrality was largely affected by the tight cooperation with Israel during the Cold War including significant military and financial assistance. According to the Jewish Virtual Library, Israel has received more direct aid from the US since WWII than any other country with a total of \$3.1 billion till 1973¹⁷⁰. The US vetoed almost all UN Resolutions implying sanctions against Israel for its settlement policy. Gideon Levy, an Israeli journalist and author, criticized the US flattery to Israel:

¹⁷⁰ "US Foreign Aid to Israel: History & Overview", *Jewish Virtual Library*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overview-of-u-s-foreign-aid-to-israel>

“As long as Israel feels the United States is in its pocket, and that America's automatic veto will save it from condemnations and sanctions, that it will receive massive aid unconditionally, and that it can continue waging punitive, lethal campaigns without a word from Washington, killing, destroying and imprisoning without the world's policeman making a sound, it will continue in its ways¹⁷¹”.

Indeed, condescending attitude of American administrations to Israel's actions and indecisiveness to say an unambiguous, presidential ‘no’ left no effective leverage to influence on Israel. Interestingly, among American double standards is Israeli nuclear program that is inconsistent with the “non-proliferation” principle on the same scale as Iraqi and Iranian one. However, this illustrates how American allies enjoy privileges over other countries.

The Reagan administration, Republican, (1981-1989), came to power at the period of the Islamic Revolution and the Israeli-Egypt Camp David Accords, at the time when the US needed a strong ally in the unstable regional settings. In his public rhetoric, Reagan consistently depicted Israel within the mythic terms of the Cold War as a heroic democracy like the United States¹⁷². Reagan was the first president to state explicitly that Israel was a strategic asset to the USA¹⁷³. He opposed the creation of the state of Palestine: “The United States will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and we will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel. ... Self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just, and lasting peace”¹⁷⁴. The president is usually mentioned as one of the most pro-Israeli American presidents. However, on practice countries faced a number of crises. The first crisis emerged out of American commitment with Saudi Arabia to deliver there AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) surveillance plans that was largely criticized by the

¹⁷¹ Bickerton, Ian J.. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : A History*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2009, Accessed April 30, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁷² Fowler, Randall. “Reagan and Israel: Heroic Democracy in the Holy Land.” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2020, pp. 455–494. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.14321/rhetpublaffa.23.3.0455. Accessed 5 June 2021.

¹⁷³ Bickerton, Ian J. *The Arab-Israeli conflict: a history*. Reaktion Books, 2009.

¹⁷⁴ Tucker, Spencer C., and Priscilla Roberts, eds. *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Political, Social, and Military History* [4 volumes]: A Political, Social, and Military History. Abc-Clio, 2008.

Israeli lobby and Israel itself. The US were concerned regarding security of its oil supplies, given changes in Iran. From the Israel's perspective, AWACS in hands of Saudi Arabia, a hostile state, could directly threaten its qualitative military edge. Reagan also condemned Israeli advancement in South Lebanon under the pretext of attacking PLO Guerrillas and the Israel Air Force attack on Iraqi nuclear facilities at Osirak in 1981, supporting UN resolution 487 and suspending the delivery to Israel of a shipment of F-16 advanced private fighter jets¹⁷⁵. In the end of the day, it was Reagan's administration to recognize PLO as a negotiating party in 1988.

George H. W. Bush, Republican, (1989-1993) was perceived as an anti-Israeli in his approach to peacekeeping. After the 1991 Iraq war he sponsored a Madrid peace conference giving a beginning for the Oslo agreements. Despite that, the US-coalition victory over Iraq brought benefits to Israel, who's foe was Iraq. In addition, representatives of PLO was not allowed to be present at the Madrid conference official negotiations given the fact that they supported the wrong side in the Iraqi war. Other than that, even after the end of the Cold War the US continued to finance Israel and made it even in bigger scale. Thus, Starting with fiscal year 1987, Israel annually received \$1.2 billion in all grant economic aid and \$1.8 billion in all grant military assistance¹⁷⁶. Thus, the US defined its key priorities in the region: reliance on the Gulf countries that provide energy resources to the West and support of Israel, long-standing strategic partner in the region.

Bill Clinton (1993-2001), Democrat, was the first president to develop a friendly relationship with Yasir Arafat, to visit Gaza, and to speak sympathetically of Palestinians' aspirations to rule themselves on their own land¹⁷⁷. He also supported the creation of the Palestinian state: "There can be no genuine resolution to the conflict without a sovereign, viable Palestinian state that accommodates Israelis' security requirements and the demographic realities¹⁷⁸." Most importantly, he considered Palestinians and PLO as a legitimate negotiating party to the

¹⁷⁵Jonathan Sciarcon, "Raegan, Obama, and Israel: Historical Context, Uncomfortable Comparisons", *E-International Relations*, 19 January 2017, <https://www.e-ir.info/2017/01/19/reagan-obama-and-israel-historical-context-uncomfortable-comparisons/>

¹⁷⁶ "US Foreign Aid to Israel: History & Overview", *Jewish Virtual Library*, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overview-of-u-s-foreign-aid-to-israel>

¹⁷⁷ Quandt, William B. *Peace process: American diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1967*. Brookings Institution Press, 2010.

¹⁷⁸ Abartig Shanani, "American Presidents on Palestine", *NPR*, 11 September 2011, <https://www.npr.org/2011/09/18/140579092/american-presidents-on-palestine?t=1623405648787>

Arab-Israeli peacekeeping. His whole term was devoted to the settlement of the conflict. However, after the fail of the Camp David II he was very disappointed and blamed Arafat in that.

George W. Bush, Republican, (2001-2009) came to power in unprecedented circumstances in American history. The terrorist attack 9/11 was the first time when the US was directly attacked on their own territories. This have changed the attitude of the US towards the Middle East making the “war against terror” a priority number one. It is difficult to say what were the exact reasons of Al Qaeda to conduct this attack but America’s position on the Arab-Israeli conflict was certainly on the list of grievances¹⁷⁹. The 2003 Iraq war the policy of imposing democracy caused the criticism of the US not only in the region but among its NATO allies. The aim of Bush’s freedom agenda in the region was not simply stability, but, as summarized in that phrase “balance of power that favors freedom¹⁸⁰”, and he made his choice in favor of military solutions instead of peacekeeping negotiation. Israel was considered by the US as an ally in the “war against terror” and President Bush has, on various occasions, stressed that Israel have the right to use force by all means necessary against what he labeled as acts of Palestinian terror¹⁸¹ thereby favoring Israeli security settings rather than mutual security. For George W. Bush needed to address the Israeli-Palestinian in order to put an end to further growing extremism and unrest in the region. He backed the Quartet’s Road Map formula sponsored by the UN, the EU, and Russia to resolve the conflict. Outlining the plan, he said: "It is untenable for Israeli citizens to live in terror. It is untenable for Palestinians to live in squalor and occupation. ... My vision is two states, living side by side in peace and security¹⁸²". As a precondition to the settlement, he asked Palestinian authorities to reform the PA and elect a new leader. Daniel E. Zoughbie in his book “Indecision Points : George W. Bush and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” criticized the ambiguity and indecisiveness of the

¹⁷⁹ Kurtzer, Daniel C., et al. *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace*. Cornell University Press, 2012.

¹⁸⁰ Daniel E. Zoughbie. (2014). *Indecision Points : George W. Bush and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. The MIT Press.

¹⁸¹ Mohamad, Husam. “President George W. Bush's Legacy on the Israeli-Palestinian ‘Peace Process.’” *Journal of International and Area Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2015, pp. 79–92. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43490281. Accessed 6 June 2021.

¹⁸² Abartig Shanani, “American Presidents on Palestine”, *NPR*, 11 September 2011, <https://www.npr.org/2011/09/18/140579092/american-presidents-on-palestine?t=1623405648787>

American president saying “in yet another bold move that contradicted previous policies for bringing the democratization to the Middle East, Bush undertook an audacious project to free Palestine, not from its occupiers, but from its democratically elected leader, Yasser Arafat¹⁸³. Even though the Road Map formula was announced to go in line with all the previous international efforts to resolve the conflict such as the UN Resolutions 242 and 338, the Madrid Conference, Oslo Accords, Arab Initiative for Peace, George W. Bush in his letter to Sharon responding to his disengagement from Gaza and some territories in the West Bank made unilateral commitments that strengthened Israel in the legitimacy of the status quo. Rabinovich mentions them: acceptance of Israel’s large settlement blocks in the West Bank, an allusion to continued support of Israel’s “nuclear ambiguity”, acceptance of the principle of Palestinian refugees’ return to a future Palestinian state rather to Israel, and a statement promising that “existing arrangements regarding the patrolling of air space, territorial waters and land passages of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will continue¹⁸⁴. The democratic election of Hamas in 2006 reflected American mistakes on the Israeli-Palestinian direction. Desired by the US Palestinian democracy has chosen to confront American policy in the region and the conflict and this was used by Israel to further implement its unilateral policy.

Barack Obama, 2009-2017, Democrat, started his career openly addressing the Israeli-Palestinian cause at Cairo University in 2009. Most importantly, he clearly stressed his adherence to the two-state solution that definitely become a challenge to the right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu that refuses from any concessions for Palestine. Asked by an interviewer with the Israeli news site, NRG, if it was true that a Palestinian nation would never be formed while he's prime minister, Netanyahu replied, "Indeed¹⁸⁵". Obama believed that the “two-state solution” is beneficial for Israel, Palestine and the US. However, this good intention was significantly vanished by the Arab revolutions in the region that focused the attention of the Obama Administration on maintaining the stability in the region as a whole. The Arab Spring added so many instabilities to the regional situation that the old Israeli-Palestinian conflict moved to the backside in its importance for all actors that indeed played

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Rabinovich, Itamar. *The Lingering Conflict: Israel, The Arabs, and the Middle East 1948 2012*. Brookings Institution Press, 2012, p.158

¹⁸⁵ Elliott C. McLaughlin, “Israel’s PM Netanyahu: No Palestinian state on my watch’, *CNN*, 16 March 2015, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/16/middleeast/israel-netanyahu-palestinian-state/>

in favor of Israel. Another important landmark during the Obama presidency was brokered by the US JCPOA or Iran nuclear deal in 2015 that lifted billions of dollars' worth sanctions in exchange for dismantling most of the Iranian nuclear facilities and international control over its nuclear program. JCPOA brought significant changes into the Middle Eastern landscape. From the one hand, they provided more security to the Gulf countries and Israel itself excluding the possibility of nuclear attack from the Iranian side. From the other hand, the possibility of nuclear strikes is very limited at modern times. Further, the main threat that Israel pose for the GCC countries and Israel is not its nuclear program, but mostly its spreading political influence in the region. What is more, huge inflows from trade has increased Iran's capacity to finance its militias and other political interests and have not deprive it from the opportunity to restore its nuclear program at any moment. Even though the US and Israel faced the biggest disagreements on many directions, Israel remained the US strategic ally and partner. In Obama's last year in office, the two governments were negotiating a new ten-year commitment of tend billions of dollars of US military aid to Israel¹⁸⁶. What is interesting, during the Obama presidency the US for the first time in history abstained from voting on a Security Council resolution 2334 which demands an immediate halt to all Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli minister Yuval Steinitz, speaking after the vote, said the US had "abandoned Israel, its only ally in the Middle East" and said its behavior was not that of a friend¹⁸⁷. The official added: "This is an abandonment of Israel which breaks decades of US policy of protecting Israel at the UN and undermines the prospects of working with the next administration of advancing peace"¹⁸⁸.

Donald Trump, Republican, 2017-2021, was the one to step back from the policy of "democratic crusade" and liberal values. From the beginning of his presidency, he started to play his own game on many national and international directions not caring much about continuity of the American policy. In his National Security Strategy regarding the Middle East, it was clearly stated that Iran is the main enemy in the region for the US: "Iran, the world's

¹⁸⁶ Jeremy Pressman, "Obama and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *E-International Relations*, 14 July 2016, <https://www.e-ir.info/2016/07/14/obama-and-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/>

¹⁸⁷Eric Cortellessa, "Choosing not to veto, Obama lets anti-settlement resolution pass at UN Security Council", *The Times of Israel*, 23 December 2016, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/choosing-not-to-veto-obama-lets-anti-settlement-resolution-pass-at-un-securit-council/>

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

leading state sponsor of terrorism, has taken advantage of instability to expand its influence through partners and proxies, weapon proliferation, and funding¹⁸⁹". Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the strategy mentioned that "threats from jihadist terrorist organizations and the threat from Iran are creating the realization that Israel is not the cause of the region's problems", and that "states have increasingly found common interests with Israel in confronting common threats". The strategy promised a "greater economic and political cooperation that will expand prosperity for those who want to partner with us"¹⁹⁰". It is interesting that the framework for the future Trump's "Peace to Prosperity" plan reads very well from it. During the Trump's presidency, the US significantly reduced its presence in the Middle East. After the protests in Iraq in January 2020, Trump withdrew the US forces from Iraq. In September 2021, the US forces left Afghanistan. In the article "How to Do More with Less in the Middle East" authors describe the new American approach in the region: "A focus on constraining geopolitical competition within the region, confronting Iranian behavior more effectively, and resolving proxy conflicts where possible should enable Washington to maintain preponderant influence, doing less in the Middle East without giving up on it altogether"¹⁹¹. Trump staked on the armament of American Gulf allies and Israel and pointed military special operation such as, for instance, killing of Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian major general, in January 2020.

Trump initially took an overt pro-Israeli stance. The US unilaterally withdrew from JCPOA with Iran. He also officially recognized Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, seized by Israel in 1967¹⁹² and Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, having moved a new US embassy there. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recognized the West Bank settlements as legal saying to reporters that the United States has concluded that "the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not, per se, inconsistent with international law"¹⁹³".

¹⁸⁹ National Security Strategy of the United States of America, Trump White House, Archives, December 2017, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Mara Karlin and Tamara Cofman Wittes, "How to Do More With Less in the Middle East: American Policy in the Wake of the Pandemic", *Foreign Affairs*, 15 September 2020, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2020-09-15/how-do-more-less-middle-east>

¹⁹² "Golan Heights: Trump signs order recognising occupied area as Israeli", *BBC*, 25 March 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-47697717>

¹⁹³ "US says Israeli settlements are no longer illegal", *BBC*, 18 November 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50468025>

Further, Trump cut a humanitarian and development aid to Palestinians in the amount of more than \$200m¹⁹⁴. The US unilaterally developed a peace plan “Peace to Prosperity” not consulting with any of the parties and even not mentioning negotiations in the future. However, the plan was definitely of Israeli interests. It was developed by Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law married on his daughter Ivanka. He hasn’t had before any experience in diplomacy and in the Middle East. The Guardian reports that he also has close family ties to Netanyahu¹⁹⁵. The Plan in ultimate form prescribed annexation of the West Bank settlements, a four-year suspension of the construction of Jewish settlements and recognition of Jerusalem as a capital of Israel. Palestinians would have received a two-state solution, a capital city on backyards of Jerusalem and various economic initiatives implemented worth \$50 billion of investments. In fact, the plan fixed the bitter reality on the ground, and when Mahmud Abbas as expected refused from it calling it “Fraud of the Century” instead of “Deal of the Century”, Netanyahu announced its realization in unilateral form. It is important to mention that for both Trump and Netanyahu mutual cooperation was seen as very beneficial in terms of political support. Trump pursued hopes to save his presidency for the second term thanks to the successful resolving of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Netanyahu was reelected in spring 2020 after the publication of the “Peace to Prosperity” and his announcement of annexation of the settlements in the West Bank that make up 30% of the West Bank territory. The annexation issue became a formal PR reason for the UAE and Bahrain to sign the Abraham Accords.

After the announcement of the annexation on the 1st of July 2020, Netanyahu faced new Palestinian protests and international critique. In response, Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas announced that the Palestinian leadership considered itself “absolved of all the agreements and understandings” with the United States and Israeli governments, considering Israeli plans for annexation¹⁹⁶. The UN's Middle East envoy has warned that Israeli annexation and

¹⁹⁴ “Donald Trump cuts more than \$200m in aid to Palestinians”, *The Guardian*, 25 August 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/aug/25/donald-trump-cuts-more-than-200m-in-aid-to-palestinians>

¹⁹⁵ Chris McGral, “‘Don’t talk about history’: how Jared Kushner crafted his Middle East ‘peace’ plan”, *The Guardian*, 28 January 2020,

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jan/27/jared-kushner-israel-palestine-peace-plan>

¹⁹⁶ “Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process”, Paper to the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee, 2 June 2020, https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unsco_ahlc_paper_-_june_2020.pdf

Palestinian counter-steps "would dramatically shift local dynamics and most likely trigger conflict and instability in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip"¹⁹⁷. This situation served as an ideal window of opportunity for the Arab states to go into deal with Israel and not to lose their face. The UAE and Bahrain signed the Accords on normalization in exchange for non-annexation of the West Bank by Israel. However, the period for which Israel will not annex these territories was not discussed. The official position of the UAE towards the Accords can be tracked in the interview of Yousef Al Otaiba , the UAE Ambassador to the US, to the US Hoover Institute. Mr. Otaiba was speaking about changes in the region and its dynamics. He mentioned that new people with new mindset appeared in the region who are "tired of conflict, war, very stagnant political issues". He said that the UAE has been working with Israel for decades quietly and that the annexation could harm these relations due to the negative public opinion, so "we managed to do something that is ultimately in our interests and managed to stop annexation at the same time". Regarding the major fault line in the region, Al Otaiba commented: "it is no Sunni versus Shia, it is not Arabs versus Persians, it is about what kind of future we want for the region". Al Otaiba advocates for the separation between religion and state. Given the fact how fast other countries followed the UAE in normalization with Israel, they share this vision as start many others.

Conclusion

Having tracked the dynamics of the wide Arab-Israeli conflict and having considered the American contribution to the Arab-Israeli peace process, it is fair to conclude that the American influence has been playing a crucial role in the whole peace process. The US initiated various peace formats, mediated negotiations and backed all the peace agreements that were signed with Israel. One of the issues of American involvement in the process is that the time of the presidential term is too short to secure consistency and continuity of American approach and policy in the region. To make a visible change an American administration should put the settlement of the conflict at the core of its activities like Bill Clinton did; however, new world challenges and national interests push the importance of the Palestinian

¹⁹⁷ "Explainer: Israel, annexation and the West Bank", *BBC*, 25 June 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-52756427>

problem further back. It is difficult to say that the US were a neutral broker of the peace process. Israel remains the most important historical strategic American partner in the region. Countries share the same vision of the regional security architecture and have the same foes: Iran and terrorism. The association of the Palestinian side with terrorism almost by all American presidents and not perceiving it as a legitimate party for negotiation significantly stagnated the process of a fair conflict resolution. Hamas that is governing in the Gaza Strip and gaining now more support in the West Bank is considered by the US as a terrorist organization and thus excluded from the resolution. In addition to that partiality, the US vetoed all the UN resolutions condemning Israel and concerning its settlements that leaves absolutely no leverage to influence on Israel through international mechanisms. It would be possible to affect the central issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – settlements in the West Bank – only if there will be another Ariel Sharon in power, who will unilaterally evacuate all the settlements. However, such a development seems very unrealistic in current settings as such a decision will never gain political support in Israel. Even Netanyahu was criticized for agreeing to the Trump's plan "Peace to Prosperity" as it contained provisions about creation of the Palestinian state. Polls show that half of Israelis support annexing parts of the occupied West Bank¹⁹⁸. At the moment of writing, all eight Israeli parties united to unseat Benjamin Netanyahu from his position that he has been taking for 12 years. They have promised to stop further marginalization of Palestinians living in Israel and grant them more political influence. Basically, considering the fact that, according to the UN, by 2050 Palestinians will outnumber Israelis in Israel, makes such policy very dangerous for internal security of Israel. Thus, despite all the promises even harder marginalization of Palestinians in Israel can be expected. Another option to influence the situation with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank is an American president who would support or at least not oppose Security Council resolutions allowing sanctions against Israel. However, as we could see on the Obama example, a little response followed the resolution 2334. As history shows, even if there are fundamental disagreements between America's and Israel's policies towards the Middle East, Israel remains an important ally of the US and in a high degree enjoys its financial support. In addition, it is widely known that the US have a very influential Israeli lobby at home. The US in many situations closes eyes for its allies actions pursuing a double standard policy. For instance, Israel is silently allowed

¹⁹⁸ "Half of Israelis support West Bank annexation, poll finds", *Reuters*, 3 June 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-poll-idUSKBN23A1X5>

to have its nuclear program even though it is inconsistent with the “non-proliferation” principle, and such countries as Iraq, Iran, North Korea have been facing sanctions and even war. Another illustrative example of this double standard policy is the murder of Jamal Khashougi in the Saudi embassy that remained unaddressed by the US authorities. Surely, American policy depends in a significant degree on which president and party takes office. At least two administrations recognized the settlements in the West Bank to belong to Israel: George W. Bush and Donald Trump. They laid a ground for a unilateral character of the American approach to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As long as Israel has the US behind its back, the situation with settlement will remain unchanged.

Donald Trump was a very pragmatic president, not sophisticated with a tradition for the US appellation to democratic and liberal values. He desired to receive fast political gains from the proposed settlement of the conflict that did not address the root causes and could not serve for a long-term resilient solution. Even the name of the plan “Deal of the Century” gives a hint about its character – “deal” instead of “resolution”. However, his diplomacy virtuously used the window of opportunity being created by supporting an Israeli annexation of the West Bank settlements pushing the Arab countries exchange peace for prosperity and forget about the “land” principle. Answering the research question of this paper “whether the influence of the US became critical for the sign of the Abraham Accords”, the response that follows is yes and no. Without the American enthusiasm the process of normalization between Israel and the Arab countries could take longer, but the foundation for normalization was already on the table. While official PR position of the Arab countries was the one portraying them as saviors of Palestinians from annexation, the real intentions were rather pragmatic. Since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the world and the region have been developing. As Mr. Al Otaiba said in the interview, the dynamics in the region are changing and people are overlooking or neglecting this fact. New people are coming who are tired of wars and conflicts and have different mindset, values and vision. If to look at the map of the Middle East keeping in mind the future of the region, which countries there have a potential competitiveness in the modern world in terms of economics and development? The answer will include only the GCC countries, that have huge resources to transform their economics strategies, that have their vision of sustainable development 2030 and the only functioning in the region integration organization and Israel, that possess a significant experience in

technologies and intensive development and managed to successfully build its economy on a small territory, without energy resources and surrounded by then-hostile Arab states. What is foreseeable in the future is a strong regional cooperation and even some sort of regional integration between Israel and the GCC countries. It is difficult to imagine, but Arab unity and Arab solidarity does not exist anymore in the region as Arab countries are significantly divided in their approach to Iran, Israel, Turkey, Islamism and other issues. They do not need now to form a common approach to these issues. The Arab unity was replaced by the unity of the Gulf countries, which are obliged to coordinate their policies towards third countries. However, even such a strong regional integration organization have a weakness - Qatar that supports Hamas, political Islam and close ties with Iran and Turkey. Another sign that the region has changed is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not the central for the region anymore. The Islamic revolution in Iran, the end of the Cold War, devastating revolutions of the Arab Spring, migration crisis significantly shifted focus of not only Mideastern countries but global actors as well. In these different regional settings, the normalization between the Arab countries and Israel was foreseeable. Firstly, they have the same ultimate rival – Iran. Secondly, they are the closest allies of the US in the Middle East with strong historic strategic ties. Thirdly, the shadow diplomatic relations between Israel and the Arab countries have been already developing since 1970s. Fourthly, the economics of the countries are much more complementary than, for instance, economics of the GCC members themselves. Fifthly, the Gulf countries need Israel surveillance technologies to further maintain internal stability of autocratic regimes. Sixthly, countries never were in the direct confrontation and never had any territorial disputes. The factor of Trump was decisive in enabling these developments. Huge volumes of economic exchange between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain as well as aspirations for further normalization with other GCC countries can retain Israel in the future to annex the West Bank. However, declining significance of the conflict and further regional empowerment of Israel will only lead to greater marginalization of the Palestinian cause and further rounds of violence.

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Pledge of Honesty

“On our honours as students of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, we submit this work in good faith and pledge that we have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Perevalova', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Perevalova Anastasia

Vienna

29.01.2021

