

Transforming Dynamics: Exploring the Strategic Alliance between Saudi Arabia and Israel as a Catalyst for Middle East Geopolitics

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Abstract

The Middle East serves as a central hub for the Islamic faith, with a significant majority of Muslims residing in this region. The establishment of a Zionist state in an area where Muslims were the majority population in 1948 elicited surprise among the Middle Eastern Muslim nations. The majority of Muslim states in the Middle East exhibited significant opposition to the establishment of the nascent Zionist state. Saudi Arabia, being the cradle of Islam, strongly rejected and opposed the concept of Israel. Saudi Arabia provided significant support to the Islamic nations of the Middle East during their collective efforts to eliminate the presence of the Zionist state from the territory of Palestine in the conflicts of 1948, 1967, and 1973 between the Arab nations and Israel. In light of numerous instances of Muslim losses to Jewish forces, supported by the United States, Saudi Arabia has begun contemplating the possibility of acknowledging Israel as a sovereign state within the Middle Eastern region. The leadership of Saudi Arabia was additionally prompted by the antagonism between Iran and the goal for economic modernization to acknowledge the legitimacy of a Jewish state in the land of Israel. Recent developments in the relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia indicate a strong willingness on both sides to establish bilateral ties. The recognition of Israel by Saudi Arabia is likely to have both positive and negative implications for the country. However, it presents a significant opportunity for Israel within the Middle Eastern region.

Key words: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Strategic Alliance, Geopolitics

1. Introduction

The political landscape of the Middle Eastern area saw significant changes throughout the twentieth century, mostly attributed to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the state of Israel within the former Palestinian territories of the empire. The Muslim nations in the Middle East collectively opposed the establishment of a Zionist state in the sacred regions around Jerusalem. During the period of Israel's establishment, no Muslim country

extended recognition to the state. Over time, Israel engaged in armed conflicts with the Arab states and achieved significant victories on several occasions. Certain Arab governments, such as Egypt and Jordan, have historically been significant rivals of Israel. However, these states have since chosen to acknowledge and establish diplomatic relations with Israel, after a series of conflicts and wars between them. Israel has comprehensive diplomatic ties with Egypt, a diplomatic accord that was created in the year 1979. Additionally, Israel also maintains full diplomatic relations with Jordan, a bilateral agreement that was formalized in 1994. (BECK, 2019).

Saudi Arabia has a significant position in the Islamic world due to its association with the origins of Islam, the presence of ancient Islamic landmarks, and its distinction as the birthplace of Hazrat Muhammad and his family members. Saudi Arabia has rejected the notion of Israel and encouraged other Muslim nations to speak out against Israel's oppressive actions and control in the Palestinian areas. Saudi Arabia provided assistance to Muslim nations in their conflict with Israel throughout the years 1948, 1967, and 1973.

The Saudi Arabian economy relies heavily on natural resources, which are projected to be depleted in the foreseeable future due to their present rate of usage. Similar to other Arab governments, Saudi Arabia is concerned about its economic prospects. The apprehension over the economic prospects of Saudi Arabia serves as a driving force for her to engage in new thinking. The NEOM city project embodies the manifestation of this conceptualization. Just like other states, Saudi Arabia prioritizes economic advantages in its policies. In line with this approach, Saudi Arabia aims to establish a partnership with Israel to promote economic development, particularly via the NEOM city project. Israel is anticipated to have a significant role in the development of NEOM city due to its unparalleled inventions on a global scale. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expresses its interest in harnessing the intellectual capabilities present in Israel to contribute to the economic progress of Riyadh.

Saudi Arabia, as the birthplace of Islam and a nation held in high regard by 57 Islamic nations globally, is likely to encounter significant consequences with its recent decision to officially recognize Israel as a sovereign state. The potential for disunity within the Muslim world under the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) may arise, leading to the emergence of several factions within the OIC and the broader Islamic community. Following the formal recognition of Saudi Arabia, it is anticipated that several other nations closely aligned with Saudi Arabia would subsequently extend their recognition as well. The global community may raise inquiries about the leadership and holy standing of Saudi Arabia in comparison to other Muslim nations. The Palestinian cause is anticipated to see a decline in strength, while Israel is expected to emerge as a dominant regional power in the Middle East. The escalating hostility between Iran and Saudi Arabia is expected to intensify, resulting in potentially detrimental consequences for the broader region.

2. History of Conflicting Ties Between Israel and Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, as a prominent center of Islam, has always opposed the establishment of a Zionist state of Israel in the Middle East. From its inception, it has consistently maintained its position as a crucial ally to Muslim nations that have actively advocated for the Palestinian cause. While Saudi Arabia has maintained a significant alliance with the United States, it has always had a contentious relationship with one of America's closest allies, Israel. Throughout the many conflicts between Arab nations and Israel, Saudi Arabia consistently offered substantial physical, moral, and financial assistance to Islamic countries, positioning itself as a prominent advocate for the Islamic

faith. Saudi Arabia actively participated in the Arab-Israeli conflicts of 1948, 1967, and 1973, whereby it became evident that achieving victory against Israel proved to be an exceedingly challenging endeavor for both Saudi Arabia and its Muslim counterparts. Following the Israeli military's loss in the Yom Kippur War, the most formidable adversary of Israel began to draw nearer to its borders, bolstered by the backing of the United States (Dawisha, 1983).

In the year 1947, Saudi Arabia was one of the Middle Eastern governments that expressed opposition to the United Nations' partition proposal for Palestine. In the context of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Saudi Arabia sent its military forces to provide support and protection to Palestine (Salih, 1986).

Saudi Arabia is a country located in the Middle East, namely on the Arabian Peninsula. It is known for its rich cultural heritage. During the crises of the Suez Canal, the Seven-Day War, and the Yom Kippur War, there was significant support for the Palestinian cause. Following the Yom Kippur War, Saudi Arabia initiated a reassessment of its foreign policy towards Israel, since it saw the removal of a United States-supported Israel from the Middle East to be an unattainable objective. Saudi Arabia has always endeavored to propagate a sentiment of enmity and hostility against Israel throughout the Muslim nations around the globe. Numerous Muslim nations exhibit opposition against Israel due of historical instances of Saudi Arabia engaging in similar actions. Several Islamic nations stopped their diplomatic ties with Egypt when the Muslim state recognized Israel (PACE, 1981).

Saudi Arabia and Israel both possess a shared characteristic that has prevented them from engaging in direct conflict throughout history: their affiliation with the United States, a global powerhouse. Saudi Arabia has significant importance as a Muslim nation for the United States, whereas Israel stands as the United States' most prominent and closely aligned partner globally. Israel has historically been the largest recipient of assistance from the United States, while Saudi Arabia has engaged in significant collaborations with the United States in the past. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Israel are increasingly forging stronger ties as a result of shared objectives throughout the region. The convergence of Saudi Arabia and the ascendance of Iran represents a shared objective. The countries under discussion are Israel and the United States of America (Sanger, 2015). Historically, USA has tried to convince her ally Saudi Arabia towards the recognition of Israel but it remained unsuccessful and Trump administration is doing such an attempt in an overt manner.

3. The Development of Friendly ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel

Following the conclusion of the seven day war in 1967, it became evident to the Arab world that achieving victory against Israel in the Middle East was not a straightforward endeavor. Consequently, the Arab governments began to make preparations for a significant conflict, but with a perception that they were undertaking a formidable undertaking. In 1973, Egypt initiated military action against Israel in an attempt to eradicate its presence from the global geopolitical landscape. This marked the commencement of the Yom Kippur War. Subsequently, Egypt became cognizant of the intricate dynamics at play, whereby engaging in hostilities with Israel effectively included confronting the United States. The United States provided assistance to Israel in that way. Anwar Sadat made efforts to establish a compromise with Israel, culminating in the Camp David Accord, whereupon he officially acknowledged the existence of Israel (History.com, 2020). The Arab countries boycotted Egypt but later on the reinstated their relations with Egypt. The Saudi

kingdom observed the entire scenario deeply and meticulously. This development was infect an informal step towards the recognition process of Saudi Arabia.

The advent of the Islamic revolution in Iran introduced a new dynamic in the Middle East, namely the emergence of Sunni-Shia sectarianism. Iran has emerged as a significant and concerning danger to Saudi Arabia and the wider region. In 1948, Iran extended diplomatic recognition to Israel; however, after the revolution, Iran subsequently revoked its recognition of Israel. The occurrence of this major event in the Middle East is a significant development for Saudi Arabia to carefully consider in relation to the potential recognition of Israel. One notable historical occurrence that demonstrates Saudi Arabia's affinity towards Israel is the incident that transpired in 1981. During this period, Israeli aircrafts were seen using Saudi Arabian airspace, and it is widely believed that Saudi Arabia provided implicit consent for such activities (Solis, 2010).

The end of the Cold war made US a sole super power and bipolarity ended with unipolarity, new recognitions, new blocs, groups appeared in the world stage, and states like India and China started full diplomatic relations with Israel (Abadi, 2004). The various worldwide political developments have served as catalysts for Saudi Arabia's inclination towards recognizing the state of Israel. Saudi Arabia, as a nation with historical significance in the founding of Islam, endeavors to safeguard against the tyranny faced by Muslims in Palestine. The primary catalyst for animosity between Saudi Arabia and Israel stemmed from the contentious matters surrounding Palestine, including the perceived mistreatment of Muslims in Palestine by Zionist forces. In the aftermath of the 1990s, the evolving relationship between Israel and Palestine has prompted the Saudi authorities to contemplate the possibility of recognizing Israel. The Oslo Accords, signed in 1994 and 1995, were a significant development in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, since they included mutual recognition between Palestine and Israel. Specifically, Palestine acknowledged the existence of Israel, while Israel granted recognition to Palestine as a distinct territorial entity (StateDepartment, n.d.).

Following the 1979 revolution, Iran emerged as a significant and formidable challenge to the continued existence of Israel. Iran's views have progressively gotten more stringent and severe in the 21st century. During the presidency of Ahmadi Nejad, Iran emerged as a shared security concern for both Saudi Arabia and Israel. The shared adversary has fostered increased proximity between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Israel and Saudi Arabia might be considered *de facto* allies in their efforts to counter Iran's increasing influence in the region. The connection in question has a delicate and progressive character (Marcus, 2017).

The factor of the Iran threat serves as a focal point of discussion for both Saudi Arabia and Israel. The presence of Wahhabis, both within and outside of Saudi Arabia, poses a potential hindrance to the development of the relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia. However, significant changes have occurred in recent years, and there are indications that the Israeli Prime Minister will soon visit Saudi Arabia. The prospective visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Saudi Arabia, as discussed by Walid Phares, a national security specialist at Fox News (Phares, 2019).

Muhammad Bin Salman asserts that every individual around the globe have an inherent entitlement to reside inside a tranquil sovereign state. The individual under consideration advocates for the recognition of Israel and Palestine's respective rights to self-determination inside their own territories. The individual in question argues that peace accords has the capacity to ensure the stability of each country, therefore facilitating the maintenance of a normal relationship. The issue

of the Palestinian people's rights, the destiny of the holy Mosque, and the status of Jerusalem have significant religious significance for Muhammad Bin Salman (Goldberg, 2018).

The demise of King Fahad and the subsequent measures implemented by his successor have facilitated a favorable environment for the recognition of Israel. Muhammad bin Salman (MBS) is implementing policies that have come as a surprise to the Muslim world, given their genesis in the birthplace of Islam. Muhammad bin Salman, a 34-year-old individual, has shown a moderate disposition and has actively advocated for enlightened moderation inside Saudi Arabia. He has endeavored to implement novel changes aimed at fostering economic prosperity and facilitating future progress within the kingdom. The Kingdom is now seeing the gradual formation of a favorable perception of Israel among its general populace. The encouragement of extensive criticism on Israeli policy is discouraged. Noha Al Balawi, a Saudi activist, was arrested due to his expression of dissent on the diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Israel. In addition to Balawi, several dissidents were subjected to detention in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Akkad, 2018). The Saudi government has arrested Abdel Aziz Al Ouda over a tweet in favour of Palestine (MEMO, 2019).

On October 26, 2018, Prime Minister of Israel Nathenyahoo made a sudden visit of Oman to discuss the peace initiatives of Middle East. He discussed peace initiatives with Sultan Qaboos of Oman (Reuters, 2018). This visit is a greatest development between the relations of Saudi Arabia and Israel. Oman has the majority of Ibadite Muslim and the have stern traditions like the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia. A rare visit to Oman is if possible then such a visit can also be possible for Oman. On the other hand, the Bloggers of Saudia Arab and other great influencers show a huge acceptance for Israel (i24News, 2019). Saud Al Qahatani is a right hand of Muhamad Bin Salman has been charged for having relations and doing espionage cooperation with Israel (Hilalah, 2019). The gradual development of the relations of Israel and Saudia Arab have reach in a point in the early 2020 that Israeli Muslims were allowed to go for Pilgrimage to Saudia while in the past special permissions were required to visit Saudia Arab (Newyorktimes, 2020).

4. Why Saudi Arabia Want to nurture exquisite ties with Zionist Israel

The Arab countries had a period of economic prosperity subsequent to the discovery and extraction of natural oil resources inside its territories. The Arab world was characterized by significant economic deprivation among the international community prior to that time. The abundance of natural resources in Arab nations has contributed to their affluence; nonetheless, a sense of apprehension over their future has emerged among some Arab republics. The economies of Arab nations have primarily transitioned into oil-based economies. The concerns around the potential depletion of oil reserves and its implications for the long-term economic prosperity of affluent nations have prompted some monarchs to contemplate strategies for securing their economic future. The ruler of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) designated Dubai as a prominent center for recreational activities and amusement. In the past, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) mostly relied on its oil industry as a key driver of its economy. However, in recent years, the UAE has gained recognition as a prominent center for entertainment tourism (Edmond, 2019).

In line with a similar model, Muhamad bin Salman has launched the NEOM city project in Saudi Arabia. The establishment of Neom City is expected to ensure the long-term economic growth and sustainability of Saudi Arabia in the face of potential resource depletion within the area. The primary objective of every nation in the globe is to achieve economic progress. Saudi Arabia is seeking to harness the inventive capabilities and intellectual capital of Israel inside the NEOM city

project, with the aim of bolstering its economic growth via the establishment of favorable bilateral connections. Saudi Arabia's inclination towards establishing stronger ties with Israel may be attributed to many factors, including the shared concern about the perceived danger posed by Iran (MABON, 2018).

A) In Pursuit of Economic Prosperity

The primary objective of any nation worldwide is to attain economic prosperity and ensure its sustained growth. The pursuit of economic growth is a primary objective for almost all states within the global community. Religious considerations and other such factors are indeed taken into account in the formulation of foreign policy of Muslim nations. However, when juxtaposed with economic progress, their influence becomes negligible and inconsequential. Israel has the potential to emerge as a very compatible and advantageous corporate ally for Saudi Arabia inside the Middle Eastern region. Saudi Arabia has the potential to serve as an importer of Israeli technology, while also using its oil and natural resources for trade with Israel. Israel is widely regarded as a strong friend of the United States, and it is often acknowledged that individuals of Jewish descent have significant influence in shaping US policies. Given this context, it is plausible to suggest that Israel may potentially assist Saudi Arabia in Washington by leveraging its close ties with the US to get further economic benefits for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Jared Kushner has assumed the responsibility of encouraging Muhammad bin Salman to acknowledge Israel, with the aim of establishing a foundation for any future assistance from Jared Kushner to Saudi Arabia in shaping Washington's policy towards the Kingdom (Tibon, 2018).

Saudi Arabia wants to make more economic prosperity by exporting more oil to the western world. The kingdom urgently needs an alternative route for its oil exports, for the same reasons Saudi Arabia is making gambits towards Israel. Riyadh is talking to Jerusalem about a pipeline to Eilat to import Israeli natural gas. This route could be used as an alternative to get Riyadh's oil to the deep port of Haifa to pass on to West and Europe. This route will be much safer, secure and faster way to guarantee the exports of Riyadh to Europe. This route will evade the aggression of Iran at Bab Al Mandeb strait in the red sea and strait of Hormuz. This will also save the transit fee involved in crossing the Suez Canal (Musmar, 2019).

a) Promotion of Westernization through Neom City

Saudi Arabia, as a prominent center of Islam, adheres to the traditional Islamic Law, which is governed by Wahhabism, a puritanical interpretation of Islam. This legislation exhibits incompatibility with several facets of the present-day world economic growth. Islamic law restricts the use of the Western financial system and imposes limitations on the involvement of women in many roles within the state. According to the aforementioned legislation, women are prohibited from participating in the economic activities of the nation, since their confinement within the domestic sphere restricts their ability to do so, in contrast to males. In industrialized nations, women make significant contributions to the country's economy. The labor force in Middle Eastern countries has the lowest level of gender parity. The female representation in the workforce of Saudi Arabia is at a mere 16.6%, in stark contrast to Europe where it exceeds 46%. Israel stands out as the only nation in the Middle East region where the proportion of women in the labor force exceeds 35% (Fetterolf, 2017). The Moderate King of Saudi Arabia Muhammad Bin Salman has started empowering women in Saudi Arabia by allowing them to drive cars (Specia, 2019). The well aware and moderate young prince wants to promote westernization in the country for the sustainable development of the economy.

Saudi Arabia is prepared to embrace the potential investment from Israel in the NEOM city, while Israel expresses its willingness to engage in collaborative efforts with Saudi Arabia inside the NEOM city. According to a report in an Israeli newspaper, there is evidence of communication that confirms the existence of coordination between Arab businesspersons and diplomats in Tel Aviv. The companies in Israel are well-prepared to secure contracts worth billions of dollars. According to a report published in an Israeli newspaper, there exists communication that purportedly confirms the involvement of the Saudi government (MEMO, 2017).

The half-trillion dollar enterprise to build a tristate at Egyptian, Jordanian border in the Gulf of Aqaba will make Riyadh recognizing Israel and integrating it into the project (Korybko, 2017).

The Trump administration has aggressively endorsed and facilitated the process of reconciliation between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of the President of the United States, has a prominent role as a key figure in the Middle East, particularly in relation to his established connections with Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS). Kushner is trying to persuade MBS to align with Israel's perspective towards the Palestinian problem, and he has made notable progress in this regard (Kirkpatrick, 2019).

b) Allying with Israel against Iran

The best context for having a deep insight into the regional politics of the Middle East is a Cold War in which Saudi Arabia and Iran play the prominent roles (Gause, 2014). Abdul Hamid AL Hakim, a former director of the Middle East Center for Strategic and Legal Studies in Jeddah, expressed his support for the Jewish state by extending congratulations to Israel on its seventieth Independence Day. Additionally, he expressed his approval of the move of the US embassy to Jerusalem. The individual asserts the perspective that Jews possess a historical entitlement to the territory of Israel, a claim rooted in their adherence to "monotheistic Scriptures." Saudi Arabia is increasingly aligning itself with Israel, resulting in a significant loss of support for hard-line Palestinian factions (Israeltoday, 2018).

During the war of 2006 of Israel on Lebanon, Saudi Arabia sent secret messages of backing to Tel Aviv and insisted it to attack at Hezbollah with all its power. Prince Bandar hold meeting with Ehud Olmert and long-time Mossad chief Meir Dagan in Jordan after the attack of Israel on Lebanon in 2006 (Nassar, 2019).

The lack of a unified condemnation from the Islamic world over the Trump Plan of Middle East 2020 serves as evidence that some Arab nations are prepared to establish normalized ties with Israel in order to form a united front against the shared perceived danger posed by Iran. During a discussion with Al Jazeera, a Palestinian author and journalist said that the January 2020 clashes between the United States and Iran had led other Gulf nations to see the United States as their only protection against Iran (Baroud, 2020).

c) Research, innovation and modernization of Economy

Saudi Arabia is a nation characterized by abundant natural resources, although it has significant challenges in terms of its human capital. The abundance of natural resources is providing sustenance to the populace, therefore exempting them from taxation obligations to the government. Research and innovation are somewhat limited in the country, and the allocated budget for education amounts to about 4 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a much lower proportion compared to other economically prosperous countries. Foreign laborers are engaged in

various occupations due to a shortage of domestic labor in their respective countries. The confinement of women inside domestic spaces may be attributed to religious constraints imposed upon them. The aforementioned restrictions are significant impediments to the achievement of sustained economic growth in the Kingdom. Prince Muhamad Bin Salman, a figure of mild disposition, expresses a desire to foster better relations with Israel, a nation renowned globally for its advancements in science and innovation. In contrast to Saudi Arabia, Israel has a relative scarcity of natural resources but possesses a notable abundance of human resources. Saudi Arabia is captivated by Israel's human resources, innovativeness, research development, intellectual capacity, and ideas. Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations are increasingly establishing closer ties with Israel due to their need for advanced security and surveillance systems to effectively monitor their own people within the backdrop of regional uprisings. Israel has shown a high level of proficiency in quelling uprisings inside the Palestinian area for over the last five decades. The Gulf States have a strong demand for Israel's technological innovations. The Gulf States and Saudi Arabia place significant importance on their relations with Israel due to many factors (Rahman, 2019).

5. The Possible impact of Saudi Arabia and Israel ties on Islamic world

The prominent status of Saudi Arabia within the Islamic world is now facing significant challenges as a result of the policies and unconventional actions undertaken by Muhammad Bin Salman in relation to Israel and Palestine. The actions undertaken by the individual in question, which include implementing efforts to terminate the Arab boycott of Israel, apprehending several princes, and most significantly, establishing normalized ties with Israel, serve to undermine Saudi Arabia's standing within the Muslim world (Fraihat, 2017).

The unveiling of the 2020 pro-Israel plans by the United States and Israel at the White House, with the participation of ambassadors from Bahrain, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, indicates their approval of President Trump's pro-Israel initiatives. In the year 2018, the nation of Oman extended a warm reception to Prime Minister Netanyahu in the city of Muscat, despite its longstanding practice of maintaining a neutral stance in matters of foreign affairs (Najjar, 2020).

a) Destruction of the Unity of Islamic world

According to TE Lawrence who was the champion of pan Arabism admitted in is later days "Arab unity is a madman's notion- for this century of next, probably. English speaking unity is a fair parallel." (Lawrence, 1963). Muslims constitute 23.2 percent of the population of the world and they have 57 states in the world (shiawaves, 2019). There are several conflicts among them, including ideological, financial, territorial, and geographical dimensions. However, they exhibit unanimity in various other matters pertaining to the global Islamic community. The hallowed sites in Jerusalem and Makkah, located in Saudi Arabia, have significant reverence among Muslims worldwide. The majority of Muslims worldwide express empathy with the predicament faced by the Palestinian population. A limited number of Muslim nations have established diplomatic ties with Israel; yet, they have reservations over the perceived fairness of Israel's conduct towards Palestinians. In the event that Saudi Arabia, a prominent leader within the Islamic world, were to acknowledge the state of Israel, it would prompt all 57 nations worldwide to articulate their respective stances on this development. Consequently, the cohesion and solidarity of the Islamic world would face potential challenges. The Muslim community, which formerly exhibited shared characteristics despite its internal diversity, is now seeing a decline in harmonious relations, leading to the fragmentation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) into many factions.

The establishment of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was widely seen as imperative in light of historical events, notably the incident involving an assault on the Al-Aqsa mosque by individuals of Jewish descent (Ciment & Hill).

b) An inordinate setback to Palestine cause

The Palestinian struggle is intricately connected to the sentiments of the global Muslim population, which exceeds one billion individuals. The Al-Aqsa mosque and Bait Ul Muqadas are prominent religious sites for Muslims, situated in Jerusalem. These hallowed locations have significant importance within the context of the Palestinian struggle. From a religious standpoint, it is quite unlikely for Saudi Arabia to pose any threat to the Palestinian cause. However, from a political perspective, they do have the potential to negatively impact the Palestinian situation. Consequently, they will encounter significant repercussions from the global Muslim population, which constitutes around 23.2 percent of the total population. The potential recognition of Israel by Saudi Arabia may have detrimental implications for the Palestinian cause, as it might potentially influence other Muslim nations, such as the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, which share strong alliances with Saudi Arabia, to also consider recognizing Israel. This decision has the potential to foster divisions within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), so posing a threat to the cohesion and unity of the Muslim world (Gause F. G., 2018).

The 2020 plan put out by President Trump is a clear breach of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which explicitly called for the withdrawal of Israeli military troops from the lands that were seized during the six-day war. The 2020 plan put out by President Trump marginalized the Palestinian population. Saudi Arabia expressed its appreciation for the efforts of President Trump and advocated for the initiation of direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine (Najjar, 2020).

c) Rise of conflicts in the Middle East

The potential recognition of Israel by the leader of several Muslim nations, a country that is seen as an oppressor by over 50 Muslim countries globally, has the potential to generate diverse confrontations within the Middle East region. This choice has the potential to create divisions among Muslim nations, leading to the formation of distinct factions and organizations, as can be seen in the Middle East with regard to certain matters. In the Middle East, there are two prominent blocs that are easily discernible. One of these blocs is led by Iran, while the other is unofficially led by Saudi Arabia. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, and Bahrain are recognized as friends of Saudi Arabia, whilst Qatar and the Houthis of Yemen are aligned with Iran. Iran is a nation with a mostly Shia population, and it is observed that other governments in the Middle East with significant Shia populations tend to want closer relations with Iran. Iraq has a substantial population of Shia individuals, which contributes to its alignment with Iran on several contemporary matters. The Houthis in Yemen are affiliated with a particular branch of Shia Islam, which distinguishes them from other Shia groups. This affiliation has led to their support from Iran in their conflict against the Wahhabi sect in Saudi Arabia. The substantial Alawite community in Syria has fostered closer ties between Syria and Iran, but the Sunni majority in the country is also seeking closer relations with Saudi Arabia (Williams, 2020).

When divergences arise, alliances and coalitions are established, leading to the emergence of wars within a certain region. If Saudi Arabia were to officially recognize the legal status of a Zionist state in the Middle East, it is likely that other influential nations in the region would express

opposition towards this decision. Countries such as Turkey, Iran, and Qatar are expected to oppose the decision made by Saudi Arabia due to their stance against the perceived oppressions carried out by Israel in the Palestinian territories. Various Muslim militant organizations, such as Hezbollah and Al Qaeda, who oppose the perceived oppressions of Israel, are likely to have a similar stance towards Saudi Arabia. (O'Connor, 17).

d) Robust recognition for Israel

The alteration in the Muslim world's perspective is likely to occur when Israel is acknowledged by the most esteemed and influential Islamic nations. The Middle East is likely to see the emergence of a robust Israel, which is anticipated to get recognition from many key allies of Saudi Arabia, such as the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and the Gulf States. The international friends of Saudi Arabia will contemplate the matter of recognizing Israel. Enhanced international recognition of Israel is anticipated to bolster its economic prowess, as several nations throughout the globe are likely to see Israel as a preferred destination for doing commercial activities.

At now, it is noteworthy that only a couple of Muslim nations, namely have officially recognized the state of Israel. However, their efforts to garner support from other Muslim countries have so far been ineffective. The standing of Jordan and Egypt in the Islamic World differs from that of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has a unique position among the 57 nations that identify as Islamic. The prevailing sentiment among a significant number of Islamic nations is that Israel is seen as an oppressive entity on a global scale. The potential recognition of Israel by Saudi Arabia may prompt a reassessment of Israel's perceived role as an oppressor among other Muslim nations. The recognition of Israel by Saudi Arabia is anticipated to have a cascading impact globally, leading to a steady increase in the number of governments recognizing Israel (MEMO, 2020).

6. Conclusion

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, being the birthplace of Islam, has several historical Islamic heritages, including holy locations, shrines, mosques, streets, and towns. Consequently, it holds a significant position within the global Muslim community. Saudi Arabia strongly opposed the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Middle East and expressed strong resistance towards the creation of Israel inside the area of Palestine. Similar to Saudi Arabia, Palestine and the city of Jerusalem have significant historical and religious importance for the Muslim community. Saudi Arabia has provided consistent moral, financial, and strategic support to the cause of Palestine from its inception. Saudi Arabia provided assistance to the Palestinian cause throughout the conflicts that took place in 1948, 1967, and 1973 between Arab nations and Israel. (O'Ballance, 1979). From its inception, Israel and Saudi Arabia shared a notable characteristic in their amicable relations with the United States. The establishment of a relationship and support between the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Israel has been a shared characteristic. This commonality has ultimately contributed to the growing proximity between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Following the establishment of Israel in the Middle East, a series of significant conflicts arose between Israel and various Arab nations, resulting in three major wars. These conflicts consistently showcased Israel's resilience and determination. Over time, Saudi Arabia came to recognize the formidable challenge of defeating Israel, particularly in light of the unwavering support it receives from the United States. Consequently, Saudi Arabia began contemplating the establishment of positive diplomatic relations with Israel. There are several factors that motivate both Saudi Arabia and Israel to seek closer relations with one another. The primary objective of a contemporary

nation-state is to achieve economic growth through fostering economic links with other nations. Likewise, Israel and Saudi Arabia have a mutual desire to enhance their economic prospects via closer collaboration.

Israel's position in the Middle East would be enhanced if a prominent Muslim nation in the area were to acknowledge its existence. Saudi Arabia is now facing a significant need for economic innovation and research development. Saudi Arabia has abundant natural resources; nevertheless, the availability of human resources, novel ideas, and research is limited inside the monarchy. Israel is internationally recognized for its notable contributions in the fields of research, innovation, and inventions. Given this reputation, Israel has the potential to provide valuable assistance to Saudi Arabia in several domains, such as the Neom City project, which has the promise of ensuring Saudi Arabia's future economic growth. The decision to extend the development of Neom to Egypt and Jordan via the Gulf of Aqaba is not just based on geographical closeness, but also influenced by the strategic location in relation to Israel (Rogers-Brown, 2017).

There are strategic factors that have facilitated closer relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The recognition of Israel by Riyadh has been driven by the shared perception of Iran as a significant danger to both Saudi Arabia and Israel. Israel perceives Iran as the primary regional danger, and anticipates that the proximity of Saudi Arabia to Israel might potentially lead to the alignment of other Muslim nations with Saudi Arabia. This alignment has the potential to establish a state of equilibrium in the Middle East.

The recognition of Saudi Arabia will confer more economic, political, social, and strategic influence onto Israel within the Middle East region. Saudi Arabia is widely recognized as a significant nation and the birthplace of Islam, exerting considerable influence within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Muslim world. Several countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and other Gulf States, are expected to follow Saudi Arabia's lead in recognizing Israel as an ally. The aforementioned acknowledgment has the potential to give rise to novel factions within the Islamic world and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Undoubtedly, it will diminish the cohesion of Muslims in the Middle East. Nations such as Iran, Iraq, and other Shia militant factions are anticipated to denounce this move and seek new alliances within the region in order to provide a counterbalance against Israel and its supporters.

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