

Abraham Accords and Peace Process in Middle East: A Critical Review of the Agreements towards the Settlement of the Palestine Dispute

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Abstract

Abraham Accords were signed between Israel and Arab states on September 15, 2020, under the umbrella of the United States (US). Countries like Bahrain, the UAE, Morocco and Sudan established bilateral relations with Israel in the areas of education, healthcare, tourism, economics, through bilateral agreements under the Accords. These countries are the willing participants, and the US has provided many benefits and concessions to them. These Accords are considered by its supporters as a positive and significant development towards the solution of Palestine issue, for a variety of reasons. However, the rise of tensions in Palestine in May 2021 and October 2023 shows that these Accords may have limited the efficiency of already established framework for resolution of the dispute in Palestine. The Accords have created new alliance of Gulf States and Israel against the interest of Iran in the region. (Goldberg, 2020). They occupy the space emerged out of the decreasing interest of the US in Middle East and demonstrate the realization of Gulf states and Israeli leaders in a changed scenario (Friedman, 2020). This research is conducted to assess the effects of these agreements on the peace process in Palestine. The study adopted the qualitative approach followed by content analysis. Policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders with an interest in the security and stability of the Middle East will find it to be a valuable resource.

Keywords: Abraham Accords, Palestine, Israel, Conflict, Peace

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the oldest surviving political dispute of the globe. The issue was started with the establishment of Israel in 1948 on the land of Palestine in Middle East. Many plans and proposals have been discussed, agreed

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and executed to reduce the friction between the warring parties in the region since the emergence of dispute in 1948. The last endeavour was made by Mr. Donald Trump, former president of the US, who convinced the Muslim countries in the region to establish and improve bilateral relations with Israel. Consequently, Bahrain, the UAE, Morocco and Sudan signed the Abraham accords and each country established bilateral relations with Israel during the tenure of his presidency. The initial announcement was made on 13th August 2020, and the UAE was agreed to establish the bilateral relations with Israel. This was followed by another announcement on 11th September 2020 and Israel and Bahrain established the diplomatic ties under the accord. Finally, Bahrain and the UAE signed the agreements with Israel on 15th September 2020 at the White House as a part of a peace treaty to start the bilateral relations with Israel (Guzansky & Marshall, 2020) & (Singer, 2021). Bahrain and the UAE accepted the sovereignty of Israel and developed formal diplomatic ties with her. Morocco signed the accord and developed diplomatic ties with Israel in December 2020. The gesture of Government of Morocco was reciprocated through the concessions by the Trump administration. The US recognized the sovereignty of Morocco over the disputed area in the western part of the Sahara Desert in Africa. (Lazin, 2023). Sudan also took a lead and signed the Accord. It established and normalized relations with Israel in January 2021. Again, this step was acknowledged by the US and Trump administration removed the name of Sudan from the State Department's list of the countries involved in terrorism. The removal from the list was observed as a catalyst for acceptance of Israel by Sudan (Abdullayev, 2024). The agreements were titled as: "Abraham Accords Peace Agreement: Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel and Abraham Accords: Declaration of Peace, Cooperation, and Constructive Diplomatic and Friendly Relations".

Education, healthcare, tourism, economics, a security trade alliance, and a comprehensive bilateral diplomatic treaty are among the numerous critical areas that the Accords address. (Khan & Shahzad, 2021). The accords also cover regional political and military ties between Israel and the signatories of the agreements, with only a brief mention of the dispute between Palestine and Israel (Khan & Sajid, 2021). Under the agreement, Israel has assured to halt its plans of unauthorized acquisition of land in Palestine for the construction of new settlements in exchange of establishment of its bilateral relations with the UAE and Bahrain. Prima facie, it appears that the seventy-five-year-old animosity between the Arabs and Israel has

been resolved, and the dynamics of the regional politics have undergone a transformation after signing of these agreements. (Kiani,2023). However, these agreements could not impact the political environment of the Middle East as observed during the working of these accords. The agreements may have different political, economic and security implications and bring different consequences for other countries of the region, especially Iran. Though the focus of these agreements was to strengthen the role of Israel through creation of its support among some Gulf states in the region but the motive behind the signing of the Accords is also viewed as the desire of the US to contain the role of Iran, Russia and China in the region (Syed & Ahmed, 2021). The tripartite Abraham accords (Jews, Christian and Muslims) could not establish peace in the Middle East (Winter & Guzansky, 2020). Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether this move will advance peace or marginalize the Palestinian problem. The inception of war in Middle East after the violent attack by Hamas on Israel in October 2023, has further limited the significance of these Accords. Therefore, this study will comprehend the rationale behind these normalizations, investigate their potential to lower down the friction between Palestine and Israel, and evaluate their impact on political landscape of the Middle East.

Review of the Literature

The conflict between Palestine and Israel emerged out of the rubbles of Ottoman empire after World War-I. This ongoing conflict is widely studied by the scholars, academia and students of political science.

Epshteyn (2021) highlighted the significance of Abraham Accords and stated that it is the major achievement of President Trump that he successfully negotiated and implemented the Abraham Accords under which the Gulf Countries have established bilateral agreements with Israel in the areas of science, trade, civil aviation, finance, health care, inter countries tourism, technological changes and water development. President Trump focused the countries in Middle East for containment of Ira's influence in the region and negotiated the Accords with the regional countries to ensure the effective role of Israel in Middle East. Even though the Accords could not succeed in lowering the friction between Palestine and Israel, the signatories are still committed and are making their efforts for the settlement of the Palestine issue.

Miller (2020) said that the possibility of more Arab states joining the Accords and normalizing ties with Israel remains unknown, with Sudan and Morocco joining after the US removed Sudan from the list of terrorist countries maintained by the US. Saudi Arabia has remained outside the UAE and Bahrain alliance, despite expressing endorsement of their actions. However, the prospects of execution of the Accords by the signatories in the region is linked with the political future of people in Palestine. Poor performance of the Accords has narrowed down the chances for Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries who might be hesitant to join if progress isn't made. According to Miller (2020), Netanyahu must moderate his policies towards the Palestinians for the UAE to continue implementation of Arab Israeli ties. This includes reluctance from high-profile acts that would embarrass the UAE as well as from intifadas and military actions.

Goldberg (2020) hold that if the accords are implemented, they will make a positive impact on the Palestinian situation. Because the inclusion of more Arab states with diplomatic ties with Israel will enable them to lobby and exert pressure over Israel for the interests and rights of the Palestinians. Davidovich (2020) argued that Arab leaders often prioritize their national interests over the Palestinians', and with weaker American presence and more aggressive nuclear-armed Iran, the Arab states like UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia may opt to strengthen diplomatic relations with Israel. The Accords have overshadowed the Palestine issue in the region, which gives rise to some optimism that the Palestinians have realized their previous strategy, which was spearheaded by Arafat, Mahmoud, and Hamas, did not work.

Goldberg (2020) stated that the Israeli government's unwillingness to embrace a two-state solution with the Palestinians was exposed by Trump's peace plan. He said that the Abraham Accords have the potential to undermine both Palestinian nationhood and Israel's democratic aspirations if they impede Israel's willingness to accept Palestinian control, despite their positive impact in preventing Iran and its proxies.

Norlen & Sinai (2020) said that the Abraham accord induced a significant shift in Middle East geopolitics, enabling Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to overcome a potential West Bank annexation plan, while the UAE gained full diplomatic relations with Israel and benefits from economic and military security. It strengthened the informal anti-Iran alliance.

Thus, the Accords may allow Israel to focus on improving relations with Arab and Muslim states, creating friendships between Muslims and Jews, but unlikely to change Palestinians' position in occupied territories.

Methodology

The qualitative research approach was followed during the study. Secondary data, which encompassed articles, books, newspapers, and internet searches, was used to assess the prospects of the issue. The documents were analysed by following the content analysis. A thorough examination of a variety of books, research papers, and newspapers has been conducted while studying the different dimensions of the issue under study.

Historical Context

Jewish migration started from Russia and Eastern Europe to Middle East in 1880s seeding Zionism. They began to settle in Palestine and Israel's first agricultural settlements were in the making, when in the 1890s, the Ottoman government restricted Jews from entering the country and purchasing land. (Mandel, 1975). However, the World Zionist Organisation was founded in 1897 during the first Zionist Congress and its local office was established in Jaffa. The organisation adopted the goal of establishment of independent state for Jews in Palestine (Roi, 1968). In 1916, the European powers agreed under "the Sykes Picot Agreement", a secret accord, to decide the future of territories ruled by Ottoman empire after the expected collapse of the empire. The organization followed a strict Jewish settlement policy in 1908, leading to the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Jewish and European colonialist settlements share similar philosophical backgrounds, with Zionist settlements exploited and deprived Arabs of their land, highlighting the role of ideology and colonialism. (Tahhan,2017). After the war in 1967, UN Security Council passed a resolution no. 242 and demanded Israel to withdraw from the occupied areas in respect of international law. Since then, the efforts are being made to achieve a peace in the region, but the success remained elusive for decades. However, ambiguous phrasing of the document created operational difficulties. After "Yom Kippur War" in 1973, the Camp David agreement, 11 years down the resolution, was signed which aimed for Israeli withdrawal and provisional Palestinian government formation. (Khatchadourian,2011). In 1979, Israel signed its first diplomatic agreement with an Arab nation by signing a peace treaty with Egypt.

The objective of this deal was to ensure a full withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula. This event represented the first breach of Arab unity against Israel. The first uprising, a series of protest, started in Palestine in 1987 and PLO and Israel agreed and signed the Peace Accords at Oslo, Norway in 1993 and 1995 (Makdisi, 2018). The Oslo Peace Accords decided the principles of self-Government for the people of Palestine and both the parties mutually recognized each other (Shlaim, 1994). Jordan entered a peace agreement with Israel in 1994, restoring American Jordanian relations after a damaged Iraq-Kuwait crisis. However, Jordan's public sentiment remains anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian (Khatchadourian, 2011). In 2000, the Palestinian cause gained legitimacy and recognition after Yasser Arafat met Ehud Barak in Camp David. However, the second Intifada, Intifada al-Aqsa, emerged because of the failure to reach an agreement. This time, Ariel Sharon, the Israeli opposition leader, entered a mosque, resulting in a wave of violence and excessive force. The Palestinians became enraged by their lack of socioeconomic advancement, as they were convinced that the superpowers had no intention to fulfil their promises. (Pressman, 2003). In 2002, President of the USA, George W. Bush called for a two-state solution, accusing Palestinians of terrorism and calling for new leaders. The Arab world supported this two-state solution with Saudi Arabia presenting a peace plan for Israel's withdrawal and recognition in exchange for the approval of the two-state option. (Khatchadourian, 2011). However, the Israeli Defence Forces dealt with uprising iron handedly and used more than one million rounds during the second intifada. After four decades of occupation and conflict, Israel withdrew from the Gaza in 2005. The Palestinian legislative elections of 2006 were won by Hamas; however, Israel, Russia, the EU, and the UN declined to authenticate their victory. (Efron, 2018). The events marked by the failure of the Annapolis Conference in 2007 and termination of Peace Talks between Palestinians and Israel during 2013-2014 resulted into the mistrust and animosity between Israel and Hamas. (O'Malley, 2017). Furthermore, in 2017, the Government of Israel declared Jerusalem as its capital. Mr. Donald Trump, President of the US backed and recognized the decision of Israel and subsequently shifted the US embassy to Jerusalem, the disputed new capital of the country. This decision was rejected by the world; however, it added fuel to the strained relations between Hamas and Israel. In 2019, Trump provided aid to Bahrain under an economic plan aimed at boosting Arab economies but the leaders in Palestine rejected the move of the US in the region. However, President Trump implemented and maintained his peace plan, and the Abraham Accords primarily work as an extension of the economic plan of the US in Middle East (Erdogan & Habash, 2020).

The Abraham Accords Declaration, 2020, is a concise declaration that has emphasized on peace in the Middle East through mutual coexistence and understanding. Further, it emphasizes human dignity, freedom, and cooperation among Jews, Muslims, Christians, and other religions. (The Abraham Accords Declaration, 2020). The agreements aim to develop diplomatic relations at consular level, combat terrorism, and collaborate in various sectors. The treaty was ratified by both parties, and any disputes expected to be emerged between the signatories would be resolved through negotiations or conciliation. The agreement was signed by the representatives of three countries i.e.; the US, the UAE and, Israel. Under the agreements, the UAE highlighted the importance of Israel's plan to suspend the unauthorized land acquisition process in Palestine for inhabitation of the Jews on the land of Palestine (Singer, 2021).

The factors driving the move of Muslim countries eager to join Israel

The Israel-Palestine conflict is widely recognized as the oldest protracted political conflict in the recent world history. The region of Middle East has witnessed several conflicts, including wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973, as well as uprisings of the Palestinian intifada in the 1990s and 2000. The conflict promoted unity among the many Muslim nations and provided a major impetus for Arab nationalism. The organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was established in response to the 1969 incident, but the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states did never support the armed struggle against Israel. However, they always supported the cause of Palestine.

The Accords, mediated by the United States, were unexpected development for regional states, even though these states were already experiencing good relations with Israel. The agreement was prompted by territorial insecurities, regional competition, security threats, Iran-related concerns, and unsuccessful military and political campaigns in Qatar and Yemen. (Kiani,2023). Palestinian disenchantment began during the Arab Spring, as Arabs realized internal challenges were more significant than external. (Feith & Libby 2020). As Arab leaders assert themselves, public commitment to the Palestinian cause diminishes, leading Arab states to follow their interests (Miller, 2020). The idea of Abraham Accords was that this involvement would primarily yield tangible and non-tangible benefits to Arabs and Israel. Nontangible benefits include building a powerful, like-minded coalition against Iranian influence and gaining greater acceptance among the US

establishment and Arab world, while tangible benefits include arms procurement, technological cooperation, economic development and tourism (Kiani,2023). Arab rulers have aimed to eliminate conventional security threats in the region to focus on post-oil period reforms, that could lead to an escalation in regional conflicts and have the potential to affect the human security in the region. However, the US has shown no support for excessive military presence in the region, as its interests have shifted since shale oil and gas were discovered. The Obama administration followed the policy of appeasement towards Iran which created the security vacuum in Gulf region. But the Trump administration focused Israel as a suitable substitute for the security vacuum in Middle East and strengthened its position through signing of Abraham Accords in 2020 (Jones, 2022).

Mr. Donald Trump reshaped US-Israel relations by accepting Netanyahu's West Bank settlements, reducing Palestinian refugee funding, acknowledging Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and launching a contentious Peace to Prosperity Middle East Plan. Arabs have been compelled to develop unconventional yet practical strategies to address the regional security environment because of these developments. Even, the countries tied under the nod of the Accords declared and reiterated their support for the cause of Palestine. (Langlois, 2020). They always advocated and followed the Peace Proposal of Arab countries presented and advocated by Saudi Arabia in 2001 for the settlement of Palestine issue under the mandate of UNSC Resolution no. 242, passed by UN Security Council in 1967, which advised a two-state solution in Palestine. However, the strategy of Arab countries towards the settlement of Palestine issue has been influenced and altered in response to Iranian geostrategic challenge.

The Abraham Accords influence on the Palestine issue

Trump administration has carefully selected and focused the GCC countries that have considerable political and economic strength to influence the peace initiatives in Middle East. The US has provided many benefits and concessions to the countries engaged in peace process with Israel. These countries are the willing participants, and they have always expressed their appreciation for the accords. Thus, the Abraham Accords are considered by its supporters as a positive and significant development towards the solution of Palestine issue, for a variety of reasons. The UAE's success was attributed by Emirati officials to the pressure it exerted, which ultimately resulted in the cessation of Israel's unauthorized land acquisition plans

during the years 2020 and 2021. The suspension of the decision of Netanyahu administration was appreciated and supported by Mr. Anwar Gargash, the then Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, the United Arab Emirates, who emphasized the decision made by Israel is the major point of the Abraham Accords that is predominantly centered on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The state minister further added that the steps taken by Israel under the accords have paved the way for confidence building measures leading toward the solution of the problem. Therefore, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed's bold initiative has alleviated the possibility of acquisition of land by Israel, thereby generating more possibilities for lowering down the friction between the warring parties in Palestine (Vakil, & Quilliam, 2023). The Abraham Accords provide a boost in trade and other business activities in the region. Israeli exports to the UAE witnessed a tenfold increase within one year of the inception of the Accords in 2020. Further, the UAE has signed number of agreements with Israel in the field of investment, innovation, finance, aviation, health and tourism since the execution of Abraham Accords in September 2020. But these agreements do not demonstrate political cooperation, as both nations prioritize their unique regional and international political perspectives that align with their national interests. (ÇATI, 2023). However, the Abraham Accords have the capacity and flexibility to create opportunities and circumstances for work and dialogue between the warring parties in Palestine. This, in turn, could have a positive effect on both parties, motivating them to engage in negotiations and pursue a peaceful path to settle the problem in Palestine. Furthermore, it could function as a call to end violence and aggression and provide an alternative way to resolve the chronic political problem. Both UAE and Israel have taken numerous steps to promote religious harmony in the region.

The Religious Coexistence Working Group, which was established in 2021 with the objective of maintaining interfaith and cultural dialogue, as well as eradicating religious intolerance and hostility, is a significant initiative (US Department, 2022). The Accords advocate for cessation of hostility and provocation and encouraged settlement of issues through peaceful manner by engaging the parties in constructive dialogue. Israel was forced to suspend its unauthorized land acquisition plans under the accords which otherwise has the potential to spark violence and animosity in the region. The Accords also promoted religious harmony through intercultural dialogues and cultural exchanges in the region. As a gesture of goodwill, Yair Lapid, Foreign Minister of Israel visited the UAE on June 29, 2021. He inaugurated the Israeli consulate office and the embassy in UAE during his visit. Mr.

Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel paid another visit to the UAE on December 13, 2021 and held parleys with the crown prince of the United Arab Emirates. He was the first Israeli leader who ever visited the UAE (Hameed & Kumaraswamy, 2022.). These visits were reciprocated by the visit of three member of Federal National Council of the UAE who visited the Parliament of Israel on February 07, 2022 (Vakil & Quilliam, 2023) & (Hameed & Kumaraswamy, 2022). Thus, it would not be possible for the signatories of the Accords to ignore the Palestine issue for an extended period. In fact, both parties have been actively involved in the process of resolving the conflict through constructive dialogue, without compromising their own policies. Since the inception of the Accords, the Gulf countries have been exposed to significant international pressure from the Muslim world. However, the Authorities in UAE has clarified that the Accords have empowered the UAE and Bahrain. They are in a better position to address the issue of human rights violations in Palestine effectively (Ellenbogen 2022).

These Accords may have limited the efficiency of already established framework for resolution of the dispute in Palestine. The rise of tensions in Palestine in May 2021 and October 2023 is indicative of the fact that these events have the potential to provoke a situation that is beyond the control of the GCC countries. In particular, the diplomatic endeavours of the GCC countries did not have any impact on the de-escalation process in Palestine, which suggests that the GCC countries have a limited impact on Israel's policy towards Palestine. After the Year 2021 and 2023 Israeli aggression against Palestinians and weak response from the UAE and Bahrain's shattered the hopes that the signatories of the Accords would exert pressure on Israel to deescalate the situation. The normalisation process between the Gulf countries and Israel has not been influenced by the escalating tensions between Palestinians and Israelis, as is evidenced by the signing of various agreements under the Accords since its inception in 2020. The cooperation between Israel and the GCC will not be impeded by any act of aggression by Israel in Gaza or the West Bank, as this relationship is based on bilateralism (Ishamali, & Ibiang, 2023).

The Abraham Accords have introduced new challenges to peace, as they have reduced sphere of action for Israel on one hand and have diminished the Palestinian position and influence in the region on other hand. Israel had the options to extend concessions and compromises under the Arab Peace Initiative, which stipulated complete normalisation of relations with the Arab countries in Middle East through a comprehensive peace deal with the people of Palestine (Weissman, 2023).

However, the Accords have provided Israel with the confidence to ignore the demands and violate the rights of people in Palestine. The recent escalation between Hamas and Israel has exposed the effectiveness of the framework developed under the accords to address the longstanding issue of Palestine. The situation highlights the volatile nature of relations between the signatories of the Accords which is extremely exposed to the domestic politics in Palestine (Hokayem, 2023). The Accords have created fissures in the longstanding stance of Arab countries to the cause of Palestine. The signatories are alleged to pursue and prioritize their own interests over the cause of Palestine which has further marginalized the strength of Arab countries on negotiation table in future (Zweiri,2020). The Abraham Accords have become a challenge for other regional countries who are the staunch supporter of two state solution for the people of Palestine. Critics have raised concerns about the Accords' influence on Israel's settlement expansion and its failure to comply with international demands for a negotiated settlement. According to the government's ongoing policy of expanding settlements in Palestinian societies and their subsequent actions in Israel, the Abraham Accords could not stop the dwelling plans of Israel for inhabitation of Jews in Palestine (Norlen & Sinai,2020). Moreover, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are reluctant to condemn Israeli aggression against the Palestinians. This serves as a clear illustration that Israel has twisted the provisions of the accords to gather the support of regional countries by engaging them in economic and cultural collaboration. The Abraham Accords have facilitated the circumstances that are conducive for the nourishment of extremist organizations, including Hamas and Palestinian Jihad organizations. These agreements have resulted in a surge in public support for these organizations, which is primarily attributable to their assertive posture towards Israel. Hamas conveyed its disapproval for the accords and pointed out that they are likely to align with the Zionist narrative.

Hamas has successfully convinced Palestinians that it is the genuine political force and their true representative that can watch their interest better, in contradiction to President Abbas, in the domestic realm owing to its assertive stance towards Israel and its advocacy for freedom. In the ongoing peace negotiations between the two nations, a deadlock has been the result of President Abbas' adoption of a more stringent posture towards Israel. Mr. Mahmood Abbas, President of Palestinian Authority addressed the UN General Assembly and declared that Israel is not supporting the peace process in Palestine, rather it is creating obstacles in the settlement of issues in Palestine (Khoury, 2022). President Abbas' have to follow the

harsh tone while his speech at the UN only to pacify his domestic constituency in Palestine. Further, the Abraham Accords have also added to the ferocious tone in the realm of domestic politics in Palestine, which is viewed as another impediment to the settlement of the dispute in Palestine. Benjamin Netanyahu also followed the President of Palestine and portrayed the Abraham Accords as his great political achievement for the country and employed them to accomplish his political objectives, particularly within the country. The Accords not only reinvigorated Netanyahu's political career, but also posed a challenge to his reputation as a supporter of Palestinian freedom fighters. His aggressive escalation of violence in Jenin, West Bank, indicates the domestic political pressure that prompted Netanyahu's aggressive posture towards Palestinians.

The UAE responded by pursuing a stringent de-escalation strategy, referring to the incident as an attack on the holy site. In addition, the UAE also maintained economic cooperation with Israel. (Pavia, 2023). The Accords were intended to foster economic, technological, and intelligence collaboration between the signatory countries (United States State Department, 2020). The Accords have delivered, and the signatory countries have developed economic collaboration to achieve the milestone of growth and development at a faster rate. However, there is little improvement towards resolution of political dispute in the region.

The impact of the Accords on the political landscape and the role of Iran and other countries in the Region

The Abraham Accords have changed the political orientation of major Gulf countries. It appears that Israel has emerged as the key winner. They established strong ties and encouraged collaboration across a variety of sectors with the two prominent Gulf states. The Accords have created new alliance of some Gulf states and Israel against the interest of Iran in the region. (Goldberg, 2020). They occupy the space emerged out of the declining interest of the US in Middle East and demonstrate the realization of Gulf states and Israeli leaders in a changed scenario (Friedman, 2020). Saudi Arabia has also taken several initiatives which indicates its desire for its political reorientation under the new framework of Abraham Accords in the Middle East. Mutual interests in addressing regional issues, including Iran's influence and Islamist extremist organizations, have led to indications of a strengthening relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia. In areas such as intelligence cooperation, security and countering Iran's influence, bilateral

communication and collaboration between the two countries have increased because of changed political realities under the framework of Abraham Accords (Beck, 2020). The United States is attempting to cultivate more cordial relations between the two nations by employing back-channel diplomatic methods (Weissman, 2023). Consequently, the future trajectory of their relationship will be influenced by the broader Middle East landscape, the domestic political environment, and regional developments. The Abraham Peace Accords have the potential to significantly undermine the diplomatic and political support of Palestinian authorities, thereby affecting the progress regarding lowering down the friction between the warring parties in Palestine. However, other states in the region like the GCC states of Oman and Qatar, as well as Turkey and Iran believe that it will have negative repercussions for the cause of Palestine. The people in Palestine strongly believed that the ratification of Abraham Accords by the Gulf countries is an act of betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Qatar has explained its position on the matter, asserting that the joining of the Accords with Israel has undermined the struggle for Palestinian statehood.

The Iranian leaders considered the Accords as a big mistake made by Bahrain and the UAE. The Turkish government has characterized the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) conduct as "hypocritical" and has declared that Bahrain and the UAE will not be overlooked by history (Al-Jazeera, 2020). The chances of achieving peace between the two nations under the Accord have been significantly reduced because of its failure to effectively address the fundamental causes of the dispute in Palestine, which is the real threat to the working of these Accords. Moreover, Iran has changed its regional strategy in reaction to the changing conditions in the Middle East. Iran's updated regional strategy has drawn attention to its attempts to deepen ties and collaborations with nations and non-state groups who supported its anti-Israel perspective. Iran has strengthened its alliances with Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Qatar, all of which are major stake holders in the power politics of the region.

Additionally, Iran has strengthened its position in the region by assisting Palestinian resistance groups, most notably Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad Movement. Iran has been providing political, military, and financial support to these organizations and has strengthened its commitment to the cause of Palestine and its antagonism towards Israel (Nahel, 2020). It hopes to establish itself as a dominant power through consolidation of its ties with its regional allies and minimize the apparent dangers that growing Israeli regional alliances represent.

Moreover, it depended on its relationships with non-Arab entities to promote its regional goals. The geopolitical tilt of the Iranian leadership towards Russia and China is also meant to undermine the US-lead process of re alignment of Muslim countries in the Middle East.

Russia remained a major actor in Middle East geopolitics. It has redesigned its role and developed closer relations with the countries in Middle East in recent years. Iran also developed collaboration with Russia in an effort to enhance its status as a regional power (Pollak, 2022). In the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian war of 2023, Iran has denounced Israeli acts and advocated for Palestinian rights. It tries to take advantage of such issues to keep its credibility with the Arab and Muslim population and to get assistance for its anti-Israel position.

Conclusion

The Palestine-Israel conflict has strengthened the unity and sparked Arab nationalism among the masses in the Middle East. Though the GCC countries have provided persistent support to Palestinians, however their ratification to the Abraham Accords has influenced their commitment to Palestinian cause negatively. The US efforts to reshape the US-Israel relations have prompted Arabs to devise unconventional strategies to manage and maintain the environment of regional security. Abraham Accords were also viewed to foster sustainable economic growth in the Region, with Israel and the UAE signing agreements in different sectors. They promoted interfaith harmony and established closer relations between GCC countries and Israel. Despite escalating tensions in Gaza, the Accords have promoted bilateral relations among the signatories.

The Abraham Accords have the flexibility to incite new developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, despite its intended promotion of economic cooperation and intelligence sharing between the signatory states. The intensification of hostilities between Hamas and Israel in May 2021 and October 2023 has brought attention to the GCC nations' minimal sway over Israel's policies concerning Palestine. They have highlighted the fault lines of the Accords in tackling the underlying issues and effects of the conflict.

The Peace Proposal initiated by Saudi Arabia and endorsed by the Arab countries which aimed at the complete normalization of relations of Israel with Muslim

community in the world in return for a comprehensive peace treaty with the people in Palestine, has also been weakened by the Accords. The agreements, have shattered the long-standing consensus of Arab states for the cause of Palestine, potentially weakening the Arab states' ability to collectively negotiate in future negotiations. The extremist organizations like Hamas and Palestinian Jihad groups have gained more popular support. While President Abbas' more assertive approach towards Israel has caused peace negotiations to come to a standstill. Hamas has succeeded in convincing Palestinians that they are the true representative of people in Palestine.

The Abraham Accords have been instrumental in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's diplomatic achievements, but at the same time they have damaged his reputation against Palestinian liberation fighters. In response, the UAE gave a strict response to the current situation while maintaining its customary statements and economic cooperation. The Accords have changed the politics of Middle East, which was advantageous to Israel. The agreement was free of Palestinian concessions and land exchange. It changed the political orientation of the countries in the area and bolstered the new alliances to capture the space due to the decreasing influence of the United States in the region.

The Middle Eastern states like Iran, Turkey, Oman and Qatar, view the new political alignment as detrimental, arguing the Abraham Accords undermine Palestinian statehood and addressing underlying causes of the conflict is crucial for peace. Saudi Arabia and Israel are also enhancing their ties due to regional concerns like Iran's influence and Islamist extremist organizations. The Abraham Accords have increased bilateral communication and collaboration between both the parties. The US is also helping them to foster closer relations. However, the prospects of their relationship will be influenced by regional developments in Middle East.

The Abraham Accords are expected to adversely affect the issue of Palestine although the signatory states believed that the reconciliation would open fresh avenues for peace, while also urging Israel to exercise restraint towards Palestinians. The process of rapprochement appears to have presented additional challenges in achieving peace by lowering down the friction in Israel-Palestine conflict. Israel remains resolute in its pursuit of reconciliation with its new allies in Middle East. Israel's coercive land acquisition policy, violation of human rights, frequent violence and killings of Palestinians, siege of religious sites have not been considerably

hindered by the GCC states. Further Israel did not fulfill the expectations of the signatory countries of the GCC and has limited its engagement to economic cooperation. Consequently, it can be asserted that the Abraham Accords may have held considerable importance on a bilateral scale for signatory countries, particularly for rapid economic growth and people-to-people exchanges. However, the Palestinian cause has experienced a decline in regional support, potentially leading to a reduction in support from ideologically and politically influential Gulf Cooperation Council nations. The engagement between the GCC and Israel has provided additional support to extremist organizations in Palestine, including Hamas. After the Abraham Accords, there has also been an increase in the presence of extremist political parties in domestic political landscape of Israel. As a result, the current government of Netanyahu feels compelled to take an aggressive stance towards Palestine in order to maintain support from their ultra-extremist constituency.

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