



**An Analytical
Glance at the
Conspiracy of Normalization
of Relations **between Islamic
Countries and Israel****

On August 13, 2020, the former US president, Donald Trump, tweeted that the United Arab Emirates and Israel had agreed to normalize relations. Under the agreement, the UAE, which has made a niche for itself in regional politics in recent years and is trying to make up for the lack of elements of power such as population, geographical location, history, and military capacity with its financial power, will expect to enter the scene of power as an effective actor. Israel, in turn, will suspend the annexation of parts of the West Bank, and the two countries will expand cooperation in various fields.

Israel and the United Arab Emirates were two pioneers in suppressing the wave of democratization in the region. Opposition groups were verbally and financially supported, and all pro-freedom groups were targeted under the guise of being "Pro Political Islam." Articles have also been published claiming that Turkey and Iran support these groups, claiming that the two countries have interfered in the internal affairs of Arab countries and are supporting "Islamist" groups. However, opposition to the rise of any nationalist or leftist organization in the authoritarian and monarchical regimes such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE proves that accusing these movements of being Islamist is only a cover for gaining international support.

Following the peace agreements between the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain with the Zionist regime, the process of nor-

malization of relations between some Arab countries and this regime - after years of groundwork - finally reached the final stage and other countries are expected to follow the policy adopted by the UAE and Bahrain soon. The Arab aspect of the Israeli-Arab conflict, which had been a geopolitical fault in West Asia for decades, has now become very faint, and it seems to these countries the issue of Al-Quds is merely an Israeli-Palestinian issue.

The normalization of relations between some Arab countries and the Zionist regime, in terms of its effect on the patterns of friendship and enmity, can change the order of the region. This change can have important effects and consequences on the political and security issues of the region and lead to new alliances and coalitions in general and on some issues in particular in the region. The issue of Palestine, political Islam, regional power struggles, especially in Iraq, Syria,

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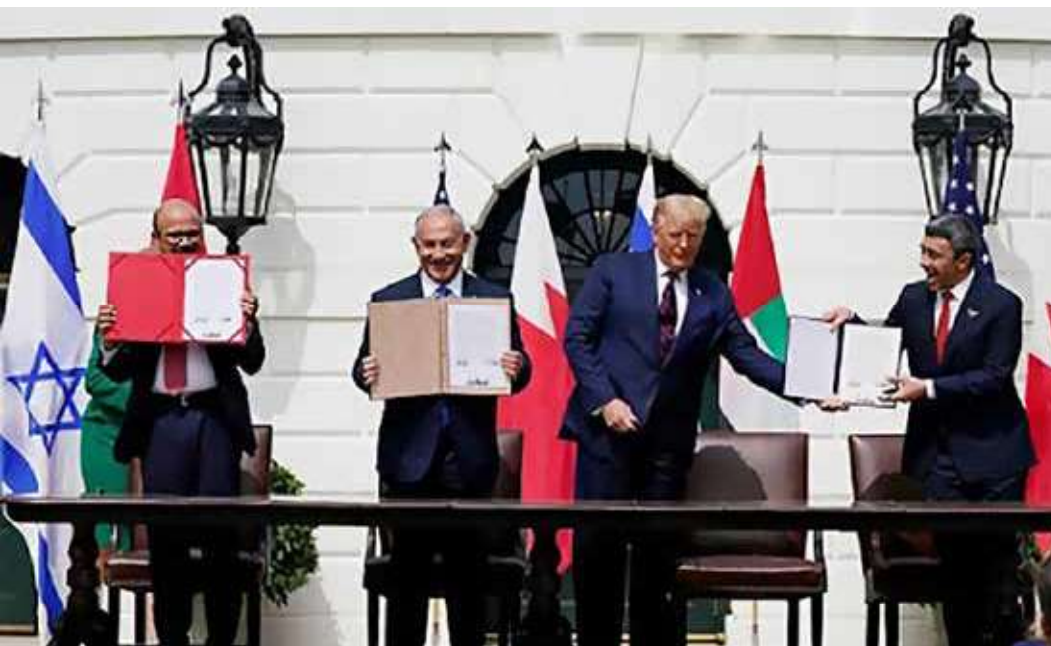
and Lebanon, and the rivalry of the UAE and Egypt and Turkey in Libya, the security of the Persian Gulf, the Yemeni war, and so on, are issues that can be strongly affected by normalization of relations.

The Reasons for the Inclination of Arab Countries towards Normalization of Relations with Israel

1 - One of the predominant reasons for this move on the part of these countries towards the normalization of relations with Israel should be sought at the individual level of their rulers. Given the political systems of these countries, their rulers see themselves in need of external support in order to strengthen their domestic position. As a matter of fact, they see the relationship with the Zionist regime as a way to gain this kind of support.

2 - Normalization is, in fact, a kind of coalition to ensure a balance of power at the regional level. The United Arab Emirates, for example, which has pursued ambitious goals in Yemen, Libya, and to a lesser extent Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq in recent years, now finds itself in a position in which it has no chance of success on these fronts and vis-à-vis Iran and Turkey in the absence of strong support from the Zionist regime and the United States.

3 - These countries consider the Zionist regime as a station for receiving the economic and political support of the United States and to be a part of the front of dominant power in the world arena; such that the United



States, for example, would turn a blind eye to widespread human rights abuses and political repression exerted by these regimes.

The Impact of the Process of Normalization on the Social Structure of the Region, including Patterns of Friendship and Hostility

In the incoherent and permeable set of West Asian countries, the influence of and support provided by foreign powers is very effective. Friendship and enmity, which is one of the constituent variables of security complexes along with power relations, is very important in shaping the pattern of relations within a complex, which includes a range of true friends, expecting support and/or protection, indifference or neutrality, suspicion and fear. The social structure of the West Asian region has special features due to the ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity, the effects

of the presence of colonialists, including the way the borderlines have been drawn, its geopolitical and geo-economic importance, and thus becoming an arena of competition for great powers. The Persian / Arab, Turkish / Arab, Persian / Turkish, Muslim / non-Muslim, and Shiite / Sunni divisions have been among the most important historical divisions in the region.

Therefore, following the normalization of relations with Israel, the cooperation of the Arab countries with the Zionist regime will increase significantly, particularly in potential areas, such that the Arab countries will expect support from the Zionist regime in many areas and for a number of issues.

Following their defeat in the two wars of 1967 and 1973, the Arab countries gradually came to the conclusion that they were not in a position to destroy the Zionist regime and, therefore, had to

accept it as a fact. Palestinian leftist and nationalist movements, too, moved in the same direction, which eventually led to the Oslo Accords. But at the same time, in the late 1980s, for the first time within the occupied territories, a struggle called the "Intifada" took shape. In these struggles, the Islamist groups of Hamas and Jihad have played a special role and Islamic ideology has prevailed over nationalist and leftist ideologies.

This, in addition to the fundamental changes of recent years, ruined the hopes that Arab countries had of a speedy resolution of the Palestinian conflict in 2002. Regional challenges, including the so-called Arab Spring, confrontation with Iran, and the influence of the Islamist government of Turkey, have made the Palestinian issue to be one of the lower priorities of these countries. With the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and the procedure adopted by some other Arab countries in this regard, this move (normalization of relations with Israel) has come to be recognized as essential by them and the potential areas of cooperation between the Arab countries and the Zionist regime have increased significantly. This will, in turn, greatly diminish the importance and impact of the Jewish / Muslim or Jewish / Arab divide as well as the Palestinian cause.

Influence on Regional Power Balance and Political Arrangements about Regional Issues

The normalization of relations

with Israel on the part of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain makes the political arrangements about regional issues clearer. At the present time, the elements that make up the regional power balance can be considered to include four blocs. These four blocs are 1- Conservative and anti-Brotherhood bloc, 2- The axis of resistance led by Iran, 3- Supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood (Turkey and Qatar), and 4- the Zionist regime. Since the second and third blocs are supporters of political Islam; although they have conflicting interests in some areas such as Syria, they also have many common interests, and in general, relations between them have become closer in recent years.

It seems that the first and fourth blocks are trying to balance power vis-a-vis the second and third blocks, by advancing the process of normalization of relations. The first bloc, consisting of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Jordan, finds itself in a defensive position in the region against the two other blocs that oppose the status quo and support Islamist groups. The security and military cooperation of this bloc with the Zionist regime, which was in secret, is gradually becoming apparent. The UAE, which has played a more active role in regional conflicts than other Persian Gulf states, now expects more support from the United States and the Zionist regime, and this will be a factor adding to the existing tension.

According to the regional security complex theory, in addition to the four variables of boundaries,

anarchic structure, polarization, and patterns of friendship and enmity, there is another variable called penetration that can affect the internal campaigns of a security complex and make a change in it.

Owing to its geopolitical, geo-economic, and geo-cultural position, the West Asian security complex, has always been subject to change or, in other words, the intervention of foreign powers prompted by global competition. If we consider the four actors of the United States, the European Union, Russia, and China as the determinants of the pattern of global power distribution, China has never interfered in the affairs of the West Asian region or its role has been very limited and the Russian-American rivalry is of more importance and the interests and goals of the European Union are in alignment with those of the United States.

Concluding Remarks

The reasons for the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime by the Arab countries can be examined at three domestic, regional, and international levels. At the domestic level, the rulers of these countries seek to strengthen their position by gaining foreign support. At the regional level, their intention is to be at par with Iran and Turkey, and at the international level, the aim is to be in alignment with the forefront of the superior power, i.e., the United States. For the United States, too, normalization of relations between the Arab countries and Israel is the formation of a

coalition of allies that could pave the path for the continuation and strengthening of the regional role of this country and reduces the role of its rivals.

With the normalization of relations with the Zionist regime by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and the trend that is being followed by some other Arab countries in this regard, the potential areas of cooperation between the Arab countries and the Zionist regime have increased significantly. This trend will, on the one hand, greatly diminish the importance and impact of the Jewish / Muslim or Jewish / Arab divide and, on the other hand, increase the Arab / Persian or Arab / Turkish divide in the region.

Moreover, this trend of normalization will also give a clearer shape to the political arrangements about regional issues. The security and military cooperation of the conservative countries of the region with the Zionist regime, which was kept secret in the past, will now begin to gradually be done openly and is expected to escalate tensions in the region, including in Syria, Yemen, and Libya.

How far will the recent event be regarded as a victory or a political show-off for bin Salman, bin Zayed and Netanyahu is a matter of debate. However, what is clear is that Israel's so-called victory in the so-called Deal of the Century, which was hailed by Trump, has receded to the recognition of the Zionist regime by a few regional governments and suspension of Israel's plan with regard to annexing the West Bank.