

What the Abraham Accord Means for Israel

The presence of United Arab Emirates officials earlier this year at the announcement of President Trump's plan for peace between Israel and the Palestinians hinted at a growing collaboration between Israel and the Emirates. The two have now struck a historic deal, dubbed the Abraham Accord, which is perhaps the most significant step ever toward regional peace for the Jewish state. The United Arab Emirates joins the short list of Middle Eastern countries with normalized diplomatic relations with Israel—alongside Jordan and Egypt. However, this agreement also signals a new alliance in the Middle East in response to heightened tensions with Iran.

The peace agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates will reap significant diplomatic and economic benefits for the two parties as they sign several agreements regarding investment, direct flights, technology, agriculture, security, tourism, the exchange of embassies and robust people-to-people relations. Considering the advancement of both countries within a war-torn, undeveloped Middle East, the deal is expected to bring region-wide economic growth, technological innovation, increased stability and respect for human rights.

Moreover, normalized relations between the two countries are expected to encourage other Gulf countries to follow suit, notably Bahrain and Oman, which could happen as soon as in a few weeks. Even Saudi Arabia is quiet and may be awaiting its turn at the table.

Expansion of Sovereignty in Judea and Samaria

President Trump's peace deal for Israel and the Palestinians allowed for the expansion of Israeli sovereignty over the

Jordan Valley and Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Although the United Arab Emirates approved of the deal, there was widespread opposition to the expansion of sovereignty. Consequently, as a part of the peace agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Israel will suspend expansion efforts, at least for the near future.

When questioned by reporters about reneging on his promise to expand sovereignty, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel promised that expansion is still very much “on the table.” U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman emphasized all parties understand it to be a temporary “suspension” of sovereignty and not a cancellation. He could not say how long this suspension would last but explained it was to allow time to negotiate other peace agreements.

Comparison to Previous International Agreements for Israel

Although this agreement is the third of its kind between Israel and an Arab country, it is an occasion of its own in different respects. Foremost, the deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates did not involve surrendering any land between the two countries—only the “suspension” of Israel’s planned extension of sovereignty. Israel gave up the entire Sinai Peninsula in 1977 to Egypt in exchange for peace and had to negotiate territorial disputes with Jordan in 1994 to normalize relations.

Furthermore, unlike with Egypt and Jordan, Israel has never been at war with the United Arab Emirates. This history void of direct conflict opens up the possibility of warmer people-to-people relations.

Strategically, the deal is larger than itself and is the beginning of an expansion of alliances to the Persian Gulf so as to face a regional foe—Iran.

How the Palestinians Feel About the Deal

Not unexpectedly, the Palestinian leaders are virtually unanimous in their opposition to the peace agreement, or put in the words of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, an act of “treason.” Nonetheless, the United Arab Emirates still possesses a robust relationship with the Palestinian Authority and can thus speak to the Palestinians in ways the United States or Israel cannot.

Undoubtedly, the deal will hinder the Palestinians’ ability to leverage the Arab League against Israel in times of conflict or negotiations. Amos Yadlin, former general for the Israeli Air Force, recently asserted on television, “America is sending a clear signal to the Palestinians: ‘You have no veto power; you have no Arab support; don’t miss another opportunity; don’t ignore Trump’s peace plan.’”

What This Means for President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu

Without a shadow of doubt, the success achieved between the countries would not have occurred without the bravery and boldness of U.S. President Trump, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed, crown prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of the United Arab Emirates. This is a major foreign policy success for President Trump, who was responsible for brokering the deal between the two countries.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Netanyahu enjoys the accolade of being the first leader of Israel to normalize diplomatic relations with a Gulf country successfully. As this regional alliance takes shape, and should Saudi Arabia come to the table, it will not just be another accomplishment for Netanyahu but another miracle in Israel’s story.

For more about the Abraham Accord and what it means for Israel, [click here](#) to listen to an episode of the *Greenelines* podcast in which Dr. Steve Greene interviews Dr. Susan

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