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Impacts of Saudi-Israel Relations on the Middle East: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims to analyze the impact of Saudi-Israel relations on the Middle East. The study also focused on the reaction of Arab countries to their bilateral ties and incidents that have arisen in the Middle East as a direct result of tensions between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The deteriorating condition of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia wreaked havoc throughout the region. The United States plays a pivotal role in the politics of the Middle East; therefore, a nation that is willing to operate as the United States' right hand was sorely needed in the region. Israel, a country that is not recognized on a global scale, has set up shop in that vacated seat. Together, they aid proxy wars between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which contributes to instability in the region. The only thing that could diminish the damage would be a concerted effort by Muslim states against Israel..

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Introduction

The bilateral relations between Saudi-Israel are not only a peace agreement or process but also extend to mutual security against Iran. This will cause some serious implications in countries like Palestine, Syria, and Iran where people are already suffering. This is also causing some serious crises like the hunger crisis in Yemen, the refugee crisis in Palestine and Syria, and also land conflicts in Palestine. This article elaborated on these key issues and also the political side of these issues. Saudi-Israel relations are very vital in these problems. They could eliminate these crises if Saudi Arabia wisely plays its role. These problems could become more deteriorated if Israel keeps playing with the lives of innocent people

and Saudi Arabia would remain silent. These bilateral relations could be present in two dimensions.

Here comes the positive side of these bilateral relations between the two countries and that is the improved economies and problem-solving approach through negotiations. These negotiations will fulfill the interests of both states, if not agreed with any condition, then stop negotiating. Then comes the negative side of these relations and that lies in the agreement to all unfavorable conditions either these are from Israel's side or Saudi Arabia's. Most probably Israel is violating the rights of the Palestinian people regarding land and life. The Saudi Arabian king proposed many agreements like "The Fahd Plan" in the 1980s, and then "The Abdullah Initiative" in the 2000s. These were carried out by resolutions and initiatives for peace. Besides all this, the conditions are more worsened. (Kostiner, 2009)

In the above-mentioned plans, Saudi Arabia is the representative of all Arab states. Saudi Arabia has gotten support from Middle Eastern Gulf states like UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, etc. Now it's up to Saudi Arabia how it takes decisions wisely to unite the whole Middle East and end all kinds of problems and crises as being the representative. Certain impacts of Saudi-Israel relations are to be explained. Here comes the problem of Israel occupying the Palestinian land, the Syrian refugee crisis, Iranian power-based Political issues, the issue of recognition of Israel, and much more issues being faced by the middle east in the present era.

This paper is an explaining document that sums up major problems and issues faced in Middle Eastern states. This will take into consideration all positive and negative aspects of these problems to give certain recommendations and solutions. There are major problems to be explained by this paper Jordan lately faced the problem of Syrian refugees and migrants, Kuwait is facing a gulf crisis with Qatar, the political and economic crisis in Lebanon, Yemen is facing a hunger crisis, Palestine is facing ethnic cleansing by Israel, Iran is under threat of US, Iraq's political and economic tensions, and lastly the problem of recognition of Israel.

Literature Review

Teitelbaum 2013, indicates that the Iran nuclear deal has resulted in more close relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The power threat is the ultimate reason for their collaboration and warming relations. Saudi Arabia is more likely to enhance its relations with Iran to maintain its legitimate rule. This article revolves around the relations and Power status between states. This does not elaborate on the impact of these relations on other Middle Eastern countries. This article would cover their impact.

Rynholdet. al Yaari 2019, pens in this paper the silently growing relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel besides that of the peace agreement their collaboration aims to counter Iran's nuclear threat. The ultimate consequences could be accepted by both states but the Palestinian issue could constrain the relations. They haven't mentioned the response of the rest of the Arab world toward these ties. This paper would elaborate on the responses of the Arab world.

Furlan 2019, states that Arab Spring has changed the direction of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Both countries have shown that religion is not a hurdle in their cooperation. Many interactions have been seen between Riyadh and

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Jerusalem. This is the gesture of longer economic cooperation. But one thing is not mentioned that is the unforgettable impact of their growing relations on the Middle Eastern counties, especially in Palestine. This piece of paper will cover the scenario of Palestine.

Beck 2019 explained the concept of the “New Middle East” of Peres, that the only leading power in the Arab Land would be Israel. This could be only possible when Saudi-Arabia wages war against a few of the Middle Eastern states. And in a case to fight them, Saudi-Arabia recognizes Israel to get support. So, like Qatar and Oman recognized Israel to find a safer side from all imposed sanctions, Saudi-Arabia would also recognize Israel in near future. This will put a full stop to Palestinian liberation. He did not throw light on the rest of the Arab states and whether they would recognize Israel as a state. The matter of recognition will be mentioned in this paper.

Fuller 2002, states the peace agreement between Saudi Arabia and Israel. That agreement was constituted by Saudi Arabia towards Israel, in which there were certain conditions to opt from the other side. In those conditions, the most important was the settlement of Palestinian refugees in their home country and absolutely Saudi Arabia would also host many of those refugees. The writer tells this step as a gesture to Washington after 9/11. This agreement was of whatever purpose or importance doesn't clear the impact on the Arab world. The positive and negative impacts of this whole scenario would be covered in this article.

Kostiner 2009, writes also about the peace process between Arabia and Israel. He gives an analysis of the peace process and its fluctuation toward highs and lows. He mentioned different policies starting from the 1970s. how Saudi Arabia became the leader of the Arab world by doing mediating tasks in the Middle East. How the initiatives of Saudi Arabia affect the Palestinian and other Arab states' integrity is not mentioned in this paper. This aspect is about to be cleared in this article.

Imran et.al 2020, threw light on the relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel and their impact on Iran specifically. This paper explained the changing power politics in the Middle East. This power politics is in the hands of the USA, Russia, and China. For their purposes, these foreign powers have made the Middle Eastern states rival one another. Iran is parallel to KSA in its power, USA started backing KSA. So, here how badly the other Arab states are suffering is neglected. The matter of Arab states' suffering will be mentioned in this piece of paper.

Torrel et.al 2018, explained the theory of balance of power in which she analyzes the conflict in Middle Eastern countries. The main rivals are Iran and Saudi Arabia. These two states have been in power conflicts for many years. It is the prediction of the writer that Saudi Arabia would cooperate with Israel to tackle the power threat posed by Iran. There isn't mentioned if Saudi Arabia would side with Israel, this would affect the other middle eastern countries. The positive and negative effects would be elaborated on in this paper.

Siddiq et.al 2019, enlisted different formations of alliances between many Middle Eastern states. The major one is between Saudi Arabia and Israel for mutual security concerns. Not only these two states are aligning together, but there are also other Arab states as well supporting the two major power blocks of Saudi Arabia and Iran. This power politics can harm the existing ties between Riyadh

and Ankara. How these dynamics of power would affect the stability and internal health of the Arab especially Palestine is not disclosed. This article would disclose the current Palestinian condition.

Bahgat 2007, explained the Shiite-Sunni conflict in the middle east. The major players are again Saudi-Arabia and Iran. They both have got support Saudi-Arabia got from Jordan and Egypt. On the other hand, Iran is supported by some active groups in the Gaza Strip, Iraq's Shiite groups, and lastly Hezbollah. This ideological war has resulted in Israel's collaboration with Saudi Arabia. Now this collaboration could affect other middle eastern countries. A major disaster could be seen in Syria, Palestine, and other such weak states. This thing is not mentioned in this paper. This article would cover this dimension also.

To cut the discussion short, many conflicts are arising due to the collaboration of Israel and Saudi Arabia. The political, economic, and ideological dimensions are changing due to their collaboration. Although it is said to be a peace process but posing a lot of internal conflicts and threats. There are mentioned the relations but the impact of these growing relations on stronger and weak states is not elaborated. So, this paper will cover the impact of these relations and the response from the Middle East as a whole.

Jordan's refugee crisis:

These refugees crisis starts at the beginning of the civil war in Syria. The USA bombed numerous Syrian cities in support of the rebels and Saudi Arabia. Many destructions caused the flee of citizens to safer places as the death toll raised. 5.6 million people migrated as refugees to Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey(Marks, 2018). Jordan faced the worst refugee crisis as being the host of the second largest number of Syrian refugees. The refugees entered through the border into Jordan. There are estimated 600000 Syrian refugees out of those 5.6 million, who migrated to Jordan. Now they make up almost 10 percent of the Jordanian population. This major shift in population burdened the economy of Jordan(Huser, 2016). People's basic needs are the priority of the host country but too many refugees suddenly become the responsibility of a country and are difficult to handle. As they need food, shelter, and medical care all the time to live alive. But government faced an economic crisis that not only create problems for refugees but also the native people of Jordan(Huser, 2016). In a nutshell, the civil conflict in Syria is to blame for all of these issues. The United States is an ally of Israel, but it also supported Saudi Arabia during that civil war. After all, the civil wars and refugee problems that are adding strain to the Middle East are making Israel quite happy. Israel may be able to distract the world from its plan to conquer Palestine by stirring up strife among Muslim governments.

Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman:

The crisis in Qatar started in 2017 when false news aired about the Qatari emir on television. This caused a blockade on Qatar's all airways, land, and water by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, and UAE. Certain embargoes were imposed on Qatar as a supporter of Iran. Qatar was accused to support terrorism and different armed organizations(Cherkaoui, 2018). GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) is the organization of Gulf states namely Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, UAE, and Saudi Arabia. All GCC member states strained their ties with Qatar on its support

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to Iran. After Qatar resist back of all false accusations against its being in support of terrorism, all the blockading countries prepared a list of several demands from Qatar. But Qatari Amir rejected those demands. During this time Qatar sort to establish relations with the US. Many GCC meetings were held and somehow the blockade brought to an official end(Sadiki, 2020)

Kuwait and Oman sided with Qatar on the respective issue and tried to solve the problem as the mediators. Oman has mediated many issues back in history. It never sided with any country during the crisis and carried out its relations with all middle eastern states equally(Bakeer, 2017). To cut the long story short, Oman emerged as a mediator in solving regional problems. On the other hand, Kuwait has remained also a mediator in solving many conflicts in the Middle East. As it mediated between Iran and KSA in the past. It also participated in Yemen war as a mediator but not as a base provider for allies to do airstrikes(Baabood, 2019)

As part of the GCC states, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait had remained under pressure for years. The cause of this pressure is quite clear these states were working as neutrals for mediating Iran and Saudi Arabia. But some external forces like USA and Israel don't want this power conflict to be solved. These two states direct Saudi Arabia indirectly through moral support so that the conflicts like this keep lingering for a long time and these states like the USA keep sucking their oil and gas. USA and Israel have an unbreakable bond that can alter any decision taken on the Middle Eastern land through those countries who got the support of the USA. Majorly UAE, Egypt, and KSA are the most influenced countries by the West.

Lebanon and Syria in the Middle East:

Lebanon has been listed among those countries of the Middle East that remain neutral at the time of conflict and later serve as a mediator to reconcile the parties. From a historical perspective, it has remained in conflict with Syria. As both countries were part of each other back at the start of the 20th century. Since their inception, they remain in different forms of conflict over land, culture, and politics as well(Chahal, 2010). There was a civil war in Lebanon that started in the 1970s. This war continued for almost 15 years.

There were several militant groups a Shiite group, a Sunni group, and a Christian group. Syria, Palestinian refugees, and none other than Israel were also part of the civil war. The insecurity of the state's leader who wanted to centralize the security system of the state was the major reason for the war(Ochsenwald, 2020). Fuad Chehab was the leading person to centralize the security system. There were Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who were raided by Israeli soldiers. Beirut was divided into Muslim and Christian blocks. Govts. Changed during the whole scenario. In the end, Syria was called to control the country into its worst condition. Syria supported the Christian militia group, a Christian group that was already supported by Israeli arms. Israel sends its troops to Lebanon's southern part and attacked. This worsened the condition of the country and led to the creation of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon for the withdrawal of Israel from the south of Lebanon. Nonetheless, Israel again attacked the northern part of Lebanon to secure the land borders with Palestinian land(Salloukh, 2017).

Later on, Aoun emerged as a leader who declared war on liberation in 1989. A resolution was made with the help of Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Morocco in Ta'if.

The whole problem was sorted out when the PM appointed was Sunni and the speaker appointed was Shia. Equal representation was given to Muslims and Christians(Young, 2014).

Now consider the whole scenario, its only purpose was to create chaos in the Arabian Peninsula so that Israel could vent out its frustration by attacking Palestinian refugees who lost thousands of lives besides being the Palestinians. Whatever the cause of the war was, the top beneficiary was none other than Israel. Syria also faced a civil war in the last decade and is still in its turmoil. This war was started with the pro-democratic protests inspired by the so-called Arab Spring. The killing of a single person led to a full-scale war in Syria. The government and its opponents fought each other in this civil war. The other cause of the war is the Sunni-Shia conflict that the govt. was dominated by the Shia sect and the majority of the population was Sunni. This civil war was started in 2011 and is still contained(Marks, 2018). Many other states like USA and Israel are also playing their role in making the situation more deteriorated by doing air strikes and bombing over the war land. There are other players besides the USA and its puppet Israel. Iraq, Turkey, and Russia are bidding to control the situation. By 2020, govt has controlled more than half of the country with the help of a cease-fire. There are still ongoing peace talks in 2021 over the Syrian civil war by Turkey, Russia, and Qatar(Laub, 2021). There was no stance in Saudi Arabia on the intervention of the USA and Israel in Syria. This clears the hegemonic status of KSA in the region and how it was not able to end the war. The consequences are seen in the form of millions of deaths and about a million Syrian refugees that are still wandering for shelter and food(Hinnebusch, 2007).

Yemen and Bahrain:

Yemen is in the worst condition at present. None other than Saudi Arabia is responsible for the pathetic condition of Yemen and its people. The conflict started from the failure of a peaceful transition of government. This was also triggered by the rise of the Arab Spring that forced the authoritarian president to resign from office and hand over the power to his deputy named Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi in the year 2011. When the power is transferred, the security forces show loyalty to President Ali Abdullah Saleh(Reza Abidi, 2016). The supporters of Saleh were Houthis and the security forces who forced Hadi to resign. Houthis got control over three cities including Sanaa. Hadi's govt was backed by Saudi Arabian and Emirati groups as UAE is an ally of Saudi Arabia. The war continued and Saleh was killed in 2017. A deadly attack war aired on Saudi oil fields named Khurais and Abqaiq(Stephen W. Day, 2020). Nearly half of Saudia's oil production was disrupted. Houthis claimed the attack but Saudi was more inclined to accuse Iran of the attack. As a result, the area of Yemen belonging to the red sea was blocked by Saudi Arabia along with Sanaa. This caused a cut in the water supply to the major areas and inflation was seen. This inflation led to the worst famine in Syria that is still ongoing. Thousands of people were killed during war airstrikes and bombings. The rest are dying of food and medication(Robinson, 2021).

There is a proxy war in the middle east that is ongoing since the inception of Saudi Arabia and Iran. This war is over Sunni and Shia causes. Many middle eastern states are also suffering because of this ideological war that is endless with increasing consequences that could be seen in most of the Arab states. Bahrain is

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also a part of this unending war. Its govt. is Sunni and most of the population is Shia. The government of Bahrain has established strong ties with Saudi Arabia but the Shia community considers itself the real inhabitants of the land(Henderson, 2011). The Shiite community is backed by Iran. Again, this is a proxy war as was between the USA and USSR during the times of the cold war.

Iran and Iraq:

Iran and Iraq fought a war back in the 1980s. Iraq has remained under the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. But Iran is facing much more tension from all three sides, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the USA. Iran has remained much hostile towards Israel since the revolution led by Khomeini. Iran was actively involved in supporting Palestinian Islamic Jihad against the illegal and terrorist state of Israel(Haidar, 2018). On the other hand, Israel supported anti-regime armed groups in Iran to create hurdles in Iran's nuclear program. Furthermore, Israel maintained its ties with the foes of Iran i.e., Saudi Arabia and the USA. As Saudi Arabia is acting as a puppet of the USA in the region. Israel had declared cyber war against Iran and is waiting for international military force to action against Iran. On the other side, Iran considers Israel an illegitimate Zionist state(Rabinovich, 2015).

Iraq is a comparatively weak state as it has been home to a US invasion since 2003. Also, Saudi Arabia is trying to reestablish its relations with Iraq after a quarter century nearly of broken relations. Saudi Arabia could gain much if it tends to play wisely, without any sectarian sentiments. This way could be fruitful for Iraq to act as a mediator between Iran and Saudi Arabia (David, 2018).

Cyprus, Egypt, and UAE:

Cyprus and Egypt have also developed cordial relations with Israel as UAE did. Besides all the tensions in the region that were caused by Israel directly or indirectly, Cyprus and Egypt are working trilaterally with Israel on the same economic forums. International companies of these states have gotten the support of each other. Cyprus and Israel both developed their understanding of Egypt due to its liquefaction plants natural gas. All three countries have made a regional bloc along with Greece against Turkey. Their common interest is Cypriot-Israeli natural gas marketing(Tanchum, 2015). The history of these states witnessed the rivalry and wars between Israel and Arab states like Egypt and Cyprus. But when it comes to strengthening economies, these long-term rivalries change in close friendships.

UAE, on the other hand, is also among those states in the Arabian Peninsula, that tried to strengthen their relations with Israel. As per the recent phenomenon of a single phone call of the US president to the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, UAE became the first Gulf state and 3rd state in the Middle East after Egypt and Jordan, to recognize Israel as a legal sovereign state. UAE normalized its relations with Israel on the terms of agreement that the right to annex the occupied land of the Palestinian West Bank is suspended by Israel(Hughes, 2020). Turkey, Iran, and Palestinian authorities condemned this step of UAE whereas other Arab states like Oman and Egypt welcomed this initiative taken by UAE. Other states remained silent on the recognition. Saudi Arabia showed silent praise in the scenario(Hughes, 2020). UAE and Israel are also collaborating in the fields of Education and Student Exchange Programs. This is a quite new phenomenon, as

this deal is held just a few days after the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in 2021.

Turkey and Palestine:

Turkey has been such a player in middle eastern politics that it emerged as a powerful country after the win of the AK party in 2002. Turkey was the first Muslim-majority state to recognize Israel in 1949. There is seen many fluctuations in Turkey's relations with Israel and Saudi Arabia. As, whenever Israel creates instability in Palestine and the region, Turkey strains its relations with it. There is seen a proxy war throughout the Middle East where Turkey and Saudi Arabia always faced each other as foes. This is not a new thing for Arabs. But a new factor is the presence of Israel in the Muslim world and its politics. This factor further deteriorates the whole scenario as Saudi Arabia never will say a word about any wrongdoing of Israel. It is considered a silent gesture of assurance of a strong friendship (Tanchum, 2015). As, lately Israeli forces attacked Al-Aqsa Mosque which is the third holiest site of Muslims, Turkey showed solidarity with Palestine but Saudi Arabia, as the custodian of the holiest places of Muslims, remained silent (Robinson, 2021). Besides this, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are also in conflict with each other over certain matters like the "Issue of Gulf states", the murder of Jamal Khashoggi (journalist in Istanbul), and support of Turkey to the opponents of Saudi-Arabia in proxy wars. The most important one is the Palestinian cause over which Saudi Arabia does not take a stand as being the custodian of the Holiest sites of Muslims (Huggard, 2020).

Palestine is such an area that is still facing oppression and ethnic cleansing by Israel. Every Muslim, Christian, and Jew is aware of its historical importance. It's the center of all three major monotheistic religions by Almighty Allah. In the 20th century, this small land of Palestine has seen a lot of movements between Arab nationals and Jews. Many wars have been fought over the sacred land. In recent days Israel again attacked the Al-Aqsa Mosque and raided there. Secondly, Israelis started a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Muslims. Many Muslim areas are targeted and eviction is continued in those areas (Winsor, 2021). The question arose here of Arab countries' solidarity with Palestinians which countries don't show any gesture of solidarity with their Muslim brothers and why? Saudi Arabia and UAE were the two major power blocs that were silent on this. This is the importance of Israel near Saudi Arabia and their non-official relations are at a peak.

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to highlight the problems and issues in the Middle East. Almost every country in the region faced some kind of problem like civil war. A few countries like UAE and Cyprus remained peaceful throughout. But the reason behind this or the cause of these all problems lies in the emerging power of Israel, the only non-Muslim state in the heart of the Muslim world. All the above-mentioned problems and crisis except the Palestinian issue started after the Saudi-proposed agreements with the Israel in 1980s. There are almost the same kind of crises seen in every weak Middle Eastern state and these were the proxy wars. These proxy wars link Israel and Saudi Arabia directly and indirectly. As the USA is strengthening its roots in the region through two states and these two states are Saudi-Arabia and Israel. The USA is waging these wars among the Muslim States

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via Saudi Arabia and Israel. The United States of America only cares about one thing: getting as much oil and other valuable resources out of that lush land as they possibly can.. The more it will create tension in the region the more it will get the chance to extract oil and other natural resources. Israel is also indulging too much in the Arab states just for the sake of gaining its religious interests. Israel wants back all that land where Jews resided back in history. The third is Saudi Arabia which is more into getting a hegemonic status in the region with the help of the USA. So, these are the mere interests of all three states over which the lives of innocent people are risked.

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