An Analysis of the Defense-Security Implications of Normalizing Relations between the Zionist Regime and Saudi Arabia on the National Security of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Abstract

Recent geopolitical shifts in West Asia, particularly the increasing tendency of some Arab regimes to normalize relations with the Zionist regime, have created a new security paradigm in the region. Among these, the potential normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia, as the leader of the Sunni world, and the Zionist regime, could have the most profound impacts on the region's security equations, specifically on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Utilizing a **mixed-method approach** (qualitative-quantitative analysis) through **library research and survey techniques** (distribution of a researcher-made questionnaire among 35 experts and professors in security and regional studies) and employing **Neorealism** as the dominant theoretical framework, this research seeks to answer the main question: **"What are the factors influencing the normalization of relations between the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia, and what defense and security consequences will this process have for the Islamic Republic of Iran?"**

Theoretical Framework:

The theory of **Neorealism (Structural)** by Kenneth Waltz forms the theoretical basis of this research. Accordingly, the behavior of states (as rational actors) in the international system's anarchy is driven by the system's structure and is aimed at **survival, increasing relative power, and maximizing national interest**. Therefore, normalization of relations can be analyzed not based on ideological or identity commonalities, but rather on **cost-benefit calculations** and the perception of a **common threat** (the Islamic Republic of Iran).

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Research Findings (Causes and Context of Normalization): International Causes:

Shift in the US grand strategy in West Asia and devolving more responsibility to regional allies (Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime) under the banner of an **"anti-Iranian coalition".**

The catalytic role of **Zionist lobbies** in the US Congress (e.g., AIPAC) in creating strategic convergence between Washington, Riyadh, and Tel Aviv.

Regional Causes:

Iranophobia: Creating and fueling the discourse of the "Iran threat" as the central axis for convergence between Arabs and the Zionist regime. This stems from Iran's regional empowerment and the successes of the Resistance Axis.

Shift in the Balance of Power: Saudi Arabia's perception of a decline in its relative power vis-à-vis Iran and its attempt to compensate through an alliance with the Zionist regime.

Threat from Resistance Groups: The shared fear of Riyadh and Tel Aviv regarding groups such as Lebanon's Hezbollah, Hamas, and Yemen's Ansarullah, which act as Iran's regional arms.

Domestic Causes:

Shift in the Discourse of the Saudi Ruling Elite: The transition from a conservative generation to a reformist one led by Mohammed bin Salman, who prioritizes national interest and economic development over ideology.

Domestic Legitimization: Bin Salman's use of normalization as a tool to gain legitimacy among Saudi Arabia's young and modern generation and to display regional leadership.

Defense-Security Implications for the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Security Consequences (Strategic & Security):

Formation of a New Security Bloc: Creation of an **"Arab-Zionist NATO"** under US patronage with the mission of containing and countering Iranian influence.

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Increased Espionage and Vulnerability: Heightened risk of espionage, sabotage, and cyber warfare against Iran through **joint security-intelligence cooperation** between Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime.

Completion of the Security Encirclement: Completing the encirclement of Iran from the West (by the Zionist regime) and from the South (by Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies).

Regional Security Isolation: Efforts to marginalize Iran in the future security order of West Asia.

Defense-Military Consequences:

Quantitative and Qualitative Enhancement of Adversaries' Military Power: Transfer of advanced military, drone, and cyber technologies from the Zionist regime to Saudi Arabia and the integration of missile defense systems (like Iron Dome and Patriot).

Shift in Strategic Balance: Disruption of the regional military balance to Iran's disadvantage and the creation of a new arms race.

Threat to Advisory Bases: Increased risk of direct and proxy attacks on Iranian forces and allies in the region (e.g., in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen).

Challenge to Deterrence Capability: Creating a challenge for Iran's **comprehensive deterrence doctrine** by enhancing the offensive capabilities of its enemies.

Conclusion and Proposed Strategy:

The normalization of relations between Riyadh and Tel Aviv is not merely a diplomatic normalization but a **profound strategic transformation** whose ultimate goal is to change the regional power structure in favor of an anti-Iranian coalition and weaken the geopolitical position of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The questionnaire analysis results also confirm that from the experts' perspective, **"synergy to weaken the Axis of Resistance"** (with a mean score of 4.57) and **"increased security influence of the Zionist regime on the southern borders"** (with a mean score of 4.46) are identified as the most significant consequences of this process. Countering this challenge requires the formulation of an **active, multi-dimensional grand strategy** encompassing **strengthening defensive and deterrent capabilities**, **active and smart regional diplomacy** (to break the imposed isolation), **economic strengthening and moving beyond an oil-**

based economy (to reduce vulnerability to pressure), and **enhancing soft and media power** to neutralize enemy propaganda and Iranophobia.

Keywords: Normalization, Zionist Regime, Saudi Arabia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Security Implications, Defense Implications, Neorealism, Axis of Resistance, National Security.

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