



**INSIGHTSIAS**  
SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

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INSIGHTS INTO EDITORIAL



# Editorial

ANALYSIS

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## America's pursuit of Saudi-Israel rapprochement

- **Prelims:** Current events of international importance, west Asia, saudi-Iran conflict, Arab League, OPEC, OPEC+, G20 etc
- **Mains GS Paper II:** Bilateral, regional and global grouping and agreements involving India or affecting India's interests.

### ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

- The **Middle East to spring surprises** are on call again.
- **United States diplomacy** to reconcile two regional powerhouses, viz. **Saudi Arabia and Israel.**



### INSIGHTS ON THE ISSUE

#### Context

#### The Israeli-Palestinian conflict:



- It dates back to the end of the nineteenth century, and is one of the world's most enduring conflicts, with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
- The Israel and Palestine conflict is complex: It's rooted in national, political, territorial, cultural and religious factors
- The core issue is not just about the land; it is about having the right to self-determination

#### Challenges for US in Saudi-Israel pursuit:

- The PM of Israel heads an extreme right-wing coalition determined to accelerate the Jewish settlements in the Occupied West Bank and curb the judiciary's independence
  - The U.S. strongly opposes both.

- **Saudi Crown Prince, initially ostracized by the Biden Administration** for his alleged involvement in the Jamal Khashoggi murder
  - **The Kingdom** has been calm towards Washington.

#### **Saudi initiatives:**

- **It has reconciled tactically, with Iran** through Chinese mediation, hosted the Chinese President for three summits in Riyadh
- **Cooperated with Russia under the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries-Plus (OPEC+)** rubric for higher oil prices
- **It facilitated the return of Syria** to the Arab fold.

#### **Steps by the US to persuade Saudi Arabia to normalize its relations with Israel:**

- The proposal to normalize has been on the Saudi table **since 2020**
- **The Saudi Crown Prince and Israel PM** had an unpublicised meeting in Neom, Saudi Arabia, in the presence of the then-U.S. Secretary of State
- **U.S. National Security Adviser** and U.S. Secretary of State visiting Saudi Arabia.

#### **Pre-conditions by Saudi:**

- **To be included in North Atlantic Treaty Organization-like** U.S. security guarantees
- **Access** to advanced American weapons systems
- **Approval** for the acquisition of civilian nuclear technology
- **Israeli commitment to a process** leading to a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

#### **Motives of US, Saudi and Israel:**

##### **USA:**

- **It is deeply concerned with the growing influence** by China and Russia in the 'Middle East'
- **It wants to re-entrench the Pax Americana** over the region by bringing two traditionally pro-west regional players together.
- **It feels that fostering such a reconciliation** would ingratiate USA with the two miffed leaders.
- **The powerful Jewish lobby's gratitude** would help Mr. Biden win the U.S. presidential election next year.

##### **Saudi Arabia:**

- **Under the Crown Prince**, it has adopted an assertive and ambitious foreign policy
  - **commensurate** with its oil wealth
  - **To become primus inter pares** for the region
  - **To emerge** as an important global player.
- **By reconciling with Israel**, it takes away the first movers' advantage that the UAE has had as a member of the "Abraham Accords".
- **The diplomatic ties with Israel** would balance the Kingdom's recent reconciliation with Iran and Syria
  - It helps it emerge as a more nationalist power than an Islamic one.
- **Saudi Arabia needs a stronger U.S. security commitment** and access to Israeli technology.
- The Saudi Crown Prince may need to mitigate the skepticism about Israel at home and within Al-Saud.

## Israel:

- **A Star of David** flying in Riyadh would be a major geopolitical victory
- **It will symbolize its final acceptance as a legitimate Jewish state** by the center of Islam after 75 years as a regional outcast.
- **Given the Kingdom's trendsetting role as the custodian** of Islam's two holy shrines
  - **The Riyadh-Tel Aviv détente: It** would herald Israel's integration with the Arab-Islamic world.
- **It would provide direct air and land access to Asia**, enabling better leveraging of the economic opportunities as the economic center of gravity shifts eastwards.

## Way Forward

- **The global fallout from such a development would be quite profound:** The Islamic mainstream would likely follow the Saudi lead, with countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia in the first row.
- **It would further marginalize the "Palestinians' Cause"** and may polarize and radicalize along with **other opponents of Israel** such as Iran and Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas and the Islamic State.
- **The U.S. may eventually succeed** despite the formidable odds, particularly as the Israeli government would have to moderate some of its hard-held policies.
- **Saudi-Israeli rapprochement would have a mildly positive impact** on India.
  - **It would remove a contradiction** in India's regional policy and better align Saudi Arabia with us.
  - **It may open opportunities** as the U.S. pushes back China from the region.
- **It may give Israel reasons to hyphenate India** with Islamic countries, including Pakistan.

## QUESTION FOR PRACTICE

Q. How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's Position in global politics?(UPSC 2022)

**(200 WORDS, 10 MARKS)**