



[U.S. Continues to Push for Saudi-Israeli Normalization](#)

With the recent return visit of Jake Sullivan, President Biden's National Security Advisor, to Saudi Arabia this past week, the United States continues its campaign for Saudi-Israeli normalization. Following Sullivan's previous visit in May, a new sense of urgency has been reinstated regarding the policy prospect as the U.S. continues its goal of bridging relations between the two countries. While no breakthrough has been announced, Sullivan's tour also follows a visit to Saudi Arabia by Secretary of State Antony Blinken the month prior, with the same goal of normalization intended. As the United States aims to broker the historic deal, it comes at a time of shifting power dynamics within the region as the U.S. seeks to reinstate itself as a major contender.

Many roadblocks lie ahead of Saudi-Israeli normalization, as Yuli Edelstein, head of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, stated, "I think it's too early to talk about a deal being in the works." With most of the conversations primarily occurring between Saudi Arabia and the U.S., the former has been adamant on the contingency of a large-scale mutual security pact and a civilian nuclear plan between the two countries. These two demands have thrown a wrench in negotiations, as Saudi Arabia remains deeply unpopular in the U.S. Congress. Any mutual security pact needs to be approved by the body. There is also great concern among policymakers about supplying the Gulf state with nuclear materials.

The U.S. also aims to distance the relationship between Russia and Saudi Arabia, their control over energy output and prices, and China's growing impact and power within the region. While Israel's demands for normalization remain unknown, it is believed that the latter state will demand some recognition in the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. As Saudi Arabia would be unsatisfied with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's promise not to annex the West Bank, more action regarding conflict resolution would be demanded. With President Netanyahu's extreme right-wing government hesitant to any solution with Saudi Arabia, it is unknown if any backlash will occur if plans for normalization move forward. Israeli National Missions Minister Orit Strock remarked, "We certainly won't agree to such a thing," in regards to any concessions regarding Palestinians being agreed on between Saudi-Israeli negotiations, with Netanyahu's administration remaining firm in its right-wing, extremist stances. Due to the latter's recent judicial overhaul approval, there is high tension between the respective Biden and Netanyahu administrations. Hence, the nature of the discussions remains convoluted within the current environment.

Netanyahu's recently announced a 100 billion shekel (\$27 billion) railway outbound from Tel Aviv and the potential for future expansion to connect with Riyadh as plans for normalization become greater in potential. Yet, as the United States remains the principal actor in negotiations, it is to be determined if either Saudi Arabia or Israel will take the following steps towards rapprochement and normalization with each other. Rumors of a potential compromise between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia continue to

surge, yet a successful deal remains contingent on Israeli concessions regarding Palestine. With the United States adamant about the success of normalization, optimism regarding successful discussions remains high from the Biden Administration. As Israel and Netanyahu's administration remain steadfast, only time and new proposals will indicate if a normalization plan can successfully progress.