



### [The Effort to Spur Saudi-Israeli Normalization is a Nonstarter That Has Zero Benefits for the U.S.](#)

The United States is working towards a security agreement with Saudi Arabia, attempting to fulfill a top foreign policy goal of U.S. President Biden. Recent reports have indicated that the United States is seeking to offer the landmark defense treaty in an effort to propel a normalization agreement between Saudi Arabia and Israel. However, fair-minded analysts have highlighted how the pursuit of a normalization deal is a nonstarter which lacks viability and is clearly aimed at achieving a “diplomatic win,” since one of the main conditions for it – a credible pathway to a Palestinian state – is something that Israeli officials have consistently opposed. In the absence of the honoring of a laid-out component such as this, the effort to initiate normalization is merely for show and has zero benefits for the United States. It appears that the Biden administration has long set its sights on trying to normalize relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, but similarly to the justifiably criticized Abraham Accords under Former President Trump, any potential agreements which fail to include fair Israeli concessions to Palestinians are not meaningful advancements towards peace and stability in the region.

Some issue experts surmise that President Biden is seeking to initiate Saudi-Israeli normalization in the hopes that it would act as a bargaining chip with Israel and help put an end to the destructive Gaza War. Biden officials have contended that previous efforts to institute normalization were derailed by the Hamas attacks of October 7th. The U.S.-Saudi pact that is currently being pursued includes a series of deals ranging from defense agreements, nuclear cooperation, attempts to normalize diplomatic engagement between Saudi Arabia and Israel, and a hopeful route to Palestinian statehood. It would guarantee Saudi Arabia U.S. protection and grant them additional access to American weaponry. The Middle Eastern nation would be required to cease arms purchases from China and diminish Chinese investment in the country, while the U.S. would assist Riyadh with the progression of its civilian nuclear program as well. According to observers, one of the key interests of the U.S. with the deal is to try and prevent further Chinese influence in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia has demonstrated a willingness to engage with both global powers and attempt to use coordination with one as leverage with the other. China’s largest source of petroleum is Saudi Arabia, and it is also its lead trading partner in the Middle East. Both regimes also have extremely poor human rights records as well.

Even if a U.S.-Saudi deal is agreed to that includes potential Israeli normalization, the conditions do not exist for the parties involved to honor their supposed commitments. Thus, the pact has been labeled by many as a nonstarter since a credible pathway towards a Palestinian state is claimed to be necessary to move things forward – something that Israeli officials are adamantly against. As such, the agreement will likely result in an unequal commitment to security responsibilities for the United States, coupled with a lack of alteration in Saudi policies relating to China and oil production. Saudi Arabia does not have the same military capacities to reciprocate equal security responsibilities.

Furthermore, the ideals and principles that the United States espouses are not embodied by the Saudi Arabian regime. Crown Prince Salman has proven to be an unreliable security companion, and his record consists of imprisoning fellow government officials, ordering the brutal murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and supporting Russian efforts to counter American initiatives. U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) emphasized that it is unlikely Congress would support “our most sacred national security commitment to a repressive, despotic regime.”

Approval from the U.S. Senate is required for the agreements to be actually implemented. Meanwhile, the Biden administration is pushing to finalize the pact, as there is little time remaining in the Congressional schedule. Many Congressional Democrats in particular are hesitant of the potential deal due to the Saudi government's history of human rights violations. As analysts have pointed out, the previous Trump administration was able to move Israeli-Arab normalization forward because the parties involved ignored the Palestinian statehood issue, but that appears to have changed following the onset of the destructive War on Gaza.