



Israel and the Arab States: A Historic Opportunity to Normalize Relations?

Moshe Yaalon and Leehe Friedman / Friday, January 26, 2018

In recent years, a noticeable shift has taken place between Israel and the Sunni Arab world: the scope of common interests between them has widened, and they have found themselves successfully cooperating on a number of strategically important issues, such as security, energy, and the sharing of natural resources. Although most of these efforts take place behind the scenes, some have happened in the public eye. Only a decade ago, it would have been unthinkable for the Israel Defense Forces chief of general staff to give an exclusive interview to [Saudi media](#) [1], as Lieutenant General Gadi Eizenkot did in November of last year, confirming Israel's willingness "to exchange information with the moderate Arab nations, including intelligences" and noting that on certain matters, "there is complete agreement between us and Saudi Arabia."

But to grasp the opportunity that now lies before Israel and the Sunni Arab world, we must first examine their relationship in the broader historical context of Israeli–Arab relations, in the current state of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and in light of the recent political changes within the Middle East as a whole.

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