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Gulf-Israel Ties Might Not Survive Trump's Peace Plan

A political program that does not envision statehood for the Palestinians could reverse the Gulf Arab states' tentative warming toward Israel.

By [Daniel B. Shapiro](#), [Yoel Guzansky](#)

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The U.S.-sponsored Peace to Prosperity workshop in Manama, Bahrain, last month—an effort spearheaded by U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior advisor, Jared Kushner, to sell the economic portion of a broader Middle East peace plan—had limited success in its stated purpose of advancing Palestinian economic development. But it showed more mixed results in another area: serving as a platform for Gulf Arab states and Israel to take meaningful steps forward in their still-emerging relationships.

The meeting had some positive moments and even modest breakthroughs. A delegation of Israeli businesspeople was present and able to network freely among other attendees, including those from Arab states. Veterans of regional economic conferences in Casablanca, Morocco, and Amman, Jordan, in the Oslo Accords era of the early 1990s recall similar scenes at those gatherings, and the economic offices that Israel and Gulf states opened in each other's countries facilitated additional contacts. So the public meetings in Bahrain were not unprecedented, but they were welcome after a long hiatus from such exchanges.

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