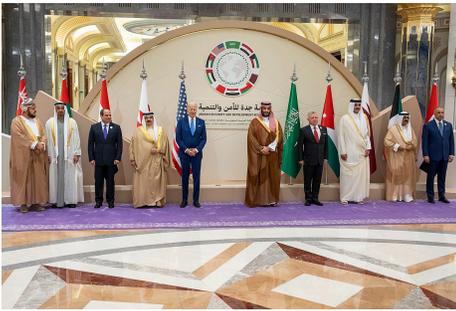


Middle East Geopolitics I: To normalize Saudi-Israeli relations, decisive U.S. action is needed | Aggies GO

Jonah Carlson

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President Biden meets with leaders from the Middle East, including Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, at the "Jeddah Security and Development Summit" in 2022.

Jonah Carlson - Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia announced its conditions for normalizing diplomatic relationships with Israel. Michael Crowley, Vivian Nereim and Patrick Kingsley survey and analyze the reactions to the announcement – which have made clear divisions in Washington – [in their latest article](#).

Saudi Arabia's conditions seriously challenge the way the United States must approach its [geopolitical codes](#) in the Middle East. Geopolitical codes dictate how states interact on the world stage, including who their allies, adversaries, and enemies are. Thus far, the Biden administration has struggled to define how Saudi Arabia fits into the United States' geopolitical codes. On one hand, the authors note that President Biden is determined to pursue the growth of the Abraham Accords, a series of diplomatic statements that have normalized relations between some Arab states and Israel, of which Saudi Arabia is currently not a signatory. Furthermore, the Biden administration has previously noted the importance of Saudi Arabia as an oil ally, especially as relationships with Russia have deteriorated. However, President Biden has also been a frequent critic of the Saudi monarchy and government, especially the state's crown prince, Mohammed bin

Salman. The President wants Saudi Arabia to improve its human rights record, and the authors note that he previously demanded the country "pay the price" for the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, among other criticisms.

To normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, however, the Biden administration will need to adopt a position. Saudi Arabia's demands on the U.S., including assistance with developing a civilian nuclear program and reducing arms sales restrictions, require a geopolitical code framework that the Biden administration has been hesitant to offer. The opportunities to solidify any geopolitical code have only been complicated by a recent agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran to renew diplomatic relations, which China helped solidify. Such actions make apparent that efforts to normalize diplomacy in the Middle East is not merely a regional issue, but must be viewed from the [scale](#) of global, or great power, politics as well.

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