

[UAE official says Israel accord should dispel doubts over F-35 sale](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1600181414664453500

Tue, 2020-09-15 13:35

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates wants to modernize its military and a request for US F-35 warplanes has been on the table since before a normalization deal with Israel, the minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, said on Tuesday.

The agreement, known as the Abraham Accord, should dispel "any grain of doubt" on why the Gulf state should get stealth F-35 fighter jets from the United States, Gargash told reporters.

"The UAE seeks like any country that takes its military seriously, to modernize its military, always, so our request for the F35 and other systems pre-dates this agreement," he said.

The UAE's existing F-16 jets are now almost two decades old and it is time to renew them, he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said his government would oppose any US F-35 warplane sales to the UAE, despite forging relations with the Gulf power. US President Donald Trump on Tuesday told Fox News he would have no problem selling the planes to the UAE.

The UAE and Gulf neighbor Bahrain are set to sign normalization accords with Israel at a White House ceremony on Tuesday.

Gargash said the country's decision to normalize ties broke a "psychological barrier" and is the way forward for the region, giving it more leverage.

He said Israel suspending its planned annexation of Palestinian land would stop the two-state solution being undermined and that the United States' mediator role was assurance that further annexation would be suspended.

The Emirati minister said it was not the time to revise the Arab Peace Initiative, and that it remains the cornerstone of the UAE's commitment to the Palestinian cause.

A strategic breakthrough is needed, he said, but "it will not happen overnight."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[UAE-Israel relations](#)

[United States of America](#)

[F-35 fighter jets](#)

A 'new dawn' as UAE and Bahrain sign Abraham Accord with Israel
Blow to Erdogan as US boots Turkey out of F-35 strike fighter program

[A 'new dawn' as UAE and Bahrain sign Abraham Accord with Israel](#)

Tue, 2020-09-15 16:58

WASHINGTON: The UAE and Bahrain signed historic agreements with Israel today in a ceremony overseen by Donald Trump in Washington.

The Abraham Accord means the two Gulf countries joined Egypt and Jordan as the only Arab nations to have full relations with Israel.

The ceremony was attended by the UAE's foreign minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, the foreign minister of Bahrain and

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

[#VIDEO](#): “Thank you for choosing peace and for halting the annexation of Palestinian territories,” says UAE foreign minister [#AbdullahBinZayed](#) at [#AbrahamAccord](#) peace signing ceremony with UAE and Bahrain [#UAEIsrael](#) [#BahrainIsrael](#)<https://t.co/igXh6Fi3wl>
pic.twitter.com/UIKeZdn8aq

– Arab News (@arabnews) [September 15, 2020](#)

The signing took place on the South Lawn of the White House – the same place where Israeli and Palestinian leaders signed the Oslo Accords in 1993.

“I stand here today to extend a hand of peace and receive a hand of peace,” Sheikh Abdullah said.

Addressing Netanyahu, he said: “Thank you for choosing peace and halting the annexation of Palestinian territories.”

“The [#UAE](#) is so delighted and privileged to play a role for peace.” Ahead of the [#UAEIsrael](#) [#Peaceaccord](#) signing ceremony [@WhiteHouse](#) today, UAE Foreign Minister HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed highlights the positive impact the agreement will have on the entire region [#OFMUAE](#) pic.twitter.com/AUkWeRJLDk

– OFM (@OFMUAE) [September 15, 2020](#)

Al-Zayani described the accord as a historic step on the road to a “genuine and lasting peace.”

He said he hoped the agreement would lead to a “comprehensive and enduring two-state solution for the Palestinian people.”

During the signing ceremony, the parties inked the Abraham Accord document along with a treaty of “peace, diplomatic relations and full normalization.”

Opinion

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)

Bahrain, which only announced on Friday that an agreement had been reached, also signed a “declaration of peace” with Israel.

[#VIDEO](#): “After decades of division and conflict, we mark the dawn of a new Middle East,” US President Donald [#Trump](#) said at the [#AbrahamAccord](#) peace signing ceremony between the UAE, Bahrain and Israel [#UAEIsrael](#) [#BahrainIsrael](#) <https://t.co/igXh6Fi3wl> <pic.twitter.com/VGwgAFTcMt>

– Arab News (@arabnews) [September 15, 2020](#)

The UAE announced last month it had reached a deal with Israel to normalize relations in return for a promise not to annex large areas of the occupied Palestinian West Bank.

The two countries have already held talks across a range of areas of cooperation and an Israeli and American delegation visited Abu Dhabi for on Aug. 31. The group, which included Trump advisor Jared Kushner, arrived on the first commercial flight from Israel to the UAE.

[#VIDEO](#): “This peace will eventually expand to include other Arab states and ultimately it can end the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all,” Israel’s [#Netanyahu](#) says at [#AbrahamAccord](#) peace signing ceremony with UAE, Bahrain [#UAEIsrael](#) [#BahrainIsrael](#)<https://t.co/igXh6Fi3wl> <pic.twitter.com/jee1e8WlST>

– Arab News (@arabnews) [September 15, 2020](#)

Donald Trump opened Tuesday’s ceremony praising the leaders of Israel, the UAE and Bahrain for reaching agreements that he said would “serve as the foundation for a comprehensive peace across the entire region.”

“After decades of division and conflict we mark the dawn of a new Middle East,” Trump said. “We’re here this afternoon to change the course of history.”

Earlier he said five or six more countries were ready to also open up relations with Israel.

HISTORIC day for PEACE in the Middle East – I am welcoming leaders from Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the Kingdom of Bahrain to the White House to sign landmark deals that no one thought was possible. MORE countries to follow! pic.twitter.com/whvJpNPrri

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [September 15, 2020](#)

Netanyahu called the day a “pivot of history that heralds a new dawn of peace.”

“Ultimately it can end the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all,” he said.

The event was attended by 700 people including former US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley and former British premier Tony Blair.

Earlier, the UAE’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, said the deal had “broken the psychological barrier” and was “the way forward” for the region.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[UAE-Israel relations](#)

[UAE](#)

[Bahrain](#)

UAE, Bahrain eye manifold benefits from Israel ties normalization UAE-Israel accord creates 'new environment' for Mideast peace: Official

[Diplomats: Roadside bombing targets British convoy in Iraq](#)

Author:

By SAMYA KULLAB | AP

ID:

1600177205014074900

Tue, 2020-09-15 13:12

BAGHDAD: A roadside bombing targeted British diplomatic vehicles in Baghdad on Tuesday, the British Embassy and Iraqi officials said. There were no injuries but the attack is fueling concerns of armed groups outside of the state's control.

The attack targeted an embassy convoy on a Baghdad highway close to the Umm Al-Tabool Mosque, the British Embassy and Iraqi security officials said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing.

The roads and the area of the attack, between the airport and the heavily fortified Green Zone, are often used by diplomatic missions, the Iraqi official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

The Green Zone is home to the seat of Iraq's government and also many foreign embassies, including the British and the US

"The safety and security of our staff is of paramount importance and we are in close touch with the Iraqi authorities," said a statement from the British Embassy.

The attack is the first in months to target a diplomatic convoy and comes amid near daily rocket attacks aimed at the Green Zone and Iraqi army bases hosting US troops. Rocket attacks have rarely led to significant losses. Tuesday's bombing is the third attack in the last 24 hours against foreign missions.

Two rockets were fired at the Green Zone late on Monday but caused no casualties; one was intercepted by the US embassy's C-RAM defense system, two Iraqi security officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity under regulations.

Earlier on Monday, a roadside bomb targeted a convoy of vehicles carrying equipment for Americans on the main highway in Babylon province, south of Baghdad.

The rocket attacks surged at an alarming pace when Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi traveled to the US last month to conclude strategic talks. They have put pressure on his administration, which has promised to rein in armed groups acting outside of state authority.

The recent attacks come as Al-Kadhimi introduced sweeping administrative changes, including naming a new governor of Iraq's Central Bank, which provoked criticism from some political blocs.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Baghdad](#)

[Iraq](#)

[terrorism](#)

[Daesh](#)

[Iran](#)

Three missiles target Baghdad airportExplosion hits southern Baghdad weapons depot, blamed on heat

[Egypt supports Saudi efforts to solve Yemeni crisis](#)

Author:

Mon, 2020-09-14 23:44

CAIRO: The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed the country's full support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen against Iranian-backed Houthi militias.

The ministry condemned the militias' targeting of civilian installations in the city of Marib with ballistic missiles, which has resulted in the injury of many civilians.

Egypt also confirmed its alignment with Saudi Arabia in its efforts to advance a political solution in Yemen, and to implement the ceasefire between the legitimate government forces and the Houthis.

Ahmed Fouad Abaza, deputy chairperson of the Arab Affairs Committee in the Egyptian Parliament, affirmed that Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi stood by the Kingdom in its rejection of external interference in the affairs of Arab countries, to protect Arab and Gulf national security.

Yemeni Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik, Abaza said, had spoken with El-Sisi about Yemen's national security.

Abaza praised Abdulmalik's assertion that Egypt would be present in everything related to the Yemeni crisis. He said that the Yemeni crisis would not be resolved as long as Iranian support for the Houthis continued, and that the demolition of national states such as Iraq contributed to the emergence of armed militias.

Abaza appealed to the Yemeni people to stand united behind the legitimate institutions inside their country to prevent Iranian interference, accusing the international community of negligence in confronting Turkish and Iranian interventions in Yemen, and also in Libya.

Mohammed Sadiq Ismail, director of the Arab Center for Strategic Studies, said that Yemen needed to be a pillar of stability for Arab national security.

He explained that Yemen was currently facing multiple problems, politically, economically and socially, as a result of the Houthi control of Al-Hudaydah (Hodeidah), and the lack of humanitarian aid entering the country.

On Sunday, the Yemeni government announced that it considered the Hodeidah Agreement, also known as the Stockholm Agreement, signed between it and the Houthis, to be functionally useless.

Yemen's Foreign Minister Mohammed Al-Hadhrami confirmed during a meeting with UN Envoy Martin Griffiths that the agreement had been rendered futile by the Houthi's exploitation of it, and that their actions were unacceptable.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Egypt](#)

[Saudi-led coalition](#)

[Yemen](#)

Houthi violence in Yemen displaces thousands of students Top military officials review operations of the coalition forces in Yemen

UN human rights experts slam Iranian wrestler's execution

Mon, 2020-09-14 22:09

LONDON: Experts from the UN Human Rights Council have condemned Iran's sudden execution of a young wrestler over the weekend.

"It is deeply disturbing that the authorities appear to have used the death penalty against an athlete as a warning to its population in a climate of increasing social unrest," UN Special Procedures experts said in a statement issued to Arab News.

Navid Afkari, 28, was executed suddenly over the weekend after being accused of killing a security guard during anti-government protests in 2018. He strongly and repeatedly denied this charge.

"The execution of Afkari, the second execution in connection to protests in the last two months, together with the alarming frequency of death penalty sentences handed to protesters, raises concerns about the authorities' future response to protests and to any expression of opposition or dissenting opinion," the UN experts said in the statement.

They highlighted Afkari's inability to access due legal process throughout his time in detention as a particularly egregious element of his case.

"If Afkari was guilty of murder, why was the trial conducted behind closed doors and through the use of forced confessions extracted under torture?" they asked.

"The execution of Navid Afkari was summary and arbitrary, imposed following a process that did not meet even the most basic substantive or procedural fair trial standards, behind a smokescreen of a murder charge."

Afkari, the statement said, was tortured, beaten and suffocated during his detention. The experts said they were "appalled at these serious allegations of torture."

Since the 2018 anti-government protests that Afkari participated in, Iran has regularly been convulsed by civil unrest.

Anti-government sentiment boiled over in November 2019 and January 2020 when protests against the entirety of Iran's leadership swept across the country, before being violently suppressed by security forces.

Afkari's execution, and his inability to access due legal process throughout his detention, have been widely condemned as cruel and unjust by rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iran](#)

[UN](#)

[human rights](#)

Iran summons German envoy for condemning wrestler's execution
Global outcry over Iranian wrestler's execution