

Navigating the US–Saudi Nuclear Accord Amid Middle Eastern Tensions

The US–Saudi defense agreement, featuring a civil nuclear component, is nearing completion and is seen as a crucial step to stabilize the Middle East by fostering Saudi–Israeli ties. However, resolving the Palestinian statehood issue remains a significant hurdle for full normalization.

This agreement adheres to the nonproliferation guidelines of Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act, aiming to help Saudi Arabia develop nuclear energy. Despite this, concerns linger about potential proliferation, especially given Saudi Arabia's warnings about pursuing nuclear capabilities if Iran does so.

Strategically, the US aims to maintain its influence in the Gulf, countering China's growing presence. Strengthening US–Saudi relations is pivotal for the US's role as a security and economic partner in the region.

However, the agreement faces challenges, including US Congressional opposition due to Saudi Arabia's human rights record and its involvement in regional conflicts like Yemen. The ongoing Gaza conflict and Israeli reluctance towards Palestinian statehood add complexity.

Economically, the deal benefits US industries by securing contracts for Saudi nuclear plants, competing with global nuclear technology providers. Security-wise, it aims to bolster Saudi defense capabilities against regional threats.

The deal's success hinges on Israel's concessions to Palestinians and the cessation of the Israel– Hamas conflict in Gaza. The intricate dynamics of nuclear nonproliferation, regional security, and diplomatic efforts highlight the complexity of this agreement's impact on Middle Eastern politics.