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The Impact of the Abraham Accords on the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002

Abstract: The Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States in 2002, expressed a common opinion of the League's member states regarding the conditions for bringing the Middle Eastern conflict to an end and continuing the normalization of Arab-Israeli relations, making the latter dependent on prior fulfilment of these conditions (i.e., Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, finding a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, and Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian state within the pre-1967 borders). The conclusion of the 2020 Abraham Accords marked a departure from this principle. This, along with the reactions from other League members, indicated that Israel's compliance with the Initiative's requirements was no longer unanimously considered by the Arab states as a prerequisite for further normalization of bilateral Arab-Israeli relations. This had a negative impact on the position of the Palestinian authorities in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, especially since it was reasonable to expect other Arab states to also make similar agreements with Israel. Today, in light of the tragedy in the Gaza Strip following Israel's response to the Hamas attack in October 2023, while further development of the idea of the Abraham Accords is arguably still not out of the question, a scenario is also possible that the normalization process will not resume without a resolution to the Palestinian question as envisioned by the Initiative, or at least significant Israeli concessions to the Palestinians.

Keywords: Abraham Accords, Arab Peace Initiative, Arab-Israeli relations, Israeli-Palestinian relations, international responsibility

Wpływ Porozumień Abrahamowych na Arabską Inicjatywę Pokojową z 2002 r.

Abstrakt: Arabska Inicjatywa Pokojowa, przyjęta przez Radę Ligi Państw Arabskich w 2002 r., wyrażała wspólną opinię państw członkowskich Ligi na temat warunków zakończenia konfliktu bliskowschodniego i kontynuowania normalizacji stosunków arabsko-izraelskich, uzależniając

tę ostatnią od uprzedniego spełnienia tych warunków (tj. wycofania się Izraela z okupowanych terytoriów arabskich, znalezienia sprawiedliwego rozwiązania problemu uchodźców palestyńskich oraz zaakceptowania przez Izrael niepodległego państwa palestyńskiego w granicach sprzed 1967 r.). Zawarcie Porozumień Abrahamowych w 2020 r. oznaczało odejście od tej zasady. To, wraz z reakcjami innych członków Ligi, wskazywało, że spełnienie przez Izrael wymogów Inicjatywy nie było już jednogłośnie uznawane przez państwa arabskie za warunek wstępny dalszej normalizacji dwustronnych stosunków arabsko-izraelskich. Miało to negatywny wpływ na pozycję władz palestyńskich w izraelsko-palestyńskim procesie pokojowym, zwłaszcza że można było oczekiwać, że inne państwa arabskie również zawrą podobne porozumienia z Izraelem. Dziś, w świetle tragedii w Strefie Gazy po odpowiedzi Izraela na atak Hamasu w październiku 2023 r., o ile dalszy rozwój idei Porozumień Abrahama nie jest zapewne jeszcze wykluczony, o tyle możliwy jest również scenariusz, w którym proces normalizacji nie zostanie wznowiony bez rozwiązania kwestii palestyńskiej zgodnie z założeniami Inicjatywy lub przynajmniej znaczących ustępstw Izraela na rzecz Palestyńczyków.

Słowa kluczowe: Porozumienia Abrahamowe, Arabska Inicjatywa Pokojowa, stosunki arabsko-izraelskie, stosunki izraelsko-palestyńskie, odpowiedzialność międzynarodowa

Introduction

In the latter part of 2020, the State of Israel, on the one hand, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, on the other, agreed to normalize their bilateral relations (or at least to begin the normalization process), which significantly increased the number of League of Arab States (LAS) member states that decided to take this step.¹ At the same time, this has provoked two interesting questions regarding the relationship between the arrangements, often collectively referred to as the Abraham Accords, and the resolution entitled *Arab Peace Initiative* (API), adopted at the 2002 LAS summit in Beirut, which set the conditions for ending the Middle Eastern conflict and normalizing Arab-Israeli relations. The questions at hand may be formulated as follows. Firstly, did the conclusion of the Abraham Accords, which deviated from significant provisions of the API, result in Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, and the UAE infringing upon their international obligations stemming from this resolution? Secondly, did the Abraham Accords impact the position of the Palestinian authorities in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process?

¹ Egypt and Jordan concluded peace treaties with Israel in 1979 and 1994, respectively (United Nations, 1987, p. 59; United Nations, 2002a, p. 351). In 1999, Mauritania decided to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel (US Department of State, 1999). The relations were severed by Mauritania in March 2010; this move came after the ties had been frozen in response to Israel's attack on the Gaza Strip in December 2008–January 2009 (Reuters, 2010).

To answer these questions, the next sections of this paper will analyze the text of the Beirut Resolution, the Abraham Accords, and the reactions to their conclusion by the LAS member states. Source documents, official government statements, and other available materials, including those provided by news agencies, will be used. Any possible long-term effects of the October 2023 Hamas attack and the Israeli response to it will also be considered. From a methodological perspective, the logical-linguistic method (especially when interpreting the provisions of the Beirut Resolution and the Abraham Accords), as well as the comparative method, will be used here.

The Arab Peace Initiative

The API was one of the resolutions adopted by the LAS Council at its session held in Beirut on March 27th–28th, 2002,² which outlined the conditions recognized by the organization's member states for ending the Middle East conflict and continuing comprehensive normalization of the Arab-Israeli relations.

According to the relevant paragraphs of the operative part of the resolution,³ the Summit-level Council of the LAS called on Israel to completely withdraw from the Arab occupied territories (including the Golan Heights to the June 4, 1967 lines, and southern Lebanon), to achieve a just and agreed-upon solution to the Palestine refugee problem (in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194(III)) and to accept the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state in the Palestinian territories occupied since June 1967 (with East Jerusalem as its capital) (Paragraph 2). After that, the Council undertook that Arab states⁴ would then consider the Arab-Israeli conflict as resolved, enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and establish normal relations with it (Paragraph 3). Accordingly, the API – which can be regarded as a document reflecting the opinion commonly shared by the LAS member governments at the time⁵ – not only set

² It was adopted unanimously (Raphaeli, 2002).

³ For the text, see United Nations, 2002b, p. 6.

⁴ Due to the fact that the Beirut Resolution used this term, it will also be used in the further part of the study in regard to the LAS member states.

⁵ As noted by A. Shlaim (2010, p. 290), all 22 members of the League endorsed a plan which offered Israel peace in exchange for withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967. The list of participants at the Beirut summit included: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (United Nations, 2002b, p. 40).

the conditions for the end of the Middle Eastern conflict,⁶ but also conditioned further normalization of the Israeli-Arab relations on the prior fulfillment of these conditions.

The analysis of the API provisions leads to the conclusion that it constituted a joint peace proposal expressing principles universally endorsed by the LAS member states⁷ rather than a joint declaration (or a form of agreement) intended to create legally enforceable obligations restricting their freedom of conduct. Thus, though considering the words used⁸ and the general aim of the API,⁹ it appears reasonable to say that Israel may have regarded it as a kind of offer and expected the undertaking to be fulfilled, in accordance with the principle of good faith, it would be certainly illegitimate to conclude – and this is particularly relevant to the subject of this paper – that the resolution, regardless of its political weight, created a legal obligation on the part of the LAS member states to refrain from normalizing relations with Israel if it failed to satisfy the demands set out in Paragraph 2 of the API, including those for resolving the Palestinian problem.¹⁰ Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Palestinians may have viewed the Beirut Resolution as advantageous to their national cause. Indeed, it contained an announcement

⁶ The conditions essentially corresponded with the traditional expectations of the international community. See United Nations, 2004, and United Nations, 2005). See also: the so-called “Road Map” prepared by the Quartet, consisting of representatives of the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union, and the United Nations (United Nations, 2003a). In fact, the API was welcomed by the UN General Assembly (United Nations, 2003b), Paragraph 3 of the operative part).

⁷ The API differed from other resolutions adopted at the summit, which took the form of decisions and employed the following wording: “The Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States, (...) Decides: (...)” (see: United Nations (2002b), p. 6–22). It may be recalled that, according to Article 7 of the Pact of the League of Arab States, “The decisions of the Council taken by a unanimous vote shall be binding on all the member States of the League; those that are reached by a majority vote shall bind only those that accept them” (United Nations, 1950, p. 237; League of Arab States).

⁸ The government of the State of Israel, one of the addressees of the Beirut Resolution, was *called upon* to act in the manner prescribed therein, and the Council of the LAS *undertook* that the Arab states would then normalize their relations with Israel. Furthermore, the preamble to the resolution referred to a statement by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, in which he called on Israel to withdraw from the territories occupied since 1967 and accept the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state “*in return for* the establishment by the Arab States of normal relations in the context of a comprehensive peace with Israel” (emphasis added).

⁹ It can be said that the primary goal of the API was to accelerate the end of the Middle Eastern conflict by persuading Israel to take appropriate action. It is worth adding that due care was also taken to ensure that the document was adequately publicized; it was submitted to the UN with a request that it be circulated as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

¹⁰ This view seems to find additional support in the fact that among the states which participated in the adoption of the resolution were also those that had already normalized their relations with the State of Israel.

that the LAS member states would adhere to the chronology set forth therein, which could be interpreted as a clear signal to Israel that resolving the issues of the Palestinian state and Palestinian refugees in accordance with international law could lead to a change in the political climate in the entire region, favorable to this state. However, the conclusion of the Abraham Accords showed that two decades after the adoption of the Beirut Resolution, bilateral normalization *without* the need for Israel to first meet the requirements of Paragraph 2 of the API had become acceptable, at least to some of the Arab states.

The Abraham Accords

On August 13th, 2020, a joint statement was issued on behalf of Israel, the UAE, and the United States, announcing that Benjamin Netanyahu and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan had agreed to fully normalize mutual relations between Israel and the UAE (US Embassy in Israel, 2020). A month later, on September 15th, the Abraham Accords were signed, which included a joint declaration by Bahrain, Israel, the UAE, and the United States (The Abraham Accords Declaration, 2020) and two separate agreements between Israel, Bahrain, and the UAE. President Donald Trump also signed both documents as a witness.

The first of them, the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement: Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel (2020), was drafted in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, with all texts equally authentic. It comprised a preamble and the main body of the text, which contained 12 articles. The Annex, addressing the issues raised in Article 5, was an integral part of the Treaty. The provisions for ratification and entry into force (Article 10), registration in accordance with Article 102 of the UN Charter (Article 12), and the settlement of disputes that may arise from application or interpretation (Article 11) were also included. According to the Treaty, the parties established peace, diplomatic relations, and full normalization of bilateral ties (Article 1). They further pledged to be guided by the provisions of the UN Charter and the principles of international law that govern relations between states. Specifically, they undertook to recognize and respect each other's sovereignty and the right to peaceful and secure existence, to develop friendly relations and cooperation, and to settle all disputes through peaceful means (Article 2). Furthermore, Israel and the UAE agreed, among other things, to cooperate and coordinate in the sphere of peace and stability (Article 4), to exchange resident

ambassadors as soon as practicable,¹¹ to conduct diplomatic and consular relations in accordance with international law (Article 3), and to conclude further bilateral agreements on issues of mutual interest (e.g., finance and investment, cooperation in legal matters, trade and economic relations, civil aviation, etc.) (Article 5). Finally, the parties pledged to fulfill their obligations under the Treaty in good faith. This includes adopting appropriate internal regulations and removing provisions inconsistent with the Treaty. They also agreed not to incur any obligations that are contrary to those under the Treaty. Additionally, they declared that, in the event of a collision between the obligations under the Treaty and other obligations, the obligations under the Treaty would remain binding and must be fulfilled, subject to Article 103 of the UN Charter (Article 9).

Compared to the Israeli-Emirati treaty, the Abraham Accords: Declaration of Peace, Cooperation, and Constructive Diplomatic and Friendly Relations (2020), signed by Israel and Bahrain, was much less detailed and simpler in form. It should largely be viewed as anticipating steps that were yet to be taken. The Declaration stated that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al Zayani met on September 15th, 2020, to endorse the principles of the Abraham Accords and to begin “a new chapter of peace” between the two states. It also noted that the statesmen agreed, among other things, to establish full diplomatic relations, promote lasting security, refrain from the threat or use of force, and seek agreements in various areas such as security, investment, technology, etc. Nevertheless, the Declaration was soon followed by a Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic, Peaceful and Friendly Relations (2020), signed in Manama on October 18th, 2020. This was accompanied by several Memoranda of Understanding on cooperation in various fields (Bahrain News Agency 2020; Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020). The Joint Communiqué was drafted in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, with all texts equally authentic. According to the document, which reaffirmed the principles enshrined in the Abraham Accords Declaration and the Bahraini-Israeli Declaration of September 15th, 2020, the parties established full diplomatic, peaceful, and friendly relations, as well as full bilateral ties, as of the date of the signing of the Joint Communiqué (Article 1).

¹¹ In March 2021, Mohamed Mahmoud Al Khaja, the first UAE ambassador to Israel, presented his letter of credence to President Rivlin (United Arab Emirates, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024). On the Israeli side, Ambassador Amir Hayek presented the letter to Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai, in November (Jerusalem Post Staff, 2021).

They pledged to be guided in their relations by the provisions of the UN Charter and the principles of international law governing relations between states. In particular, they agreed to recognize and respect each other's sovereignty and the right to live in peace and security, to eschew the threat and use of force, and to settle all disputes by peaceful means (Article 2). Moreover, Israel and Bahrain agreed to open embassies, exchange resident ambassadors as soon as practicable,¹² and maintain diplomatic and consular relations in accordance with applicable international law (Article 3).

The third LAS member state that chose to establish formal relations with Israel within the framework of the Abraham Accords was Sudan. In a Joint Statement from the United States, the Republic of Sudan, and the State of Israel (2020), issued on October 23rd, 2020, it was recalled that President Trump, Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, Sudanese Chairman of the Sovereignty Council Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke that day and agreed to normalize relations between Israel and Sudan, end the state of belligerence between them, begin economic and trade relations (with an initial focus on agriculture), and negotiate cooperation agreements in these and other areas, such as agriculture technology, aviation, and migration. Then, on January 6th, 2021, the Sudanese Minister of Justice, Nasredeen Abdulbari, together with United States Secretary of the Treasury, Steven T. Mnuchin, acting as a witness, signed "The Abraham Accords Declaration" (The Abraham Accords Declaration, 2021; Agencies and TOI Staff, 2021).¹³

Morocco is the latest Arab state to embark on the path of normalizing its ties with Israel. According to the Joint Declaration of December 22nd, 2020, on behalf of the State of Israel, the Kingdom of Morocco, and the United States, the intention of the Israeli and Moroccan governments was to immediately resume full official contacts and establish full diplomatic, peaceful, and friendly relations, promote economic bilateral cooperation, pursue cooperation in various fields (e.g., trade, finance and investment, innovation and technology, civil aviation, tourism, and energy) and reopen the liaison offices in Rabat and Tel Aviv (Joint Declaration,

¹² The ambassadors of Bahrain and Israel (Khaled Yousif Al Jalahma and Eitan Na'eh) presented their letters of credence, in September 2021 to President Herzog and in December to King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, the ruler of Bahrain, respectively (Berman, 2021; Bahrain News Agency, 2021).

¹³ In April 2021, Sudan decided to repeal internal regulations prohibiting the establishment of diplomatic and economic relations with Israel (Sudan Tribune, 2021).

2020).¹⁴ Among other things, the three governments agreed to fully commit to respecting the elements contained in the Declaration and to act accordingly at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels.

There is no doubt that the arrangements between Israel and the four LAS member states differed not only in form, but also in content and, particularly, in the degree to which they established bilateral ties between the parties. Certainly, considering the arrangements with Bahrain and the UAE, the relations between Israel and the two Gulf states could be considered the most advanced. However, in the case of Israeli-Sudanese relations, it seems that not much more than the initial preliminary steps (though certainly very important, also in their symbolic dimension) toward full normalization were taken at the time.¹⁵ On the other hand, as far as the form of the arrangements is concerned, the Emirati-Israeli agreement took the form of a model treaty in the strict sense of the term, different from other agreements – especially between Israel and Sudan, where, in addition to their Joint Statement, the full picture of their relations was given by Sudan's unilateral acceptance of the principles of the Abraham Accords Declaration.

To get a full picture of the developments, it should also be mentioned that experts pointed out that the Israeli-Sudanese-US joint statement coincided with Donald Trump's announcement that he would remove Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (Atlantic Council, 2020a), while the Israeli-Moroccan arrangement coincided with the US recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara (Atlantic Council, 2020b). On the other hand, the link between the Israeli-Emirati agreement and Israel's decision to abandon its plan to annex part of the West Bank territory was discussed (Atlantic Council, 2020c). While the joint statements of August 13th and October 23rd, as well as the Joint Declaration of December 22nd, mentioned the relevant decisions and positions of the US and Israeli governments, the focus of this paper is primarily on *the results* rather than the potential *causes* or *background* of the discussed developments. And in this context, it should be stated that, notwithstanding the observations made above regarding the perceived differences in form and content between the

¹⁴ It is worth noting that in 2023, Morocco was reported to have decided to upgrade its liaison office status to embassy level after Israel recognized its claim to Western Sahara (see: Kasraoui, 2023; Berman and TOI Staff, 2023; i24News, 2023).

¹⁵ However, it appears that negotiations for the final agreement continued in the years that followed. In early 2023, Israel's Foreign Minister made an announcement stating that a full normalization agreement would be signed later in the year (See, for example: Berg, 2023; Gold, 2023).

various elements of the Abraham Accords outlined above, the general conclusion is that the common denominator of all the arrangements in question was that they expressed the will of the four LAS member states (dictated by demands of the *raison d'état* as understood by the respective governments) to establish peaceful and friendly relations with the State of Israel without waiting for the Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement and Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. At the same time, it should be stressed that there was nothing in the texts of the Accords to suggest that the governments of the Arab signatory states had changed their minds regarding the very need for Israel to meet the conditions set out in Paragraph 2 of the operative part of the API.

There is no doubt that the conclusion of the Abraham Accords indicated a change in the approach of at least some LAS member states towards the chronology envisioned by the Beirut Resolution. However, equally significant to the Accords themselves is the overall reaction they provoked among these states.

The reaction of the LAS member states to the conclusion of the Abraham Accords

Although the Palestinians severely criticized the normalization agreements, viewing them as a betrayal of their cause and a violation of the API (Sawafta & Al-Mughrabi, 2020; Abu Samra, 2020), the response of LAS members to the Abraham Accords, particularly the arrangements made by Bahrain and the UAE, was not consistent. This conclusion is based on statements issued by foreign ministries and heads of state, as well as the fact that – during their meeting – the foreign ministers failed to condemn the normalization.

Thus, for instance, a member of the Libyan Presidential Council criticized the agreement between Israel and the UAE, stating that the UAE's step was “another stab in the back of the [Muslim] Ummah” (Aydemir, 2020). Meanwhile, a spokeswoman for the Qatari Foreign Ministry, showing more restraint, implied that Qatar did not intend to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel without a resolution to the Palestine question (Anadolu Agency, 2020a);¹⁶ one may cautiously add that Kuwaiti officials reportedly reacted in a similar way (TOI Staff, 2020). Also, the President of Djibouti declared that his state would not establish official relations

¹⁶ At the Global Security Forum held in Doha in October 2021, Qatar's Foreign Minister stated that the normalization agreements would not help to resolve the Middle East crisis (Yusuf, 2021).

with Israel until progress is made towards peace with the Palestinians (Harkov, 2020). In addition, the Algerian Foreign Minister described any decision to normalize relations with Israel as “irresponsible” (Middle East Monitor, 2021).¹⁷ On the other hand, however, the authorities of other states, such as the President of Egypt (Reuters, 2020; Aljazeera, 2020) and the government of Oman (Anadolu Agency, 2020b; Semiz, 2020; Aljazeera, 2020), welcomed the Accords, or at least seemed tacitly supportive of the normalization process. In particular, the latter appears to have been the case with Saudi Arabia, which, although it did not itself join the Accords framework, opened its airspace to direct flights between Israel and the Gulf states. This route was also used, particularly symbolically, during the first visits to the UAE by Prime Minister Bennett in December 2021 (The Times of Israel, 2021) and President Herzog in January 2022 (Alarabiya News, 2022), as well as during Defense Minister Gantz’s visit to Bahrain in February 2022 (Gross, 2022). In 2022, Saudi Arabia agreed to open its airspace to all civilian flights to and from Israel (Blaine & Mackintosh, 2022), and in 2023, a similar decision was made by Oman (Ghantous, 2023). It should also be added that the Foreign Minister of Jordan, the state which concluded the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, did not rule out that the arrangements could have had a positive impact on the future of the peace process (Aljazeera, 2020), while some other LAS members – such as Iraq (Karaalp, 2020),¹⁸ Mauritania (Middle East Monitor, 2020),¹⁹ and Tunisia (Amara, 2020)²⁰ – referred to the 2020 developments in a measured manner, apparently respecting the sovereign decisions of the signatory states of the Abraham Accords.

It should also be noted that at the September 2020 meeting, the foreign ministers of the LAS member states did not condemn the Emirati-Israeli normalization, which led to Palestine’s decision to resign from chairing the LAS meetings – a position it was supposed to hold for the next six months (Anadolu Agency, 2020c; Sawafta & al-Mughrabi, 2020; Boxerman, 2020).

Taken as a whole, the practice outlined reveals that while the LAS member states did not have a unified position on the Abraham Accords, as a regional community of states they did not condemn their conclusion, and many of them

¹⁷ Though this opinion was expressed later, it refers to promises made by some Libyan politicians to normalize relations with Israel.

¹⁸ Referring to a statement from an Iraqi government spokesman.

¹⁹ Quoting a statement from Mauritania’s Foreign Ministry.

²⁰ Citing a statement from the Tunisian Foreign Ministry.

referred to the Accords, if not with approval, at least with neutrality, seemingly acknowledging that normalization deals fall within the discretion of sovereign states. This suggests that there was a broader tolerance among the LAS member states for establishing ties with Israel before it fulfills the requirements stated in Paragraph 2 of the operative part of the Beirut Resolution, even if for most of these states the API remained an important factor in their own foreign policy.

Conclusions

Considering the information presented earlier, we can make the following observations regarding the first question raised at the beginning of this study. The Abraham Accords were signed before the resolution of the Palestinian issue and Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. This clearly deviated from the chronological order outlined in Paragraph 3 of the API (in connection with its Paragraph 2). However, since the latter did not create a legal obligation for the LAS member states to refrain from entering into normalization agreements prior to Israel's fulfilment of the requirements set forth in its Paragraph 2, the freedom of Bahrain, the UAE, Morocco, and Sudan to conclude treaties, which, according to a well-established principle of international law, is one of the attributes of statehood,²¹ was not limited by additional binding rules (*lex specialis*) contained in the API. It would, therefore, be untenable to claim that by concluding the Abraham Accords, the four states violated their legal international obligations under the API. Such conduct could not lead to legal responsibility but, at most, political responsibility for disregarding the common position of the LAS member states as stated in the provisions of the Beirut Resolution.²²

As for the answer to the second question, it is important to note that the Abraham Accords' conclusion and the overall reaction of the Arab states indicated that Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, a fair resolution to the Palestinian refugee issue, and recognition of the Palestinian state within the pre-1967 borders were no longer universally seen by LAS members as essential conditions for further normalization of Arab-Israeli relations. Consequently,

²¹ In this context, the *dictum* of the Permanent Court of International Justice is often cited: "The right of entering into international engagements is an attribute of State sovereignty." (S.S. "Wimbledon", 1923, p. 25). See also: McNair, 1961, p. 35.

²² However, an analysis of the Arab states' reaction showed that the conclusion of the Accords did not provoke widespread opposition among them.

though the demands stipulated in Paragraph 2 of the API were still uniformly regarded by them as valid,²³ the events of 2020 should be interpreted as negatively affecting the Palestinian authorities' position in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process at the time; they clearly demonstrated that the view that resolving the Palestinian issue should be the price Israel had to pay for rapprochement with the LAS member states was no longer unanimously shared by them.

Concluding remarks

The majority of this research, including the aforementioned results, was conducted prior to October 2023. As a result, the considerations relating to addressing the second question presented in the study's initial version were formulated in the present tense, as it was believed that they accurately reflected the Middle Eastern reality at that time. However, following the tragic events affecting the population of the Gaza Strip due to the Israeli attack on this territory following Hamas's attack on Israel in October 2023, the situation has become significantly more complex and necessitates an additional comment.

From a historical perspective (i.e., for the period of 2020 to 2023), the conclusions presented in the second paragraph of the previous section remain valid. Despite the cooling of relations (e.g., Nereim, 2024; Arab News, 2023), it seems likely that the achievements of 2020 (i.e., the Abraham Accords) will be preserved.²⁴ However, three potential scenarios seem to be coming into play now regarding the prospects for further development of the Abraham Accords framework and its impact on the API, and thus on the Palestinian cause.

On the one hand, it cannot be ruled out that, after a period of agitation caused by the situation in the Gaza Strip, the governments of Arab states will recognize that the national interest requires reconciling with Israel. Steps may then be taken to expand the scope of the Abraham Accords. The result could be either a further division within the LAS²⁵ (Scenario 1) or – in the most optimistic scenario for

²³ As already noted, there was nothing in the Accords to suggest otherwise. The fact that this remained the unanimous viewpoint of the member states of the LAS is confirmed, for example, by their vote in favor of the General Assembly resolution in 2021, which endorsed the principles of the Middle Eastern peace process. This resolution emphasized the importance of Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories and the establishment of a fully independent Palestinian state. Please refer to United Nations, 2021a for further information. The voting record can be found in United Nations, 2021b, pp. 8–9.

²⁴ For this opinion, see, for example, Nereim, 2024; Zaaïmi, 2023; Cordall, 2024.

²⁵ If there were not many new states joining the Abraham Accords framework, it is possible that those states could then face more serious political consequences than Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, and the UAE faced in 2020.

Israel, though probably much further in the future – the opening of a completely new chapter in the history of the Middle East, in which the unresolved Palestinian question and the unsettled disputes between Israel and its neighbors, in the opinion of most LAS members, would no longer have a significant impact on broader bilateral Arab-Israeli relations²⁶ (Scenario 2). The realization of either of these scenarios would, to some extent, directly continue the trend of bypassing that part of the API's provisions that stated the normalization would occur once Israel complied with the requirements outlined in Paragraph 2. However, it is also possible that the process of further normalization would not resume without the creation of a fully independent Palestinian state or, at least, without major concessions from Israel and a return to good-faith Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. This would mean a freeze on the development of the Abraham Accords framework and a retreat to the principles expressed in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the API (Scenario 3).

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