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## Fraternal Enemies: Israel and the Gulf Monarchies

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By Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky  
Oxford University Press, 2019, 297 pages, \$51.35, ISBN: 9780197521878

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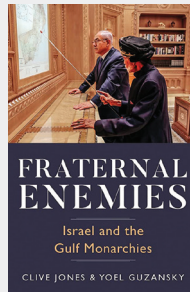
Reviewed by Ayşe AVCI, Bursa Uludağ University

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*Fraternal Enemies: Israel and the Gulf Monarchies* presents an academic study of Israel's relations with the Gulf monarchies. By drawing upon a wide range of contemporary sources, it explores both the scope and limits of these ties and their influence on the modern-day Middle East (p. 22). The extent to

which Israel's current relations with the Gulf monarchies can and should be seen as forming the contours of a new regional order is a key theme of this book. The approach of the authors, Clive Jones and Yoel Guzansky, lies in understanding Israel's ties with many of the Gulf monarchies, notably Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain, not as a formal alliance but rather as a manifestation of a tacit security regime (TSR), an interest-based, limited, and informal mechanism of cooperation between states in the context of security issues (p. 10).

This book is the result of several discussions and debates the authors had with close colleagues and friends over several years. In this study, according to the authors, the Arab officials mostly confirmed the authors' arguments during informal conversations, but they are excluded from this study (p. 7). According to the authors, in this book, the typology of the term security regime is discussed from a more realistic perspective, rather than a liberal variant. The security regimes discussed in the book are presented as a reflection of



economic and military power. This allows the interested parties to promote long-term interests (p. 12).

The book is divided into five chapters. In the introduction, the authors talk about the framework of the TSR to provide a better analysis of the study. The TSR paradigm

was put forward by an Israeli-born historian of international relations named Aharon Klieman. He avoids the normative and legalistic ideas customary in the study of international regimes and places emphasis on areas of cooperation where actors' interests are combined. This book tries to analyze the relations between Israel and the Gulf countries through Klieman's perception of the TSR (p. 16). However, the authors shared concerns over three hard security issues that define the department and extent of ties between these "fraternal enemies": (i) Iran's growing regional influence, (ii) the rise of non-state armed actors, (iii) and shared discomfort over Washington's engagement across the Middle East (p. 19). These subjects become a pattern for understanding the variable alliances and regional security systems across the wider Middle East, North Africa, and beyond. In conclusion, the authors tell us that the TSR is a framework, not a linear process, to meet a defined end. Its purpose remains the containment of Iran, and to this extent, its underlying principles, albeit unwritten, remain the basis for cooperation.

The first chapter offers a brief overview of the contentious history of Israeli interaction with the Gulf monarchies, noting how the issues of Palestine, Iran, and wider ties that all actors have enjoyed with Washington have come to influence the patterns of relations over several decades. Chapter 2 provides a more detailed analysis of how, after signing the Oslo Accords in 1993, Israel developed open ties with what could be considered the denominating monarchies of the lower Gulf: Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and the UAE. Equally, the book examines how these ties have developed around Tehran's rising regional power as well as the fidelity to the Palestine case.

Chapter 3 examines Israel's ties with the most important of the Arab Gulf monarchies: Saudi Arabia. It explores how, over time, such ties become 'legitimate' and how the progress of this relationship remains subject to ideational constraints facing both actors (p. 24). Because of the regional influence of Saudi Arabia on the Sunni Arab world, the authors claimed that only the Saudis could provide the Palestinian leadership with the political and religious legitimacy required to sign an agreement with Israel that addressed the core issues of refugees, borders, and the status of East Jerusalem (p. 96). Besides this, this chapter examines the impact of the ideological struggle on the power and status of the kingdom between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Chapter 4 examines the diplomatic cooperation between all the actors involved in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain accepted this deal; however, this acceptance was shorn of diplomatic conviction precisely because it kept alive Iran's nuclear program, whatever the international con-

straints and monitoring mechanisms put in place. This chapter studies more specifically the (arms) deals the U.S. made after recognizing these concerns to reassure the Gulf monarchies (p. 125). Furthermore, it demonstrates the paradox captured by the construct of a TSR: the readiness of Israel and the Gulf monarchies to work together to oppose the JCPOA but, equally, the divergence over individual regional nuclear ambitions (once the agreement was signed).

The last chapter examines the impact of the Syrian civil war on Israel's relations with the Gulf monarchies. It highlights that ISIS or the capacity of these militants never physically threatened Israel (p. 164). Furthermore, the book examines how the fate of the Assad regime was irrevocably entwined with the fortunes of Hezbollah and Iran (p. 168). Lastly, the authors examine that the support of Washington, Saudi Arabia, and the lower Gulf states for a proxy war remained the preferred method of countering Iran's drive for regional hegemony (p. 183).

The book explains the historical relations between Israel and the countries of the Gulf. It even explains the smallest steps taken for peace initiatives, with examples, and conveys the scope of the tacit agreements that are to be emphasized. In addition, it can be said that the analysis of the historical evolution of the book is very successful.

Despite the extensive research and efficient use of resources, the authors could have paid more attention to using impartial sources on certain topics to forestall the objectivity of the study from falling into doubt. Specifically, here is a commentary on the Palestinian Intifada, one of the most important issues affecting relations between Israel and the Gulf states: "Amid the carnage visited by Palestin-

ian suicide bombers on Israel's streets, and the inevitable human cost in retribution exacted by Israel against the various Palestinian militias..." (p. 36). The source used here is taken from an article written by Uzi Rabi, the director of an Israeli think tank named Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. This think tank is an organization that evaluates events –as can be predicted– from an Israeli perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This may create a skewed perception of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict

for a person who lacks previous knowledge about the topic.

*Fraternal Enemies: Israel and The Gulf Monarchies* can be a useful book for anyone interested in the ties between the Gulf countries, Iran, the U.S., and Israel, especially for academics, students, and politicians, with its rich use of academic resources. Such an in-depth study on the secret agreements between Israel and the Gulf monarchies will greatly contribute to the literature.

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## The Middle East from Empire to Sealed Identities

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By Lorenzo Kamel

Edinburgh University Press, 2019, 264 pages, \$99.35, ISBN: 9781474448949

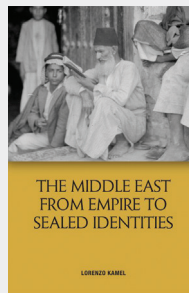
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Reviewed by Fikriye Karaman, Samsun University

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Challenging the discourse of the 'medievalisation' of the Middle East Lorenzo Kamel's book *The Middle East from Empire to Sealed Identities* provides an understanding of the historical process through which complex, flexible, and multifaceted identities of the Ottoman Empire transformed into the ones of simplified, politicized, and homogenized. Composed of seven chapters in addition to the introduction and conclusion the book mainly focuses on the 'long 19<sup>th</sup> century' (1798-1922).

In the first chapter, Kamel contextualizes major concepts including tribe and tribalism, sect and sectarianism, and the Middle East, by deconstructing their simplified and loaded versions. In the following three chapters, he examines the three 'moments,' junctures, of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that served to the emergence of competing ethno-religious visions. The first mo-



ment consisted of the rising up of nationalism amongst Ottoman Christians of the Balkans and the 'opening process' of the Ottoman markets to European powers. A phase ignited by Muhammed Ali's invasion of Greater Syria and more importantly 'imperialism of free trade.'

The second moment was *Tanzimat* (1839-1871), a period when the Ottoman Empire undertook wide-ranging reforms, the majority of which were legal and administrative. Yet, regarding it as a factor that contributed to the politicization of the ethno-religious differences Kamel focuses on the concept of *wataniyyah* (patriotism) that was introduced for solidifying state and society relations. This period also witnessed the convergence of interests of missionaries and Christian Arabs in Syria and Lebanon creating networks through which Western powers "imposed their politi-