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## Situation assessment



**The IMEC:**  
Unraveling its Genesis, Evolution,  
and Israel's Pivotal Role

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## INTRODUCTION

During the G20 summit in New Delhi on September 9, 2023, U.S. President Joe Biden unveiled a monumental proposal: the establishment of a rail corridor bridging India, the Middle East, and Europe. This revelation has sparked widespread intrigue, prompting questions regarding the project's genesis, objectives, execution strategies, and funding avenues. A notable facet of this initiative is Israel's pivotal role. While details remain somewhat enigmatic, it's anticipated that the corridor will culminate at Israel's seaports. From these ports, goods will be shipped to Europe across the Mediterranean. Additionally, all merchandise traveling to and from the Arabian Gulf will navigate through the Israeli hub of Haifa.

The project encompasses several nations: India, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and the European Union. It's part of an initiative that Biden has dubbed the "Partnership for Investing in Global Infrastructure". According to him, this initiative will play a pivotal role in enhancing trade, facilitating the transportation of clean energy resources, and fostering digital communication. The corridor will serve as a reliable and efficient transit network, originating from India, passing through the Arabian Sea, then overland through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, culminating in Israel. From Israel, the route will then extend by sea to Europe.

The nations in question have solidified their collaborative intent by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). While this MoU outlines their shared political commitments, it doesn't enforce binding legal stipulations. Instead, it paves the way for collaborative efforts to establish the IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Corridor), an economic conduit aimed at seamlessly connecting India to Europe through the Middle East.



This ambitious corridor is bifurcated into two distinct routes: the Eastern Corridor, linking India directly to the Gulf nations, and the Northern Corridor, bridging the Arabian Gulf to Europe with Israel<sup>1</sup> as a pivotal transit point.

Beyond the mere transport of goods, the IMEC is poised to become a multi-faceted infrastructure initiative. It encompasses the installation of ultra-fast data cables, the establishment of electrical interconnections, and the introduction of pipelines dedicated to the export of clean hydrogen. This collaborative venture is anticipated to elevate economic synergies among the participating countries, catalyze job creation, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and yield numerous other benefits, as is the prevailing consensus.<sup>2</sup>

This project is a continuation of an Israeli initiative introduced following the signing of the "Abraham Accords" with the UAE and Bahrain on September 15, 2020. One of its notable outcomes was coined as the "Dubai-Haifa Axis" or the "Peace Train." Interestingly, the unveiling of this expanded project closely aligns with the third anniversary of the accords' signing. However, a marked distinction in the recent announcement is the inclusion of India as a key player, transforming the initiative from a regional relation framework into one with broader implications, touching upon the U.S.-China rivalry.

Furthermore, it paves the way for logical discussions about a potential normalization trajectory between Riyadh and Tel Aviv. Despite the absence of an official Saudi-Israeli normalization agreement being a prerequisite for this project, Israeli officials and Hebrew media continually discuss the prospects. The new initiative does not explicitly mention the commencement of an economic normalization phase at this juncture. Still, in practice, it will inevitably create an overland connection between Saudi Arabia and Israel, laying the foundation for what can be described as a shared or mutual interest.

### **Keywords:**

Keywords: India-Middle East-Europe corridor, Israel, USA, India, Arabian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Abrah Accords

1 . "Muhammad Walid Youssef, "The IMEC and its Strategic Implications for the Neighborhood," Al-Shiraa Magazine (Beirut, Lebanon), September 12, 2023 [link](#)

2 . "An economic corridor between India, the Middle East and Europe, a challenge to China?", Deutsche Welle website (Bonn, Germany), September 17, 2023 [link](#)



## FIRST: IMPLICATIONS OF THE OFFICIAL ISRAELI STANCE

Statements by Israeli officials and politicians in response to the unveiling of the IMEC project paint a clear picture. The economic, political, and strategic gains that Israel stands to accrue from its inclusion in this global goods and services transportation network are evident. For the first time in its history, Israel is poised to become a pivotal junction for economic connectivity between India and Europe. This would elevate Israel to a global hub for trade, which is expected to invigorate its economy. Historically, Israel's economy has been primarily anchored in innovation, cutting-edge technology, and military exports. The introduction of this corridor provides an added impetus. In essence, Tel Aviv is banking on this project, which seemed more fantastical than feasible until its recent revelation, to cement its place in the global trade equation stretching from India to Europe and vice versa.

Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, perceives the American president's announcement to position Israel at the heart of a historic international project as unparalleled. This initiative will bridge Asian and European infrastructures, realizing Tel Aviv's vision of reshaping both the Middle East's landscape and Israel's own strategic position. Netanyahu firmly believes that a project of this magnitude will positively impact the entire world. Consequently, he lauded the U.S. announcement and commended the countries that signed the memorandum of understanding.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Netanyahu speaking about the American initiative: Israel stands at the center of an unprecedented international project," Makor Rishon newspaper (in Hebrew), September 10, 2023 [link](#)



As for the direct outcomes if the project were to be executed, Netanyahu indicates it would be an economic revolution. Israel would metamorphose into a central hub for global trade and commerce and serve as a principal gateway between India and Europe and vice versa. It would herald a significant opening towards the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Apart from that, the operational capacity of Israel's seaports is poised to increase, and a plethora of employment opportunities would emerge, potentially improving the living standards of Israelis who currently grapple with soaring prices.

Netanyahu's remarks, widely circulated by the Hebrew media, reveal that the U.S. president had approached him regarding the project several months prior. Diplomatic engagements to kickstart this initiative remained incessant over the past few months, underscoring both parties' commitment to reshaping the Middle Eastern<sup>4</sup> landscape.

According to Netanyahu, Israel will deploy all its resources to turn this ambitious project into reality. He has directed all relevant ministries and agencies to work towards this end. Furthermore, Netanyahu has entrusted the National Security Council, under his office, with the task of fully coordinating with the United States and other involved countries.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen released a statement praising the U.S. president for his role in the initiative. He emphasized the ministry's commitment to solidifying ties with the Abraham Accords' countries. Cohen highlighted that the new corridor would significantly reduce distances, expedite the transportation of goods to and from the Gulf states, and diminish shipping costs.

Drawing a connection between the project and the Abraham Accords, Minister Cohen perceives the initiative as a fruit borne out of the regional peace agreements signed three years prior. He underscored its potential to usher in greater stability to the Middle East, contribute to the reduction in goods' prices, and alleviate the economic burden on Israelis.<sup>5</sup>

4. "Netanyahu comments on the project to connect the Middle East: It constitutes a breakthrough that will change the face of the Middle East," Walla news website (in Hebrew), September 9, 2023. [link](#)

5. "Will we soon travel from Tel Aviv to India by train? The giant project launched by the Biden administration," Kikar Hashabat website (in Hebrew), September 10, 2023. [link](#)

The recent statements from the Israeli echelons of power carry substantial geopolitical and strategic weight at this juncture. Delving deeper into the multi-faceted implications:

- **Project's Perception:** Israeli decision-makers and the national media are circumspect, refraining from portraying the initiative as predominantly Israeli or even an Israel-U.S. collaboration. It's evident from the discourse that the project is predominantly framed as a U.S. initiative.
- **Netanyahu's Diplomatic Prowess:** Prime Minister Netanyahu, backed by certain segments of the Hebrew media, has been strategically highlighting the project. He frames it as a testament to his diplomatic acumen, indicative of fortified Washington ties, and his strategic push to diminish Israel's longstanding regional and global isolation.
- **Domestic Political Landscape:** On the flip side, this development doesn't bode well for Netanyahu's detractors within his right-leaning coalition. While he grapples with domestic dissension on varied fronts, including judicial reforms and coalition ideologies, the normalization discourse with Arab nations remains a unifying theme, even attracting concordance from sections of the opposition.
- **Infrastructure Readiness:** Netanyahu has notably sidestepped a comprehensive discussion on Israel's infrastructural readiness for such a monumental project. Pertinent questions about the allocation of a substantial budget, estimated at approximately 25 billion shekels, for roadway and railway enhancements have been left unanswered, especially given its absence from the latest fiscal planning.
- **Diplomatic Gambit:** The aforementioned evasiveness suggests that Netanyahu is tactically using the U.S. announcement as a swift diplomatic triumph, postponing the intricate discussions, particularly those revolving around the funding mechanisms for infrastructure. His mention of "international agreements" as funding avenues remains enigmatic at best.



- Israel-Saudi Diplomatic Trajectory: If the project catalyzes an Israeli-Saudi détente or even a deeper alliance, it would underscore a significant feather in Netanyahu's diplomatic cap, with global ramifications and spotlight.
- The Sino-Israel Equation: The venture, intriguingly, positions Israel, which had previously stalled Chinese participation in its infrastructure tenders<sup>6</sup>, in the broader chessboard of the U.S.-China geopolitical contest.

<sup>6</sup> Galia Lavi, "China and National Infrastructure in Israel: Past the Peak", Strategic Assessment, Volume 25, No. 2, (Tel-Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies, July 2022), p 118.





## SECOND: “PEACE TRAIN” AND THE OUTCOMES OF THE ORIGINAL ISRAEL INITIATIVE:

The Abraham Accords between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain serve as the foundation for the land-sea connectivity initiative between India and Europe. Unveiled by the US president in New Delhi, this initiative aims to capitalize on the renewed relationships stemming from the Accords. Specifically, since the normalization of ties with the two Gulf nations, Israel has been keen on exploring avenues of connectivity. One such endeavor is the "Peace Train", a railway project envisioned to bridge Israel and the UAE. While this proposal underwent extensive dialogues between Tel Aviv and Washington, the Hebrew media only caught wind of the details in recent months. A significant disclosure came from a leak to "Yedioth Ahronoth" on March 13, 2023, which credited Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Minister of Transportation and Road Safety, Miri Regev, for spearheading this initiative. Notably, Regev's office has already charted a blueprint for this railway. Designed to eventually integrate into a broader high-speed train network, it aims to connect northern "Beit Shean" with southern "Eilat", and other central stations culminating at "Haifa"<sup>7</sup>. Further shedding light on this, the newspaper, on July 7, 2023, presented a detailed map delineating the "Dubai-Haifa axis", as seen in (Figures 1).

<sup>7</sup> "Are promises kept? This is the route of the planned railway from Beit Shean to Eilat," Yedioth Ahronoth (in Hebrew), March 13 2023. [link](#)

**Figure (1):** A map showing the route of the proposed land "Dubai-Haifa axis" within the original Israeli project



Source: This map was published on the website of the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth

Israel has placed significant hopes on the project, anticipating a plethora of strategic advantages due to the terrestrial linkage with the Gulf. Apart from overcoming bureaucratic hurdles, the project will enable trucks to transport goods in a shorter time frame, slashing transportation costs by nearly 20% compared to current expenses. The expected outcomes that Tel Aviv was anticipating can be outlined as follows:

- **The Dubai-Haifa Axis:** The primary objective of the Israeli project is to establish a terrestrial route (comprising railways and truck transport) that connects the UAE and Israel through Saudi Arabia and Jordan, terminating at the port of Haifa in northern Israel. Hence, it has been aptly termed the "Dubai-Haifa Axis".



- **Overcoming Bureaucracy:** Currently, trucks loaded with goods traveling from the UAE to the port of Haifa via the "King Hussein" crossing in Jordan undergo intricate processes, facing numerous challenges and bureaucratic obstacles. These trucks are often compelled to change plates, swap drivers, and endure prolonged waiting periods. Israel, therefore, sought to alter this scenario so that a truck departing from Dubai could directly reach the port located in northern Israel without these hindrances.
- **Washington Developed the Initiative:** Israel presented a version of the project to the US President's Special Envoy, Amos Hochstein. The Americans expressed unparalleled enthusiasm. Subsequently, the U.S. administration revisited and refined the project's framework, leading to the latest announcement which now also includes India.<sup>8</sup>
- **Normalization with Saudi Arabia:** Hebrew media outlets hinted at the topic from the perspective of it being tied to secret discussions. They sought evidence suggesting that the terrestrial route's passage through Saudi territory inevitably implies normalization between the two nations. Subsequently, conversations began about establishing a land connection between Saudi Arabia and Israel, whether or not the two sides reach a normalization agreement, in hopes that the project might bridge the gap in perspectives.
- **Inclusion of Other Gulf States:** On July 7, 2023, the Hebrew newspaper "Yedioth Ahronoth" mentioned that the primary objective of both Israel and the U.S. is to expedite the project's implementation. There's ongoing discussion about its expansion to encompass Bahrain and Oman. This urgency stems from the fact that a significant portion of the anticipated routes relies on pre-existing infrastructure and an established transportation network<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> "A major step for the train line from Saudi Arabia to Israel. Biden announces a giant global project," Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper (in Hebrew), September 9, 2023, [link](#)

<sup>9</sup> . "The axis that will connect Saudi Arabia to Israel," Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper (in Hebrew), July 7, 2023., [link](#)



The Israeli initiative encountered several challenges. Foremost among these was the route's inclusion of Saudi territory, given the ambiguity surrounding the normalization between Riyadh and Tel Aviv. Additionally, the feasibility of Israeli diplomacy successfully handling this matter on its own was questionable. Besides, there were concerns about how such a massive project would be financed. Consequently, Israel engaged in intensive dialogue with the United States. Since then, Washington adopted and began refining the concept. The project was then introduced as an American initiative aimed at linking the UAE and Israel, initially passing through Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Its primary goal was to establish a terrestrial route for transporting goods from the Gulf to Israeli maritime ports. Subsequently, Israel would become a gateway for exporting goods from the Middle East to Europe. This would also boost tourism. The scope of the initiative expanded, culminating in the version announced by Biden in New Delhi.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "A major step for the train line from Saudi Arabia to Israel. Biden announces a giant global project," Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper (in Hebrew), September 9, 2023, [link](#)

## THIRD: ISRAEL AND THE REHABILITATION OF ITS INFRASTRUCTURE:

From Israel's perspective, the IMEC project necessitates a robust infrastructure in terms of transportation, high-speed internet networks, super-fast data transfer, and more. This will enable Israel to swiftly meet the project's requirements, transforming it into a vital hub in the global trade equation, as it aspires. The cost of the railway network that Israel aims to establish is estimated at around 25 billion dollars, based on Israeli media reports. On March 13, 2023, these reports also indicated that the Ministry of Transportation and Road Safety is embarking on the execution of colossal projects for high-speed train networks. These networks are designed to accommodate the new developments resulting from the potential linkage with routes originating from the Gulf and leading to Israel. Notably, this date precedes the emergence of India as a primary stakeholder in the initiative.<sup>11</sup> It was anticipated that the route coming from the Gulf would merge with the Israeli road network through the "King Hussein" crossing at the border with Jordan, entering Israel and reaching the city of Afula (north). Meanwhile, the Israeli Ministry of Transportation has been working on initial plans for a high-speed "Galilee" train line, which is expected to link the cities of "Afula" and "Kiryat Shmona". From there, this new line will connect with both the northern and southern "Menashiya" lines by 2026. All these lines will be connected to another line coming from Be'er Sheva (south). As for this line, currently under construction, it is planned to run parallel to the Egyptian border, with completion slated for 2025 at a cost of 35 million shekels. This line will lead to the port of Eilat and includes four underground tunnels, each costing 25 million shekels.

<sup>11</sup> . "Are promises kept? This is the route of the planned railway line from Beit Shean to Eilat," Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper (in Hebrew), March 13, 2023 [link](#)

In March 2023, the subject of the railway line was discussed, which will ultimately connect the city of Beit Shean (north), about 83 kilometers northeast of Jerusalem, to the city of Eilat (south), through various aforementioned branch lines. This colossal project was something Netanyahu had pledged to launch as part of coalition agreements when forming the government, without allocating a specific budget for it. However, he emphasized at the time that the overall financing for infrastructure projects associated with the railway network, totaling around 25 billion shekels, would come through international linkages and agreements. This is because this network will be tied to the route designated for the "Peace Train" line coming from the UAE.<sup>12</sup>

Several key points can be identified concerning the proposed railway network in Israel, which is designed to meet the requirements of the upcoming phase, whether in relation to the initial "Peace Train" initiative or the American update, the "IMEC Project":

- All the infrastructure projects related to transportation and high-speed train networks, expected to eventually connect to the IMEC, are being executed by local Israeli companies, rather than large foreign corporations with significant competitive capabilities.<sup>13</sup>
- The "Galilee" train line is still in the planning phase. The project aims to link the cities of "Afula" and "Kiryat Shmona" with a high-speed train network (250 kilometers/hour). The execution of this project will be handled by the "National Infrastructure and Transportation Company," an Israeli government entity.
- As for the Haifa line, it is expected to be completed next year, in 2024. The "Israel Railways Company" is overseeing its construction. This line aims to operate a high-speed train network, reaching speeds of (250 kilometers/hour) as well.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

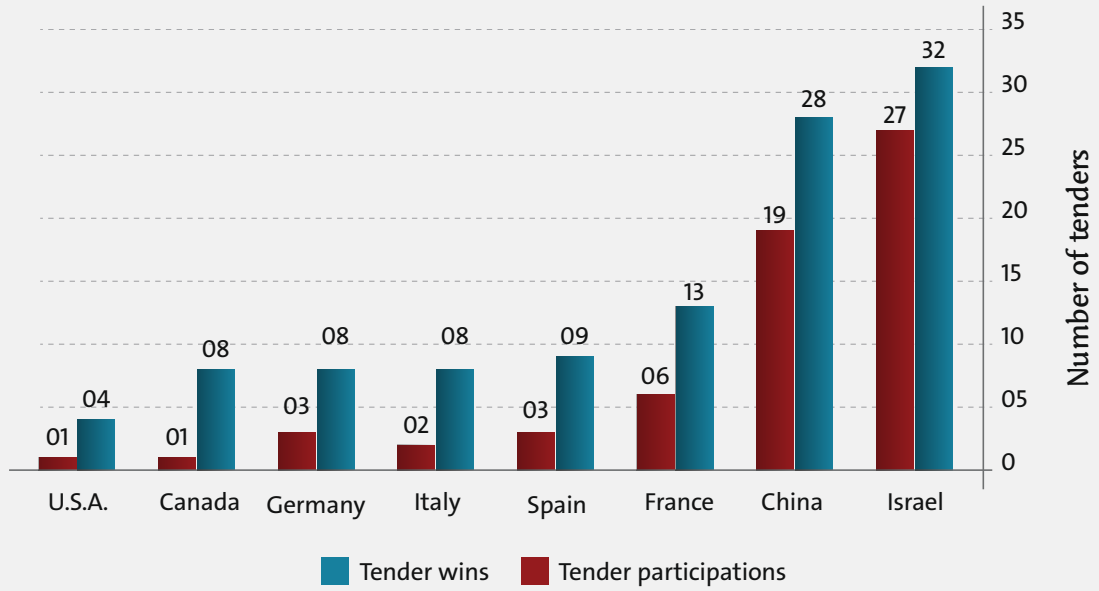
<sup>13</sup> The "infographic" published in the previous source shows that the implementation of new railway line projects in Israel is limited to only two government companies: the National Infrastructure and Transportation Company and the Israel Railways Company.

- The lines designated to connect the south to the north target, in one of their stages, a network of railway lines from Eilat to the city of Beersheba, then linking the (Beersheba-Dimona) axis with stations on the outskirts of the city of Lod, leading to a project to double the railway lines of the coastal road, which ultimately leads to Haifa.
- The cost of the Israeli infrastructure projects, capable of meeting the requirements of the project announced by Biden, is estimated at around 25 billion shekels, as previously mentioned. These substantial amounts have not been included in the Israeli general budget. Netanyahu announced that the funding would come through international understandings and agreements.<sup>14</sup>
- One of the challenges facing Israel lies in the fact that, up until the beginning of 2020, Chinese companies, predominantly state-owned, dominated projects related to infrastructure, especially transportation and roads. However, U.S. pressure on Israel led to a halt in Chinese companies' participation in tenders issued by the Israeli government. These companies had previously been recognized for their significant competitive edge, both in terms of cost and speed of execution (see Figure 2).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> This is the route of the planned train from Beit Shean to Eilat," Israeli local authorities portal (in Hebrew), March 15, 2023

<sup>15</sup> Galia Lavi, "China and National Infrastructure in Israel: Past the Peak", Strategic Assessment, Volume 25, No. 2, (Tel-Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies, July 2022), p 118.

**Figure (2):** All tenders related to Israeli infrastructure since its establishment (until January 2020)



Source: The figure was prepared based on information contained in the study (Galia Lavi, 2022), page 108.



## FOURTH: THE "INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE CORRIDOR" IS AN ISRAELI PROJECT ADOPTED BY WASHINGTON

The U.S. President's announcement in New Delhi did not allude to the fact that the project is an updated version of the aforementioned Israeli initiative (see Figure 3-3). Instead, it discussed plans to construct a railway and cargo corridor connecting India with the Middle East and Europe. This ambitious project aims to boost economic growth, foster political cooperation, enhance trade, facilitate energy resource transportation, and thereby physically link a vast area of the world. It also intends to improve digital communication and enable more trade between countries, including clean energy products like hydrogen. The announcement did not specify the timelines for its completion or details regarding its funding sources.

However, reports indicated that within 60 days of the announcement, joint working groups will develop a more comprehensive plan and set timelines. The first phase will identify areas requiring investment and ways to link the physical infrastructure between the countries. Subsequently, by 2024, the initiative will transition to the financial planning and construction stage. It's noteworthy to mention that last January witnessed intensive discussions conducted by the White House with project stakeholders. By April, map drawing processes began, and written evaluations of the current railway infrastructure in the Middle East were formulated. On May 8th, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, along with senior White House aides, traveled to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to finalize the last touches on the project.<sup>16</sup>

The announcement by the U.S. President achieves several political and strategic gains for his administration on the foreign policy front. As the project is set to pass through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel, it implies a tacit acknowledgment of Saudi-Israeli relations, inching closer to the possibility of normalization, a goal the U.S. has been working towards.

<sup>16</sup> . AAMER MADHANI and JOSH BOAK, "Biden unveils US-backed transport corridor to link India to EU via Mideast, Israel", The Times of Israel (Tel-Aviv) September 9, 2023: [link](#)

Additionally, it serves as a practical countermeasure by the U.S. administration to China's Belt and Road Initiative, by aligning U.S. allies in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe under a single umbrella and a unified trade alliance led by the U.S. Furthermore, this announcement transforms Israel into the crossroads of the Middle East, connecting India to Europe, be it in trade, data transmission, or services. All these developments can be interpreted from an American perspective as a significant political and strategic achievement in the foreign policies of the U.S. administration.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the initial optimism surrounding the announcement, some experts within Israel have downplayed the potential benefits that the country might gain from this project. They view it as merely a statement of intent that faces numerous challenges in its implementation, not to mention the significant budgets required to complete it.

Among the skeptics is Yoel Guzansky, a researcher at the Israeli National Security Research Center. Guzansky believes that, while the project does carry substantial strategic advantages, they might not be as significant as the Israeli government promotes. In his view, the primary driving force behind this initiative is the ongoing U.S.-China rivalry, with the project serving as a step to bring India into the American camp. The geopolitical implications, rather than the direct economic or strategic benefits to Israel, seem to be at the forefront of this initiative, indicating that the larger game of global power dynamics is at play.<sup>18</sup>

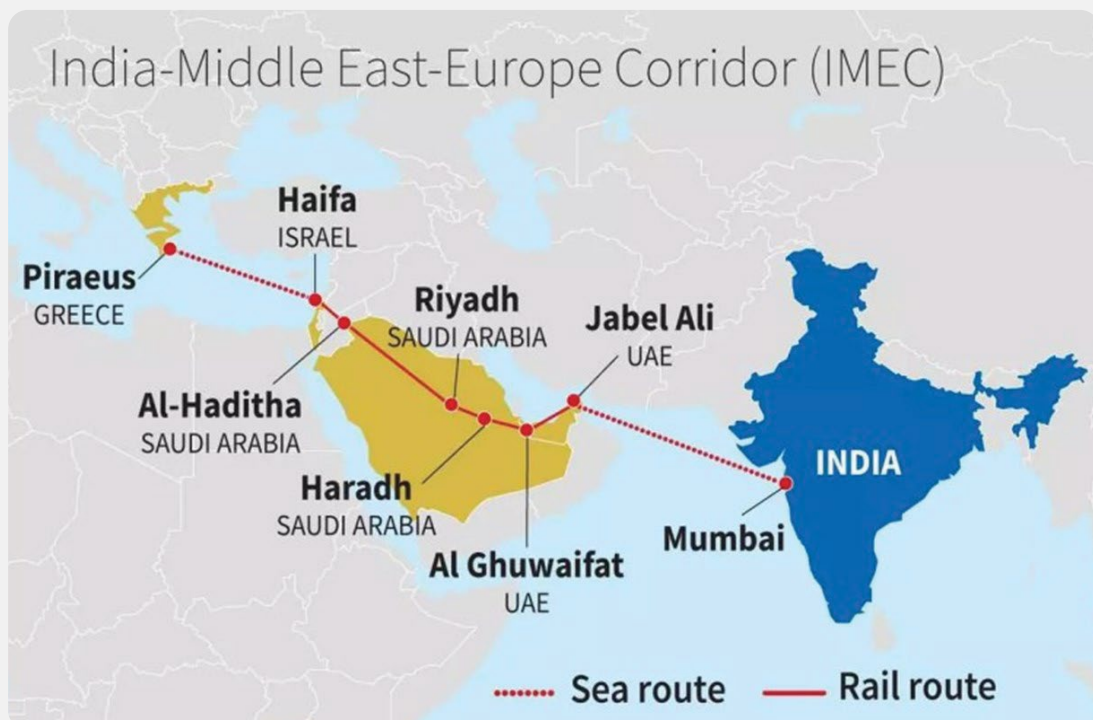
The same expert believes that this project should be understood as a reflection of Washington's ambitions in the region and an indication of its potential re-engagement in the Indian Ocean and Middle East areas. It is not ruled out that the American announcement came in response to China's sponsorship of the agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran on March 10, 2023. However, he sees that it grants India, not Israel, significant strategic advantages.

<sup>17</sup> . VAS SHENOY, "G20 in Delhi: Israel, India, US, Italy are the big winners - opinion", The Jerusalem Post (Jerusalem), SEPTEMBER 13, 2023: [link](#)

<sup>18</sup> . Lazar Berman, "Despite Israeli enthusiasm, the peace train is just an American tool in the conflict with China," Zaman website (in Hebrew), September 14, 2023, [link](#)

This project represents a qualitative shift with immense geostrategic implications, positioning New Delhi to reshape its role in the Eurasian economic system. This will provide India with a strategic response that enhances its ability to compete with China and overcome obstacles to its global trade growth and prosperity.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure (3):** Routes of the IMEC according to the US declaration



Source: This map was published in Rau's IAS Compass magazine on September 12, 2023, Link

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

## CONCLUSION

The American "IMEC" project is perceived as an extension of the "Dubai-Haifa Axis" initiative, or "Peace Train," which, in turn, emerged as one of the outputs of the Abraham Accords signed on September 15, 2020, between the UAE, Bahrain, and Israel, under the patronage of the United States. Washington received a draft of this initiative, attributed to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and prepared by specialists in the Office of the Minister of Transportation and Road Safety, and proceeded to expand it to include India, subsequently becoming an intrinsic part of the struggle for dominance between the US and Beijing. While this project is supposed to reshape the contours of the Middle East region and enhance economic and political partnerships among the signing countries, several points warrant attention:

- The Democrats U.S. administration can market the IMEC project as a colossal achievement in its foreign policies, and specifically in the Middle East; it can also regard it as a robust indicator of the strength and continuity of U.S.-Israeli relations and the sustained American support and patronage for Israel, despite disagreements stemming from domestic issues and Israeli policies towards the Palestinian file.
- The project proposal presents a substantial opportunity for the Israeli Prime Minister to articulate the triumphs of his foreign policies, notably those intended to normalize relations with Arab nations and to expand the incorporation of additional countries into the Abraham Accords. This strategy not only breaks Israel's regional and international isolation but also garners numerous economic and strategic benefits for the nation, bolstering its geostrategic position.



- There are no clear timelines for completing the project's infrastructure, and the American announcement did not answer questions about the funding sources, which are supposed to exceed tens of billions of dollars, or the economic feasibility and expected returns, not to mention the logistical considerations and its ability to handle the multiple transport and shipping operations that are supposed to involve repeated loading and unloading of cargoes, which may include goods and merchandise.
- The announcement overlooks the future of companies owning fleets of ships and tankers, as well as the general maritime shipping system, which utilizes other routes including Egypt's Suez Canal. It's left ambiguous whether the IMEC will alter the transport equation in this region, amplifying the role of train networks and railway lines while diminishing the role of shipowners, tankers, and the Suez Canal itself.
- Israel talks about shortening time and cost concerning shipping goods and merchandise and overcoming bureaucratic obstacles and difficulties encountered by trucks transporting goods from the Gulf to Israel or vice versa. However, the distance that trains and trucks are supposed to cover from the UAE to Israel, or that ships will traverse from India to the UAE and from Israel to Europe, necessitates studying the actual cost and the real-time that loading and unloading processes, then re-shipping, will take. Additionally, it raises questions about how customs duties will be collected, along with procedures for security and safety checks of trucks, among others.
- Saudi territory serves as a pivotal and longest passageway within this project for the transit of goods and services from India or conversely from Europe, thereby holding two possibilities. The first is that the American project might impose what can be described as 'peace of de facto', grounded in economic interests, or secondly, that the system's participants find common ground and an apt timing to announce Riyadh's accession to the Abraham Accords.

- "It's plausible that this project remains merely an American-Israeli ambition, with its colossal cost posing a substantial barrier to its realization. This is aside from the potential waning enthusiasm following the outcomes of feasibility studies, along with other technical and technological factors that may hinder its completion.
- Specific political circumstances, related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict file, or severe security developments, can undermine the progress of a project of this nature. In a scenario like this, certain countries that are part of the project might be compelled to backpedal or procrastinate in order to alleviate domestic pressure, especially if Israel were to implement particularly acute policies towards the West Bank or the city of Jerusalem, for instance, such as reverting to a plan to annex parts of the West Bank, among other actions.
- The project's route is characterized as being akin to tightly interconnected links that cannot be separated from each other, and difficulties arising in one country within the IMEC mean the entire system is affected. There are no clear guarantees against developments, including those on the level of climate changes, impacting the project's routes. An example of this would be the occurrence of severe storms hitting and disrupting or paralyzing Israel's Haifa port, or the eruption of new confrontations between Israel and the Lebanese organization 'Hezbollah,' with Haifa port being closed or subjected to missile strikes, among other scenarios.
- Israel, which is relying on the project to transform into a new trade hub between India and Europe, has not yet allocated budgets to upgrade its railway network. There are projects supposed to be completed by 2027 and others still in the planning stage. There are numerous question marks regarding its capability to establish such infrastructure, which needs to have significant and smoothly flowing capacity. This either will take many years or perhaps will not be executed in a manner that meets the requirements of a global economic route of this type.



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