

# The Gigantic City Project Called NEOM: Saudi Arabia Might Recognize Israel Because of NEOM Project

The half-a-trillion-dollar initiative to build a tristate city at the Saudi, Egyptian, and Jordanian border in the Gulf of Aqaba will more than likely lead to Riyadh recognizing Israel and integrating Tel Aviv into the project.

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

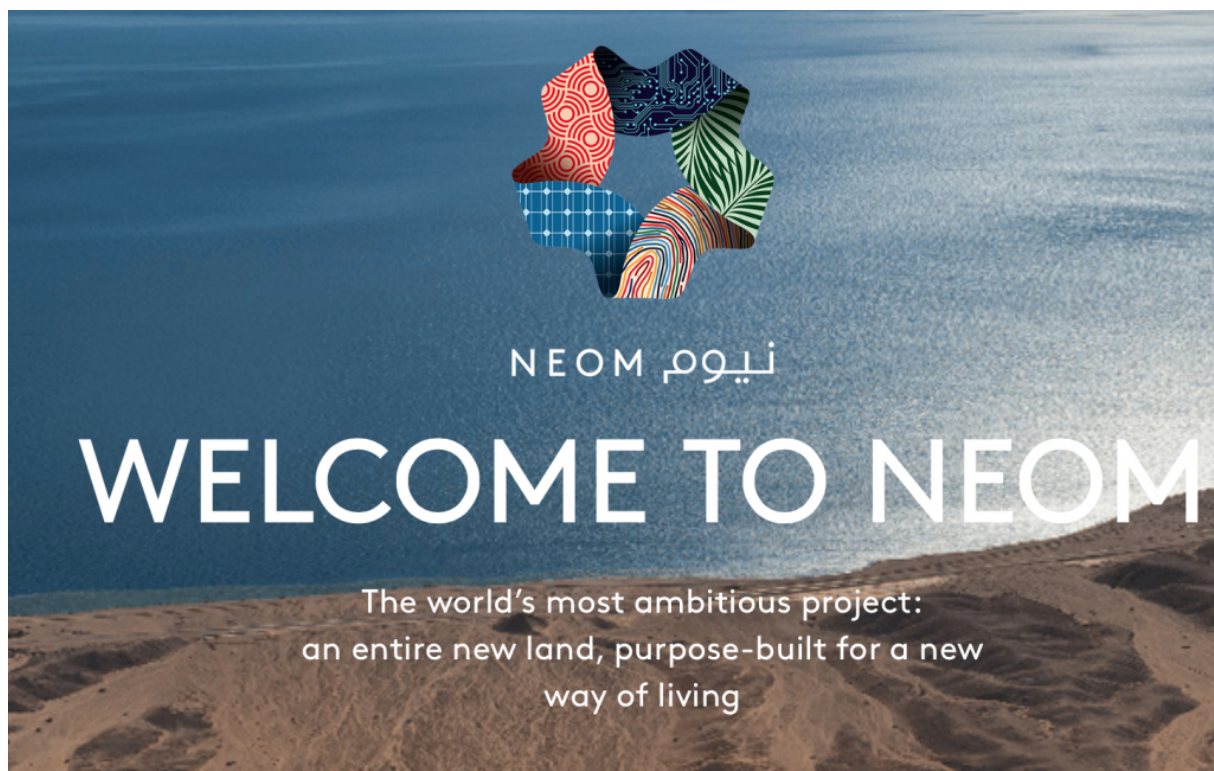
Global Research, October 27, 2017

[Oriental Review](#) 26 October 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Intelligence](#), [Oil and Energy](#)

*The ambitious [Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman](#) unveiled a [\\$500 billion project](#) at an investment forum earlier this week in an effort to bring some serious substance to his [Vision 2030](#) project of fundamentally diversifying his country's oil-dependent economy in the coming decade. The proposal calls for a gigantic city called NEOM to be built at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba in the northeastern corner of the Red Sea, with the plan being for it to eventually extend into neighboring Egypt and Jordan as well. The Crown Prince promised that it would be a technologically advanced city with its own laws and administration, and it will also be free from anything "traditional".*



The latter remark hints that Mohammed Bin Salman won't allow the Kingdom's traditional Wahhabi socio-cultural "regulations" to be enforced there, which goes along with his other headline-grabbing statement during the event when he [said](#) that Saudi Arabia will "return...to moderate Islam" and "swiftly deal a blow to extremist ideologies". Quite clearly, as analyzed in the author's earlier piece this month about [Saudi Arabia's shifting grand](#)

[strategy](#), a “deep state” conflict is indeed being fought in the country between its monarchic and clerical factions, with the former poised to carry out a “soft coup” against the latter as it seeks to “modernize” the country. This will surely result in some behind-the-scenes tumult in the coming future, if not overt destabilization, but the point of the present article isn’t to dwell too much on that tangent.

Instead, it’s relevant to have brought that up in order to make the case that Saudi Arabia is on the cusp of an unprecedented paradigm change that will likely see it recognizing Israel if the monarchy is successful in snuffing out the clerics’ political influence. Saudi Arabia’s Egyptian and Jordanian NEOM partners have already recognized and signed peace treaties with Israel, and Riyadh is known to be coordinating with Tel Aviv in [crafting a comprehensive anti-Iranian regional policy](#), amongst other strategic commonalities that they share. Moreover, the [secret meetings](#) between Saudi Arabia and Israel over the years suggest that their relationship is much warmer in private than either side publicly presents it as for their own respective domestic political reasons.

Israel has always wanted relations with Saudi Arabia, though Riyadh has traditionally shirked away from this because it wanted to present itself as a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause, made all the more symbolic by the Saudi monarchy’s custodianship over the Two Holy Mosques given the religious dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, if Mohammed Bin Salman comes out on top in his “deep state” “soft coup” against the Wahhabi clerics, then he can easily lay the “blame” on them for his country’s refusal to recognize Israel after all of these decades. Not only could he be interested in doing this as the ultimate expression of his country’s radically transformed identity under his stewardship, but he might be just as importantly driven by the geostrategic imperatives related to Vision 2030’s flagship NEOM project.



The Gulf of Aqaba was chosen not just because it would allow NEOM to spread into Egypt and Jordan, but also because of its proximity to Israel, which is promoting its [“Red-Med”](#) railway proposal as the perfect Mideast complementary component of the New Silk Road. Tel Aviv keenly knows that the Chinese are always looking for backup plans and transport route diversification in order to not be too dependent on any single connectivity corridor, and in this case, overland rail transit from the Gulf of Aqaba to the Eastern Mediterranean via Israel comes off as exceedingly attractive to Beijing’s strategists. Furthermore, China has [fantastic relations](#) with both Saudi Arabia and Israel, so from Beijing’s perspective, this is the perfect Mideast “win-win”, especially if the People’s Republic can find a way to insinuate that its possible financing of both the NEOM and “Red-Med” projects contributed to bringing peace to the Mideast.

In addition, there’s also the Russian factor to take into consideration, and it’s objectively known – though commonly denied in the Alt-Media Community – that Moscow and Tel Aviv are on excellent terms with one another and [basically cooperate as allies](#) in Syria. When accounting for the fast-moving Russian-Saudi rapprochement and Moscow’s [envisioned 21<sup>st</sup>-century grand strategic role](#) in becoming the supreme balancing force in Eurasia, it’s likely that Russia would be in favor of any Saudi recognition of Israel and Tel Aviv’s integration into the NEOM project because it would then allow the Russian business elite both in the Russian Federation and Israel to invest in this exciting city-state and the complementary “Red-Med” Silk Road corridor.



Seeing as how Mohammed Bin Salman is trying to purge the clerics' political influence from the Kingdom, it's very possible that Saudi Arabia will end up recognizing Israel in the near future and blaming its decades-long delay in doing so on the Wahhabis. The grand intent behind this isn't just to formalize the Saudi-Israeli anti-Iranian partnership or to show the world just how serious the Crown Prince is in changing the course of his country, but to please Riyadh's [newfound Multipolar Great Power partners](#) in Moscow and Beijing, both of which enjoy exceptional relations with Tel Aviv but would probably be reluctant to invest in the Kingdom's NEOM city-state project so long as its connectivity access remained dependent on the Suez Canal chokepoint.

Russia and China would feel more strategically secure if Israel was incorporated into this megaproject so that its territory could be used for overland transshipment between the Red and Mediterranean Seas via the "Red-Med" railway proposal, which would then make NEOM infinitely more attractive from a logistics perspective for all sorts of investors. If Saudi Arabia doesn't recognize Israel, then this non-Suez workaround is [impossible](#) and the NEOM city-state loses its grand strategic significance in the context of the [Multipolar World Order](#), which could consequently lead to a lack of investment and therefore the potential failure of Vision 2030's flagship project. As such, due to the economic-strategic imperatives associated with NEOM, as well as the geopolitical paradigm shift taking place in Saudi Arabia, Riyadh will probably recognize Israel in the coming future in order to guarantee that its city-state initiative succeeds and ultimately transitions the Kingdom away from its oil-exporting dependency.

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