

Israeli penetration of central Asian nation and repercussions for relations with the Arab world

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Israel has gradually extended its influence in central Asia both strengthening and diversifying bilateral relations there in order to open the doors of the region to its investments in ways that will bolster its position in Palestine and the region and have repercussions for Arab relations with the nation of central Asia

Since the collapse of the former soviet union there has been an international scramble for influence in central Asia and a race to penetrate its markets as well as to ensure access to its vast natural resources including oil, natural gas gold and uranium. the mechanisms of influence employed by various powers including Israel ,Iran,Turkey,Saudi Arabia and Egypt (among others)range from trade and technical ,educational and cultural -as well cultural and religious initiatives inclusive of local Muslim populations and Jewish diasporas. This research paper seeks to respond to a number of important question and significantly: what are the reasons for Israeli maneuvering and penetration into central Asia? What are the means by which Israel employs to facilitate the attendant processes? What are the factors that positively or negatively impact Israeli operations in the region? What are the future scenarios for Israeli maneuvering in and penetration of Central Asia? this paper operates on the hypothesis that Israeli

penetration of central Asia may have possible political and economic effects and negative repercussions for Arab relations with the region.

Central Asian economies were left in various stages of disarray with the collapse of the Soviet Union, which left them eager to open up to foreign technical and economic assistance and to attract foreign investments. International actors- both in the region and far afield - have pursued programmes and initiatives to secure access to the area and its markets; and middle eastern countries seeking to exert and expand their influence range from turkey to Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel. The practical means deployed include economic incentives; technical and material assistance; various exchange -including educational and cultural ones; joint agreements for oil and natural gas prospecting, refining and transport; joint business ventures; and the co-opting of indigenous religious groups to serve political purposes. This last involved religious studies and the construction of centers mosques by Saudi Arabia and Iran and the recruitment of Jewish diasporas initially to solicit immigration and later to influence policies of local governments on the part of Israel.

While numerous countries, including Turkey and Israel, have been quick to capitalize on opportunities for developing trade relations, encouraging joint business enterprises in fields such as telecommunications and securing markets for their exports as well as favorable terms for central Asia petroleum export - the Arab

World,despot efforts of individual businessmen has been rather slow to act. Saudi Arabia has used Central Asia as sphere to advance its particular interpretation of Islam which -along with the support it has provided - sometimes conflicts with the agendas of various Central Asia governments or gives the appearance of a threat. turkey has sought to promote its version of secular democracy which has extended to encouraging the use of the Latin script and the abandonment of the Russian /Cyrillic alphabet and the Arabic/Persian script .Iran has done the opposite and encouraged use of Persian script ,but its influence in this particular sphere has been confined largely to Tajikistan where Farsi is the official language.Israel,for its purposes, has focused on the commercial and security spheres in its dealings with most central asian countries and has at times been able to ply successfully on fears of "Islamic fundamentalism". Furthermore, Central Asia countries particularly Uzbekistan under Karimov - tend to view Israel as a conduit to the West and the united states and this has encouraged particular patterns of relations deemed to be conducive to mutual interests.