



[United Arab Emirates Cancels Meeting with American and Israeli Officials After Netanyahu Opposes Arms Sales to the Gulf Country](#)

The United Arab Emirates cancelled a scheduled tripartite meeting with U.S. and Israeli officials in response to embattled Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's opposition to the United States' pending sale of F-35 fighter jets to the Gulf nation. The meeting was meant to be a ceremonial occasion to celebrate the recently announced Abraham Accord between the UAE and Israel, a normalization agreement which has been denounced for ignoring the rights of Palestinians and allowing for the continued illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. Following the indefinite cancellation of the meeting, UAE officials proclaimed that they will not hold any other public gatherings with the United States and Israel until the latter's position on the arms sales is "clarified." The Emiratis were especially irked that Netanyahu publicly spoke out against the potential arms deal and also informed members of his Cabinet that he would express his concerns about it to the U.S. Congress.

The decision to call off the meeting marks the first setback in the aftermath of the normalization deal between the United Arab Emirates and Israel. The agreement, known as the Abraham Accord, has been criticized for a couple of important reasons. Firstly, some have falsely praised it for supposedly putting an end to the Israeli government's illegal annexation plans, when in actuality it merely suspends those plans for the time being, but does not abandon them. In fact, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has continued to emphasize, even after the deal was announced, that the suspension of his annexation plans is only temporary and that they remain "on the table." In a controversial video address following the White House's announcement of the Abraham Accord, Netanyahu stated that "According to the Palestinians, and to many others in the world who agreed with them, peace can't be reached without conceding to the Palestinians' demands, including uprooting settlements, dividing Jerusalem, and withdrawal to 1967 lines. No more. This concept of 'peace through withdrawal and weakness' has passed from the world." The global community views Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory and the plans to annex them as illegal under international law, and therefore, a viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not possible if these plans are allowed to move forward.

Furthermore, the UAE-Israel agreement is not in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, which calls for normalizing relations between Arab nations and Israel, but only after Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories and other components in line with international law. Instead, the Abraham Accord allows for normalization between the United Arab Emirates and Israel without putting an end to the latter's illegal occupation practices. The Arab Peace Initiative is the consensus position of the Arab League (which includes the UAE) and was unanimously reaffirmed earlier this year in February after the release of the widely-condemned Trump Mideast Peace Plan. As such, normalization should only be put into effect if and when all of its aspects are properly adhered to.

For now, the UAE's indefinite cancellation puts the planned signing ceremony with the United States and Israel on hold. However, U.S. officials are still planning on escorting an Israeli delegation to the UAE early next week in order to hold talks on the formalizing of the normalization agreement. The contention regarding the pending arms sales could emerge as a sticking point in the negotiations, and is something to keep an eye on in the coming weeks.