

Geopolitical Overview: Israel's Overreach and the Shifting Sands of Middle East Alliances

The Middle East has long been a crucible of conflict, with Israel at the heart of its most contentious dynamics. Recent developments, particularly Israel's military engagements and the evolving role of its key ally, the United States, have exposed vulnerabilities in its strategic posture, raising questions about the sustainability of its ambitions and the ideological underpinnings of Zionism. This article explores Israel's overconfidence, the erosion of its external support, the internal divides over Zionism's legacy, and the broader geopolitical ramifications of its actions in a region increasingly skeptical of its approach.

Israel's Overreach: Ambitions Beyond Capabilities

Israel's recent military operations, particularly its aggressive campaigns in Gaza, Lebanon, and against Iran's nuclear program, reflect a bold vision that some argue has outstripped its realistic capabilities. The Israeli government, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, launched "Operation Rising Lion" in June 2025, targeting Iran's leadership, military infrastructure, and nuclear sites with the stated goal of reshaping the Middle East. This followed a series of strikes aimed at dismantling Iran's proxy network, including Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and elements in Syria, which Israel framed as a response to the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack that killed over 1,200 Israelis.

However, these actions have been criticized as overambitious. Posts on X and expert analyses suggest Israel may have miscalculated, assuming its military prowess and nuclear deterrent would suffice to achieve strategic dominance. The reality has been less forgiving. Israel's campaigns have strained its resources, with reports indicating shortages of missile interceptors and challenges sustaining long-range operations due to crew fatigue and aircraft maintenance. Critics argue that Israel's pursuit of regime change in Iran and territorial expansion into Lebanon and Syria lacks a clear endgame, leaving it diplomatically isolated and militarily stretched.

The Waning of U.S. Support: A Strategic Miscalculation

Central to Israel's confidence was the expectation of unwavering U.S. support, particularly from the evangelical Christian demographic within the MAGA movement, which has historically viewed Israel through a biblical lens. Approximately 80% of

white evangelicals in the U.S. expressed favorable views toward Israel in 2020, often tying its existence to religious prophecy. Israel's leadership, particularly under Netanyahu, leaned heavily on this support, expecting the Trump administration to provide robust backing for its regional ambitions, including potential annexation and confrontation with Iran.

Yet, this assumption has proven flawed. The Trump administration, while initially supportive, has shown restraint, prioritizing "America First" policies over entanglement in Middle East conflicts. Trump's push for a diplomatic resolution to Iran's nuclear ambitions, rather than full-scale military involvement, caught Israel off guard. In June 2025, Trump resisted Netanyahu's calls for a broader assault on Iran, only reluctantly endorsing U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear sites like Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan after Israel acted unilaterally. Even these strikes, hailed by Trump as "obliterating" Iran's nuclear program, were later assessed to have only set it back by months, undermining claims of decisive victory.

Moreover, the U.S. decision to finalize an arms deal with Saudi Arabia without requiring recognition of Israel as a state signaled a shift in priorities. This move, coupled with Trump's focus on expanding the Abraham Accords to include Saudi Arabia, suggests the U.S. is prioritizing regional stability and economic ties over unconditional support for Israel. Posts on X reflect growing sentiment that Israel's fate is increasingly in America's hands, with some arguing the U.S. is engaging directly with Hamas and Iran, sidelining Israel's influence. This has left Israel "stranded," as its leaders confront the limits of their "lion of Judah" narrative in a region where allies are hedging their bets.

The Zionist Divide: Internal Dissent and Ideological Roots

The ideological fervor of Zionism, particularly its Ashkenazi, Eastern European roots, has been a driving force behind Israel's policies but also a source of internal and external friction. Early Zionist thinkers, shaped by European nationalism and experiences of persecution, envisioned a Jewish state as a fortified homeland, often with an uncompromising stance toward neighboring populations. This vision, some argue, contrasts with the perspectives of Mizrahi or Arab Jews, who historically coexisted with Muslim and Christian communities in the Middle East and may not share the same messianic zeal.

Within Israel, this divide is becoming more pronounced. Polls from the Israel

Democracy Institute in 2024 show rising dissatisfaction with the government's handling of security and diplomacy, with ethnic and ideological splits emerging. Mizrahi communities, while often politically conservative, are increasingly vocal about the costs of perpetual conflict and the radical policies of Israel's right-wing leadership. The aggressive actions in Gaza, which have killed over 50,000 people since October 2023, and strikes on Iran have fueled domestic protests, with some Israelis questioning the sustainability of a Zionist ideology that prioritizes military dominance over coexistence.

Globally, the conflation of Israel's government with its people has eroded public support. Social media reactions, particularly in the Arab world, reflect growing anti-Israel sentiment, with some Egyptians reportedly expressing readiness to oppose "the Jews" outright. This backlash, combined with Israel's perceived arrogance—rooted in the "prideful lion" imagery of Zionism—has painted it as an aggressor, diminishing its legitimacy. The narrative of divine right, critics argue, has fostered a hubris that blinds Israel to its vulnerabilities, leaving it exposed as an "arrogant kitten" in a region turning against it.

Iran and the Regional Chessboard

Israel's campaign against Iran, intended to disrupt its nuclear ambitions and proxy network, has had mixed results. While Israel's strikes degraded Hamas, Hezbollah, and Syrian capabilities, Iran's regime has leveraged the conflict to rally domestic support, framing itself as a victim of Israeli aggression. Iran's leadership, prioritizing regime survival, has avoided all-out war but vowed limited retaliation, such as the attack on a U.S. base in Qatar in June 2025, which it warned of in advance to minimize casualties. Experts suggest Iran's weakened position—economically strained and militarily hobbled—may force it to reconsider its "forward defense" strategy, but regime change remains unlikely.

Meanwhile, Arab states like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt, wary of Iran's influence, have quietly welcomed Israel's strikes but remain cautious about public alignment. The Abraham Accords, a cornerstone of Trump's first term, have fostered cooperation between Israel and Gulf states, but the ongoing Gaza conflict and Israel's expansionist rhetoric complicate further normalization. Saudi Arabia's rapprochement with Iran, brokered by China in 2023, reflects a pragmatic shift, as Gulf states prioritize economic stability over ideological battles.

The Path Forward: A Murky Future

Israel's nuclear deterrent remains its ultimate safeguard, ensuring no Middle Eastern state dares launch a direct existential attack. Yet, its strategic position is precarious. The U.S., while still a key ally, is increasingly reluctant to be drawn into Israel's wars, with Trump's base split between hawkish pro-Israel voices and isolationists like Tucker Carlson, who warn against another Middle East quagmire. Public opinion in the U.S. is also shifting, with 2024 Gallup polls showing approval for Israel's actions dropping to 50% among Americans, particularly among younger and progressive voters.

Internally, Israel faces a reckoning with its Zionist identity. The Ashkenazi-driven narrative of conquest is losing traction among diverse communities, who bear the costs of endless conflict. Externally, the region's alignment is shifting, with Arab states balancing ties with Israel, Iran, and global powers like China and Russia. Israel's vision of regional dominance, rooted in a prideful ideology, is colliding with a reality of limited support and growing backlash.

The ceasefire between Israel and Iran, announced in June 2025, is fragile, with both sides accusing each other of violations. For Israel, the path forward requires a strategic pivot—either doubling down on military escalation at the risk of further isolation or rethinking its approach to prioritize diplomacy and coexistence. The latter would demand a reassessment of Zionism's role in shaping a state increasingly seen as overreaching in a region that no longer bends to its will.

In conclusion, Israel's geopolitical gambit has exposed the limits of its power and the fragility of its alliances. The fervor of Zionism, once a unifying force, now fuels internal dissent and external skepticism, leaving Israel at a crossroads. Whether it can adapt to this new reality—or remain tethered to an ideology that may no longer serve its survival—will define its future in an ever-shifting Middle East.