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## The Intensifying Palestine-Israel Conflict: Spillover Effects and the Weaponization of Interdependence in the Context of International Power Transition

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**Abstract:** In the wake of the global energy transition, which has a significant impact on the Middle East's politics, market, and security, the Palestinian-Jewish conflict and its spillover effect have grown to be exceptionally important. Israel's confidence has worsened the situation, and Palestinians have had to deal with major issues with their politics, security, and company. The humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, separation in the region, and ongoing offense have all demonstrated how complicated and serious this conflict is. In comparison, a network effect in the Middle East has been triggered by the spillover effect of the conflict, such as the battle between Hezbollah and Israel, and the tension between Iran and Israel, more expanding regional tensions. The international community needs to take multidimensional countermeasures based on the theory of power transition and the weaponization of interdependence, like strengthened international treatment methods, promoted economic and social growth, and strengthened human rights protection, all of which aim to help local peace and cooperation, comfortable regional tensions, and promote national reconciliation and assistance. The global society's concerted efforts, the political will of Palestine and Israel, and effective global guidance methods are essential for peace and development in the Middle East. These efforts will only lead to lasting peace and prosperity in the Middle East place.

#### 1. Introduction

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which poses significant problems to international cooperation and compromise, has caused anxiety and violence in the Middle East for years. Recent years have witnessed an increase of this struggle amidst the landscape of tremendous swings in global power structures and the weaponization of interdependence among states. In specific, this report looks at the spillover effects of international power transition and interdependence weaponization, as well as recent research place, hot matters, controversies, and future directions in the field of Palestinian-Jewish

issue<sup>[1]</sup>.

According to the international power transition, which has shown new characteristics and development trends, and has had a significant impact on international politics, business, and security, the Palestinian-Jewish conflict has grown in recent years. Israel has taken a strong stand, escalating the conflict, and the nation is dealing with serious business, political, and health issues. The Gaza Strip's humanitarian crisis, political fragmentation, continued crime, and increased dialogue activity all serve as examples of how complicated and contentious this conflict is. The spillover effect of the conflict has had a system effect in the Middle East. Due to the tension between Iran and Israel, the Houthis 'support to Palestine, and the fight between Hezbollah and Israel, regional tensions have increased. The spillover effect of the conflict has triggered a chain reaction in the Middle East. This includes the confrontation between Hezbollah and Israel, the tension between Iran and Israel, and the support of the Houthis for Palestine, all of which have intensified regional tensions<sup>[2]</sup>. The spillover impact of this round of Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unprecedented in the new century. How to view and explain the continuous spillover of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is an important basis for the proper settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The theory of international power transition reveals the vacuum phenomenon of regional power in the context of changing international patterns, which promotes changing behavior of the powerful countries in the region. In explaining the outbreak of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in addition to religious, historical and ethnic factors, the power transition theory provides a new perspective and emphasizes its far-reaching impact on the region and even the entire world. In addition, the theory of the weaponization of interdependence reveals the role of interdependence of countries in conflict, as well as the manifestations and consequences of the weaponization of interdependence. Resolving the spillover effect of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict requires the concerted efforts of the international community<sup>[3]</sup>. Based on the perspective of international power transition, this study explores the conflict and its spillover effect in depth, providing a new perspective and solutions for the occurrence and resolution of conflicts in the Middle East.

#### 2. The status quo of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its spillover

On October 7, 2023, a new round of Israeli-Palestinian conflict broke out. Hamas preemptively inflicted heavy losses on Israel through various forms of warfare. Israel immediately launched a full-scale retaliation and attempted to completely eliminate Hamas forces in Gaza. So far, at least 42,000 Palestinians have been killed and 97,000 injured. This round of conflict is different. Its effects continue to spill over, triggering major changes in the Middle East and even beyond.

#### 2.1 Israeli-Palestinian conflict

## 2.1.1 Palestinians challenges

The dilemma faced by Palestinians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. From an economical standpoint, Palestine has had a major impact. As a result of the continuing Israeli blockade, the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip has gotten worse. The lives of Palestinian civilians have been severely affected, especially children and women, who are facing shortages of food and water. The education system has also been hit hard. Many school attacks have had a significant impact on family's safety and education. The issues Palestinian political divisions and management challenges have made things even more difficult. The Palestinian-Israeli issue is the longest lasting, most complex and most difficult hot issue in the international community. It is rooted in the contradictions between Palestine and Israel, as well as the complex relationship between their internal contradictions and external interference. The adjustment of the Middle East strategy of the United States, especially the unilateral

normalization of relations between Israel and Arab countries promoted by the United States since the Trump administration, has seriously damaged the basis for resolving the Palestinian issue through political means, resulting in the increasingly marginalization of the Palestinian issue among affairs in the Middle East. From the perspective of security, continued violence and Israeli settlement expansion pose a serious threat to Palestinian stability. The United Nations reports that a severe financial and economic crisis is threatening the stability of Palestinian institutions. In the meantime, continued violence and unilateral measures, including Israel's settlement expansion and demolitions, continue to exacerbate tensions, fuel despair, erode the position of the Palestinian Authority and further weaken prospects for the resumption of meaningful negotiations.

#### 2.1.2 Israel's escalation

Israel's assertive posture in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. First, Israeli military operations have caused great damage to the Gaza Strip. After the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, Israel's retaliatory bombing killed 42,000 people in Gaza and injured 97,000. The spillover effect of the conflict has been widespread, and Israel's security mindset has become proactive and assertive. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the military operations in the Gaza Strip would continue for several months until all objectives were achieved, including the elimination of Hamas and the release of all detainees. This shows that under pressure from domestic public opinion, the Israeli public administration has been forced to adopt a tougher political and military stance. The Israeli government has been under pressure from right-wing and far-right groups, who have been demanding a tougher approach from the government, arguing that Netanyahu's war cabinet has not been tough enough after the outbreak of the current round of conflict.

## 2.2 Spillover effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

#### 2.2.1 Israel's conflicts with Iran and Lebanon

In the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel's ties with Iran and Lebanon have grown complex. Israel sees Iran as its main regional foe due to its support for Palestinian resistance, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. On Oct. 26, 2024, Israel retaliated for an Oct. 1 Iranian missile attack with air strikes on Iran's air defense and long-range weapon facilities, causing limited damage. Meanwhile, Israel-Lebanon tensions escalated: on Oct. 31, 2024, Israel ordered evacuations in southern Lebanon and Rashid refugee camp, struck Baalbek, triggering mass displacement; Hezbollah and the IDF exchanged heavy fire, with Hezbollah rocketing northern Israel, causing casualties<sup>[4]</sup>. These conflicts, influenced by and exacerbating regional tensions, see Israel fearing Hezbollah attacks and Iran challenging it indirectly via proxies, with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict acting as a catalyst for intensifying hostilities.

## 2.2.2 Reconciliation of political forces within Palestine

Amid the persistent Israeli - Palestinian conflict, Palestinian political factions recognized the need to overcome internal rifts and stand united against Israel. With Egypt's active mediation, Hamas and Fatah, the two main factions, embarked on challenging reconciliation talks addressing political power - sharing, unified security command, and socio - economic rebuilding. After intense negotiations, they achieved a preliminary consensus on key matters, outlining a power - sharing framework encompassing coalition government formation, elections, and security force integration to create a unified Palestinian security system. The signing of these agreements marked a significant milestone in Palestine's internal reconciliation, paving the way for an independent and united Palestinian state. Nevertheless, the agreement's practical execution faces hurdles, including complex power distribution, disputes over key positions, the tricky task of balancing factional interests during security force

integration, and intensified challenges due to an unstable security situation, with violence and mistrust threatening its implementation.

#### 2.2.3 The involvement of the Houthis

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is part of a strategy to expand its regional influence and consolidate its regime in Yemen. Through its close ties with Iran, the Houthis have received support in terms of advanced military technology and materials, allowing them to play a greater role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Houthis' long-range attack capabilities, particularly their launching of drones and ballistic missiles into Israel, demonstrate not only their military might, but also their support for the Palestinian resistance. Israel reacted strongly to the Houthis' actions, describing the attacks as a serious threat to its national security. The Israeli military launched retaliatory strikes as a warning and retaliation against the Houthis. This military response could further inflame tensions with the Houthis and exacerbate regional instability. Western countries have expressed deep concern about the actions of that the Houthis took, fearing that the Houthis' actions would not only exacerbate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also spark a broader conflict in the region, particularly in the geopolitical rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The involvement of the Houthis expanded the geopolitical implications of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, not only creating tensions in the Middle East, but also posing a direct threat to the security of international shipping lanes. The Red Sea waterway is a vital route for international trade, and Houthi actions could affect shipping security, triggering a ripple effect on the global economy. Therefore, the involvement of the Houthis is not only a regional issue, but also an international issue with global implications.

## 2.2.4 Differences in the international community on the Palestinian-Israeli issue

In the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the international community has been divided mainly by different positions on the behavior of the Israeli government. The United States and some Western countries tend to support Israel, while many developing countries and some European countries have condemned Israel's deeds. The actions of the Israeli Government and army, such as military strikes and territorial expansion against Palestine, have drawn widespread criticism from the international community and led to an obvious political split on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. Such division is not only detrimental to the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but may also exacerbate regional conflicts, affect the stability of international relations and pose a long-term threat to global peace and securit.

#### 3. Theoretical exposition

The theory of international power transition and the theory of interdependence weaponization can be applied to explain the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its spillover effect, revealing the complexity of power change and dependence. The power vacuum and the decline of dominant power creates a gaming space for rising powers, and the weaponization of interdependence has expanded the conflict from the military field to economic and political fields, intensifying conflict spillover in the context of globalization.

## 3.1 The theory of international power transition

## 3.1.1 Definition and characteristics of power transition

International power transition refers to the changing process of the global power structure and competition between rising and established powers. Based on the realist theory of international

relations, it holds that in the anarchic state of the international system, countries seek power so as to protect their own interests. In this process, power is seen as essential to achieving the national interest, and pursuing it is seen as reasonably necessary. The theory of power transition discusses the risk of war caused by the rise of great powers, pointing out that changes in the balance of power are more likely to trigger conflicts than power disparities<sup>[5]</sup>. However, the theory falls short in explaining the causes of wars and is regarded more as a research topic than a mature theory. In the process of power transition, both rising countries and established powers attach importance to the recognition of status. The former needs the recognition of the latter to enhance its international influence, while the latter promotes the integration of rising countries into the international system and supports the existing order through the recognition of status. Conversely, a lack or misunderstanding of status claims can lead to escalating tensions and even a struggle for hegemony.

## 3.1.2 The influence of power transition on international relations

International power transition has a profound impact on international relations, including reshaping international rules and institutions, increasing the risk of conflicts and wars in regions, and promoting cooperation and confrontation in the process of power transition. In a region, the power transition will intensify the horizontal pressure and security dilemma, easily trigger chain reactions of alliances, and increase the possibility of war. Cross-regional power transition are fraught with friction, but the risk of war is low. The influence of the strategic competition among great powers on the international order is complex and changeable. With the improvement of comprehensive national strength, the roles of great powers become clearer. According to the domestic and international situation, they adjust their strategies, strive to break the restrictions from the old order, and reshape the rules of profit distribution according to the new balance of power. This process can destabilize the international order, especially when the dominant power weakens and responds inadequately to challenges from rising powers.

## 3.2 The theory of weaponization of interdependence

#### 3.2.1 The connotation and function of interdependence

Interdependence theory occupies an important position in the field of international relations. It focuses on the interdependence of states or actors in the fields of economy, politics and security. The theory, which emphasizes the close links formed by the cross-border movement of money, goods, people and information in international interactions, was developed by Richard Cooper, Robert Keohan, and Joseph Nye. This pattern of "you in me and me in you" is particularly pronounced in the nuclear age, when even the military powers are vulnerable. In the context of globalization, energy, environment and other issues highlight the importance of international cooperation, and promote the transformation of international relations from traditional national security to economic and welfare fields<sup>[6]</sup>. Opening to the outside world becomes the norm, international relations become more relaxed and open, the role of force diminishes, and negotiations and balance of power become the mainstream. Interdependence both promotes international cooperation and can be a source of conflict. Liberalism believes that interdependence helps to reduce conflict and promote peace.

## 3.2.2 Manifestations and consequences of the weaponization of interdependence

The weaponization of interdependence refers to the use of interdependence for political coercion, economic sanctions, and political isolation. This phenomenon is linked to globalization, increased geopolitical competition, and the rise of nationalism. In 1977, Keohan and Nye pointed out that the asymmetry in interdependence, in which one side was more susceptible to influence by the other, could make weaponization possible. In a networked architecture, by controlling key nodes, the dominant

players of the network make use of interdependence to achieve their strategic goals. In the context of economic globalization, countries take advantage of financial networks and resource supply to impose sanctions or isolate other countries. This alters the balance of power between states, leading to security dilemmas and escalating conflicts. For example, the US financial sanctions against Iran through the SWIFT system and Russia's interruption of gas supplies to Europe both show the risks of the weaponization of interdependence. These actions have destabilized the global economic and political order and affected the stability of international relations.

The reason for the continuous weaponization of interdependence lies in the deepening of interdependence among countries in the context of globalization, which makes dependency become a strategic tool. This weaponization has led to a redistribution of power and diversification of conflicts among states, increased economic sanctions and political isolation, aggravated security dilemmas, and transformed cooperative relationships into confrontations. Weaponization limits the potential for international cooperation, increases uncertainty in international relations, and makes conflict resolution more complicated, thus triggering a chain reaction in the international arena and affecting global stability and development. For example, the US-China trade war affected not only the economies of the two countries, but also the global supply chain and the international trading system, highlighting the broad implications of the weaponization of interdependence.

## 4. Analysis of the reason of spillover

Spillover causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict include the push for weaponization of interdependence, such as economic sanctions and political isolation; the influence of structural power dominance, such as great power intervention and regional power imbalance; genocide and increased policy disproportionality, such as human rights violations and discriminatory policies. These factors have intensified the tension between Palestine and Israel, triggered a chain reaction in the region and even around the world, and affected international stability.

## 4.1 Promotion of the weaponization of interdependence

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel exploited the interdependence between both sides to intensify its political pressure on the Palestinians through the dependence on economic and military aid, its technological and market power, and its network of international political support. This strategy leads to complex challenges faced by the Palestinians. It is vulnerable not only in terms of international assistance, but also in its disadvantageous position in political negotiations, thus exacerbating its socioeconomic marginalization. Tensions between Israel and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) have escalated into one of the most serious outbreaks of violence in recent years. In this process, Israel, relying on advanced military technology and equipment, carried out precision strikes on the Gaza Strip; Hamas fired a large number of rockets, but due to technical limitations, it has not been able to effectively counter Israel's military superiority. Moreover, as Israel moves forward with the normalization of its diplomatic relations with Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian issue has fallen further in the global spotlight. In response, human rights bodies of the United Nations expressed deep concern, noting that Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip constituted a serious humanitarian crisis, and criticized Israel's long-term occupation of the Palestinian territory and its violation of the rights of the locals<sup>[7]</sup>.

## 4.2 The influence of structural power superiority

America's role in the Middle East, particularly its unwavering support for Israel, has profoundly influenced the development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The strong U.S.-Israeli relationship

stems from a number of factors: On the one hand, the political influence of the Jewish community and interest groups in the United States has promoted the U.S. government's support for Israel; On the other hand, Israel is a strategic ally of the United States in the Middle East, and the importance of its geographical location is crucial for the United States to maintain regional stability and its strategic interests. At the same time, their similarities in values such as democracy and freedom have deepened the ties between the two countries. In the military field, the United States has provided Israel with a large number of advanced weapons and technical assistance, while Israel has reciprocated with its military wisdom and actual combat experience, forming a mutually beneficial cooperation model and jointly safeguarding the security pattern of the region. From the economic perspective, the active trade and investment activities between the two countries have promoted the growth and prosperity of the bilateral economy. However, America's strong support for Israel has also given the latter significant power advantages in the conflict, including military and technological leadership, the friendship of allies on the international political stage, and the policy of continued expansion of settlement. This tendency in U.S. Middle East policy is often criticized as following double standards, reflected by its almost unconditional support for Israel contrasting with its neglect or suppression of Palestinian demands. This has led to greater suffering for the Palestinian people and increased instability in the Middle East.

## 4.3 Genocide and policy disproportion

The deepening of Israeli policy disproportion and genocide towards Palestine is an important aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to reports by UN human rights experts, Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip have been accused of genocide. The reports pointed out that Israel destroyed Gaza during its five-month military operation, which had caused a large number of deaths and injuries, as well as a systematic destruction of all aspects necessary to sustain life in Gaza. The reports emphasized that these actions of Israel not only violated the basic principles of international humanitarian law, but also went beyond conflict crimes and crimes against humanity. Reports by UN human rights experts also noted that Israeli bombing had not only targeted civilians, but also journalists, medical workers, UN staff and aid workers, leading to the collapse of medical infrastructures, food shortages and massive displacement. These actions are considered ethnic cleansing and collective punishment against the Palestinians. This policy disproportion and the intensification of genocide have led to an existential crisis for the Palestinians and discussions in the international community about the lack of moral responsibility. These acts of Israel are seen as an escalation in the process of colonial clearance of long-time settlers of the Palestinian people and constitute a grave violation of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

#### 5. Countermeasures and Outlook

In exploring the spillover effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the measures to resolve it, it is of great importance to recognize that this is a complex issue involving multiple dimensions, including politics, society, economy and international relations. Here are ways to address the spillover effect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and an outlook into the future:

## 5.1 Countermeasures to the spillover of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

In the face of the complexity of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its extensive spillover effect, an effective solution should be proposed from a multi-dimensional approach, combining the strength of the international community and the joint efforts of both sides.

#### 5.1.1 Enhancing multilateral mediation for equitable negotiations

Strengthening international mediation mechanisms is one of the key steps in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The international community should establish a more robust, authoritative and enforceable mediation framework aimed at providing a fair and just negotiation platform for the two sides. This requires not only the active participation of international organizations such as the UN Security Council, but also a constructive role by major countries, especially those with significant influence in the Middle East, such as the United States, Russia, China, and members of the European Union. The establishment of a pluralistic mediation mechanism can ensure that the negotiation process is more transparent, reducing the unilateral pressure from external forces, and enable Palestine and Israel to engage in talks on core issues on an equal basis<sup>[8]</sup>. In addition, the international community should strengthen its support for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, including providing necessary financial assistance, technical training and security guarantees, so as to help the two sides overcome obstacles encountered in the negotiations and gradually build a foundation of mutual trust.

## **5.1.2** Promoting economic and social development and alleviating poverty and unemployment in Palestine

One of the root causes of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict lies in the economic plight and social problems of Palestine. Therefore, the international community and relevant parties should be committed to promoting the economic and social development of Palestine, and fundamentally ease the living pressure of the Palestinian people and reduce the ground for extremist ideology through such measures as increasing employment opportunities, strengthening infrastructure construction and raising the level of education. Specifically, special funds can be set up to attract domestic and foreign investment to support the growth of SMEs and create more jobs. At the same time, cooperation with Israel and neighboring Arab countries should be strengthened to jointly develop cross-border water resources projects, improve agricultural irrigation conditions, and increase the efficiency of agricultural production. In addition, more investment should be made in the field of education to train more high-quality personnel, thus laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of Palestinian society.

# 5.1.3 Strengthening the protection of human rights and promoting national reconciliation and coexistence

Given the frequency of human rights violations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is particularly important to strengthen mechanisms for human rights protection. The international community should urge the Israeli Government to abide by international law, cease its misconduct against Palestinian civilians and respect and guarantee their basic human rights. At the same time, Palestine and Israel should be encouraged to carry out national reconciliation, enhance mutual understanding through cultural exchanges and people-to-people exchanges, eliminate misunderstandings and prejudices, thus creating favorable conditions for the realization of lasting peace. To this end, the establishment of a special human rights monitoring committee may be considered so as to issue regular reports on the human rights situation, monitor the implementation of both sides, and ensure the effective implementation of various measures for human rights protection. In addition, the education and guidance of Palestinian and Israeli youth should be strengthened to develop their identification with the values of peace and tolerance, so as to lay a solid foundation for national reconciliation and coexistence in the future.

#### 5.2 Outlook into the future

The future of the Middle East region focuses on peace and development. This process will be influenced by the concerted efforts of the international community, the political will of leaders on both sides, and the involvement and promotion of civil society. The development prospects of the Middle East region include economic integration and regional cooperation, political stability and democratization processes, as well as a long-term vision of peace and development. First of all, the new characteristics of the development of the Middle East are mainly reflected in the following aspects: countries put the principle of development first, the trend of easing among regional countries is obvious, and the strategic autonomy of countries has been significantly enhanced. Countries in the Middle East are grappling with the challenges posed by the Fourth Industrial Revolution while focusing on livelihood and governance issues so as to achieve high-quality sustainable development. Second, Middle Eastern countries are accelerating the implementation of their development plans. Since 2021, the competition among major powers in the Middle East has become increasingly fierce, while the relations among countries in this region have become more relaxed, and there has been a new trend of transition from the wave of turbulence since the upheaval in the Middle East to the current phase of seeking stability and development<sup>[9]</sup>. However, the easing of relations between Middle Eastern countries does not equal reconciliation, and the hot spot issues such as Palestinian-Israel, Syria, Yemen and Libya issues have not eased, and the security dilemma in the region remains severe. Looking into the future, although some long-term hot spot issues in the Middle East remain difficult to resolve, the tone of detente is expected to continue. Middle Eastern countries are expected to continue to look east in their foreign relations and strengthen their cooperation with China. In summary, the future of the Middle East depends on efforts and cooperation from multiple perspectives, including a developmentfirst orientation at the state level, detente and reconciliation among countries in the region, and new developments in external relations.

In the context of the election of Donald Trump as US President, the future outlook for the Middle East has become more complicated. Trump's approach to foreign policy and military deployments heralds a major shift in U.S. foreign policy, particularly when it comes to the Middle East. The Trump administration is likely to reduce its military involvement in the Middle East and shift its focus to the Asia-Pacific region in response to its competition with China. Such a policy shift may lead to a power vacuum in the Middle East and increase regional instability. At the same time, the Trump administration's support for Israel can exacerbate tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition, the reduction of the US military presence in the Middle East may affect the balance among countries in the region, especially regional powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, according to current theoretical analysis, the situation in the Middle East is likely to further collapse in the context of Trump's election as US president, especially in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and regional power competition. International cooperation and reconciliation efforts among regional countries will become even more important in order to avoid further deterioration of the situation<sup>[10]</sup>.

#### 6. Conclusions

The intensifying Palestinian-Israeli conflict has had profound spillover effects on the Middle East and beyond, amidst a backdrop of international power transition and weaponization of interdependence. The conflict has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, deepened Palestinian political fragmentation, and triggered broader regional tensions, including conflicts between Israel and Iran, Lebanon, and the involvement of the Houthis. To address these challenges, multidimensional countermeasures are necessary, including strengthened international mediation, promotion of Palestinian economic and social development, and enhanced human rights protection. The future of peace and development in the Middle East hinges on concerted international efforts, the political will

of both Palestine and Israel, and effective multilateral cooperation.

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