

UAE, ISRAEL REACH AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC TIES

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UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed

President Donald Trump said on Thursday that the United Arab Emirates and Israel have agreed to establish full diplomatic ties as part of a deal to halt the annexation of occupied land sought by the Palestinians for their future state. The announcement makes the UAE the first Gulf Arab state to do so and only the third Arab nation to have active diplomatic ties to Israel.

Mr. Trump tweeted a statement from the countries, acknowledging the deal. He then told reporters in the Oval Office that it was “a truly historic moment”. “Now that the ice has been broken I expect more Arab and Muslim countries will follow the United Arab Emirates,” he said. The recognition grants a rare diplomatic win to Mr. Trump ahead of the November election.

For Israel, the announcement comes after years of boasting by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that his government enjoys closer ties to Arab nations than publicly acknowledged. Mr. Netanyahu has sought to build settlements on lands sought by the Palestinians and embraced a Trump proposal that would allow him to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank while granting Palestinians limited autonomy in other areas.

For the UAE, it further burnishes its international campaign to be seen as a beacon of tolerance in West Asia despite being governed by autocratic rulers.

Joint statement

A joint statement from the U.S., the UAE and Israel was issued immediately after Trump’s tweet. It said delegations would meet in the coming weeks to sign deals on direct flights, security, telecommunications, energy, tourism and health care. The two countries also will partner on fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Opening direct ties between two of the Middle East’s most dynamic societies and advanced economics will transform the region by spurring economic growth, enhancing technological innovation and forging closer people-to-people relations,” said the statement by Mr. Trump, Mr. Netanyahu and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, the day-to-day ruler of the UAE. It said the leaders had a three-way call discussing the deal.

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