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The Abraham Trade Route: Linking Asia to the Mediterranean for Peace and Prosperity

A Strategic Vision for Economic Growth and Regional Stability

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Foreword - Catherine Perez-Shakdam

For too long, the Middle East has been synonymous with conflict—a region where history repeats itself in cycles of war, instability, and political paralysis. Bound by old grudges and defined by a zero-sum mindset, nations that share geography, resources, and cultural ties have too often chosen rivalry over cooperation, confrontation over commerce. Yet, history has also shown that where there is economic opportunity, there is the prospect of peace.

This research brief presents a bold and transformative vision—one that does not merely seek to mitigate conflict but to render it obsolete. The Abraham Trade Road, stretching from Afghanistan through a free Iran, across the Gulf, and into the Mediterranean via Israel and Gaza, lays the foundation for a new Middle East—one where economic interdependence, rather than perpetual enmity, becomes the organising principle of regional relations.

A free Iran, in this vision, is an Iran liberated from the theocratic rule of the mullahs—an Iran that has shed its expansionist and genocidal ambitions, no longer serving as a destabilising force but rather as a strategic partner in regional growth. Such an Iran, integrated into a vast network of trade and cooperation, would be pivotal in securing a new economic axis that not only reconfigures the Middle East but extends its reach into the resource-rich Central Asian states.

Expanding this corridor to incorporate nations such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—which already share strategic, technological, and agricultural ties with Israel—would transform this initiative into a revitalised Silk Road, one led by a coalition of democracies and open economies rather than by authoritarian regimes. Central Asia's vast energy reserves, combined with Israeli innovation and Gulf capital, would allow for a US- and UK-aligned economic hegemony stretching from Egypt to Kazakhstan, providing a natural counterbalance to China's Belt and Road Initiative. This corridor would enable Western allies to organically overwhelm Chinese influence without the necessity of costly trade wars or military entanglements, instead fostering economic dominance through innovation, trade integration, and secure transit routes.

The Abraham Trade Road, therefore, is not just a means to stabilise the Middle East—it is a blueprint for a new strategic alignment that extends far beyond its immediate geography. By anchoring Israel as a critical gateway to the Mediterranean, linking the Gulf to Central Asia's economic potential, and creating a secure trade route free from malign influences, this project presents a geopolitical masterstroke—one that reshapes global trade while ensuring that economic prosperity, rather than ideological extremism, defines the region's future.

The logic is undeniable. Where trade flows, peace follows. Nations that rely on one another for prosperity have a vested interest in stability. A secure and thriving Israel would no longer be a mere diplomatic talking point—it would be an economic imperative for every country along the route. A Gaza integrated into global commerce would have little room for extremism. A free Iran engaged in trade with its Gulf neighbours would have no need for proxy wars.

The Abraham Trade Road is more than just a corridor of commerce; it is a bridge between the past and the future, a modern Silk Road that would redefine geopolitics through shared economic interests rather than perpetual hostility. Just as the Abraham Accords shattered the illusion that the Arab-Israeli conflict was an immutable reality, this trade route presents an opportunity to turn that diplomatic breakthrough into a lasting economic revolution.

But such a vision does not come without obstacles. It demands political courage, diplomatic coordination, and infrastructure investment on an unprecedented scale. It requires a fundamental shift in thinking—from the entrenched belief that security can only be achieved through military deterrence to the recognition that lasting security is built through shared prosperity.

This research brief outlines why this vision is not only necessary but achievable. It presents a detailed analysis of the economic, security, and geopolitical benefits of the Abraham Trade Road, which would bypass traditional chokepoints, reduce reliance on unstable actors, and empower the region's economies to thrive independently of external manipulation. It highlights the challenges that must be overcome, from securing investment to countering extremist threats, and offers a framework for implementation.

This is not a dream; it is a blueprint. A strategic recalibration that, if embraced, could reshape the Middle East for generations to come. The alternative is to continue the pattern of history—to allow militant groups to dictate regional instability, to permit economic stagnation to breed resentment, and to leave the fate of the Middle East in the hands of those who profit from perpetual conflict.

The choice is clear. The Abraham Trade Road is not just about connecting markets—it is about forging a new reality, one where trade, security, and diplomacy become the cornerstones of a stable and prosperous Middle East. If the region is to break free from its past, then now is the time to build its future.

Executive Summary

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has long been characterised by geopolitical tensions and economic disparities. In this context, economic interdependence emerges as a viable pathway to sustainable peace. The proposed Abraham Trade Route—a corridor extending from Afghanistan through a liberated Iran to the Strait of Hormuz, proceeding to Dubai, and traversing to Gaza or Israel with access to the Mediterranean—presents a transformative opportunity. This initiative aims to unlock untapped markets, reduce reliance on traditional choke points such as the Suez Canal, and enhance both economic and security cooperation among participating nations.

Economic interdependence has been empirically linked to enhanced cooperation and reduced conflict among nations. By fostering significant trade ties, countries are more likely to engage in collaborative efforts and less likely to resort to hostilities. The Abraham Trade Route would facilitate seamless movement of goods and services across the region, thereby promoting economic integration. This integration is poised to stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities, and elevate the standard of living for populations along the corridor. Moreover, by providing an alternative to the Suez Canal, the route would mitigate risks associated with over-reliance on a single maritime passage, as evidenced by disruptions like the 2021 blockage of the canal.

The strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz in global energy supply is well-documented. However, its vulnerability to geopolitical tensions necessitates alternative routes to ensure uninterrupted energy flow. The proposed trade corridor would offer such an alternative, thereby enhancing global energy security. Additionally, by facilitating access to new markets, energy-exporting countries in the region could diversify their customer base, reducing economic vulnerability to regional instabilities.

The development of this trade route would necessitate substantial investments in infrastructure, including the construction of roads, railways, and ports. Such projects are likely to spur technological advancements and attract foreign direct investment, further bolstering economic growth. The establishment of modern logistics networks would not

only improve trade efficiency but also position the region as a pivotal hub in global supply chains.

Economic collaboration often serves as a foundation for political stability. By intertwining the economic interests of Afghanistan, Iran, the Gulf States, and Israel, the Abraham Trade Route would create mutual dependencies that discourage conflict. Furthermore, the economic upliftment of historically marginalised areas, such as Gaza, could address underlying socio-economic grievances that extremist groups often exploit. By providing alternative livelihoods and fostering hope, the appeal of such groups is likely to diminish, thereby contributing to regional security.

The diversification of trade routes diminishes the strategic leverage of non-state actors who have historically exploited chokepoints like the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. By offering alternative pathways for global trade, the influence of groups such as the Houthis over critical maritime routes would be significantly reduced. This realignment not only enhances the security of global trade but also stabilises the region by limiting the operational reach of these actors.

The Abraham Trade Route stands as a beacon of potential transformation in a region yearning for peace and prosperity. By fostering economic interdependence, enhancing energy security, and undermining the influence of destabilising non-state actors, this initiative offers a comprehensive strategy for regional rejuvenation. The collaborative efforts required for its realisation would not only bridge economic divides but also pave the way for enduring peace and stability in the MENA region.

Strategic Benefits of the New Trade Route

1. Economic Growth and Market Integration

The Abraham Trade Route offers a fundamental shift in the region's economic landscape, unlocking unprecedented opportunities for market integration and sustainable development. By providing a direct corridor from Afghanistan to the Mediterranean, the initiative would not only diversify global trade routes but also introduce competition to the Suez Canal, reducing over-reliance on a single maritime passage. This alternative route would streamline logistics, lower transportation costs, and increase accessibility to both regional and international markets.

For Afghanistan, a country long dependent on limited and unstable trade pathways, access to this corridor would be transformational. Decades of conflict have stifled its economic growth, leaving it largely isolated from global trade. A direct, secure trade route leading to a Mediterranean port would integrate Afghanistan into the broader Eurasian and Middle Eastern trade network, allowing its agricultural and mineral exports to reach European and African markets with greater ease. This would not only facilitate post-war economic recovery but also reduce Afghanistan's dependence on neighbouring Pakistan and Iran as its primary export conduits.

For a liberated Iran, participation in this trade system would signal a strategic economic pivot. For too long, Iran's economy has been shackled by international sanctions, corruption, and over-reliance on oil exports. A new trade route would necessitate and incentivise diversification, allowing Iran to invest in infrastructure, logistics, and manufacturing rather than simply extracting and exporting hydrocarbons. The economic spillover from this trade network would create high-value employment, foster foreign direct investment, and position Iran as a major transit hub connecting Asia to Europe. Moreover, Iran's participation in a structured trade framework would align its economic interests with regional stability, making sustained conflict with its Gulf and Israeli neighbours economically unviable.

For the Gulf States—notably the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrain—the corridor would further entrench their role as commercial hubs linking Asia to Europe. These nations have long pursued economic diversification strategies under initiatives such as Saudi Vision 2030 and the UAE's economic transformation plans. With Dubai as a focal point of this new route, the Gulf States would reinforce their role as gateways for global trade, expanding their influence beyond the energy sector and into logistics, finance, and technology-driven trade solutions. This trade corridor would strengthen intra-regional economic cooperation, reducing barriers between economies that have historically operated in silos.

Perhaps most critically, Israel and Gaza—long seen as geopolitical adversaries—would emerge as key trade gateways to the Mediterranean. The economic potential for Gaza in particular cannot be overstated. Historically one of the most underdeveloped regions in the Eastern Mediterranean, Gaza's strategic location would be transformed from a liability into a competitive advantage. Economic growth would diminish the influence of extremist groups, reduce reliance on international aid, and foster a business ecosystem where trade and entrepreneurship replace radicalisation as the primary drivers of social and political engagement.

For Israel, the benefits are equally compelling. By serving as a Mediterranean endpoint for trade originating in South Asia, Central Asia, and the Gulf, Israel would consolidate its position as a regional economic leader. Israeli expertise in high-tech logistics, cybersecurity, and infrastructure development would be critical in making the trade route efficient, secure, and technologically advanced. Additionally, Israel's strategic integration into this network would make its security and stability a matter of shared economic interest for all countries involved—creating a natural deterrent against conflict.

By breaking historical trade barriers, this corridor would redefine economic cooperation in the Middle East, making prosperity the common denominator for peace. The initiative would not only reduce economic disparities but also foster interdependence, ensuring that no single country benefits at the expense of another—but rather that growth and stability become regional imperatives.

2. Securing Global Energy Supply

The Abraham Trade Route offers a geostrategic solution to one of the greatest challenges facing the global economy: the security and stability of energy supply chains. For decades, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz have served as critical choke points for the transit of oil and gas from the Middle East to global markets. However, these existing trade arteries remain dangerously vulnerable to geopolitical turmoil, militant activity, and hostile state actors. The proposed trade route would neutralise these vulnerabilities, ensuring that global energy markets are not held hostage by regional instability.

The Suez Canal¹, a vital maritime passage for approximately 12% of global trade, has repeatedly demonstrated its strategic fragility. The 2021 Ever Given blockage, which disrupted global supply chains for six days and cost an estimated \$10 billion per day in lost trade, underscored the risks associated with a single point of failure. Additionally, the canal has long been a target for regional conflicts, with past hostilities such as the 1956 Suez Crisis and the 1967 Six-Day War exposing its vulnerability to political tensions. By establishing an alternative trade corridor, the New MENA Trade Route would provide a critical buffer against disruptions in one of the world's most trafficked shipping lanes.

Beyond the Suez Canal, another major vulnerability lies in the Gulf's shipping lanes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz—through which nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supply flows daily. Iran's ability to threaten, disrupt, or even temporarily close this passage presents a severe strategic risk to global energy markets. Iranian-backed militias and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have repeatedly engaged in acts of maritime aggression, from harassing commercial vessels to seizing oil tankers. The Abraham Trade Route would mitigate this threat by reducing the reliance on the Strait of Hormuz as the primary transit hub for Gulf oil exports.

Furthermore, the growing instability in the Red Sea², exacerbated by Houthi attacks on commercial shipping, has demonstrated how non-state actors can exert disproportionate control over global trade flows. The Iran-backed Houthis have used drones and missiles to target commercial vessels, threatening to turn the Red Sea into a hostile maritime corridor. With an alternative land-based transit network, the Abraham Trade Route would deny the Houthis a strategic bargaining chip, depriving them of their ability to hold global energy supplies hostage to their ideological and military objectives.

A diversified transit network would also stabilise global oil prices by reducing logistical risks. Markets are highly sensitive to supply chain disruptions, with minor interruptions leading to price spikes and economic uncertainty. By offering a secure, predictable, and multi-modal transit corridor, the new trade route would increase the resilience of energy exports from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iraq to Europe. The introduction of a new

¹ **Encyclopædia Britannica.** "The Economy." *Britannica*, last modified 2024.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Suez-Canal/The-economy>.

² **World Bank.** "Navigating Troubled Waters: The Red Sea Shipping Crisis and Its Global Implications." *World Bank Blogs*, last modified 2024.
<https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/developmenttalk/navigating-troubled-waters--the-red-sea-shipping-crisis-and-its->

infrastructure system—potentially including a rail network or pipeline corridors—would provide oil-exporting nations with an alternative logistics framework, minimising exposure to geopolitical flashpoints.

In essence, the New MENA Trade Route would serve as an economic stabiliser, ensuring that global energy flows are insulated from regional conflicts, terrorist threats, and hostile state interference. By reducing dependency on the Suez Canal, bypassing Iranian-controlled waters, and eliminating the threat posed by the Houthis, this corridor would transform the energy security landscape—not just for the MENA region, but for the entire global economy.

3. A Strategic Shift in Regional Security

For decades, the Middle East has been trapped in a cycle of instability, fueled by economic stagnation, security competition, and the proxy wars of regional powers. The proposed Abraham Trade Route offers a fundamental shift in strategic priorities, forcing nations to redefine security through economic interdependence rather than through conflict. By creating an economic artery that runs through multiple nations, this trade route would transform national interests, aligning security with economic prosperity and disincentivizing the use of militant proxies.

The most profound shift would be in how the security of Israel is perceived and prioritized by the region. If Israel serves as the final transit point into the Mediterranean, then its stability would be essential for the prosperity of every country along the trade route. No longer would Israel be treated as an isolated entity; instead, its security and functionality as a trading hub would become a regional necessity. Nations that once viewed Israel solely through the lens of hostility would now have an economic stake in its continued stability.

This realignment of interests would create a new security order in the Middle East, fostering cooperation between the Gulf States and Israel. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain, which have already deepened their ties with Israel through the Abraham Accords, would have an even greater incentive to ensure regional stability. The economic benefits of a secure and uninterrupted trade network would make conflict less appealing and cooperation more rewarding. Furthermore, the ability of Iran-backed proxies—such as Hezbollah and Hamas—to destabilize the region would be significantly reduced, as economic success would increasingly take precedence over ideological warfare.

The Houthis and Hamas, two of the most disruptive non-state actors in the region, would see their leverage diminished. These groups thrive on economic despair, using poverty and disenfranchisement to recruit fighters and justify endless cycles of violence. But if the new trade corridor provides tangible economic benefits to local populations, their grip on power would weaken significantly. The people of Gaza, for example, could see a future rooted in economic growth rather than permanent war—undercutting Hamas' stranglehold over the region. Similarly, if trade routes bypass the Houthis' zone

of control, their ability to extort global shipping and disrupt trade in the Red Sea would be neutralized.

A liberated Iran would also no longer have a strategic interest in funding terror proxies. Tehran's historical reliance on asymmetric warfare—arming Hezbollah, Hamas, and various Shia militias—has been a function of its geopolitical isolation. However, a free Iran, integrated into a new economic order, would have far more to gain from trade and development than from perpetuating regional conflict. Crucially, the establishment of a robust economic trade corridor would not only anchor Iran in legitimate global markets but also constrict the ability of terror networks to seek alternative sponsors. Without Iranian sponsorship and with fewer avenues for external funding, groups from Lebanon to Yemen would find themselves weakened and rudderless, allowing for the long-term stabilization of conflict zones that have been in turmoil for decades.

The Abraham Trade Route would not just be an economic project—it would be a strategic realignment. By making economic interdependence the foundation of regional relationships, it would replace outdated power dynamics with pragmatic, mutually beneficial cooperation. The cost of war would far outweigh its benefits, and for the first time in modern history, the nations of the Middle East would find their prosperity tied not to division, but to collaboration.

4. Geopolitical Implications: A New Balance of Power

The Abraham Trade Route would do more than restructure economies—it would redefine the strategic balance of power in the Middle East, shifting influence away from militant groups and rogue states toward a coalition of stable, economically interdependent nations. By replacing conflict-driven power structures with economic cooperation, this trade corridor would undermine those who thrive on instability while strengthening regional actors committed to stability, trade, and prosperity.

For the West, this represents a geostrategic opportunity to reinforce an alliance network across the Middle East, countering the growing influence of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Beijing has aggressively expanded its economic footprint across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, using infrastructure projects as leverage over fragile economies. The Abraham Trade Route would offer a powerful alternative, providing a Western-backed, locally-driven economic framework that does not demand strategic subservience in return. By aligning the economic interests of the Gulf States, Israel, and a free Iran, the West would reduce its reliance on unstable actors and reinforce a regional coalition against external influence from China and Russia.

One of the most disruptive consequences of this trade corridor would be the breaking of Egypt's Suez Canal monopoly over regional trade. For decades, Egypt has held an outsized influence over global commerce, with the canal handling nearly 30% of the world's container trade and serving as a bottleneck for Europe's energy and goods supply chains. However, this monopoly has driven up transit costs and made global trade vulnerable to Egyptian domestic instability.

The 2021 Ever Given crisis³, in which a single ship blocked the canal for six days, demonstrated just how fragile and costly dependence on a single maritime route can be. A land-based alternative, running through the heart of the Middle East, would lower transit costs, improve logistical resilience, and provide Europe with diversified trade routes. Instead of relying solely on a single Egyptian waterway, European markets could benefit from a multi-modal transport network that connects the Arabian Peninsula, Israel, and the Mediterranean via road, rail, and pipeline infrastructure.

This new corridor would dilute the geopolitical leverage of states and non-state actors that profit from controlling vital trade arteries. The Houthis, who have used attacks on Red Sea shipping to extort international players, would lose their ability to disrupt global trade. Iran's historic ability to threaten the Strait of Hormuz would become increasingly irrelevant, as oil and goods would have alternative transit pathways. Meanwhile, countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel would be incentivised to work together as guardians of the new trade corridor, ensuring that regional stability prevails over conflict.

In short, the Abraham Trade Route would shift the centre of gravity in the Middle East—from conflict to commerce, from militancy to modernisation, from dependence on unstable chokepoints to a resilient, multi-route trade network. By tilting the regional balance toward economic pragmatism, it would undermine the forces of extremism and empower a new coalition of stability-driven states, reshaping the future of the Middle East and its place in global geopolitics.

5. Technological Advancements and Infrastructure Development

The Abraham Trade Route would not only reshape regional economics and security—it would also ignite a revolution in infrastructure and technological innovation. The construction and operation of such a vast corridor would demand cutting-edge solutions in transportation, logistics, and energy, transforming the Middle East into a global leader in advanced trade systems.

At the heart of this transformation would be next-generation transport networks. High-speed rail, built to seamlessly connect the Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean, would drastically reduce transit times for goods and passengers alike, making regional trade more efficient than ever. Underground tunnels, particularly beneath the Strait of Hormuz or even the Arabian Gulf, would bypass maritime choke points, ensuring uninterrupted trade flows and neutralising threats from geopolitical instability. The introduction of cross-Gulf bridges, linking major economic centres from Dubai to Israel, would create a continuous commercial artery, integrating Gulf economies with the Levant in an unprecedented manner.

³ **Karasz, Palko, and Marc Santora.** "Suez Canal Ship Is Finally Free, but the Struggle to Move Goods Persists." *New York Times*, July 17, 2021.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/17/world/middleeast/suez-canal-stuck-ship-ever-given.html>.

Beyond transport, the logistical backbone of the trade route would be powered by AI-driven automation. Smart ports, equipped with AI-powered customs processing, would streamline cargo handling, cutting wait times and minimising bureaucratic inefficiencies. Autonomous cargo vehicles and drones could facilitate last-mile delivery across desert landscapes, ensuring that goods move seamlessly from production hubs to consumer markets. With AI-driven monitoring, supply chain security could be dramatically enhanced, detecting and mitigating threats before they disrupt trade.

But perhaps the most ambitious innovation would come in the form of sustainable energy solutions. The MENA region, already a leader in solar energy investment, could deploy solar-powered transport networks, ensuring that high-speed rail, cargo hubs, and industrial zones operate with minimal environmental impact. Desalination plants powered by renewable energy could provide vital water resources for industrial zones and urban developments along the corridor, ensuring that the expansion of trade infrastructure does not strain natural resources.

This technological leap forward would position the MENA region as a pioneer in sustainable and intelligent trade systems. The innovations developed for the Abraham Trade Route—from AI-powered logistics to renewable energy transport models—would not only redefine regional commerce but could also serve as global blueprints for modernising trade corridors elsewhere.

By leveraging state-of-the-art infrastructure, disruptive technologies, and sustainable development, this project would be far more than just a commercial pathway. It would be a symbol of economic modernisation, a testament to human ingenuity, and a blueprint for how trade, security, and innovation can work in harmony to shape the future of the Middle East.

Challenges and Implementation Considerations

1. Political Alignment and Diplomatic Challenges

The Abraham Trade Route presents a bold vision for economic integration, but its success hinges on overcoming deep-rooted geopolitical tensions and diplomatic hurdles. A corridor spanning Afghanistan to the Mediterranean would demand unprecedented cooperation between historical adversaries, as well as a fundamental shift in regional alliances.

At the heart of this challenge lies Iran—a nation whose current regime is defined by hostility toward many of the key players in this trade initiative, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the West. For the corridor to materialise, Iran must transition from an isolated, revolutionary state to a cooperative, economically integrated partner. This shift would require significant diplomatic intervention from global powers, as well as domestic reforms within Iran itself. A post-theocratic, economically reformed Iran would benefit immensely from integration into a regional trade hub, but the political transformation necessary to enable this remains one of the greatest hurdles to the plan.

Beyond Iran, Arab states must confront their historical hostilities with Israel in order to fully embrace the economic potential of the trade route. While the Abraham Accords have paved the way for closer ties between Israel and Gulf nations such as the UAE and Bahrain, further reconciliation is needed, particularly with Saudi Arabia and nations like Oman and Kuwait, where public sentiment remains wary of normalisation. The success of this corridor depends on economic pragmatism overriding ideological resistance—a shift that requires a new diplomatic framework focused on shared prosperity rather than past conflicts.

The involvement of international stakeholders is another critical factor. The United States, European Union, India, and Japan—all of whom have vested interests in Middle Eastern stability and global trade security—must provide diplomatic backing and financial support. The corridor represents a Western-led alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, offering economic incentives without Beijing's coercive political conditions. However, to be successful, it must attract sustained investment, security guarantees, and diplomatic coordination.

Additionally, international bodies such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) must be engaged to ensure the legal, regulatory, and financial frameworks required to sustain such a large-scale project. Without strong multilateral coordination, the project could falter under the weight of regional rivalries, bureaucratic inefficiencies, or external geopolitical pressures.

Ultimately, while the Abraham Trade Route offers unparalleled economic and security benefits, it is not merely an infrastructure project—it is a diplomatic challenge of historic proportions. The ability of regional and global players to prioritise economic growth over political grievances will determine whether this visionary project becomes a reality or remains a theoretical aspiration.

2. Security Risks and Countering Extremism

The Abraham Trade Route would not only reshape economic landscapes but also introduce significant security challenges. The vast infrastructure required—spanning multiple conflict-prone regions—would become a prime target for terrorist groups, militant factions, and state-sponsored actors seeking to disrupt trade, exert leverage, or undermine regional stability. To ensure the success of this corridor, comprehensive security frameworks and counterterrorism strategies must be developed at every stage of its implementation.

The first and most pressing concern is infrastructure security. Roads, railways, ports, and tunnels stretching from Afghanistan to the Mediterranean would be exposed to terrorist attacks, cyber warfare, and sabotage. Extremist groups such as ISIS-K in Afghanistan, Hamas in Gaza, the Houthis in Yemen, and remnants of Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria have a vested interest in destabilising projects that promote regional cooperation. Protecting these trade arteries would require a coordinated security network, including physical countermeasures (military patrols, drone

surveillance, fortified transport corridors) and cybersecurity protections to prevent digital sabotage of logistical systems.

A unified counterterrorism framework would be crucial, involving Israel, the Gulf States, a free Iran, and international allies. A trilateral security alliance between Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE could provide the intelligence-sharing and rapid-response capabilities needed to counter emerging threats. A post-theocratic Iran, free from its current proxy warfare strategy, would shift from being an instigator of regional instability to an active security partner, eliminating a major source of asymmetric warfare in the region.

Furthermore, the economic success of the trade corridor hinges on neutralising extremism at its roots. Economic stagnation and lack of opportunity have historically been key drivers of radicalisation—militant groups thrive in conditions where populations feel abandoned and voiceless. To counteract this, significant investments in economic development must accompany security measures, particularly in Gaza and the West Bank, where Hamas and other extremist factions exploit economic despair to fuel their recruitment and control. By guaranteeing economic prosperity in these territories—through direct employment, trade incentives, and infrastructure investment—the appeal of militant groups would decline, gradually undermining their influence over local populations.

Additionally, ensuring equitable economic benefits across Sunni and Shia communities would be critical to preventing sectarian tensions from being exacerbated. Historically, unequal economic development has fueled resentment, creating an opening for groups like Hezbollah, which position themselves as defenders of marginalised communities. The trade route must integrate Shia and Sunni populations into a shared economic future, discouraging sectarian exploitation.

Finally, international actors, particularly the U.S., NATO, and European intelligence agencies, must provide advisory support and training to ensure that regional forces remain equipped to handle evolving security threats. This includes joint military exercises, cybersecurity collaboration, and intelligence-sharing mechanisms that would anticipate and preempt threats before they materialise.

By combining hard security measures with economic prosperity, the New MENA Trade Route could serve as a model for counterterrorism-driven development—proving that economic opportunity, not violence, is the most effective tool against extremism.

3. Infrastructure and Investment

The Abraham Trade Route is not merely an ambitious geopolitical vision; it is a vast engineering and financial undertaking requiring unprecedented levels of infrastructure investment. The creation of a seamless Afghanistan-to-Mediterranean corridor would necessitate multi-billion-dollar capital injections into the development of roads, railways, tunnels, ports, and logistics hubs. The scale of the investment required is daunting, but

the long-term economic dividends make it an attractive opportunity for global investors, sovereign wealth funds, and private-sector stakeholders.

A successful implementation of this transformational project would require a multi-layered funding approach that combines government-backed investments, private-sector participation, and multilateral financial support. Nations directly benefiting from the trade route—Afghanistan, a free Iran, the Gulf States, Israel, and Mediterranean transit partners—would need to commit substantial public funds, but they cannot carry the financial burden alone.

Private-sector engagement is crucial. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar possess sovereign wealth funds that are among the largest in the world, and these could serve as key sources of capital. At the same time, international corporations specialising in logistics, transportation, construction, and smart infrastructure—such as DP World, Siemens, and Bechtel—would be natural partners in designing, funding, and operating elements of the corridor.

Beyond regional players, the involvement of global financial institutions would be necessary to de-risk the project and attract long-term investment. Institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) could provide low-interest financing, risk mitigation tools, and regulatory frameworks to ensure the project's stability. Similarly, bilateral investment agreements between the United States, India, Japan, and the Gulf States could encourage foreign direct investment (FDI), making the corridor a truly global undertaking.

Yet, for this project to succeed, it must not become another white elephant—a costly megaproject that struggles with inefficiency, corruption, or political delays. To prevent this, sustainability must be embedded into every stage of development. The corridor must be designed not only for immediate trade needs but for long-term viability.

This means prioritising climate-resilient infrastructure, integrating smart technologies into logistics and transport hubs, and ensuring that environmental sustainability considerations shape construction and operations. Renewable energy-powered transport systems, particularly solar and wind energy solutions, would reduce the corridor's carbon footprint and provide an additional economic advantage in a world shifting toward green energy.

Additionally, the technological dimension of the trade corridor must be cutting-edge. Smart ports, AI-driven logistics, blockchain-enabled trade facilitation, and automated freight management systems would dramatically enhance efficiency, minimise bureaucratic delays, and ensure that the corridor remains competitive with other global trade routes. Countries along the route must also invest in cybersecurity infrastructure to protect against digital threats, ensuring that the logistics network remains secure from state and non-state actors looking to disrupt it.

Ultimately, the Abraham Trade Route is an investment not just in infrastructure, but in economic transformation. It represents a blueprint for future trade corridors worldwide, proving that regional cooperation and economic vision can drive political stability and prosperity in even the most conflict-prone regions. If executed correctly, this corridor could stand as a landmark achievement in 21st-century trade and development—a project that redefines the economic and security architecture of the Middle East for generations to come

Conclusion: A Vision for a New Middle East

The Abraham Trade Route is more than just a commercial undertaking—it is a blueprint for a reimagined Middle East, a strategic realignment where economic interdependence becomes the foundation for stability, security, and regional transformation. For decades, the region has been defined by conflict, sectarian rivalries, and geopolitical zero-sum games. This corridor offers an alternative: a future in which economic prosperity, rather than perpetual enmity, becomes the driving force of Middle Eastern geopolitics.

A trade corridor of this magnitude is not simply a matter of infrastructure and logistics—it is a geopolitical recalibration. By creating mutual dependencies between former adversaries, it would render conflicts economically unviable and make stability a shared strategic necessity rather than an elusive diplomatic ideal.

It would secure global energy supplies, bypassing volatile chokepoints and diminishing the leverage of militant groups like the Houthis, who have long sought to weaponise their control over strategic maritime routes. By diversifying trade flows away from the Suez Canal, the project would bolster supply chain resilience, ensuring that the world economy no longer hinges on a single transit corridor vulnerable to blockades and instability.

It would weaken the appeal of radical groups, offering a direct economic alternative to the ideology of terror. Militants thrive in conditions of economic despair, where young men and women see no path to prosperity beyond violence. But a thriving, interconnected economic corridor—one that generates jobs, creates wealth, and elevates living standards—would deprive these groups of their primary recruitment tools.

It would reposition Israel as an indispensable economic partner, placing it at the heart of a new Afghanistan-to-Mediterranean trade network. No longer seen solely through the lens of conflict, Israel would emerge as a vital transit hub, a technological powerhouse, and a regional stabiliser, whose security would become a matter of economic interest for all countries involved.

It would compel Iran, the Gulf States, and Israel to shift from confrontation to collaboration. If Iran—freed from the grip of its current theocracy—were to embrace this trade route, its long-standing proxy warfare strategy would become obsolete. Tehran would have far more to gain from economic integration than from funding insurgencies,

reducing the need for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas to act as pawns in a decades-old regional chess game. The Gulf States, similarly, would find themselves increasingly aligned with Israel's stability, not as a matter of ideology, but as an economic necessity.

For too long, the Middle East has been a theatre of war, sectarian division, and self-perpetuating cycles of destruction. The New MENA Trade Route presents a radically different path—one where regional cooperation is dictated not by goodwill alone, but by the hard realities of economic self-interest. It is a project that challenges the historical narrative of Middle Eastern politics, proving that shared prosperity can succeed where decades of diplomacy have failed.

The time to act is now. The region must break free from the ghosts of its past and embrace a future where trade, security, and development take precedence over conflict and destruction. The vision of a connected Middle East, where economic corridors replace battlefields, is no longer a utopian dream—it is a strategic imperative for the 21st century.

The choice is clear: continue down the well-trodden path of division, or seize the opportunity to build an economic future that guarantees peace for generations to come.