Techno-diplomacy and the reconfiguration of Arab alliances: Digital Innovation and Shifts in Regional Influence in the Arab World

التكنو–دبلوماسية وإعادة تشكيل التحالفات العربية: الابتكار الرقمي وتحولات النفوذ الإقليمي في العالم العربي

Mounira Bouderdabene1*
University of Constantine3 – Salah Boubnider, Algeria.
mounira.bouderdabene@univ-constantine3.dz

Date of send: 20/04/2026 **Date of acceptance**: 30/05/2026 **Date of publication** ;11/06/2026

Abstract:

This article uses the concept of techno-diplomacy as an analytical framework to understand how control over critical technological capabilities, such as semiconductors, 5G, cloud computing and artificial intelligence, is used to reshape alliances and power dynamics in the Arab region. The analysis focuses on Gulf states, particularly the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, which are reorganising their partnerships with major powers (China, the United States and Israel) through technology partnerships and investments in digital infrastructure within "balancing" technological models.

The article concludes that techno-diplomacy generates a new Arab regional order based on digital state efficiency rather than ideological reference points. In this system, Gulf states act as the 'digital hub', characterised by technological dominance, while a marginalised Arab periphery emerges. This also leads to the establishment of technical dependencies that cannot easily be reversed, tying Arab countries to the technical networks and geopolitical strategies of states that control critical technology.

Keywords: techno-diplomacy, Arab alliances, digital innovation, regional influence.

* *Corresponding author*

Introduction

Since 2018, the technological rivalry between China and the United States has revealed a fundamental shift in the dynamics of international power. Technological capabilities are no longer distributed evenly among states, but instead are distributed asymmetrically among a limited number of actors who control critical technologies.

This creates a major distinction between critical/strategic and general technological capabilities. The latter are relatively easy to access. In contrast, critical/strategic capabilities include advanced semiconductors, 5G network standards, large-scale cloud infrastructure and advanced artificial intelligence. The defining feature of critical/strategic capabilities is that they are not accessible to all international actors.

Critical capabilities have three main characteristics:

(1) the scarcity and concentration of production sources.

(2) the difficulty of substitution.

(3) their profound strategic importance to national security and the digital economy. Together, these characteristics transform control over such capabilities into a geopolitical asset, giving the owning states an exceptional ability to influence the behaviour of other states.

Major state decisions regarding critical technologies, such as U.S. restrictions on the export of advanced semiconductors to China and the exclusion of Huawei from Western 5G networks, cannot be viewed as merely industrial or commercial competitive policies. Rather, they reflect a new power dynamic in which exclusive control over critical technological capabilities is a decisive, yet not inevitable, factor in reshaping geopolitical orientations.

This dynamic particularly affects Arab middle powers, who are faced with unprecedented strategic choices. For example, the UAE has developed technological partnerships with China, such as 5G collaboration involving Huawei, thereby elevating China to the status of a strategic ally rather than merely an economic partner, while maintaining traditional security alliances with the United States at the same time. Similarly, Saudi Arabia is investing in artificial intelligence through projects such as NEOM and the Intelligent Data/AI initiatives, while also forming partnerships with China and preserving its traditional defence and security alliance with the United States.

These seemingly contradictory strategies reveal a dynamic that is difficult for conventional concepts to capture. Although Arab states do not possess critical technological capabilities, they are compelled to position themselves within a geopolitical landscape that is being redrawn according to the logic of controlling these capabilities.

Research problem: How does techno-diplomacy reshape alliances and power dynamics in the Arab region? More specifically, how do Arab states — especially those in the Gulf — use control over technological capabilities and networking of digital partnerships as a mechanism of power to reshape regional alliances? How does this reflect a radical shift in the understanding of interdependence and strategic balancing?

Research sub-questions:

1) Does techno-diplomacy form the core of a new Arab regional order based on the dominance of the Arab Gulf states?

How does technology reshape regional alliances in favour of the states of the 'digital centre' (the UAE and Saudi Arabia), marginalising digitally lagging Arab countries? How can the marginalisation of Arab–Arab logic in coalition building be understood? How do Arab alliances evolve in light of growing competition between Gulf states for digital hegemony?

How does Israel's technological leadership redefine its role, transforming it from an 'isolated state' into a 'strategic partner' within the Arab security system?

What are the risks of this asymmetric alliance, given the reliance of Arab states on imported technologies?

Main thesis/central argument:

This paper proposes the concept of techno-diplomacy as an analytical framework for understanding how control over critical technological capabilities is used as a mechanism of power to reshape alliances, and how Arab middle powers that do not possess these capabilities respond to this new dynamic through strategies of adaptation and strategic balancing.

Techno-diplomacy is not simply the use of digital tools in diplomatic work. Rather, it is a mechanism of power that exploits technological asymmetries to impose long-lasting dependency regimes. In doing so, it redefines the meanings of 'mutual interdependence' and 'strategic balancing' within the Arab regional system.

Firstly: Techno-Diplomacy and the Revision of the Concept of Complex Interdependence (Analytical Framework)

1. The concept of techno-diplomacy

Operational definition: Techno-diplomacy is a mechanism of power whereby states exploit their unequal control of vital, scarce technological capabilities in order to influence, attract or exclude other states. The aim is to reshape international political orientations and alignments, and impose a technological order that is consistent with their geopolitical interests.

What is the explanatory power of the techno-diplomacy concept compared with existing conceptual tools?

First reason: up until now, the dominant conceptual frameworks have only offered partial explanations. The most commonly used concepts are:

1) Digital diplomacy: Digital diplomacy tends to be limited to the use of digital tools as instruments of soft power and public diplomacy (e.g. social media networks).

This concept does not capture the structural dimension of power. The UAE's decision to choose Huawei for its 5G infrastructure is not merely an example of digital diplomacy; it is a strategic choice that will create long-term technological dependencies with geopolitical consequences.

2) Cyber diplomacy: Cyber diplomacy focuses on the governance of cybersecurity norms and the protection of information security in cyberspace. However, it does not address how states utilise technological control to create or enforce political alliances, such as the role of Chinese mediation in normalising relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Similarly, U.S. threats to limit the sharing of intelligence information with allies that adopt Huawei go beyond cyber norms. They represent the use of diplomacy to exploit technological asymmetry in order to impose specific political orientations on others[1].

3) Digital sovereignty: Digital sovereignty refers to the adoption of defensive policies intended to protect regulatory independence, data control and critical technological infrastructures. However, it does not explain how technologically dominant powers exploit their hegemony to reshape alliances. Furthermore, the concept of sovereignty has evolved significantly over time — from traditional sovereignty, which was based on states' control over their geographical borders (land, sea and air), to digital sovereignty, which reflects states' ability to exercise their rights within their digital boundaries[2].

Second reason: Problematic features of the techno-diplomacy concept

This concept focuses on the most significant structures, particularly the power dynamics and relations that are shaped by control over critical technologies and value chains. Within this framework, techno-diplomacy encompasses three key properties:

1.structural technological asymmetry

Controlling critical technologies without an immediate substitute, such as advanced semiconductors, 5G standards and large-scale cloud infrastructure, creates a state of 'strategic scarcity'. This grants the technology owner significant bargaining power. For instance, a company such as Huawei controls 5G standards that run in parallel to Western standards, leaving states with two strategic options: to align with China or the West[3].

2. the implicit diplomatic objective

Techno-diplomacy is not only aimed at acquiring technological gains; it also seeks to achieve diplomatic outcomes. This is reflected in the success of Chinese mediation in reconciling Saudi Arabia and Iran in March 2023, which can be attributed to Saudi Arabia's growing dependence on Chinese critical technologies and investments. These factors contributed to a re-evaluation of Saudi Arabia's relationships within the Chinese sphere of influence, most notably its relationship with Iran.

Furthermore, the UAE's decision to use Huawei for its 5G infrastructure is not merely a technical choice. It is also a strategic choice intended to open channels of

influence with China, as well as to rebalance Gulf alliance alignments and reduce the UAE's dependence on U.S.–Israeli technologies[4].

Similarly, the UAE's technological partnerships with Israel (in areas such as technology-intensive agriculture and space) are not only driven by technological necessity. They also reflect a redefinition of security and diplomatic relations with a state that had previously been 'regionally isolated', due to the UAE's vulnerability resulting from its dependence on US critical technologies.

3. non-reversible dependencies: This is evident in:

3.1. Technological lock-in costs: The costs associated with switching technologies make it almost impossible to separate from a critical technology supplier in practice.

3.2. Ecosystem integration: Ecosystem integration means that recipient states become linked to specific standards and systems. For Example if a state chooses Huawei for its 5G network, it will find it difficult to switch to American or European standards without incurring significant costs, creating a non-reversible dependency[5].

2. Techno-diplomacy methods

Modern technology has become a central pillar of both soft and hard power. It functions as a symbol of progress and control for those who master it and as a sign of vulnerability for those who fall behind. Its importance has intensified as it has become embedded in the fabric of international relations, turning it into a decisive tool for managing conflicts and shaping their outcomes. There areThree approaches reflect today's international practice:

2.1. Coercive techno-diplomacy: This involves controlling critical technologies in order to impose export bans or exclude competitors from technological value chains. Examples include U.S. restrictions on exporting advanced semiconductors to China and excluding Huawei from Western 5G networks. In the Arab region, Gulf states could face U.S. pressure if they move closer to China technologically, such as reduced security cooperation or limits on intelligence sharing, making technological choices a tool of geopolitical coercion[6].

2.2. Attractive techno-diplomacy

This involves offering preferential access to advanced technologies and enabling integration into dominant ecosystems. For instance, China is attracting Gulf countries by promising large investments in smart cities and artificial intelligence, while the United States is offering technology-based security partnerships[7].

2.3.Structural techno-diplomacy (Structural)

Structural techno-diplomacy is one of the most prominent forms of digitally supported dependency backed by structures. It involves imposing proprietary standards that force states to connect to closed technical systems controlled by large companies or major states. These standards, such as proprietary encryption protocols or non-adaptable software interfaces, create structural constraints that tie countries to a single supplier.

This creates long-term dependencies through digital infrastructures, such as cloud servers and 5G networks, and systems that cannot easily be updated or replaced without incurring significant costs or causing operational disruption. For instance, when a country selects a particular cloud infrastructure, such as AWS or Azure, for its critical infrastructure, it enters into a long-term contract with the provider. Consequently, moving data or adapting to alternatives becomes costly and complex, thereby strengthening the economic and political dominance of the originating state (e.g. the United States) and limiting the recipient state's digital sovereignty in the long term[8].

3. Redefining Complex Interdependence in the Digital Age

In the complex interdependence model, states prioritise their own interests without necessarily feeling compelled to prevent the strengthening of others' power. Cohen and Keohane argue that states are not obliged to remain hegemonic forever, even if they have the capacity to do so, since they do not seek to expand their power unless real security threats are on the horizon, contrary to what realism suggests. When security anxiety subsides, states tend to strengthen cooperation, creating opportunities for mutual economic and political gain.

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye contend that, through complex interdependence theory, economic interdependence creates mutual costs. However, strategic critical technologies have noticeably altered this concept. Today, interdependence is decisively shaped by critical technological capabilities such as advanced semiconductors, 5G standards, cloud infrastructure and advanced AI. This is because technological asymmetry produces unequal costs: states that own critical technologies can withdraw at a lower cost than states that depend on them[9].

Consequently, complex interdependence evolves into 'hierarchical interdependence', where clear technological hierarchies emerge.

Secondly: A Comparative Analysis of UAE and Saudi Techno-Diplomacy

Here, the concept of 'alliance' is not confined to formal, traditional alliances. Instead, it encompasses a range of strategic partnerships that extend beyond direct diplomatic arrangements to include technological cooperation with major companies and leading countries in artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure. In this analysis, an alliance is understood not in the narrow sense of declared military or political agreements, but as an extended techno-diplomatic network linking political influence, digital power and various technical partnerships. This network is used to integrate the UAE and Saudi Arabia into dominant technology ecosystems, thereby strengthening their influence in the regional and international landscape, and reshaping the geopolitical map by employing technology as an attractive tool and a form of advanced soft power.

1. UAE Techno-Diplomacy: The 'Balancing While Retreating' Model

The UAE's techno-diplomatic approach involves a pattern of 'balancing while retreating' in its relationship with the West, maintaining cooperation with Western

partners while deepening technical and economic reliance on China, despite attempts to reduce direct dependence on Western tools. This can be clarified through:

1.1. With the Chinese axis: Structural dependence from the outset of a controlled separation.

In the context of reshaping economic and technical dependencies, the UAE's relationship with China appears to be a complex model, combining deep structural reliance with the early stages of carefully managed, deliberate divergence. This is reflected in:

- Deep economic partnership: China–UAE trade, excluding oil, is estimated at $82 billion in 2023, representing a 34% increase compared with 2021. This indicates that the UAE is reconfiguring its underlying economic dependence around the Chinese market (trade, technology, logistics services and finance)[10].

- Partnership in fifth-generation (5G) technology: Salim Al Balooshi, CEO of Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company's technology arm ("du"), stated that Huawei is their partner in deploying the 5G network and that, from a security perspective, they have their own laboratories in the UAE and visit Huawei's labs. They have not seen evidence of security vulnerabilities in the technology. This suggests that the UAE is choosing to rely on Huawei's technology to accelerate the development of digital infrastructure while attempting to reduce political dependence through:

- Strict security vetting;

- Building local technical capabilities (cyber laboratories and local data centres)[11].

Launching the first 'Future Home' project with Huawei in Dubai, in cooperation with 'du' (described in reports and by an Emirati agency as 'the smart future home'), reflects the intensive use of Chinese technology within the UAE's urban space. The project supports connections reaching up to 10 gigabits per second and uses integrated smart applications for lighting, power, security and home services through 5G networks[12].

1.2.Reducing Partnerships in Critical Infrastructure from the UAE

Against the backdrop of intensifying geopolitical tensions between the United States and China over advanced technology, particularly in the domains of artificial intelligence and critical infrastructure, the United Arab Emirates has taken strategic steps to redirect its technological partnerships. A 2025 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) highlights these developments as examples of how Gulf states are adapting to American pressure without severing all ties with Beijing. Specifically, the CSIS report states that the UAE 'voluntarily' disengaged in November 2023: G42 reportedly removed Huawei equipment worth approximately $1.7–$2 billion from its 13 data centres, including the removal of Emirati investments considered 'negative' in relation to Chinese companies such as ByteDance, iXFusion, and Honor[13].

2) With the Israeli Axis: Full Regional Re-Authorisation

Following the Abraham Accords (2020), a deep strategic partnership emerged between the UAE and Israel, oriented towards full regional re-authorisation, especially in the cyber, defence, and investment sectors. This partnership demonstrates how the UAE has sought to strengthen its security and economic alliances with Tel Aviv in order to address shared threats, such as Hezbollah and Iran, while leveraging advanced technologies. The details of this partnership can be seen through the following elements:

- Cyber cooperation: In April 2021, Mohammad Al Kuwaiti revealed that the UAE and Israel had shared intelligence on Hezbollah's cyber activities.

Large Emirati investments: the UAE announced the establishment of a $10 billion investment fund in Israel, focused on strategic industries.

- Defence alignment: the UAE's EDGE and Israel Aerospace Industries have agreed to independently develop a drone countermeasure system[14].

3) With the American Axis: Leadership in Artificial Intelligence

Following the re-election of President Donald Trump in 2024, the United States and the UAE established a growing strategic partnership, and the UAE has since emerged as a global hub for artificial intelligence (AI). This position is supported by significant investment and technological alliances. The 'American Axis' reflects Abu Dhabi's efforts to strengthen its role as a key partner to Washington in the competition with China, through joint projects centred on digital infrastructure and innovation. Key developments include:

- May 2024: The Trump–Bin Zayed announcement of the largest AI campus outside the United States. This includes large-scale data centres and partnerships with companies such as Microsoft and Amazon. This initiative aims to attract US investment and train thousands of engineers, establishing Abu Dhabi as a global AI hub independent of Beijing[15].

- Participation in the U.S.–Israeli Scientific Center initiative with an estimated funding envelope of $200 million, focusing on military and civilian applications such as cyber defence. This initiative strengthens the US–UAE–Israel alliance by facilitating the transfer of advanced technology and is seen as an extension of previous agreements, including those involving G42[16].

Overall, these steps indicate a strategic shift towards 'shared leadership': the UAE gains global technological influence while maintaining geopolitical balance.

2. Saudi Arabia: The "Dual Balancing" Model

Under the "dual balancing" model, Saudi Arabia's strategic partnership with China is notable for its increasing economic and technological integration. This approach reflects an intelligent balance between relying on emerging Eastern powers and preserving traditional alliances. This model is based on strengthening strategic independence through significant investment in advanced technology.

1. Partnership with China: Increasing Strategic Integration

This partnership represents a clear model of growing strategic integration between Riyadh and Beijing, particularly with regard to technological and digital

infrastructure. Reports suggest that Huawei is establishing a regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia, strengthening its position across the Middle East and positioning the Kingdom as a hub for next-generation communications and technologies. During the 2023 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Huawei and the Saudi telecom operator Zain signed a Memorandum of Understanding to build a 5.5G network serving individual customers, businesses, and government entities, thereby aligning with the goals of digital transformation and Saudi Vision 2030[17].

The partnership also has a significant geopolitical dimension, as evidenced by the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by President Xi Jinping and Saudi King Salman, which includes support for 'the core interests of each side with strong determination', and the development of an aligned plan between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Vision 2030. Huawei has also announced plans to invest $400 million in the Saudi cloud sector by 2028 and launched a new cloud data centre in Riyadh, enhancing the country's digital infrastructure and reducing reliance on foreign data centres. Furthermore, on 26 October, Saudi Arabia's National Center for Artificial Intelligence announced a strategic partnership with Huawei to develop national AI capabilities. This reflects a shift from a basic alliance to a comprehensive partnership spanning innovation, digitisation, and artificial intelligence[18].

2. Partnership with the United States: Strengthening the traditional alliance through Vision 2030 and digital transformation

This partnership demonstrates how Saudi Arabia is seeking to reinforce its traditional alliance with Washington while simultaneously reshaping it to focus more on technology and the digital economy, in line with Vision 2030. On 13 May 2025, President Donald Trump received a major investment commitment of $600 billion in Saudi projects — an amount that reflects substantial US confidence in the Kingdom's digital and economic transformation. During an investment forum in Riyadh, Riyadh signed six agreements with major US technology companies, with the aim of building a stronger digital infrastructure in the areas of data and artificial intelligence[19].

One of the most notable partnerships is the agreement announced in January 2024 by Aramco Digital with Intel to establish the first Open RAN development centre in Saudi Arabia. The project is designed to enhance innovation in telecommunications infrastructure and build reliable, locally developed open networks that can support telecoms services and broader digital infrastructure across the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia is also witnessing strong partnerships in cloud computing and artificial intelligence. In October 2024, the Public Investment Fund (PIF) revealed a partnership with Google Cloud to create an advanced AI centre near Dammam, as part of a broader effort to transform Saudi Arabia into a regional AI hub. In May 2024, SDAIA and IBM launched ALLaM, a large Arabic language model that facilitates the development of national linguistic and technical resources for education, public services, and financial technology[20].

According to estimates, artificial intelligence is expected to contribute around $135.2 billion to the Saudi economy each year by 2030, representing approximately 12.4% of GDP. This highlights the importance of the sector in achieving Vision 2030 and establishing the Kingdom as a regional centre for advanced technologies. However, despite the strength of this partnership, the model faces pressure and constraints from the US, particularly with regard to semiconductors. Saudi Arabia reportedly purchased at least 3,000 Nvidia H100 graphics processing units, priced at around $40,000 each[21]. Following the company's disclosure of financial information, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security imposed restrictions on the export of H100 and A100 chips to China in October 2023, with Gulf countries also being included in these restrictions. This weakens the Kingdom's ability to expand freely in the development of future digital infrastructure and illustrates that, even with a strong partnership with Washington, the process remains subject to US geopolitical and technological considerations[22].

Thirdly: Implications for the Arab Regional System

Cooperation between states is no longer limited to written agreements. It is increasingly based on communication networks, artificial intelligence programmes and cyber-security infrastructure. This shift towards what can be termed 'techno-diplomacy' alters the internal nature of the Arab regional system itself. Arab techno-diplomacy produces a set of changes in the regional system through the studied cases, most notably:

1. The decline of traditional ideological reference points.

This refers to the move away from the conventional framing of alliances (e.g. Arab nationalism, the Palestinian cause and Arab solidarity) towards a logic of shared digital interests.

2. Fragmentation of Arab geopolitical identity:

This is the shift from a unified ideological identity to a capability-based identity, which is grounded in technological competence. For instance, the UAE is more closely aligned with Israel technologically than with Egypt, while Saudi Arabia is more closely linked with China (5G) and the United States (AI) than with other Arab countries[23].

3. Formation of asymmetrical digital blocs (centre and periphery):

The concentration of technological power in the Gulf states has created clear digital hierarchies within the Arab world, i.e. fragmentation of the Arab regional system along technological lines.

4. Redfinition of the tools of regional power and domination:

This involves shifting focus away from traditional sources of power (oil and the economy) towards digital value chains.

5. Emergence of different techno-diplomacy models

The Emirati model illustrates the integration of Israel into Gulf security structures through cybersecurity. The Saudi model, by contrast, reflects the pursuit of 'digital sovereignty' through diversification of sources (i.e. avoiding dependence on a

single pole). Nevertheless, in both cases, the management of dependencies remains, rather than their complete elimination[24].

Conclusion:

In an era of accelerating competition for digital control among major powers, critical technologies such as advanced semiconductors, 5G networks and artificial intelligence have become the new currency of power. In this context, alliance dynamics are shifting from ideological alignments to technology-based dependency networks. The experiences of the UAE and Saudi Arabia — both regional mid-range powers with different levels of capability, but adept at balancing them — reveal the emergence of techno-diplomacy, which is reshaping the map of Arab regional influence. This analysis yields several strategic outcomes and recommendations to address these transformations:

1. Techno-diplomacy is not merely a technical phenomenon; it fundamentally redefines power and alliances within the Arab regional system.

Control over digital infrastructure and critical technological capabilities is a strategic tool that can outweigh natural resources and military power in shaping political and diplomatic outcomes.

2. Techno-diplomacy is a key instrument for reshaping Arab alliance maps, because Gulf states such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia can convert their technological dependencies into regional influence, even if they do not possess the same critical capabilities themselves.

3. In the case of the UAE, Israel and Saudi Arabia, the common feature is managing limited choices within a landscape of dependencies. The UAE and Israel have redefined regional relationships through what can be described as ‘technological necessity’, while Saudi Arabia is attempting to strike a balance between two technological giants in order to avoid becoming completely dependent on either of them. In both cases, however, the options remain limited; the focus is essentially on managing multiple dependencies in the absence of critical technological capabilities developed in-house.

4. The Arab world is at a crossroads: it must either invest in local innovation to transform dependency into an equal partnership or continue to manage fragile balances. Ultimately, digital leadership is not a luxury — it is a necessity for survival in an era where geopolitics is decided by ‘algorithms, not oil’.

5. Irreversible dependencies (technological lock-in) remain a major risk for Arab nation-states because they could reduce Arab countries to mere links within foreign ecosystems. This creates the threat of coercive pressure from either the United States or China. In the future, this dynamic could produce a new regional system based on capability rather than ideology, but building real digital sovereignty is required to avoid external domination.

6. Digital partnerships have become substitutes for old ideological reference points, contributing to the fragmentation of a shared Arab identity and the emergence

of unequal ‘digital blocs’. On the one hand, there is a Gulf centre controlling digital value chains, and on the other, there is a periphery suffering from marginalisation.

7. Techno-diplomacy demonstrates that critical digital capabilities have become the new currency of regional influence, with countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia transforming their technological dependency into a tool for forging alliances that transcend the boundaries of traditional Arab nationalist ideology.

In conclusion, the rise of techno-diplomacy is radically reshaping the Arab regional system, transforming it from a unified ideological entity into a differentiated, hierarchical network of digital capabilities. While this transformation has the potential to strengthen digital sovereignty, it also signals deeper fragmentation if mechanisms of cooperation across technological divides are not established. It is therefore essential to rethink and reform Arab solidarity in the age of artificial intelligence.

Margins:

[1]- Abdel Fattah, Mohamed. “The Concept of Cyber Diplomacy.” Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies and Thought. (May 11, 2025). Link: https://ecss.com.eg/53837, accessed April 6, 2026.

[2]- Al-Ghamdi, Ali bin Muhammad. “Digital Marketing and Digital Sovereignty.” Al-Riyadh Newspaper, (October 9, 2025). Link: https://www.alriyadh.com/2154941, accessed April 5, 2026

[3]- Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, The American Reading of Chinese Mediation in the Saudi-Iranian Agreement, (March 23, 2023), Link: https://sl1nk.com/z5xbuee, accessed March 25, 2026.

Friis, K., & Lysne, O. (2021). Huawei, 5G and security: Technological limitations and political responses. Development and Change, 52(5), 1174–1195. https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12680

[4]- Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, “The U.S. Perspective on Chinese Mediation in the Saudi-Iranian Agreement,” (March 23, 2023), Link: https://sl1nk.com/z5xbuee, accessed March 25, 2026.

[5]- Kadri Kaska, NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, Huawei, 5G and China as a Security Threat, 28 March 2019, https://ccdcoe.org/uploads/2019/03/CCDCOE-Huawei-2019-03-28-FINAL.pdf , visited on March, 25 2026.

[6]- Global Diplomatic Forum. “The Coming Decade: Ten Forces That Will Reshape Diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa.” New Horizons in Diplomacy, December 10, 2025. Global Diplomatic Forum.

[7]-ItzhakMashiah,“Tech-Diplomacy:High-TechDrivenRhetorictoShapeNationalReputation,”E-InternationalRelations,December16,2023, https://www.e-ir.info/2023/12/16/tech-diplomacy-high-tech-driven-rhetoric-to-shape-national-reputation. pp2-9

[8]- Corneliu Bjola & Ilan Manor (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Digital Diplomacy, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024.

[9]- Thomas C. Walker, “A Circumspect Revival of Liberalism: Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye’s Power and Interdependence,” in Henrik Bliddal, Casper Sylvest, and Peter Wilson (eds.), Classics of International Relations: Essays in Criticism and Appreciation, Taylor and Francis, Hoboken, 2013.p 151-155.

[10]- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). (2025). The United Arab Emirates’ AI Ambitions: Placing Enormous Bets on Artificial Intelligence to Diversify the Economy and Become the Next Technological Hub. Washington,

[11]- Albalooshi, Saleem. (2019). "Huawei is our partner in rolling out 5G network". Arab News, 5 October 2019, Business & Economy section. https://www.arabnews.com/node/1565031/business-econom , visited April 5, 2026.
[12]- Allen, Gregory C.; Adamson, Georgia; Heim, Lennart; Winter-Levy, Sam. (2025). The United Arab Emirates' AI Ambitions: Placing Enormous Bets on Artificial Intelligence to Diversify the Economy and Become the Next Technological Hub. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). https://www.csis.org/analysis/united-arab-emirates-ai-ambitions. Access, March 25, 2026.
[13]-. Op.cit.
[14]- Atlantic Council: "Israel is becoming a cybersecurity guarantor in the Middle East", (17/11/2019), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/israel-is-becoming-a-cybersecurity-guarantor-in-the-middle-east-heres-how. Accessed, 12/10/2025.
[15]- UAE-US: A Strategic Partnership Built on Five Decades (mofa.gov.ae, 17 2025 مايو): إعلان رسمي عن إطار "US-UAE AI Acceleration Partnership".
[16]- U.S., Israel Plan $200 Million Quantum Fund -- With Potential Gulf States Backing (thequantuminsider.com, 13 2025 يوليو).https://thequantuminsider.com/2025/07/14/u-s-israel-plan-200-million-quantum-fund-with-potential-gulf-states-backing/?2025/11/12
[17]- Allen, G. C. (2020). China's Silicon Dreams: Beijing's Quest for Innovation and Technology Leadership. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).p52 -57.
[18]- Chen, Juan, Meng Shu, and Shaobiao Wen. "Aligning China's Belt and Road Initiative with Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision: Opportunities and Challenges." China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies 4, no. 3 (2018): 363–379.
[19]- U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia, "The United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Eight Decades of Shared History, Strong Partnership and a Vision for the Future," U.S. Mission Saudi Arabia, 2023, https://sa.usembassy.gov/the-united-states-and-the-kingdom-of-saudi-arabia-eight-decades-of-shared-history-strong-partnership-and-united-vision/?2025/03/11 التصفح .
[20]- Aramco Digital, "Aramco Digital and Intel Aim to Forge Collaboration to Establish Saudi Arabia's First Open RAN Development Center," January 17, 2024.
[21]- ibid.
[22]- Middle East Council on Global Affairs. (2024, August 4). The paradox of trust in the military in the Middle East and North Africa. Middle East Council on Global Affairs. https://mecouncil.org.
[23]- Alessandri, Emiliano. Wired for Power: Digital Technology as the MENA's New Geopolitical Axis. Trend Report 4. Vienna: Österreichisches Institut für Internationale Politik, January 2026. https://www.oiip.ac.at/publikation/wired-for-power-digital-technology-as-the-menas-new-geopolitical-axis/?2026/02/12 .
[24]- Nima Khorrami, "Insight 266: One Year On – Israel's Cybersecurity Cooperation with the GCC States," Insights, no. 266 (Singapore: Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, September 14, 2021), https://mei.nus.edu.sg/publication/insight-266-one-year-on-israels-cybersecurity-cooperation-with-the-gcc-states/.