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From Multiplex to Multiverse: Why an Open World Calls for a Stronger Greece–Israel Partnership

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The emerging international environment cannot be adequately understood as a straightforward transition from one coherent geopolitical order to another. Different configurations of rivalry, cooperation, hierarchy, and interdependence operate simultaneously. This paper proposes a "multiverse" perspective in which international arrangements overlap and penetrate one another and states act according to different, sometimes incompatible, expectations about history's direction. An interconnected but uneven international space creates opportunities for smaller and middle powers to form partnerships. A stronger Greece–Israel relationship, for example, can increase both countries' capabilities and options without requiring exclusive dependence or complete agreement.

From multiplex to multiverse

What kind of international system is emerging? The conventional answer is either unipolarity, bipolarity, or multipolarity. While these categories are useful for particular questions about the distribution of power, they are less reliable when treated as exhaustive descriptions of international reality.

Amitav Acharya's concept of a "multiplex world" offers a more productive starting point. His argument concerns a politically and culturally diverse

international environment connected through economic interdependence and overlapping institutions. Different international orders coexist and intersect. His multiplex cinema metaphor captures the presence of multiple actors and narratives under a common roof. (A complementary image comes from Murray Leinster's story *Sidewise in Time*, published in 1934. In the story, fragments of alternative historical worlds intrude into one another. Different historical trajectories suddenly occupy the same geographical space.)

The metaphor suggests that international politics is a "multiverse" in which states inhabit several configurations of relations simultaneously while interpreting their decisions through different historical expectations. However, Acharya's multiplex does not preclude interaction. Overlapping orders belong to his analysis. The proposed multiverse perspective places particular emphasis on their mutual transformation and on the different historical horizons through which states understand them.

One government may expect a renewed great-power settlement. Another may anticipate the eventual triumph of its political model. A third may pursue an indefinite sequence of selective partnerships. Their policies meet in the same international environment, but their understandings of what that environment is becoming can differ substantially.

Several strategic realities at once

A multiverse international system can contain several kinds of logic.

A classical multipolar logic operates wherever states seek shifting balances and combinations. A bipolar logic might organize competition between the United States and China in particular fields. An oligarchic logic appears when major powers attempt to negotiate arrangements affecting smaller countries. Meanwhile, commercial networks, regional institutions, and partnerships among middle powers generate configurations that cross these divisions.

These arrangements need not develop into comprehensive, mutually exclusive camps. A state can cooperate economically with a country it regards as a security competitor. It can share one partner's concern about a third country while rejecting other elements of that partner's policy.

The important question is how these relationships interact. Sometimes governments contain disagreements within particular fields. Sometimes conflict spreads across economic, technological, and diplomatic relations. Sometimes one overriding confrontation subordinates most other relationships.

The multiverse perspective must accommodate all three possibilities. Its value lies in examining when pluralism persists, when it contracts, and how decisions influence that movement.

Nor should "chaotic" mean causeless or wholly unpredictable. International politics contain structures, recurring incentives, and material constraints. Yet interactions can generate consequences that are disproportionate, unintended, and difficult to forecast. Recognizing these limits should encourage more rigorous judgment.

Menon and the limits of a single historical map

Shivshankar Menon's reflections offer a valuable corrective to uniform accounts of international order. Discussing Asia's historical experience, he has described different political and security "universes" within the continent. His account directs attention to regional worlds whose dynamics cannot be read off a single global map.

His discussion of India's conduct during the 1971 Bangladesh crisis provides a concrete illustration. India used Soviet support to secure room for action within the wider Cold War environment. The regional actor pursued objectives of its own while working through a global configuration.

This does not establish that bipolarity was imaginary. It demonstrates why bipolarity alone cannot exhaust the explanation of every regional decision.

This distinction matters today. A global rivalry may shape a country's choices without determining them completely. Regional priorities can modify, complicate, or sometimes resist the expectations associated with broader alignments.

Historical categories should therefore remain instruments of inquiry. When they become comprehensive scripts, they obscure the very agency that strategy seeks to exercise.

The danger of "railway history"

A particularly hazardous assumption is that international history follows a narrow railway. Namely, one established order disappears, a transitional interval follows, and a recognizable successor necessarily arrives.

This image combines several propositions that should be examined separately. Chronological succession does not establish inevitability. Identifying causes does not prove that only one outcome was possible. Describing a dominant structure does not demonstrate that it governs every significant relationship.

The phrase "closed history," developed in a broader philosophical context by Nikolaos Loudovikos, offers a useful point of departure. He criticizes an understanding of history as self-explanatory and self-justifying. Applied here through an explicit analytical extension, the question becomes whether a preferred political outcome is treated as history's necessary destination and used to justify the path toward it.

Such closure can produce strategic narrowness. Compromise becomes a deviation from historical necessity. Contrary evidence becomes a temporary obstacle. Costs become acceptable because eventual vindication is presumed.

A government anticipating another Cold War with a familiar ending may underestimate developments that do not fit that expectation. Another convinced that great powers must inevitably divide the world into exclusive spheres may surrender opportunities for initiative before testing them.

The familiar language of an "interregnum" can encourage a similar mistake when used mechanically. It may lead one to assume that current instability is necessarily a temporary gap between two coherent orders.

But overlapping arrangements may endure. They may consolidate, fragment, or generate configurations we have not anticipated. An open interpretation of history leaves these possibilities available for examination.

The trap of unequal adaptability

Closed interpretations are especially dangerous for smaller states when they support exclusive dependence on a great-power protector.

The stronger country typically manages a wider portfolio of relationships. It can negotiate with a smaller partner's adversary while maintaining other elements of the partnership. The smaller country may have organized its entire strategy around an expectation of continuous protection.

This creates an asymmetry of adaptability.

If circumstances change, the great power may revise its priorities while the dependent state lacks alternatives. The consequences can include reduced support, pressure to accept an unfavorable accommodation, or exposure to risks generated by decisions taken elsewhere.

None of this proves that great powers inevitably abandon their partners. Alliances can be durable and indispensable. The vulnerability arises when a smaller country assumes that alignment guarantees an unchanging identity of interests.

Such a country risks making two errors simultaneously: imagining a world divided into sealed camps and imagining unconditional protection within its chosen camp.

Its policy then rests on a misleading map of both the international system and its own relationship with the stronger power.

Niblett, Markesinis, and the advent of a middle power-centric global system

Robin Niblett's *After America: The End of the Old Order and the Rise of the Middle Powers* provides a relevant policy framework. He emphasizes how middle powers can invest in their security, strengthen regional cooperation, and organize partnerships with one another and with smaller states.

The important implication is that countries with consequential capabilities can help shape their environment. Their influence need not be confined to bargaining individually for favorable treatment from larger powers.

Sir Basil Markesinis's advocacy of a "polygamous" foreign policy points toward a related principle: maintaining several meaningful relationships rather than assigning every national interest to one exclusive external connection. His

terminology may be somewhat provocative, but the underlying question is worth considering—how can a country retain alternatives?

Diversification requires discipline. Multiple relationships can produce conflicting obligations, and diplomatic flexibility without dependable commitments can undermine trust. The objective should be reliable cooperation within defined fields combined with independent decisions elsewhere. A country becomes more autonomous when its partnerships strengthen its capabilities and expand its credible options.

An open, integrated, and nodal international space

The multiverse perspective also requires reconsidering space.

An integrated international environment does not abolish distance, borders, or regional subsystems. It allows geographically separated actors to become functionally close through technology, infrastructure, institutions, and specialized capabilities. In this sense, international space becomes increasingly nodal: influence can derive from a country's position within particular networks.

A state may be comparatively limited in aggregate power yet significant as a logistics connection, technological partner, infrastructure node, or organizer of cooperation. Its importance can vary across fields. This creates possibilities for small and middle powers to construct functional partnerships across conventional regional boundaries. The relevant strategic question becomes which connections produce capabilities, resilience, and bargaining influence.

Loose arrangements can be useful, provided they contain dependable commitments. Openness concerns the possibility of adding partners and accommodating differences; it should not mean uncertainty about whether agreed responsibilities will be fulfilled.

Greece and Israel as a practical application

Within this framework, a stronger Greece–Israel relationship becomes a realistic and increasingly necessary response to shared vulnerabilities.

Both countries need dependable partnerships while retaining the capacity to respond to changes in the priorities of larger powers. Neither can assume the international environment will settle into a permanent arrangement that automatically protects its interests.

Their different capabilities offer a basis for reciprocity. Greece brings a maritime dimension, European institutional connections, geographical opportunities, and domestic expertise that can support wider cooperation. Israel brings technological and industrial capabilities and experience that Greece can evaluate and adapt to its requirements.

The relationship already has an institutional foundation. The December 2025 Greece–Cyprus–Israel summit reaffirmed cooperation in security, maritime affairs, and critical infrastructure while supporting the importance of the 3+1 format with the United States.

The next step should connect existing activities with a broader purpose: increasing the capacity of the partners to withstand disruption and preserve choices.

Critical infrastructure protection, joint research, defense innovation, industrial participation, and regular strategic consultation offer practical priorities. Cyprus should remain central, and additional partners should be able to participate in clearly defined projects.

For Greece, the relationship should help build domestic competence rather than deepen reliance on imported solutions. For Israel, a more capable Greek partner would strengthen the relationship's long-term value.

Partnership without strategic confinement

The partnership should also survive changes in relations with third countries.

Turkey is relevant to both countries' calculations, but opposition to Ankara cannot provide its entire foundation. Otherwise, a shift in either partner's relationship with Turkey could destabilize the whole structure.

Greece and Israel should identify positive purposes that remain useful across different regional scenarios. They must also recognize that cooperation does not require identical positions on every dispute.

Respect for international law, civilian protection, sovereignty, and agreed commitments is essential to the relationship's credibility. Independent judgment should be compatible with dependable cooperation.

The same principle applies to their wider alignments. A stronger partnership can reinforce constructive engagement with the United States and European countries while increasing the partners' capacity to contribute initiatives of their own.

In a multiverse world, realism requires attention to several relationships, possibilities, and historical horizons at once. A stronger Greece–Israel partnership follows from this understanding when it creates reciprocal capabilities and preserves freedom of decision.

Its purpose should be to help both countries navigate an open international environment with greater resilience, influence, and confidence. That is the strategic opportunity offered by a world whose future has not already been decided.

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