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## Coercive Diplomacy Via Economic Sanctions: Israeli Withholding of Palestinian Clearance Revenues

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### *Abstract*

*Coercive diplomacy has increasingly emerged as a prominent instrument within contemporary international relations, encompassing a diverse set of mechanisms designed to influence the behavior of targeted actors. This study explores the application of coercive diplomacy through economic tools, focusing specifically on Israel's recurrent withholding of Palestinian clearance revenues as a strategic means of exerting pressure on the Palestinian Authority and deterring particular political decisions. The paper systematically analyzes patterns of suspension and withholding since 2011, with the aim of identifying both the frequency of these measures and the underlying political conditions that prompt their implementation.*

**Keywords:** *Coercive Diplomacy, Economic Sanctions, Clearance, Palestine, Israel*

### **Introduction**

In contemporary international relations, the capacity of states to advance their interests without resorting to direct military force has become a strategic imperative. Diplomacy, broadly understood as the management of international relations through negotiation, dialogue, and other non-violent means, serves as a central instrument for sustaining and regulating interactions among states (Cornago, 2022). While diplomacy has long functioned as a cornerstone of interstate engagement, its role has evolved significantly in recent decades. Increasingly, states have come to prioritize diplomatic mechanisms over overt military confrontation as the primary means of addressing disputes, managing crises, and pursuing national objectives.

Within this evolving landscape, coercive diplomacy has emerged as a particularly salient policy tool. It occupies an intermediate position between traditional diplomacy and the use of force, offering states a means to compel behavioral change without engaging in full-scale military action. Often characterized as “forceful persuasion,” coercive diplomacy entails the strategic use of threats, pressure, or limited measures of force to influence an adversary’s conduct (Art & Cronin, 2003). Its appeal lies in its ability to achieve political objectives while mitigating the costs and risks associated with open conflict.

Coercive diplomacy operates through a range of instruments, including economic, diplomatic, legal, and institutional mechanisms. Among these, economic measures—such as sanctions, restrictions, or financial controls—have become a particularly prominent and widely utilized form of coercion. Positioned between diplomacy and war, economic coercion is often perceived

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as a lower-cost and lower-risk alternative, especially when employed asymmetrically by a stronger actor against a weaker counterpart.

The Palestinian–Israeli context provides a salient illustration of this dynamic. A key mechanism of economic coercion is Israel’s recurrent withholding of Palestinian clearance revenues—funds collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority under the framework of the 1994 Paris Protocol. These revenues, which consist primarily of customs duties and value-added tax, constitute a substantial portion of the Palestinian Authority’s fiscal resources, particularly since 2011. Their periodic suspension has therefore functioned as a powerful lever of influence, enabling Israel to exert pressure on Palestinian political decision-making and deter specific policy actions.

This study seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of coercive diplomacy by integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical analysis. It examines the strategic logic underpinning the use of economic measures as instruments of coercion and evaluates their political and economic implications within the Palestinian–Israeli context. Through this lens, the paper contributes to broader debates on the evolving nature of power, coercion, and statecraft in contemporary international relations.

### **Historical Context**

“The use of military threats and/or limited force in support of diplomatic negotiations is as old as the institution of diplomacy” (Jakobsen, 2016). While coercive diplomacy is often discussed as a modern strategic tool, its conceptual foundations are deeply rooted in earlier traditions of statecraft. Historical notions of power and persuasion—evident in the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli—reflect an enduring logic of influencing adversaries through credible threats without necessarily resorting to their execution (Brunello, 2023). However, it was Alexander George who formally conceptualized and popularized the term during the Cold War, defining coercive diplomacy as the deliberate use of threats or limited force to shape an adversary’s behavior and compel compliance (George, 1991).

A paradigmatic illustration of coercive diplomacy is the Cuban Missile Crisis. During this episode, the United States, under President John F. Kennedy, employed a naval blockade alongside calibrated threats of escalation to pressure the Soviet Union into withdrawing its missiles from Cuba, while simultaneously engaging in backchannel negotiations (George & Smoke, 1974). The outcome is widely regarded as a successful instance of coercive diplomacy, insofar as it achieved strategic objectives without escalating into full-scale war. Nevertheless, this success was contingent upon a broader constellation of factors, including mutual deterrence, communication channels, and political calculations on both sides.

Beyond military posturing, coercion has long been exercised through economic means, constituting a central component of states’ foreign policy repertoires. Economic sanctions have historically been employed not only to influence external behavior and advance national security objectives, but also to respond to domestic political imperatives and economic pressures. One of the earliest recorded examples is the Megarian Decree of 432 BCE, when Athens imposed trade restrictions on Megara by excluding its merchants from Athenian markets. This unilateral economic measure contributed to escalating tensions that culminated in the Peloponnesian War (Alexander, 2009).

Over time, economic sanctions have evolved in both scope and sophistication. They may take comprehensive forms—targeting entire national economies—or be more selective, focusing on specific individuals, entities, or sectors. Instruments of economic coercion include, but are not

limited to, travel bans, asset freezes, reductions in foreign assistance, and trade restrictions. Particularly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the use of sanctions has expanded significantly, serving multiple strategic purposes: coercion, deterrence, punishment, and stigmatization of political regimes. They are now widely deployed to advance a range of foreign policy objectives, including the promotion of democracy and human rights, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, counterterrorism efforts, and conflict management (Yakoviyk & Novikov, 2024).

Within the Palestinian–Israeli context, the economic dimension of coercive diplomacy is institutionalized through the Paris Protocol, signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization as part of the broader Oslo Accords framework. The Protocol was intended to serve dual purposes: fostering mutual economic interests conducive to peace and strengthening the Palestinian economy. Under its provisions, Israel collects customs duties, value-added tax, and other import-related revenues on behalf of the Palestinian territories and transfers them monthly to the Palestinian Authority, retaining a 3 percent administrative fee. These clearance revenues constitute a critical pillar of the Palestinian Authority’s fiscal structure, accounting for approximately 60–70 percent of its total income.

However, despite its formal objectives, the Paris Protocol entrenched a structural asymmetry within the economic relationship. Israel’s continued control over key aspects of the Palestinian economy, combined with the Palestinian Authority’s fiscal dependence on externally collected revenues, has effectively institutionalized a mechanism of leverage and constraint. As such, what was initially framed as an instrument for economic cooperation and state-building has, in practice, evolved into a tool that can be mobilized within a broader framework of coercive diplomacy (Samhuri, 2016).

## **Literature Review**

The conceptualization of coercive diplomacy within international relations is most prominently associated with the work of Alexander George, who situated it within the broader framework of the “carrot-and-stick” approach. George argued that coercive diplomacy is most likely to succeed when it is calibrated, credible, and complemented by inducements alongside threats (George, 1991). Building on this foundation, Thomas Schelling emphasized the strategic role of coercion in negotiation, underscoring the importance of a state’s “power to hurt” as a means of shaping adversarial behavior (Schelling, 2008).

Subsequent scholarship has both refined and contested these assumptions. Robert Pape, for instance, argues that coercive strategies may prove ineffective when directed against ideologically committed regimes, which are often less susceptible to external pressure (Pape, 1996). In contrast, Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock advance a more conditional framework, suggesting that the success of coercion is contingent upon contextual variables, including the nature of the target regime and the specific political environment (Jentleson & Whytock, 2005). Similarly, Todd Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann challenge the assumption that superior material capabilities necessarily translate into effective coercion, highlighting the limits of military superiority in securing diplomatic compliance (Sechser & Fuhrmann, 2017).

Further developments in the literature expand the scope of coercive diplomacy beyond traditional military paradigms. Peter Viggo Jakobsen incorporates humanitarian intervention into the coercive diplomacy framework, arguing that successful application in such contexts requires multilateral legitimacy, credible military capacity, and clearly defined political objectives (Jakobsen, 2000). In parallel, Richard Outzen traces the increasing reliance on coercive

diplomacy in the post–Cold War era, particularly through the evolution of strategies such as economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation (Outzen, 2023).

Although early formulations of coercive diplomacy focused primarily on military instruments, economic coercion has increasingly been recognized as a central component of this strategy. George himself acknowledged the potential of economic tools as instruments of persuasion capable of influencing state behavior (George et al., 1994). However, the growing reliance on economic sanctions has generated significant debate regarding their effectiveness. Kern Alexander notes that while the use of sanctions has expanded considerably, their capacity to achieve intended outcomes remains uneven, particularly in unilateral contexts (Alexander, 2009). Similarly, scholars such as Daniel Drezner and Pape emphasize that factors such as economic interdependence, alliance structures, and the resilience of the target state critically shape the efficacy of sanctions (Drezner, 2003; Pape, 1997).

Beyond questions of effectiveness, the legal and normative dimensions of economic coercion have attracted increasing scholarly attention. Critics argue that unilateral sanctions often stand in tension with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, which authorizes collective measures under Article 41 through the Security Council. From this perspective, unilateral coercive measures may contravene principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention, and jurisdictional integrity. Moreover, as Ali Z. Marossi and Marisa Bassett highlight, such measures frequently produce adverse humanitarian consequences, disproportionately affecting civilian populations. Accordingly, even where sanctions are deemed necessary, their legitimacy depends on adherence to clear legal authority, transparency, and compliance with international human rights standards (Marossi & Bassett, 2015).

### **Conceptual Framework**

Coercive diplomacy operates within the broader framework of power politics, encompassing a range of interrelated factors through which states seek to influence the behavior of others. It relies on a combination of deterrence, persuasion, credibility, and proportionality, aiming to apply calibrated pressure while deliberately avoiding escalation into full-scale conflict. At its core, coercive diplomacy reflects key assumptions of realist theory in international relations, which conceptualizes states as rational actors driven by the pursuit of power, security, and strategic advantage.

Within the scholarly literature, coercive diplomacy is commonly categorized into two principal forms: offensive and defensive. Offensive coercion involves efforts to compel an adversary to halt or reverse a particular course of action—often resembling forms of political blackmail—whereas defensive coercion entails the use of threats to deter or prevent undesired behavior. In this regard, it is essential to distinguish between coercive diplomacy, deterrence, and brute force, as each operates through distinct mechanisms and strategic logics (George et al., 1994). Coercive diplomacy may be implemented through a variety of approaches, including “try-and-see” tactics, gradual escalation—often described as “turning the screw”—and the traditional “carrot-and-stick” model. These strategies enable states to adjust their instruments of pressure dynamically in response to the behavior and resilience of the target (Zagare, 2020).

The effectiveness of coercive diplomacy is contingent upon multiple variables and is often shaped by asymmetries of power. As noted by Art and Cronin (2003), coercive strategies tend to be more successful when employed by stronger actors against weaker counterparts, making the relative capabilities and resilience of the target state a critical determinant of outcomes. Within this framework, economic coercion has emerged as a central instrument of influence. It can be

defined as the deliberate use or threat of economic measures by one state, or a coalition of states, to impose costs or deny benefits in order to shape the decision-making processes or actions of another state (McLean, 2021). Such measures operate through mechanisms of punishment, deprivation, and denial, including restricting access to markets, financial systems, or essential resources.

Economic coercion takes multiple forms, ranging from unilateral sanctions imposed by a single state to multilateral sanctions coordinated by international actors such as the European Union or the United Nations (Baldwin, 1985). It may also include targeted sanctions directed at specific individuals, sectors, or institutions, as well as comprehensive sanctions that affect an entire national economy (Cortright & Lopez, 2000). Beyond credibility and proportionality, several additional conditions shape the effectiveness of economic coercion. Scholars such as Baldwin, George, and Pape emphasize factors including the vulnerability of the target state, the degree of economic interdependence, the presence of international support, and the domestic political context of the targeted regime. While authoritarian systems may, in some cases, demonstrate greater resilience to external pressure, outcomes remain highly context-dependent and contingent upon specific pressure points.

Despite its strategic appeal, economic coercion is not without significant limitations and risks. As Pape (1997) argues, such measures may prove counterproductive by provoking nationalist sentiment, hardening political positions, and reducing the likelihood of compliance. Moreover, economic coercion often entails substantial humanitarian consequences, disproportionately affecting civilian populations rather than political elites. Over time, prolonged sanctions may lose their effectiveness, leading to what is commonly referred to as “sanctions fatigue,” while targeted states may adapt by diversifying economic partnerships or developing alternative channels of trade and finance.

In sum, while economic coercion constitutes a prominent and versatile instrument within the broader strategy of coercive diplomacy, its outcomes remain uncertain and context-dependent. Its application requires careful calibration, as the same mechanisms intended to compel compliance may simultaneously generate resistance, adaptation, and unintended humanitarian costs.

## **Discussion & Analysis**

A comprehensive understanding of coercive diplomacy requires attention to both its strategic and psychological dimensions. It is not solely predicated on the material capacity to inflict harm, but equally on the adversary’s perception of that capacity and the credibility of its potential use. The effectiveness of coercive diplomacy thus depends on several interrelated conditions: the credibility of threats, clarity of demands, proportionality in the application of pressure, the availability of a viable exit strategy, and, in certain contexts, the involvement of mediators. Absent these elements, coercive efforts are likely to falter. Credibility, in particular, is central; threats that lack believability undermine the coercive process, while ambiguous or poorly articulated objectives increase the risk of miscalculation and unintended escalation.

Scholarly work highlights the importance of perception and interpretation in shaping outcomes. Richard Ned Lebow argues that coercive diplomacy frequently fails due to the misinterpretation of intentions, often compounded by cultural and contextual differences between actors (Lebow, 2007). Similarly, Freedman and Karsh (1993) emphasize that ambiguity in signaling can lead decision-makers to underestimate or misread the seriousness of threats. Effective coercion, therefore, requires not only the careful calibration of pressure—determining when, how, and to

what extent threats are communicated—but also the maintenance of a coherent, consistent, and timely messaging strategy. Equally important is the provision of a dignified exit for the targeted actor, allowing compliance without total loss of political standing.

The role of mediators and international organizations further complicates the dynamics of coercive diplomacy. While multilateral engagement can enhance legitimacy and facilitate communication, divergent interests among participating actors may undermine cohesion and dilute the effectiveness of collective pressure (Giumelli, 2016). In many instances, coercive diplomacy also relies on indirect communication channels, including backchannel negotiations. The Cuban Missile Crisis serves as a salient example, where formal coercive measures were complemented by secret diplomacy, media signaling, and informal exchanges, underscoring that coercive diplomacy rarely operates in isolation but rather as part of a broader diplomatic strategy. Contemporary developments have introduced additional variables that shape the effectiveness of coercive diplomacy. Public opinion, for instance, can constrain policymakers or bolster the credibility of coercive threats, while technological advancements—particularly in the realm of cyber capabilities—have expanded the repertoire of coercive tools. Hybrid strategies, including propaganda, information leaks, and digital disruption, can both reinforce and obscure coercive signaling, making consistency and credibility in communication even more critical (Kinne, 2014).

These theoretical insights are particularly relevant to the Palestinian–Israeli context, where the economic arrangements established under the Paris Protocol reflect a form of structured interdependence characterized by pronounced asymmetries of power. The repeated withholding of Palestinian clearance revenues illustrates how economic instruments can be embedded within a broader framework of coercive diplomacy. However, the effectiveness of such measures is complicated by enduring political grievances and deeply entrenched conflict dynamics.

Empirical analyses by institutions such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Al-Shabaka, and other policy research organizations have characterized the withholding of these revenues as a *de facto* form of economic sanction. Reports by the World Bank and various UN agencies further demonstrate that these measures have contributed to recurrent fiscal crises within the Palestinian Authority, often resulting in salary reductions for public sector employees, diminished service provision, and increased reliance on external aid and domestic borrowing. In this context, scholars and commentators have described such financial pressure as a form of “fiscal warfare,” deployed to influence Palestinian political behavior and constrain policy choices.

The following section outlines the principal, documented instances of Israeli withholding of Palestinian clearance revenues between 2011 and 2025, illustrating the recurring use of economic measures as instruments of political pressure:

First, in May 2011, Israel withheld clearance revenues for a period of one month following Palestinian national reconciliation efforts, as reported by UNCTAD (Report No. 62/3). Later that year, in November 2011, Israel imposed a more prolonged suspension, freezing the transfer of monthly revenues for approximately four months. According to contemporaneous reporting, this measure was intended to penalize Palestinian efforts to secure international recognition of statehood at the United Nations (Azriel & Khadder, 2011).

Second, between December 2012 and March 2013, Israel withheld approximately \$100 million in Palestinian customs revenues following the adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/19, which upgraded Palestine’s status to that of a non-member observer state. This

withholding was documented in the United Nations Secretary-General's report (A/67/738, 8 March 2013).

Third, from December 2014 to April 2015, Israel again suspended the transfer of clearance revenues, depriving the Palestinian Authority of an estimated \$164 million per month over a five-month period. This episode coincided with the State of Palestine's accession to the International Criminal Court and was documented in UNCTAD's report *Assistance to the Palestinian People*.

Fourth, in June–July 2016, while revenues were not fully withheld, the Israeli government initiated systematic deductions equivalent to the Palestinian Authority's expenditures on stipends for prisoners and families of the deceased, under what is commonly referred to as the "Pay-for-Slay" framework. These deductions were justified by Israeli authorities on security grounds (Dalalsha et al., 2025).

Fifth, in September 2022, Israel fully withheld clearance revenues in response to the continued payment of stipends by the Palestinian Authority to prisoners and families, again invoking the "Pay-for-Slay" rationale, as documented by the Al-Shabaka policy network.

Sixth, in October 2023, following the escalation triggered by Hamas' attack on 7 October, Israel froze clearance revenues for both Gaza and the West Bank. Subsequently, in January 2024, Gaza's portion of these funds was redirected to a Norwegian-managed escrow account, according to media reporting.

Finally, throughout 2024 and into 2025, the withholding of clearance revenues persisted on a near-monthly basis. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich authorized the freezing of approximately \$90 million, reallocating these funds to Israeli victims' compensation mechanisms while framing the policy as a measure to counter Palestinian incitement. Additional reports indicate that portions of the withheld funds were diverted to offset Palestinian Authority debts, including those related to electricity—an approach previously employed in 2019.

Taken together, these episodes reveal a consistent pattern in which the withholding of clearance revenues is closely linked to specific Palestinian political actions, particularly those associated with international recognition, legal recourse, or internal political developments. This recurring practice underscores the role of fiscal instruments as a central component of economic coercion within the broader framework of Israeli–Palestinian relations.

It is important to underscore that these episodes of revenue withholding are ongoing and constitute a form of unilateral economic coercion. According to UNCTAD, such measures have exacerbated the already significant exposure of the Palestinian domestic banking sector, particularly in relation to public sector employees whose salaries depend heavily on these transfers. Additional pressure has been introduced through Israeli policy decisions, including the reported cancellation of banking waivers by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, further constraining the financial operations of the Palestinian Authority.

Within the framework established by the Paris Protocol, the Palestinian Authority exercises no direct control over the collection or transfer of clearance revenues, thereby reinforcing structural dependency. This asymmetry was particularly evident in 2020, when the Palestinian Authority refused to accept these revenues in protest against proposed annexation policies in the West Bank. This self-imposed suspension highlighted a fundamental contradiction: the tension between political resistance and economic reliance. As noted by humanitarian reporting, the episode exposed the depth of institutional dependence embedded within the Oslo-era economic arrangements.

The pattern of withholding clearance revenues reveals a consistent relationship between Israeli fiscal measures and specific Palestinian political actions. These episodes are typically triggered by developments such as diplomatic initiatives, legal recourse in international forums, or internal political shifts that Israel seeks to deter. Over time, this practice has evolved into a predictable instrument of coercion. However, while such measures impose immediate fiscal strain on the Palestinian Authority, their long-term effectiveness in achieving political compliance appears limited. Notably, the Palestinian leadership has not reversed key decisions—such as pursuing enhanced status at the United Nations or accession to the International Criminal Court—despite sustained financial pressure. In some instances, these coercive measures have arguably produced counterproductive effects, attracting international criticism and reinforcing political support for the Palestinian position.

Nevertheless, there are limited cases of partial policy adjustment. One such example is the restructuring of payments to prisoners and families of the deceased under a social welfare framework, a move widely interpreted as a response to sustained financial deductions under the so-called “Pay-for-Slay” policy. This suggests that while coercion may not yield comprehensive political reversal, it can influence specific policy adaptations under sustained pressure.

In response, the Palestinian Authority has pursued a range of counter-strategies aimed at mitigating the impact of economic coercion. These include securing budgetary support from Arab states and international donors, such as the World Bank and the European Union, as well as resorting to domestic borrowing to meet public sector wage obligations. Efforts have also been made to enhance local revenue generation in order to reduce dependence on externally controlled funds. In parallel, the Palestinian leadership has engaged in diplomatic advocacy within international institutions to challenge the legality and legitimacy of Israel’s financial measures. Despite these efforts, structural dependence on clearance revenues persists, underscoring the enduring vulnerabilities embedded within the existing economic framework. Internal political fragmentation and administrative constraints further limit the Palestinian Authority’s capacity to insulate itself from external pressure.

From a theoretical perspective, Israel’s use of economic coercion reflects several key criteria associated with coercive diplomacy. First, the element of credibility is clearly present, as threats of withholding are consistently implemented and backed by the capacity to impose significant and recurrent financial costs. Second, while often implicit, the clarity of demands is generally discernible, particularly in relation to deterring Palestinian engagement in international legal and diplomatic arenas or internal political reconciliation processes. However, a critical limitation lies in the absence of a clearly defined exit option for the Palestinian Authority, which complicates the prospects for compliance and undermines the overall effectiveness of the strategy.

Ultimately, while the withholding of clearance revenues functions as a potent punitive mechanism, its success in producing sustained political outcomes remains constrained. Instead, it contributes to heightened economic fragility and institutional instability within the Palestinian Authority, dynamics that may carry broader implications for regional security. Furthermore, the unilateral nature of these measures raises significant legal and normative concerns. The adverse impact on civilian livelihoods—particularly public sector employees—calls into question their compatibility with international human rights standards. In the absence of clear legal safeguards or accountability mechanisms within the governing framework, these practices highlight the tension between economic coercion and the principles of international law.

## **Conclusion**

Coercive diplomacy through economic instruments has emerged as a central feature of contemporary statecraft, occupying a strategic space between overt military confrontation and traditional diplomatic engagement. Its effectiveness depends fundamentally on the careful calibration of key elements—most notably credibility, clarity of demands, and proportionality—supported by broader political, economic, and institutional conditions. While economic coercion holds considerable potential as a tool of influence, its limitations are equally evident. Failures and unintended consequences highlight the need for sustained scholarly attention to its operational gaps, legal foundations, and evolving dynamics, particularly in light of emerging challenges such as technological transformation and hybrid forms of conflict.

The case of Israeli withholding and deduction of Palestinian clearance revenues provides a compelling empirical illustration of economic coercive diplomacy in practice. Since 2011, such measures have been employed repeatedly—at least twelve documented instances—each closely linked to specific political actions undertaken by the Palestinian Authority. This pattern underscores the systematic use of fiscal instruments as a mechanism of pressure and signaling. However, while these policies have proven effective in imposing economic costs and conveying political disapproval, their capacity to induce substantive changes in Palestinian political behavior remains limited. Instead, they have contributed to heightened economic instability, deepened political mistrust, and reinforced structural asymmetries embedded within the Oslo-era framework.

Moreover, the prolonged use of economic coercion within the context of an entrenched and asymmetrical conflict raises significant ethical, legal, and humanitarian concerns. By disproportionately affecting civilian livelihoods and institutional stability, such measures risk undermining the normative foundations of international law and human rights. In parallel, they complicate diplomatic efforts, constrain prospects for sustainable peace, and impede the development of viable governance structures necessary for Palestinian statehood.

Looking forward, the sustainability and legitimacy of economic arrangements within the Palestinian–Israeli context require fundamental reconsideration. Depoliticizing economic mechanisms and insulating them from unilateral intervention constitute essential steps toward reducing vulnerability and fostering stability. Whether through substantive reform of existing frameworks or the replacement of the Paris Protocol with a more balanced and equitable arrangement, recalibrating the economic dimension of the relationship is indispensable for any meaningful peacebuilding process.

Ultimately, the future of coercive diplomacy will depend not only on its strategic application but also on its alignment with principles of international legitimacy, legal accountability, and ethical responsibility. Without such alignment, the continued reliance on economic coercion risks perpetuating instability rather than resolving conflict, thereby undermining both regional security and the broader prospects for a just and lasting peace.

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