Twitter Thread by Ilan Goldenberg

Ilan Goldenberg
@ilangoldenberg

1. To folks, and especially my Israeli friends, who are wondering why I'm questioning this Morocco deal and the Sudan deal. Let me try and explain my concerns. It's not sour grapes or instinctively criticizing Trump. It's about other US interests and policy.

2. First the UAE and Bahrain deals i entirely support. And I think connecting Israel with the Gulf and also putting off annexation are all strategically valuable and positive for the US. Though I have reservations about the UAE F35 sale.

3. But in the Morocco and Sudan case there is a cost benefit for the US. For the Israelis there is no cost benefit. It's just all benefit. So of course they support it and don't understand why any American may have concerns.

4. On Morocco - recognizing Western Sahara as Moroccan territory when it has been in dispute for years and combining that with the decision on the Golan has broad international consequences.

5. Since 1945 the US has stuck by a basic international principle of not recognizing acquisition of territory by use of force. This norm is now eroding and it could have dangerous long term consequences and lead to more conflicts.

6. It weakens the US international position on Crimea. And in the future if we have similar disputes with others (e.g. China), it will be harder to gather international support if the US is seen as hypocritical and not actually abiding by this principle.

7. So is it worth trading that for an Israel-Morocco deal given that there are already quiet ties and have been for years? & that strategically North Africa is just less important than the Gulf and the potential benefits for the US of Morocco-Israel cooperation are not as clear?

8. It doesn't mean this isn't a good thing for Israel. But is it worth it for the US?

9. On Sudan. This is a big important country going through a delicate & challenging transition. In that moment, to make our first priority israel-Sudan normalization and to withhold access to international financial markets unless Sudan normalized with Israel misplaces priorities

10. We should have been helping the new Sudanese government, instead of basically making our first priority its relations with Israel.

11. I also don't like using the State sponsor of terrorism designation as political leverage for something entirely unrelated when Sudan is no longer a state sponsor of terrorism. It politicizes the process (though in fairness it's already quite politicized).

12. Again. I'm glad Israel and Sudan are normalizing. It's generally a good thing. But like Morocco, the strategic benefits for the US here are not necessarily the same as in the Gulf where the benefit is much more evident.

13. The bottom line is that the US and Israel are different countries and have different interests. They are allies but that doesn't mean everything that is good for Israel is good for America.

14. They both benefit from Israel's normalization with its neighbors. But the US has to balance that against some of these other interests. Israel doesn't. But from an American perspective the cost benefit formula in these cases doesn't make a lot of sense to me.