

Approaching Peace:

U.S. Interests in Israeli-Palestinian Final Status Talks

by [Robert Satloff \(/experts/robert-satloff\)](/experts/robert-satloff)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Preface

Since the founding of The Washington Institute a decade ago, our work has been dedicated to assisting U.S. policymakers in their efforts to promote American interests in the Middle East, especially the pursuit of Arab-Israeli peace.

When we began, comprehensive peace was a distant fixture on the horizon. Our role was to identify ways in which the U.S. government could deal with the conflicts then plaguing the Middle East -- Lebanon, Libya, the Persian Gulf, terrorism -- so as to prepare the groundwork for the day when real peacemaking would be possible. Building for Peace, the 1988 report of The Washington Institute's bipartisan Presidential Study Group, chaired by Walter Mondale and Lawrence Eagleburger, underscored the importance of working with Israel, moderate Palestinians, and other Arab partners in nurturing the environment for future negotiations.

By the time President Bush presided over the Madrid peace conference, the prospect for real movement toward Arab-Israeli peace looked much brighter. For the Institute, the challenge was to help translate the opportunities of the post-Cold War, post-Gulf War environment into tangible achievements in the cause of peace. Pursuing Peace, the 1992 report of our Strategic Study Group, chaired by a distinguished steering group, outlined a strategy of active engagement by the United States to capitalize on the achievement of direct Arab-Israeli negotiations to help reduce the risks of compromise to each of the parties.

The past year has witnessed remarkable progress toward peace. Though terrorism and conflict persist, the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles, the establishment of Palestinian self-government in Gaza and Jericho, and the "Washington Declaration" ending the state of war between Israel and Jordan are truly historic steps on the road to what we hope will prove to be a comprehensive and lasting peace.

At this moment of promise, The Washington Institute is pleased to publish Approaching Peace, a collection of essays that brings together the wisdom and insight of eight veteran American diplomats and scholars to examine American interests in the next stage of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the final status talks. Our goal is to help policymakers as they move from promoting the concept of the "interim step" -- Palestinian self-government -- to assisting Israelis

and Palestinians negotiate a final resolution of their nearly century-old conflict.

Following in the tradition of our previous blue-ribbon efforts, we are hopeful that Approaching Peace will be a useful tool to U.S. policymakers charged with helping to forge a more peaceful Middle East.

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