

UN Resolution 242:

Building Block of Peacemaking

Apr 1, 1993



In-Depth Reports

Preface

Ever since its adoption by the United Nations Security Council on November 22, 1967, Resolution 242 has provided context for peacemaking efforts between Arabs and Israelis. It was the basis for the only peace treaty ever signed between Israel and an Arab country, Egypt, in 1979, and the foundation for the current peace talks launched by the Madrid peace conference in October 1991. After twenty-five years, the critical elements of the resolution -- peace, security and land -- are still the main issues of contention between the parties to the peace talks.

For this reason, The Washington Institute took the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the resolution's passage to devote its 1992 Harris Symposium to examine anew the framework for peacemaking enunciated in the resolution, and especially the meaning of the three central issues of peace, security and land. The Symposium addressed the original intent of the resolution's drafters; the various, often conflicting, legal interpretations of the resolution's twin calls for territorial withdrawal and the establishment of "secure and recognized boundaries"; and the relevance of the resolution for the current negotiations.

This volume contains the presentations of six diplomats and legal scholars -- Adnan Abu Odeh, Nabil Elaraby, Meir Rosenne, Dennis Ross, Eugene Rostow, and Vernon Turner. Together, this distinguished group spans the last quarter-century of peacemaking, including diplomats who represented their respective governments during the negotiations over the final wording of the resolution, veterans of Camp David, a senior political advisor to Jordan's King Hussein, and an American diplomat who was instrumental to the convening of the current peace talks launched at Madrid.

Of special significance in this volume is the supplementary document section which contains several early drafts of the resolution. These drafts help shed light on the attitude of various members of the Security Council prior to the adoption of the ultimate version of UNSC 242. Included as well is a collection of statements by various U.S. officials and legal interpretations by several international legal experts on the importance of UNSC 242.

Today, more than twenty-five years after the adoption of UNSC 242, it is our hope that this volume will contribute to a better understanding of the resolution as the parties continue their negotiations in an effort to reach a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

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