

Building Bridges for Peace: U.S. Policy Toward Arab States, Palestinians, and Israel

by [David Makovsky \(/experts/david-makovsky\)](/experts/david-makovsky)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Part of a series: [Transition 2021 \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/transition-2021\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/transition-2021)

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The Biden administration can succeed by strengthening and expanding Israeli normalization with Arab states and pursuing gradualism on the Palestinian issue.

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In the second in a series of TRANSITION 2021 memos examining policy challenges across the Middle East, expert David Makovsky explores how the Biden administration can use progress in Arab-Israel normalization to reenergize dormant ties between the United States and the Palestinian Authority, and between Jerusalem and Ramallah. After urging the administration to invest in strengthening and expanding normalization with Arab states, he argues for gradualism on the Palestinian issue, rooted in mutual efforts on several fronts, including preventing the slide to a one-state reality, taking a differentiated approach to Jewish settlements, and encouraging a range of trust-building exercises.

“The gradualist approach to Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking is not one of grand declarations, high-profile White House announcements, or flag-waving signing ceremonies,” explains Makovsky. “To the contrary, if it succeeds, it will emerge from hours of intensive consultation with Israeli and Palestinian interlocutors, as well as the coordinated input and support of key Arab, European, and international partners.”

In the coming weeks, TRANSITION 2021 memos by Washington Institute experts will address the broad array of issues facing the Biden-Harris administration in the Middle East. These range from thematic issues, such as the region’s strategic position in the context of Great Power competition and how to most effectively elevate human rights and democracy in Middle East policy, to more discrete topics, from Arab-Israel peace diplomacy to Red Sea security to challenges and opportunities in northwest Africa. Taken as a whole, this series of memos will present a comprehensive approach for advancing U.S. interests in security and peace in this vital but volatile region. ❖

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