

## The Pursuit of Middle East Peace: A Status Report

May 8, 2014



In-Depth Reports

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**Martin Indyk, the U.S. special envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, addressed the 2014 Weinberg Founders Conference.**

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[Read a transcript of Ambassador Indyk's remarks, including his Q&A session with Dr. Satloff \(/uploads/Documents/other/IndykKeynote20140508.pdf\).](#)

President Obama's special envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations delivered a blunt diagnosis of the failure of recent peace talks to an audience of policymakers, scholars, and journalists at The Washington Institute's [2014 Weinberg Founders Conference \(/policy-analysis/view/2014-weinberg-founders-conference\)](#) on May 8. "For the time being, talks have been suspended," said Ambassador Martin Indyk. "Some have said this process is over. But that is not correct ... in the Middle East, it's never over."

Indyk went on to catalog the mistakes in both Israeli and Palestinian camps that prevented talks from achieving the breakthrough that seemed often within grasp. Israeli underestimation of the psychological and political effects of new settlement construction, even as Binyamin Netanyahu became ever more flexible in his approach to the negotiations, was mirrored by the growing disengagement of Palestinian leaders.

"The parties, although both showing flexibility in the negotiations, do not feel the pressing need to make the gut-wrenching compromises necessary to achieve peace," Indyk said. "It is easier for the Palestinians to sign conventions and appeal to international bodies in their supposed pursuit of 'justice' and their 'rights,' a process which by definition requires no compromise. It is easier for Israeli politicians to avoid tension in the governing coalition and for the Israeli people to maintain the current comfortable status quo. It is safe to say that if we, the U.S., are the only party that has a sense of urgency, these negotiations will not succeed."

*Martin Indyk is special envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and is on leave as vice president and director of foreign policy program at the*

**Robert Satloff**, who moderated this event, is executive director of The Washington Institute. ❖

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