

How to Save Arab-Israeli Peace

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

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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

Robert Satloff is executive director of The Washington Institute, a post he assumed in January 1993.



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There's more to it than Stephen Walt would have you believe.

Like the swallows to Capistrano, Stephen Walt must have an automatic reminder on his iPad that it is time to lodge another puerile attack on me and the institution I direct.

Last time, in 2010, Walt threw the malicious charge of "dual loyalty" against Ambassador Dennis Ross, advisor to four presidents, and everyone else associated with The Washington Institute. This time, Walt devoted an entire blog post to a critique of an article I wrote earlier this week for The New Republic, in which I warned about the end of the "forty-year peace" between Israel and Arab states and its implications for U.S. regional interests.

But instead of addressing either the details of the analysis I offered or the five specific policy recommendations I made, Walt took aim at the fact that one of my suggestions is to strengthen U.S.-Israeli ties as a counterweight to the fact that Israel is a target of the two main destabilizing forces in the Middle East today: Iran's hegemonic ambitions and the spread of radical Sunni extremism.

Walt was stunningly silent on the four other recommendations I propose to prevent the drift toward regional crisis in the Arab-Israeli arena -- incentivizing more moderate behavior from the calculating Islamists who govern Egypt, preventing Hamas from reaping political benefit from the Gaza conflict at the expense of the Palestinian Authority, hastening the demise of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad regime and thereby limiting the worst-case outcomes that are growing more likely every passing day, and taking steps to prevent instability from spreading to increasingly wobbly Jordan. If silence betokens consent, perhaps I should count my blessings that Walt took no issue with 80 percent of my advice.

Why then did Walt pick on the Israel recommendation -- and only the Israel recommendation -- especially since it is inherently connected to my four other suggestions, which triggered not a peep of protest? If Walt were the co-author of "The Jordan Lobby" or "The Palestine Lobby," the answer wouldn't be so obvious.

Robert Satloff is executive director of The Washington Institute. ❖

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