

## An Institute's Views

### Robert Satloff responds to the New York Times characterization of the Institute as "a pro-Israel think tank"

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

Jan 25, 2011

#### 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.



Articles & Testimony

**On January 23, 2011, the New York Times ran a story on the Institute Strategic Report *Imagining the Border: Options for Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Territorial Issue*, by David Makovsky. In that article, the Times described to the Institute as "a pro-Israel think tank." Institute executive director Robert Satloff's response, reprinted here, appeared on January 25 in the Times.**

**Y**our otherwise fine article about David Makovsky's study on potential solutions to the territorial aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ("Trying to Break Logjam, Scholar Floats an Idea for a Palestinian Map," Diplomatic Memo, Jan. 23) twice referred to the Washington Institute as "pro-Israel." This characterization is woefully insufficient.

While the institute is not shy about its view that strong United States-Israel ties advance American national security interests, the moniker "pro-Israel" projects two false impressions -- first, that the institute does not value American interests above special pleading for a foreign power and second, that the institute must be "anti" others in the region (Palestinians, Arabs).

This shorthand terminology perpetuates "old thinking" that views the Arab-Israeli conflict as the key dividing line in a region where the division between moderates versus radicals is a more accurate prism through which to understand local politics.

On the personal level, this one-dimensional description of the institute's quarter-century of research does a disservice to the many current and former United States government officials and military officers at the institute over the years as well as the numerous institute scholars from Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Morocco and other Middle Eastern countries over the years who have undertaken impeccable research on a broad array of

topics.

*Robert Satloff is the executive director of The Washington Institute.*



*New York Times*

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