

Rethinking the Two-State Solution

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In-Depth Reports

Fifteen years after the Oslo Accords outlined a pathway to a final resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a "permanent status agreement" seems as unattainable today as it was at the time. If Israelis and Palestinians are committed to the principle of a "two-state solution" for their historic dispute, why does that objective remain so elusive?

In this Washington Institute Policy Focus, Maj. Gen. Giora Eiland, former head of Israel's National Security Council, examines the current agenda of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and offers the provocative assessment that a conventional two-state approach may never succeed, given the cumulative weight of the compromises required from each side. If negotiations were challenging in 2000, he argues, they will be even more difficult today, with Hamas's ascendancy in Gaza and the injection of new technology -- such as short-range rocketry -- having entered into the strategic equation. In place of a diplomatic approach that has repeatedly failed to produce peace, General Eiland offers two new proposals -- a modified "Jordanian option" and a new "regional solution" -- that could bypass the growing political and security obstacles that have impeded peacemaking for so many years.

THE AUTHOR

Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Giora Eiland is former head of the Israeli National Security Council, a post he held from 2004 to 2006. Previously, he served in the Israel Defense Forces for thirty-three years, heading the Strategic Planning Branch at the end of his career. He now works as a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) in Tel Aviv.

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