

Palestinian Politics after the Hamas Coup

by [Ehud Yaari \(/experts/ehud-yaari\)](/experts/ehud-yaari)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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In-Depth Reports

On October 21, 2007, Ehud Yaari and Sari Nusseibeh addressed The Washington Institute's Weinberg Founders Conference. The following is a brief summary of their remarks.

Ehud Yaari, an Israel-based Washington Institute fellow and journalist, and Sari Nusseibeh, president of al-Quds university and co-chairman of the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization, had quite different perspectives on the progress in Palestinian political reform and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Yaari argued that the June Hamas coup in Gaza was a catastrophic defeat for the peace process, and one unlikely to be reversed in the near future. He also argued that Hamas has now split into many rival factions, and that little progress is being made by either Hamas or Fatah to halt the collapse of Palestinian society. In his view, the prospects for a two-state solution are fading, and Israel should do all it can to stop the collapse of Palestinian society into Israel's unwilling arms.

Nusseibeh disagreed, arguing that if leaders on both sides have sufficient will to pursue peace and are able to present a solution to the crisis, they will be able to build popular support at home and win the authority to negotiate. He pointed to one key basis for a compromise: Israel should concede on Jerusalem to preserve the Jewish character of the state, and the Palestinians should concede on the refugee issue to gain Jerusalem. He concluded that defeatism regarding the future is only self-fulfilling, and that both sides must will a solution to exist before it can come into being.

A full summary of this session can be found in the [Weinberg Founders Conference proceedings \(templateC04.php?CID=287\)](#), available as a free PDF download from the Washington Institute bookstore. ❖

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