

Panel III:

The Lasting Effects of the Failure of Diplomacy in 1967

by [Samuel Lewos \(/experts/samuel-lewos\)](/experts/samuel-lewos), [Wendy Chamberlin \(/experts/wendy-chamberlin\)](/experts/wendy-chamberlin), [Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](/experts/dennis-ross)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Samuel Lewos \(/experts/samuel-lewos\)](/experts/samuel-lewos)

Samuel Lewis served as U.S. ambassador to Israel under Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.



[Wendy Chamberlin \(/experts/wendy-chamberlin\)](/experts/wendy-chamberlin)

Wendy Chamberlin, president of the Middle East Institute, is a former U.S. ambassador to Laos and Pakistan and deputy high commissioner of the UNHCR.



[Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](/experts/dennis-ross)

Dennis Ross, a former special assistant to President Barack Obama, is the counselor and William Davidson Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute.



Brief Analysis

On June 4, 2007, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy held a symposium marking the fortieth anniversary of the June 1967 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The purpose of the symposium was to grapple with the failure of U.S.-led diplomacy on the eve of the war, exploring the period from a variety of perspectives. The following is a summary of the symposium's concluding session.

[View a summary \(http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=340\)](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=340) of the symposium, including video and audio of each session.

The symposium closed with a shift back to U.S. and international diplomacy during the crisis, and the enduring implications for policy today. Ambassador Samuel Lewis and Ambassador Dennis Ross, veteran American diplomats who have played a key role in defining U.S.-Israeli relations for decades, both pointed to the failure of Washington and Paris to live up to their 1957 commitments on keeping the Straits of Tiran open as important factors contributing to the war.

Lewis voiced his agreement that the failure to maintain those commitments in 1967 undermined Israel's belief in international assurances and reinforced the Zionist ethos of self-reliance. Lewis sought to put this failure in context,

pointing to both the U.S. arms embargo in 1948 and the 1981 effort to dissuade Israel from striking Iraq's nuclear reactor at Osiraq as further examples of American inability or unwillingness to meet what Israel defined as existential interests. Regarding the latter incident, Lewis said that the United States and Israel held secret talks in 1980 and 1981 on preventing Iraq from achieving nuclear weapons capability. The inconclusive talks served as a pretext for the Israeli strikes.

At the conclusion of the day's discussion, Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin, an experienced U.S. diplomat, joined Ross and Lewis in expressing hope that a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians would be reached and become the lasting legacy of the 1967 war. Changing the human dimensions that played so critical a role on all sides in the events leading to the war, Chamberlin said, is a prerequisite to attaining a lasting Arab-Israeli peace.

Read (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2615>) a full rapporteur's summary of this panel. ❖

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