

## Gaza:

### Moving Forward by Pulling Back

by [David Makovsky \(/experts/david-makovsky\)](/experts/david-makovsky)

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[David Makovsky \(/experts/david-makovsky\)](/experts/david-makovsky)

David Makovsky is the Ziegler distinguished fellow at The Washington Institute and director of the Koret Project on Arab-Israel Relations.

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Articles & Testimony

**T**his Foreign Affairs article is based on David Makovsky's [Engagement through Disengagement: Gaza and the Potential for Renewed Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=221)

(<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=221>) (The Washington Institute, 2005).

View (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/mapImages/41de9318b0396.pdf>) a detailed map of the Gaza Strip, including Israeli settlements, Palestinian communities, IDF security zones, Egypt-Israel border buffer zone, checkpoints, and roads.

After four and a half years of terror and violence, the proverbial stars seem to be aligned for a new push for peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Unlike his predecessor, the newly elected Palestinian Authority (PA) president, Mahmoud Abbas, stresses the importance of peaceful problem solving and has condemned suicide bombing (in Arabic and in English) as counterproductive. On the Israeli side, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the onetime architect of the settlement movement, is leading the drive to evacuate all settlers from Gaza and the northern West Bank. At Sharm-el-Sheikh earlier this year, he and Abbas committed to a cease-fire, an important step even if rejectionists on both sides are certain to try to exploit it. In Washington, meanwhile, Condoleezza Rice is as close to the commander in chief as any secretary of state has been since James Baker teamed up with George W. Bush's father, guaranteeing that she speaks with the president's authority.

But even under such relatively favorable conditions, it is wrong to assume that the Israelis and the Palestinians can simply return to the summer of 2000, when Washington thought that an end to the conflict was within sight. Since then, trust between the parties has been shattered by violence, and rebuilding it will not be quick or easy. . . .

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