

Conference Reports

## A Conversation with Ehud Barak

[Ehud Barak](#)

2014 Weinberg Founders Conference

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Israel's former prime minister and defense minister shared his outlook on the Middle East, American global leadership, and his country's rapidly evolving strategic position.

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Ehud Barak, Israel's former prime minister and defense minister in Binyamin Netanyahu's coalition, shared his views of pressing international issues at The Washington Institute's [2014 Weinberg Founders Conference](#) on May 8.

After a century characterized by multipolar and bipolar competition, Barak said, "now there is no pole. No single player, including previous superpowers, including the United States, can tackle any single issue on its own without creating certain kinds of coalitions." But American leadership and engagement remains critical, Barak said, making all the more dangerous the growing perception that, rightly or wrongly, America has been "weakened quite significantly."

At the same time, the norms and structures that have supported international order for the last century, including national borders, are fraying, Barak said. "The very world order we used to have in the Middle East following Sykes-Picot, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire ... is changing in front of our eyes."

In his remarks to an audience of policymakers, scholars, and journalists from around the world gathered in Washington, Barak shared his concerns and insights on issues ranging from the conflict in Syria to Russian adventurism in Ukraine, as well as Israel's security challenges in a region beset by revolutions and upheavals.

**Ehud Barak** is former Israeli prime minister and defense minister.

**Dennis Ross**, who moderated this conversation, is counselor and William Davidson distinguished fellow at The Washington Institute.