The Emperor Has No Clothes: The Case for Ending   
U.S. Mediation in the Israel/Palestinian Conflict

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The respected research organization International Crisis Group, commenting on the Israeli/Palestinian peace process, said it best in 2012 QUOTE:

“The inescapable truth, almost two decades into the peace process, is that all actors are now engaged in a game of make-believe: that a resumption of talks in the current context can lead to success; that an agreement can be reached within a short timeframe; that the Quartet is an effective mediator; that the Palestinian leadership is serious about reconciliation, or the UN, or popular resistance, or disbanding the PA. This is not to say that the process itself has run its course. Continued meetings and even partial agreements – invariably welcomed as breakthroughs – are possible precisely because so many have an interest in its perpetuation. But it will not bring about a durable and lasting peace. The first step in breaking what has become an injurious addiction to a futile process is to recognise that it is so – to acknowledge, at long last, that the emperor has no clothes.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

END QUOTE. Please join us as we affirm that The United States should significantly reform its policy toward one or more countries in the Middle East. Let’s start with…

OBSERVATION 1. Our DEFINITIONS

**Significant**: “large enough to be noticed or have an effect” *(Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2014* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant)*)*

**Policy**: “a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body”*(Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2014* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy?show=0&t=1402599657*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy?show=0&t=1402599657))

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the conditions of the STATUS QUO. Some key FACTS:

FACT 1. Long history of intervention. U.S. engagement to solve the Israeli/Palestinian conflict goes back decades

Dr. Rashid Khalidi 2013 (PhD from Oxford Univ.;  Professor of [Modern Arab Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESAAS) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University)) 29 Apr 2013 ‘US mediation made Israeli-Palestinian problem even worse’ [http://rt.com/op-edge/us-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572/](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Frt.com%2Fop-edge%2Fus-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNH4FZLgypL32in7FyLR5giidGnjZA" \t "_blank)

President Carter started working on the so-called Palestinian autonomy in 1978, 35 years ago. So the US has been engaged in the process, there is no question about that, for three-and-a-half decades. It hasn’t produced peace. I argue in my book that they couldn’t have achieved peace. What they were trying to do in essence was to do something that was under a ceiling of what Israel would allow. That didn’t amount to anything that the Palestinians could ever accept – it didn’t really amount to real statehood or real self-determination. So it was a process, which was described as a peace process, but it couldn’t have led to a resolution of this conflict.

FACT 2. Still involved. The U.S. remains involved in mediating Israeli/Palestinian conflict. In December 2014, journalist Teresa Welsh reported:

Teresa Welsh 2014. (journalist) US NEWS & WORLD REPORT The Middle East Peace Conundrum  11 Dec 2014 <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/11/challenges-face-the-us-as-lead-middle-east-peace-negotiator-between-israel-and-palestine>

Secretary of State John Kerry was in charge of the latest round of talks, continuing the long-held role of the U.S. as lead mediator between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Kerry remains involved in the region, holding meetings with leaders on both sides in attempts to quell a flare-up of tensions this fall over a holy site in Jerusalem, but has recognized that [the time is not right to resume formal peace talks](http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/07/john-kerry-peace-between-israelis-palestinians-still-possible).

OBSERVATION 3. We have a PLAN, to be implemented by Congress and the President

1. No more mediation. The President changes US foreign policy to end all efforts to mediate the Israeli/Palestinian peace process.   
2. Funding canceled. Congress cancels funding for any activities related to U.S. intervention or mediation in the Israeli/Palestinian peace process (like special ambassadors, travel, conferences etc.).  
3. Enforcement through normal means within existing laws.  
4. Plan takes effect the day after an Affirmative ballot.  
5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify as needed.

OBSERVATION 4. The JUSTIFICATIONS, or reasons why this Plan should be implemented

JUSTIFICATION 1. Intervention Fails. Intervention in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is futile, and we should stop trying.

Dr. Stephen M. Walt 2014. (Ph.D. in Political Science; [professor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professor) of [international affairs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_relations) at [Harvard University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University)'s [John F. Kennedy School of Government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy_School_of_Government) ) The case for doing nothing in the Middle East 11 Aug 2014 <http://theweek.com/article/index/266111/the-case-for-doing-nothing-in-the-middle-east>

Among other things, the policy I'm suggesting would mean the United States would stop its futile efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I've [argued against](http://www.fpa.org/topics_info2414/topics_info_show.htm?doc_id=1143022" \t "_blank) such a course in the past, but it is now obvious to me that no president is willing to challenge Israel's backers here in the United States and make U.S. support for Israel conditional on an end to the occupation. Until that happens, even well-intentioned efforts to broker a peace will keep failing. Instead of continuing to squander valuable time and prestige on a fruitless endeavor, the U.S. government should disengage from this thankless task until it is ready to do more than just palaver and plead. If Israel's leaders want to risk their own future by creating a "greater Israel," so be it. It would be regrettable if Israel ended up an apartheid state and an international pariah, but preventing that tragedy is not a vital U.S. interest.

JUSTIFICATION 2. End False Expectations. U.S. mediation does more harm than good by creating false expectations

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from the School of International Service at [American University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University)) 17 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Romney's Sensible Stance on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/romneys-sensible-stance-israel-palestine-7598>

In fact, America's preoccupation with the conflict—motivated by its commitment to Israel and its need to appease the Arab oil-producing states and driven by pressure from the members of an influential industry of experts and activists—may have been doing more harm than good. By pursuing the illusion that the United States has the power and moral authority to broker a “peace” in the Middle East, Washington has created unrealistic expectations that cannot be fulfilled.

JUSTIFICATION 3. Sets back progress. U.S. intervention hardens positions on both sides, and increases the separation

Nathan Thrall 2014. (master’s degree in politics, Columbia Univ.; Jerusalem-based Senior Analyst with the Middle East & North Africa Program of the [International Crisis Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Crisis_Group) ) Sept 2014 “Faith Based Diplomacy” <https://medium.com/matter/americas-quest-for-israeli-palestinian-peace-db27f99ad9f0>

In point of fact, the U.S.’s earnest and patient search for peace serves to entrench a one-state reality: Israeli Arabs deepen their ties to Palestinians in the West Bank; settlements spread; outposts are legalized; and annexationist Israeli ministers and parliamentarians grow in power and strength. New roads and parks cut through Arab East Jerusalem and make any realistic division of the city untenable. East Jerusalemite Palestinians are cut off from the West Bank, receive eviction orders from their homes, or move to the other side of the separation wall. All the while a series of fruitless negotiations helps to discredit the two-state model and confirm the depth of the chasm between the two sides.

JUSTIFICATION 4. Anti-American Backlash. Failed US mediation leads to anti-American backlash in the Arab world because we can’t be an ally of Israel and a fair mediator at the same time.

**Dr Hadar in 2012 continues in the same context, saying QUOTE:**

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from the School of International Service at [American University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University)) 17 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Romney's Sensible Stance on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/romneys-sensible-stance-israel-palestine-7598>

By pursuing the illusion that the United States has the power and moral authority to broker a “peace” in the Middle East, Washington has created unrealistic expectations that cannot be fulfilled. Meanwhile, America's repeated failures as an “honest broker”—a designation that quite frequently runs contrary to its commitment to be a “reliable ally” of Israel—ends up producing an anti-American backlash in the Arab and Muslim worlds, which creates even more pressure on Washington to “do something.”

JUSTIFICATION 5. Disengagement is the only thing that works. Direct Arab-Israeli diplomacy, without U.S. involvement, is the only thing that has ever produced breakthroughs in the peace process

*Aaron David Miller 2012. (*former senior negotiator in the Mideast peace process; distinguished scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars) 11 May 2012 Foreign Policy: Got A Conflict? 6 Ways To Resolve It http://www.npr.org/2012/05/11/152490754/foreign-policy-got-a-conflict-6-ways-to-resolve-it

In the history of the Arab-Israeli negotiations, there's no precedent for a successful U.S. initiative that wasn't preceded by some bold act of war or diplomacy on the part of the locals. The inconvenient truth is that the old saw — so despised and ridiculed by peace processors everywhere — was right all along: The mediator can't want a deal more than the parties themselves. Don't believe this eternal truth? Think only about this: The only three breakthroughs in the history of Arab-Israeli peacemaking — involving Israeli deals with the Egyptians, Jordanians, and Palestinians — came about through secret diplomacy in which Washington wasn't even involved.

2A Evidence: Stop Mediating Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

2A EVIDENCE: Stop Mediating Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

COOL QUOTES / AFFIRMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

U.S.-led “peace process” is like the Energizer Bunny. Doesn’t accomplish anything, but it keeps going and going…

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from the School of International Service at [American University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University)) 17 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Romney's Sensible Stance on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/romneys-sensible-stance-israel-palestine-7598>

But perhaps the time has come to face reality and recognize that Romney was right, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “is going to remain an unsolved problem” for a long time and that Washington cannot do much more than “moving things along the best you can.” Members of the reality-based community should admit that the U.S.-led “peace process” has accomplished little. And yet, like the Energizer Bunny, it keeps going and going and going.

[Referring in context to the Middle East] It’s time to walk away

Dr. Stephen M. Walt 2014. (Ph.D. in Political Science; [professor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professor) of [international affairs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_relations) at [Harvard University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University)'s [John F. Kennedy School of Government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy_School_of_Government) ) The case for doing nothing in the Middle East 11 Aug 2014 <http://theweek.com/article/index/266111/the-case-for-doing-nothing-in-the-middle-east>

Every time the U.S. touches the region, it makes things worse. It's time to walk away and not look back.

Palestinians have given up on the peace process

International Crisis Group 2012. (independent,non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Undersecretary of State and Ambassador Thomas Pickering.) May 2012, THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES: PALESTINIANS AND THE END OF THE PEACE PROCESS <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Israel%20Palestine/122-the-emperor-has-no-clothes-palestinians-and-the-end-of-the-peace-process.pdf>

The vast majority of Palestinians long ago wrote off a peace process that has endured, in fits and starts, for two decades. Of late, it has seemed at times that the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah no longer was too far behind. Uncharacteristically, it has been reluctant to enter talks with Israel, insisting that two demands – a settlement freeze and Israel’s acceptance of the 1967 lines as the basis for negotiations – be met.

INHERENCY

Pres. Obama and Sec. of State Kerry are “highly engaged” in the peace process (Dec 2014)

Teresa Welsh 2014. (journalist) US NEWS & WORLD REPORT The Middle East Peace Conundrum  11 Dec 2014 <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/11/challenges-face-the-us-as-lead-middle-east-peace-negotiator-between-israel-and-palestine>

Still, Goldenberg – now director of the Middle East Security Program at the Center for a New American Security – says Kerry and Obama are both “highly engaged in the issue” and that the secretary of state hasn’t given up. “He’s determined to give it a shot,” Goldenberg says. “That’s why he went into it so hard in the first place.” Kerry said last week that while the Mideast peace process "may at this particular moment be a misnomer," it is "nevertheless something that we are deeply committed to, and we will work on it."

US has not abandoned the peace process: It’s only a “reassessment” – probably to be followed by more mediation efforts

Dr. Robert Satloff 2014. (PhD; executive director of The Washington Institute, leading a team of Middle East scholars, experts and policy practitioners; holds the Institute's Howard P. Berkowitz Chair in U.S. Middle East Policy) 12 May 2014 Decision Time on the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process:U.S. Strategy Hits a Critical Juncture <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/decision-time-on-the-israeli-palestinian-peace-process-u.s.-strategy-hits-a>

Perhaps the real impact of Indyk's speech is the implications it may have for senior U.S. officials -- especially Secretary Kerry -- as they mull the critical decision of how to proceed with peacemaking. Currently, U.S. policy is under "reassessment," said Indyk, a term that is pregnant with memories from the Kissinger-era "reassessment." As Indyk noted, however, that past "reassessment" was just a pause between bouts of peacemaking -- only a few months after it was concluded, Washington brokered a breakthrough second disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt.

Obama wants a legacy. Pres. Obama intervenes because he wants to redeem his historical legacy before he leaves office

Dr. Norman Finkelstein 2013. ([Ph.D](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctor_of_Philosophy) in Political Science from [Princeton Univ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princeton_University); both his parents were Jewish Holocaust survivors from Poland) “New Mideast Talks Hang on Old Question: Will U.S. Drop Support for Israeli Annexation of West Bank?” 30 July 2013 <https://buildingbridgesvancouver.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/two-interesting-pieces-on-the-negotiations/>

The U.S. goal is a little bit more interesting, and it requires a historical perspective. If you look at the last three presidencies—Clinton, then Bush and then Obama—in each of the three presidencies, at the end of the terms, the eight-year terms, there were attempts to negotiate a settlement. In the Clinton presidency, the purpose was clearly Clinton wanted to redeem himself after the Monica Lewinsky scandal. In the Bush presidency, the negotiations came in 2008, and the purpose again was pretty clear, that Condoleezza Rice, in particular—she was secretary of state at the time, and she was looking for somehow to redeem her role as the secretary of state in what was the end of the Bush administration a complete disaster. Now Obama is facing the same problem, namely, his is a failed presidency, and even though he’s a narcissist, he knows that the presidency has been a disaster. And just like Clinton and just like the Bush administration, he’s now hoping that maybe he can pull a rabbit out of the hat with the Israel-Palestine conflict and redeem, as Clinton hoped to do and as Condoleezza Rice hoped to do, and redeem his record in at least foreign policy.

JUSTIFICATIONS

U.S. intervention not only doesn’t solve the Israel/Palestinian conflict, it makes it worse

Dr. Rashid Khalidi 2013 (PhD from Oxford Univ.;  Professor of [Modern Arab Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESAAS) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University)) 29 Apr 2013 ‘US mediation made Israeli-Palestinian problem even worse’ [http://rt.com/op-edge/us-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572/](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Frt.com%2Fop-edge%2Fus-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNH4FZLgypL32in7FyLR5giidGnjZA" \t "_blank)

Four years have been wasted so far. I think that if the US doesn’t change its policy they will not even help resolve this conflict but make it even worse. The US is not just a neutral actor. It’s supporting Israel diplomatically, gives Israel $3 billion every year as assistance, much of which seems to me to be used in ways that are a violation of US law, in ways that aren’t defensive – bombing Gaza for example. And finally, it’s hundreds of millions of dollars of American money that go to the settlement enterprises in the West Bank. This is the American participation in making the settlement less likely. So the US has not only helped to resolve this but made the situation worse.

U.S. mediation isn’t solving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Maybe nothing can solve it

Teresa Welsh 2014. (journalist) US NEWS & WORLD REPORT The Middle East Peace Conundrum  11 Dec 2014 <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/11/challenges-face-the-us-as-lead-middle-east-peace-negotiator-between-israel-and-palestine>

The U.S. has long been the chief negotiator in trying to reach a deal between Israelis and Palestinians that would end a decades-old clash between two peoples [claiming the same holy lands as their own](http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/11/18/murder-in-israeli-synagogue-wont-escalate-violence). Yet again and again the process has failed, causing some to say it’s time for a new lead actor to take the stage, even though complexities on the ground indicate neither side will make concessions significant enough to create space for a deal no matter who is trying to mediate.

American mediation cannot solve the Israeli/Palestinian conflict

Teresa Welsh 2014. (journalist) US NEWS & WORLD REPORT The Middle East Peace Conundrum  11 Dec 2014 <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/11/challenges-face-the-us-as-lead-middle-east-peace-negotiator-between-israel-and-palestine>

“The day that the talks broke down on April 1 of this year was the day where it became evident that the period of American ownership of this political process is over,” says Daniel Seidemann, a Jerusalem expert and founder of Terrestrial Jerusalem – an Israeli nongovernmental organization – referencing a period during which disputes over the failed release of Palestinian prisoners and international conventions started the talks' demise. “This conflict will not be resolved primarily through an American-brokered deal between Israelis and Palestinians.”

Obama could spend all his time working with Israelis and Palestinians and it wouldn’t help

Dr. Leon Hadar 2013. (Ph.D. from the School of International Service at [American University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University)) 27 Mar 2013 NATIONAL INTEREST Why Stay in the Middle East? <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/why-stay-the-middle-east-8259>

Indeed, you don't have to be a deep strategic thinker to conclude that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was a major military and diplomatic fiasco (no more Iraqs, please); that Washington exerts very little influence on the political weather (where it’s “spring” or “winter”) in the Arab World, a place where they lost that loving feeling for America a long time ago; or that Israelis and Palestinians are not going to live in peace and harmony anytime soon, even if President Obama would spend the rest of his term engaged in diplomatic psychotherapy sessions with them at Camp David.

Continuing the failed peace process makes U.S., Israel’s, and the Palestinians’ problems worse

International Crisis Group 2012. (independent,non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Undersecretary of State and Ambassador Thomas Pickering.) May 2012, THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES: PALESTINIANS AND THE END OF THE PEACE PROCESS [www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/israel-palestine/122-the-emperor-has-no-clothes-palestinians-and-the-end-of-the-peace-process.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/israel-palestine/122-the-emperor-has-no-clothes-palestinians-and-the-end-of-the-peace-process.aspx) (brackets added)

The trouble with all these domestic and international justifications for not rocking the boat is that they are less and less convincing and that perpetuating the status quo is not cost-free. A process that is turning in circles undermines the credibility of all its advocates. It cannot effectively shelter the U.S. from criticism or Israel from condemnation. Europe can fund a PA [Palestinian Authority] whose expiration date has passed only for so long. The Palestinian leadership is facing ever sharpening questioning of its approach. Most of all, the idea that to end the existing process would create a dangerous vacuum wildly exaggerates the process’s remaining credibility and thus assumes it still serves as a substitute for a vacuum – when in reality it widely is considered vacuous itself.

US mediation has made negotiations worse

**RT news interviewed Dr Rashid Khalidi in 2013 in which they asked him the opening question and then he responds:**

Dr. Rashid Khalidi 2013 (PhD from Oxford Univ.;  Professor of [Modern Arab Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESAAS) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University)) 29 Apr 2013 ‘US mediation made Israeli-Palestinian problem even worse’ [http://rt.com/op-edge/us-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572/](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Frt.com%2Fop-edge%2Fus-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNH4FZLgypL32in7FyLR5giidGnjZA" \t "_blank) (brackets added)

RT [RT news]: You were saying that the US is acting as so-called lawyers of Israel, not as mediators.  
RK [Dr Rashid Khalidi]: I the book I talked about numerous cases, where this is exactly what happened. And I am not abusing the term, which in fact I didn’t create. It was an American diplomat, who’s been engaged for decades in this – Aaron David Miller – who was calling Secretary of State [Henry] Kissinger so. I think it’s an apt term. In fact the US hasn’t been an honest broker. When I was adviser to the Palestinian negotiators from 1991 to 1993 we saw multiple instances of the US supposedly mediating but in fact being even less forthcoming than the Israelis were themselves. It was less willing to take certain daring moves than the Israelis were at certain points.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas says US mediation has failed

*Rami G. Khouri 2014. (director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut) 12 Sept 2014* Abbas will fail at U.N. without Hamas’ backing <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2014/09/12/commentary/world-commentary/abbas-will-fail-at-u-n-without-hamas-backing/>

On Tuesday, Abbas announced that he was disillusioned by more than two decades of failed mediation by the U.S. and would instead seek Palestinian statehood at the United Nations Security Council. If he doesn’t win a commitment from the Security Council to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem within three years, he plans to bring Palestinian grievances to the International Criminal Court and other global institutions.

U.S. has no influence over the Palestinians

International Crisis Group 2012. (independent,non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Undersecretary of State and Ambassador Thomas Pickering.) May 2012, THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES: PALESTINIANS AND THE END OF THE PEACE PROCESS <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Israel%20Palestine/122-the-emperor-has-no-clothes-palestinians-and-the-end-of-the-peace-process.pdf>

The Palestinian leadership held its ground against the Quartet’s entreaties but not those of Jordan’s King Abdullah.82

**END QUOTE. At this point the quote references footnote 82, and we pick up now quoting from that footnote:**

82 This prompted a Palestinian analyst to say, “consider where we are: It is easier for Abbas to say ‘no’ to President Obama than to King Abdullah. What does that say about U.S. influence?”

Intervention fails because the parties aren’t motivated to resolve the conflict

Aaron David Miller 2014. (former senior negotiator in the Mideast peace process; vice-president of th*e Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars* ) The Pitfalls of Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks 13 May 2014 <http://www.cfr.org/israel/pitfalls-israeli-palestinian-peace-talks/p32971> (brackets in original)

[Kerry] believes in negotiations. He believes in diplomacy, and that this truly was the last chance. He fundamentally misjudged how he could move both sides in a sort of last-chance environment, and his statements reflect that. He crossed the line by identifying the very real danger of Israel emerging as an [apartheid](http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/29/politics/kerry-apartheid-controversy/" \t "_blank) state if there were no two-state solutions. But this is part of peace. He has said that there will be violence, there will be boycott, that Israel will lose its demographic majority and no longer be a Jewish state. Some of these things may be true, but it is virtually impossible to frighten, scare, or push Israelis and Palestinians into making these kinds of existential, politically risky decisions if they're not motivated to do so. There simply isn't enough urgency and ownership right now to get them to make those decisions.

5 Presidents have tried and failed to settle the conflict. Palestinians have lost confidence in the U.S.

Dr. Rashid Khalidi 2013 (PhD from Oxford Univ.;  Professor of [Modern Arab Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESAAS) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University)) 29 Apr 2013 ‘US mediation made Israeli-Palestinian problem even worse’ [http://rt.com/op-edge/us-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572/](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Frt.com%2Fop-edge%2Fus-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNH4FZLgypL32in7FyLR5giidGnjZA" \t "_blank) (typographical error and brackets in original)

A number of US presidents including Barack Obama in the early stages of their presidency have tried to push beyond the envelope of what is accepted in terms of the Israelis will let you get away with basically – what the lobbies will accept, what the Israeli PM won’t fight you over. President [Jimmy] Carter tried, President [Ronald] Regan tried, pPesident [George] Bush Sr. tried, President [Bill] Clinton tried and President Obama tried. But in each case they’ve been rebuffed and they haven’t persisted on what they were trying to do. I think we’ve now reached the point where an interim solution, the Palestinian Authority, which was established back in the mid-1990s, it’s been there for almost 20 years and there hasn’t been any resolution of the conflict. Palestinians have lost confidence not just in this president but in the US.

Arab/Israeli peace process is broken, and the U.S. cannot fix it

Aaron David Miller 2014. (former senior negotiator in the Mideast peace process; vice-president of th*e Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars* ) The Pitfalls of Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks 13 May 2014 <http://www.cfr.org/israel/pitfalls-israeli-palestinian-peace-talks/p32971> (brackets in original)

The real [issue] for the United States is that it is adrift in a kind of peace process Bermuda Triangle. It's caught between a two-state solution that the administration feels is simply too important to abandon, and a two-state solution that simply can't be implemented. And it is within that political space that the secretary of state and the president will have to figure out how to manage during the course of the next eighteen months to two years. The options are not good. You go from there to more drastic approaches, and do what my old boss [former secretary of state James] Jim Baker did. You can give out your phone number and basically say, "Call us when you're serious," and allow nature to take its course. You can allow the international community to become more bitter and angry at the Israelis, and to try to pressure them to change their minds or allow the process to surrender to violence—and there will be violence. You could wait to see what kind of impact these unity talks have. Will it result in an effective, authoritative government, or is it a tactical unity? I can't imagine that these unity talks will do much else than provide a gift to every Israeli who's looking for an excuse not to participate in this peace process. There is no honest answer to the question of what the United States does now. And frankly, there shouldn't be. Because we need to first understand the nature of the problem before we run around trying to fix it.

“Camp David Agreement (Egypt/Israel) proves US mediation works” – Response: The parties agreed because it was in their interest, not because of US diplomacy

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from School of International Service at [American Univ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University).) 17 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Romney's Sensible Stance on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/romneys-sensible-stance-israel-palestine-7598>

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the 1979 peace accord between Israel and Egypt was not made in America (Camp David). President Jimmy Carter helped negotiate a settlement that reflected the strategic calculations of both Israelis and Egyptians. They agreed to end the state of war between them because it was in their own core national interests—not as a response to American diplomatic pressure.

“Oslo Agreement proves US mediation works” – Response: Oslo happened without US engagement, and then failed later

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from School of International Service at [American Univ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University).) 17 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Romney's Sensible Stance on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/romneys-sensible-stance-israel-palestine-7598>

At the same time, the so-called Oslo Accord between the Israelis and Palestinians was arrived at without any U.S. engagement. President Bill Clinton served as nothing more than a master of ceremonies during the 1993 signing of the accord by Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat on the White House south lawn. Clinton didn’t make the Israeli and Palestinian leaders do it then, and he actually failed later on in 2000 to negotiate another deal at Camp David. The Israelis and the Palestinians concluded that the costs of ending the conflict would be higher than reaching an agreement. And even the United States, then at the height of its “unipolar moment” as a global military and economic hegemon, could not force them to change their positions.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Benign neglect approach would be more likely to succeed: It would motivate Israel to “do something”

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from School of International Service at [American Univ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University).) 17 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Romney's Sensible Stance on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/romneys-sensible-stance-israel-palestine-7598>

A benign-neglect approach toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of the kind proposed by Romney—which would probably be embraced as a de facto strategy by a second Obama administration—could help send a clear message to the Israelis that the window of opportunity for American engagement in a Middle East peace process is gradually closing. Now is the time for Israel—not the United States—to “do something.

Mediation of the Israel/Palestinian conflict has failed. We need to acknowledge failure and make room for other options

Nicola Nasser 2012. (Arab journalist based in the West Bank) 16 May 2012 “ISRAEL- PALESTINE: “Peace-making” without “Mediators” <http://www.globalresearch.ca/israel-palestine-peace-making-without-mediators/30877>

And the almost twenty-year old U.S.-led and EU-financed “peace process” is still a non-starter for any feasible, credible or sustainable peace-making in any foreseeable future. Failure of the “peace process” to deliver is proof enough that it is inherently infertile, but most importantly it is proof enough that there has never been any serious mediation, or the mediators themselves were only either managing a process instead of trying to solve a conflict, were unqualified, or the parameters of their approach were the wrong ones.   The end result however is that all mediators have failed and it is the time to acknowledge their failure and to make room for other options, like sending back the file of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict to the United Nations, which was responsible for creating the conflict in the first place when the UN General Assembly adopted the non-binding resolution No. 181 for partitioning Palestine in 1947, which triggered a series of Arab – Israeli wars, thus undermining its own main mission as the organization created for the sole purpose of maintaining world peace.

Anybody else would be a better mediator than the U.S.

Dr. Rashid Khalidi 2013 (PhD from Oxford Univ.;  Professor of [Modern Arab Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESAAS) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University)) 29 Apr 2013 ‘US mediation made Israeli-Palestinian problem even worse’ [http://rt.com/op-edge/us-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572/](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Frt.com%2Fop-edge%2Fus-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNH4FZLgypL32in7FyLR5giidGnjZA" \t "_blank)

The US is not going to be removed from this process because they are the sole superpower. The US is the 900-pound gorilla on the block. It’s not going anywhere. However, the addition of any other party, almost literally any country on the face of the Earth with the exception of south Pacific islands that vote with the US no matter what with all respect to them - anybody would be a better mediator than the US. The US has shown such a degree of bias and are so closely connected to the Israeli position on so many issues. Here is the massage – is this not a vital interest for Europeans, for Russia, for China, For India? They get the energy from the Middle East. Yes, the US and Russia are energy sufficient, but the countries that get their energy from the Middle East have vital interest in doing something about this. But they’ve done very, very little. I think they must push a lot harder for a little more fairness, little more evenhandedness in mediating this conflict.

U.S. mediation in the peace process has made the situation considerably worse. We need to start over

Dr. Rashid Khalidi 2013 (PhD from Oxford Univ.;  Professor of [Modern Arab Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESAAS) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University)) 29 Apr 2013 ‘US mediation made Israeli-Palestinian problem even worse’ [http://rt.com/op-edge/us-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572/](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Frt.com%2Fop-edge%2Fus-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNH4FZLgypL32in7FyLR5giidGnjZA" \t "_blank)

There is not peace process and the US is not a force for good in this process. It has made the situation considerably worse over the past three-and-a-half decades. When we went to Madrid in 1991 there were 20,000 Israeli settlers in the occupied territories and there are almost 600,000 now. That’s the result of developments that were allowed to take place and that were supposedly a peace process underway. I would argue that those developments have made the two-state solution impossible. Somebody has to be held accountable for this and a different approach, I think, has to be found. We have yet another administration trying to follow the same approach basically that President Carter negotiated back in 1978 in Camp David. All this should be thrown out of the window.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

“Harms US interests” – Response: Only important US interest in the region is oil. Non-intervention will not harm that interest

Dr. Stephen M. Walt 2014. (Ph.D. in Political Science; [professor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professor) of [international affairs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_relations) at [Harvard University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University)'s [John F. Kennedy School of Government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy_School_of_Government) ) The case for doing nothing in the Middle East 11 Aug 2014 <http://theweek.com/article/index/266111/the-case-for-doing-nothing-in-the-middle-east>

Moreover, the Middle East today is riven by a series of overlapping conflicts along multiple fault lines, driven in good part by protracted government failures and exacerbated by misguided outside meddling. There's the division between Sunni and Shiite, of course, and between Islamists (of many different stripes) and traditional authoritarians (also of several different types). Add to that mix the conflicts along sectarian lines (as in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and elsewhere), and the recurring suspicions between Arabs and Persians. And don't forget the conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, which still reverberates throughout the Arab and Islamic world. Here's where Americans need to remember the United States may have permanent *interests*in the Middle East, but not necessarily permanent friends. In terms of its strategic interests, the central U.S. goal since World War II has been to prevent any single power from dominating the oil rich Persian Gulf. However troubled we may be by all the divisions and quarrels in the region, those conflicts also make the possibility that one power will dominate the region more remote than ever. Does anyone seriously think Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Islamic State (formerly known as ISIS), the Kurds, Russia, Turkey, China or *anyone else* is going to take over and manage this vast and turbulent area, and smooth out all these rifts and feuds? Of course not. And if that is the case, then America's primary strategic goal will be met whether Washington lifts a finger or not.

“Harms US interests” – Response: Nobody thinks Israeli/Palestinian conflict harms US interests

Dr. Rashid Khalidi 2013 (PhD from Oxford Univ.;  Professor of [Modern Arab Studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MESAAS) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University)) 29 Apr 2013 ‘US mediation made Israeli-Palestinian problem even worse’ [http://rt.com/op-edge/us-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572/](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Frt.com%2Fop-edge%2Fus-mediation-israeli-palestinian-problem-572%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNH4FZLgypL32in7FyLR5giidGnjZA" \t "_blank)

In the past it’s clear that achieving peace between the major countries like Egypt and Israel was in the US interest, because back in the days of the cold war a clash between the two countries had a potential of a superpower conflict in 1963, for example. Unfortunately on the Palestinian issue there is no body of powerful interest, that is to say ‘You have got to resolve this because it will be harmful in this or that way for the US if you don’t’.

“Need mediation or peace process will fail!” – Response: There’s nothing to mediate. The parties don’t see agreement as being in their own best interests, and it won’t change any time soon

Teresa Welsh 2014. (journalist) US NEWS & WORLD REPORT The Middle East Peace Conundrum  11 Dec 2014 <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/11/challenges-face-the-us-as-lead-middle-east-peace-negotiator-between-israel-and-palestine> (brackets added)

Yet the catch-22 and largest hurdle of the conflict is that even if the U.S. or another international actor could bring both the Israelis and Palestinians back to the table, there’s still no evidence the Middle Eastern leaders see an agreement as being in their interests. “You simply do not have the type of ownership on the part of Netanyahu and Abbas required to create the kinds of heroic decisions and take the kinds of risks that are necessary,” [former Mid-East peace negotiator Aaron David] Miller says. “The problem is not the absence of an effective mediator. The vast majority of the problem is because neither of these two, Abbas or Netanyahu, is prepared to pay the price of even getting close enough to allow a mediator to close the gaps. That is not going to change anytime soon.”

“They need mediators or peace process will fail!” – Response: There are plenty of mediators, but they always fail

Nicola Nasser 2012. (Arab journalist based in the West Bank) 16 May 2012 “ISRAEL- PALESTINE: “Peace-making” without “Mediators” <http://www.globalresearch.ca/israel-palestine-peace-making-without-mediators/30877>

A surplus of mediators have been around all the time, including the heavy weight Quartet of the UN, U.S., EU and Russia, as well as heaps of terms of reference of UNSC resolutions, bilateral signed accords and “roadmaps,” in addition to marathon bilateral talks that have left no stone unearthed, international as well as regional conferences were never on demand to facilitate the “peace process,” which has been lavishly financed to keep moving. However the Palestinian – Israeli peace-making is still elusive as ever as Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot” has been, without a glimpse of light at the end of the endless tunnel of Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory and people.

“Solving Middle East peace is key to stability in the entire region” – Response: Not any more. Mid-East problems today are not linked to Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from the School of International Service at [American University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University)) 19 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Realism and Reality on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/realism-reality-israel-palestine-7638>

In any case, one of my main points was that the reality in the Middle East has changed dramatically since 2000, and the power of the more nationalist and religious forces in the Israeli and Palestinian communities has been strengthened as a result of demographic and domestic political changes as the conflict itself has become more "localized." It does not have the force to ignite a regional war, which is more likely to happen as an outcome of Israeli tensions with Hezbollah and Iran. I am not even sure that the old axiom—that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would help reduce the power of the radicals in the Middle East—applies anymore. Much of what is happening in the Arab world today reflects political, economic and social pressures that have very little to do with the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

“Disengagement will hurt Israel” – Response: It’s better for Israel to get more engaged in the process than to wait for the US to do it.

Dr. Leon Hadar 2012. (Ph.D. from School of International Service at [American Univ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_University).) 17 Oct 2012 THE NATIONAL INTEREST Romney's Sensible Stance on Israel-Palestine <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/romneys-sensible-stance-israel-palestine-7598>

Many of Israel’s friends in the United States will be worried that the lack of resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the continuing control of the West Bank pose long-term threats to Israel’s survival and to its identity as a Jewish and democratic state. But they have to understand that no American president, including one committed to reviving the peace process such as Obama, can or should become a stand-in for an Israeli leadership and public that will have to make their choices sooner rather than latter.

“Disengagement will hurt Israel” – Turn: Failed mediation will hurt Israel. The international community will increase punitive measures against Israel

Yousef Munayyer 2013. (Executive Director of the [The Jerusalem Fund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jerusalem_Fund) for Education and Community Development and its educational program, the Palestine Center; former policy analyst with the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee; PhD candidate at Univ of Maryland. ) “New Mideast Talks Hang on Old Question: Will U.S. Drop Support for Israeli Annexation of West Bank?” 30 July 2013 <https://buildingbridgesvancouver.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/two-interesting-pieces-on-the-negotiations/>

What these negotiations do is they allow the Israelis to say, “Well, actually, our occupation may still be temporary,” and create a façade to cover their continued colonial activities in the West Bank. Once these negotiations fail—and I believe ultimately they will—that façade will fall. And once again, we will be looking at—the international community will be looking at — what is essentially an apartheid system, and the continued isolation of Israel will grow. And more and more states around the world will move towards punitive policies to get Israel to change its behavior, knowing full well that Washington will not be able to deliver any sort of agreement.

1. *International Crisis Group 2012. (independent,non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group is chaired by former U.S. Undersecretary of State and Ambassador Thomas Pickering.) May 2012, THE EMPEROR HAS NO CLOTHES: PALESTINIANS AND THE END OF THE PEACE PROCESS* [*www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/israel-palestine/122-the-emperor-has-no-clothes-palestinians-and-the-end-of-the-peace-process.aspx*](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/israel-palestine/122-the-emperor-has-no-clothes-palestinians-and-the-end-of-the-peace-process.aspx) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)