

PRAISE FOR
NEGOTIATING ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE
American Leadership in the Middle East

“This rigorous, non-partisan, no-holds-barred analysis of the most recent twenty years of U.S. effort in Middle East peacemaking is essential reading for practitioners and scholars. The operational implications have powerful potential in the hands of leaders who care about the results as well as the politics of American statecraft in the region.”

—Chester A. Crocker, the James R. Schlesinger
Professor of Strategic Studies, Georgetown University

“I commend the authors of this book for their balanced and critical analysis of the U.S. role in one of the most pernicious conflicts of our time. The book publishes at a critical juncture for U.S. leadership in the Middle East. Its insights will be invaluable for many years to come.”

—Joschka Fischer, former foreign minister and vice
chancellor of Germany

“Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace is a tour de force that deserves wide readership not only in the official, journalistic, and think tank worlds but also in academia. This book should be widely utilized as a teaching tool by professors who want to add real life practices to the plethora of academic theory about conflict resolution and peacemaking.”

—Samuel W. Lewis, former U.S. ambassador to
Israel and former director of the Policy Planning
Staff, U.S. Department of State

“Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace comes at a pivotal moment for U.S. foreign policy. While delivering a critical assessment of the United States’ mixed record in mitigating the conflict, this study reasserts America’s crucial role in the Middle East peace process and provides a solid framework from which American policymakers and mediators can work to facilitate a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement.”

—George J. Mitchell, former U.S. senator

“This volume is the most forceful, thorough, concrete, and concise analysis of the U.S. performance in the Arab-Israeli peace process since it was born as a political process in 1974. The sharp call for energetic, determined, and disciplined perseverance in pursuit of the clear-cut U.S. interest in an Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace sets the bar for our next president. It’s a superb statement.”

—Harold H. Saunders, former assistant secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, U.S. Department of State

“In a direct and diplomatic analysis, this book dissects the past decades of U.S. inadequacies and outlines the requirements for an effective U.S. policy in the Middle East. It is the ‘1975 Brookings Report’ of the next election, and it points sternly and creatively to the lessons and opportunities that we will be criminal to ignore. The United States Institute of Peace has done the nation a service in sponsoring the project, and the authors and their team have done the world a favor in looking so clearly into the past and the future.”

—I. William Zartman, the Jacob Blaustein Professor of International Organizations and Conflict Resolution, Johns Hopkins University–SAIS

NEGOTIATING ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE



NEGOTIATING ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE

American Leadership in the Middle East

DANIEL C. KURTZER

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with

William B. Quandt, Steven L. Spiegel,
and Shibley Telhami



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE PRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The views expressed in this book are those of the authors alone. They do not reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace or any person interviewed or consulted by the study group.

United States Institute of Peace
1200 17th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036-3011
www.usip.org

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First published 2008

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Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standards for Information Science—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kurtzer, Daniel.

Negotiating Arab-Israeli peace : American leadership in the Middle East / Daniel Kurtzer, Scott Lasensky.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-60127-030-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Arab-Israeli conflict--1993--Peace. 2. Israel--Politics and government--1993- I. Lasensky, Scott. II. United States Institute of Peace. III. Title.

DS119.76.K87 2007

956.05--dc22

2007044149

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FOREWORD

Since the founding of Israel, successive U.S. administrations have tried various stratagems and tactics to bring about peace between Arabs and Israelis. Despite an outsized investment in diplomatic energy, foreign aid, and presidential prestige, however, this bitter conflict has endured, eroding the U.S. position in the region and undermining American interests.

To understand why the United States has had such a mixed record on Arab-Israeli peacemaking, and to explore what it would take for the United States to help broker peace, the U.S. Institute of Peace convened a study group in 2006–07 with some of America's most experienced senior authorities in the field. Led by Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer and anchored by Scott B. Lasensky, William B. Quandt, Steven L. Spiegel, and Shibley Telhami, the study group conducted countless hours of confidential interviews in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East with former negotiators, political figures, and civil society leaders from all sides of the conflict. The product of these efforts, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East*, sets forth a compelling, interests-based framework for American engagement in the peace process; provides a critical assessment of U.S. diplomacy since the end of the Cold War; and offers a set of ten core lessons to guide the efforts of future American negotiators.

In this volume, Kurtzer and Lasensky deconstruct America's involvement in the peace process and identify both strengths and weaknesses with respect to policy formulation and execution. Many diplomatic insiders have made valuable contributions to

this assessment. *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace* is not mired in the details of day-to-day diplomacy nor shaped by the limited perspective of a memoir. Instead, the book is organized thematically to give readers the full scope of the group's experience and expertise. While many of the lessons are derived from the Arab-Israeli context, the book also serves as a general guide for negotiators, academics, and students of conflicts worldwide.

As part of the United States Institute of Peace's congressional mandate to promote research, education, and training on the peaceful management and resolution of international conflicts, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace* is the latest in a distinguished list of volumes the Institute has published on this conflict. In 1991, Sam Lewis and Ken Stein authored *Making Peace Among Arabs and Israelis*, a report that delved deeply into the U.S. negotiating experience during the Cold War. More recently, the Institute has explored the conflict in *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process* edited by Tamara Cofman Wittes, and *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process* by Adnan Abu-Odeh. A recent Special Report on the conflict, *From Rejection to Acceptance: Israeli National Security Thinking and Palestinian Statehood*, was authored by Shlomo Brom.

Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace represents an important addition to the growing body of scholarship on this seemingly intractable conflict. It provides present and future negotiators with both a resource for assessing past diplomatic efforts and a set of guidelines for shaping future initiatives.

RICHARD H. SOLOMON, PRESIDENT
UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

THE STUDY GROUP ON ARAB-ISRAELI PEACEMAKING

Organization and Members

From its inception in fall 2006, the study group has been chaired and codirected by Daniel Kurtzer, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel and Egypt and currently a professor at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. The project is also codirected by Scott Lasensky, a senior research associate at the U.S. Institute of Peace and acting vice president of the Institute's Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention.

The study group's work began by forming a core team of some of the most respected academic experts in the United States on Arab-Israeli relations. Professors William Quandt (University of Virginia), Steven Spiegel (University of California, Los Angeles), and Shibley Telhami (University of Maryland and the Brookings Institution) are three of the most widely cited and trusted authorities on the subject. Each has made significant academic contributions and been involved in the policy realm as well. All three have previously contributed to the Institute's program on Arab-Israeli peacemaking. Telhami also served as a member of the Institute's board of directors, and Kurtzer and Quandt were members of the earlier Lewis-Stein project.

Members of the core team were key to the development of this book, which was authored by Kurtzer and Lasensky. Our findings also benefited from the contributions of the project's

two special advisers, Ambassador Samuel Lewis and Professor Kenneth Stein.

Since fall 2006 the study group has met with more than one hundred current and former policymakers, parliamentarians, diplomats, academic experts, community leaders, and civil-society figures. Consultations involved not-for-attribution interviews. Meetings were conducted with Americans, Israelis, Arabs, and Europeans. Numerous interviews were conducted in the region. A wide range of opinion shapers and next-generation leaders were also consulted during this process.

On the U.S. side, the study group consulted with virtually every U.S. diplomat and policymaker involved in Arab-Israeli negotiations since the end of the Cold War. There was extremely high interest in meeting with the study group. In addition, consultations were conducted with members of Congress (House and Senate), outside experts, civil-society figures, and community leaders (see full list on page xvii).

Although this book is principally designed as a guidebook for future U.S. negotiators, the findings are also intended to influence the broader policy community and inform public discourse. Arabs and Israelis disagree profoundly on the issues that divide them and what they expect from the United States, but all agree on—and actively seek—a strong U.S. role. Therefore, the publication should also be of interest to the parties themselves, which is why the Institute is committed to promoting the study group's findings in the region.

Profiles of Study Group Members

Daniel Kurtzer, Chair and Codirector

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer holds the S. Daniel Abraham Chair in Middle East Policy Studies at Princeton University's Wood-

row Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. President Bill Clinton appointed Kurtzer as United States Ambassador to Egypt, where he served from 1997 to 2001. President George W. Bush appointed Kurtzer as United States Ambassador to Israel, where he served from 2001 to 2005. Kurtzer, a thirty-year veteran of the United States Foreign Service, was an early member of the State Department's peace team and was deeply involved in the negotiations that led to the Madrid peace conference. The author of numerous essays about U.S. diplomacy and the Middle East and a leading public commentator and lecturer, Kurtzer holds a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University. In 2006 he worked with the Institute as an adviser to the Iraq Study Group on regional and strategic affairs.



Scott Lasensky, Codirector

Dr. Scott Lasensky is a senior research associate at the United States Institute of Peace, focusing on Arab-Israeli relations and the regional dimensions of the Iraq crisis. He is also acting vice president of the Institute's Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. He has taught courses on Israel, the Middle East, and U.S. foreign policy at Georgetown University and Mount Holyoke College. Lasensky was a fellow in the Studies Program at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and a research fellow in foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution. He holds a Ph.D. in politics from Brandeis University. Lasensky was awarded a Fulbright research fellowship and was a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations.



William Quandt, Study Group Member

William Quandt holds the Edward R. Stettinius Chair in Politics at the University of Virginia. One of the most widely cited and best-known experts on U.S. policy in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, Quandt served on the National Security Council under presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter and participated in the first Camp David peace summit in 1978. The author of numerous books and articles, his study of U.S. involvement in Arab-Israeli relations, *Peace Process* (Brookings Institution/University of California, third edition, 2005), is a standard text in the field. He has contributed to a number of Institute programs on the Middle East. The recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, Professor Quandt also serves on the Board of Trustees of the American University in Cairo. Quandt received a Ph.D. in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 2006 he worked with the Institute as an adviser to the Iraq Study Group on regional and strategic affairs.



Steven Spiegel, Study Group Member

Steven L. Spiegel, Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), is among the world's foremost experts on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. He is the director of the Center for Middle East Development (CMED) at UCLA and of Track II Middle East programs at the University of California's Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation. Widely respected in



the United States and throughout the Middle East for his leadership in the field of Track II diplomacy, Spiegel is the author of the award-winning *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict* (University of Chicago, 1985). He has authored or coauthored over one hundred books, journal articles, and essays, including a major review of contemporary international relations, *World Politics in a New Era*, the fourth edition of which is currently under preparation for Oxford University Press. Dr. Spiegel has advised several presidential campaigns and members of Congress on Arab-Israeli diplomacy. In 2004 and 2005 he was one of three major contributors to the Institute's *Pathways to Peace* initiative on Arab-Israeli diplomacy. Spiegel received a Ph.D. in government from Harvard University.

Shibley Telhami, Study Group Member

Shibley Telhami holds the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland and is a senior fellow in foreign policy studies at the Saban Center at the Brookings Institution. One of the most recognized U.S. experts on the Middle East, Telhami has been consulted by numerous policymakers in several administrations and has testified frequently to Congress. A former adviser to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, Telhami is the author of numerous books and essays on international affairs and the Middle East. His book, *The Stakes: America and the Middle East*, was selected by *Foreign Affairs* as one of the five best books on the Middle East for 2003. A former Institute board member, Telhami has participated in a wide range of Institute programs on the Middle East. Professor Telhami received a Ph.D. in political science from the Univer-



sity of California, Berkeley. In 2006 he worked with the Institute as an adviser to the Iraq Study Group on regional and strategic affairs.

INTERVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS

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Einat Wilf

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Mohammed al-Masri

Mohammed Abu Ruman

Marwan Muasher

Jawad Anani

Jamil Nimri

Mustafa Hamarneh

Osamha Obeidat

Abdul-Ilah al-Khatib

Ibrahim Seif

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Yasir Abed Rabbo

Ziad Abu Amr

Nisreen Haj Ahmed

Ma'en Areikat

Khaled Elgindy

Saeb Erekat

Salam Fayyad

Akram Hanieh

Samir Huleileh

Issa Kassassieh

Ghassan Khatib

Mouin Rabbani

Mohammed Rachid

Khalil Shikaki

Saudi Arabia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are deeply grateful to a number of people whose assistance was invaluable to this project. First and foremost, we owe a debt of gratitude to the other three members of our core study group—William Quandt, Steven Spiegel, and Shibley Telhami—also known as our dream team. They demonstrated a commitment, seriousness, and intelligence that place them in a league of their own.

Many individuals at the United States Institute of Peace were essential to our work. Ambassador Richard Solomon, the Institute's president, was generous with his support and intellectual guidance. Executive vice president Patricia Thomson and vice presidents Paul Stares and David Smock were committed to this project from its inception, and former vice president Paul Stares was an early advocate of this effort. Without the assistance and support of Michael Graham and his budget team and Valerie Norville and the publications department, the project would not have functioned so smoothly. Members of the Institute's Arab-Israeli conflict team offered valuable input and generous support at every stage.

Jamie Arnett and Robert Grace provided critical research and program support. Their devotion to this initiative often went beyond the nine-to-five routine. We extend our special appreciation to Rob for shepherding the publication of this volume.

Ambassador Samuel Lewis and Professor Kenneth Stein served as special advisers, a fitting and well-deserved title. Our

work would not have been possible without the cooperation we received from approximately one hundred current and former policymakers, parliamentarians, diplomats, and civil-society leaders—Americans, Arabs, Israelis, and Europeans—who were consulted for the project, and to whom we owe our appreciation for their time and candor.

An external, academic reviewer provided extensive comments, which we appreciate. We also wish to thank the many colleagues at the Institute and elsewhere—too many to name here—who commented on various drafts, offered advice, and shared research materials.

At the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, thanks to Dean Anne-Marie Slaughter for her support of the Abraham chair and this project.

On a personal note, a special word of gratitude to our wives, Sheila Doppelt Kurtzer and Elise Pressma Lasensky, whose support was a key ingredient of this project. For their love and advice, we are deeply indebted.

As the authors of this study, we take sole responsibility for its content.

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January 2008