



CHANGING MINDS, MAKING PEACE:
U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGY IN SUPPORT OF AN
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TWO-STATE SOLUTION

PUBLISHED BY THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM OF RICE UNIVERSITY'S
BAKER INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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Foreword

Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying that “public sentiment is everything.” Accordingly, public diplomacy plays an important role in the promotion of the national interest by listening, understanding and then informing, engaging, and influencing people around the world. The Arab–Israeli conflict remains a visible and significant point of contention that affects the relations between the United States and many Arab and Muslim countries. A comprehensive resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, in particular, would help reduce tensions and serve the national security interests of the United States, Israel, and Palestine, as well as many of the other countries in the region. The role of public diplomacy in supporting the resolution of the conflict has too often been neglected or underestimated.

After the breakdown of the latest round of negotiations in April 2014, a significant new initiative is required now to pursue an expanded public diplomacy program, in close coordination with the Israelis and Palestinians, to buttress the efforts of the U.S. administration in advancing prospects for a future agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The unfortunate history of peacemaking attempts, both past and present, demonstrates that public opinion has the potential to constrain negotiating positions of the parties as well as undermine the compromises and understandings that support a sustainable agreement. A single word from the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Israel, or the President of the Palestinian Authority can harden formidable antagonism among constituents. As Middle East Envoy Martin Indyk noted of the most recent series of talks, “Public opinion was another element that we found very challenging ... [Israelis and Palestinians] are both physically intertwined and psychologically separated and terrorism and occupation have added to the trauma between the peoples, making everything harder.” In this context, public support is essential.

As underscored in the 2003 congressionally mandated report “Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World,”¹ it is important to separate questions of policy from questions of communicating that policy. While the United States cannot and should not simply change its policies to suit public opinion abroad, we must use the tools of public diplomacy to assess the likely

1 See “Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World,” a report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, October 1, 2003, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/24882.pdf>.

effectiveness of particular policies. Without such assessment, our policies could produce unintended consequences that do not serve our interests.

Public diplomacy must become an integral part of the process of policy formulation. A U.S. public diplomacy strategy on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations should first identify U.S., Israeli, and Palestinian interests in resolving the conflict. Public diplomacy officials must have access to the decision-makers and to the crafting of negotiation strategies in order to advise on methods of presentation and likely public responses. Nonetheless, warnings of adverse reactions should not alter policy, but rather prepare policymakers.

This report is the product of the Baker Institute's program on Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution. It is complementary to the institute's recent policy reports on the territorial dimensions of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement and the need for U.S. engagement in restarting negotiations.² The public diplomacy initiative contained herein represents the combination of separate contributions from Israeli and Palestinian teams of experts led, respectively, by Baker Institute fellows Yair Hirschfeld, Ph.D., and Samih Al-Abid, Ph.D. Supplemental conversations and interviews with subject matter experts in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Washington, D.C., and Oslo also guided the assessments and policy recommendations.

This report first briefly assesses the environment for public diplomacy in both Israeli and Palestinian societies before presenting a potential strategy for expanded public diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian context. We hope the findings will be a useful guide for negotiators once Israeli-Palestinian talks are resumed.



The Honorable Edward P. Djerejian
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Baker Institute for Public Policy

² See "Getting to the Territorial Endgame of an Israeli-Palestinian Peace Settlement," a special report by the Israeli-Palestinian Workshop of the Baker Institute's Conflict Resolution Forum, February 2, 2010, <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/1f9376a2/BI-pub-IPTerritorialEndgame-020210.pdf>; and "Re-engaging the Israelis and the Palestinians: Why an American Role in Initiating Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations is Necessary and How It Can Be Accomplished," published by the Conflict Resolution Program of Rice University's Baker Institute, March 13, 2013, <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/4c17ebcc/re-engaging-the-israelis-and-the-palestinians-why-an-american-role-in-initiating-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-is-necessary-and-how-it-an-be-accomplished.pdf>.

Key Findings

- The end of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians in April 2014 has opened the way for unilateral action on both sides that may push the shared goal of an Israeli state and a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security further out of reach.
- Public opinion, which influences policy in both Israel and Palestine and which will test any peace deal through expected referendums on both sides, will continue to play an important role in the current context. Polls show that a majority of Israelis and Palestinians still support the two-state solution. By comparison, less than one-third of Palestinians and Israelis polled support the creation of a binational “one-state solution” with equal rights for both peoples.³
- Although support for the “two states for two peoples” formula remains relatively high, most of the Israeli and Palestinian publics are deeply skeptical that the conflict will end in their lifetime, and many doubt that peace is possible at all.⁴
- Much of the necessary organization for a successful public diplomacy campaign can be found in U.S. public diplomacy efforts in Israel and Palestine. Public diplomacy represents one of the negotiation tracks for Secretary of State John Kerry’s peace initiative, and the public diplomacy team has given special attention to validating and supporting a potential negotiated framework and final agreement using political, religious, media, and youth constituencies in Israel, Palestine, and the United States. These networks can serve as the platform for an expanded public diplomacy strategy in Israel and Palestine.
- Accordingly, and given the gap in the desire for a peaceful solution and the deep pessimism that a solution can be reached, there is an essential need for the United States and its partners to pursue a strengthened public diplomacy campaign in close coordination with the Israelis and Palestinians.

3 “Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll,” (news release, Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, July 2, 2013), <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2013/p48ejoint.html>.

4 “Israel & Palestine: 20 Years After Oslo,” Zogby Research Services, January 23, 2014, <http://www.zogbyresearchservices.com/israel-and-palestine-20-years-after-oslo>.

- The goal of the campaign would be to invest greater time and resources in public diplomacy efforts that:
 - o Listen to the opinions, interests, and perspectives of a wide segment of Israeli and Palestinian societies, including groups that have traditionally been excluded or alienated by past peace initiatives, and take action to involve them in conflict transformation mechanisms;
 - o Inform and educate the Israeli, Palestinian, and regional public on the values and principles the U.S. and its allies believe will support a final settlement;
 - o Identify and emphasize to constituencies on both sides the costs and benefits of peace; and
 - o Highlight credible mechanisms through which an agreement might be reached and sustained.
- The Baker Institute's Palestinian team emphasizes three elements currently eroding public support for negotiations and the prospects for a final agreement: 1) the reality on the ground and the daily hardships Palestinians face from occupation and settlement expansion; 2) the lack of widespread contact between Palestinians and Israelis, which breeds distrust and negative perceptions; and 3) a lack of transparency and substantive information about the negotiations, which creates confusion, alienates groups, and impedes movement toward a two-state solution.
- In assessing the public diplomacy landscape in Israel, the Baker Institute's Israeli team notes that a majority of Israelis are interested in creating a viable and successful Palestinian state, while also fearing an agreement in name only will result in a "failed state." Israel has the political and social capital necessary to empower the Palestinian Authority, and wide sectors of the Israeli public are interested in developing contacts and workable relationships with Palestinian counterparts in trade, tourism, technology, science, health, and more. Most Israelis view the existing alliance with the United States as a key national security interest, which makes the U.S. role in peace negotiations a powerful tool to advance negotiations with wide support within the Israeli political system. Although the stagnation of negotiations in recent years have decreased trust and increased extremist Israeli action, a sizeable constituency for peace remains and offers a sufficient foundation for a successful public diplomacy strategy.
- The Israeli and Palestinian perspectives reveal the following key points for a public diplomacy strategy:
 - o Rather than using public diplomacy to "sell" an agreement or a negotiated framework after the fact, policymakers should incorporate the tools of public diplomacy into the creation of policy positions and strategies to reach initial agreements. This includes identifying key milestones for state-building and conflict transformation, and highlighting successful agreements achieved on the basis of the principle of "what is agreed upon can be implemented." Potential

- areas for conflict transformation include water and resource development, the Initiative for the Palestinian Economy (IPE), land-air-sea coordination, and metropolitan planning in Jerusalem.
- o The credibility of negotiations is critical. Third party mediators, whether American or otherwise, must be viewed as acting out of their own interests and respecting the vital interests of both the Israelis and the Palestinians.
 - o Public diplomacy strategies should address the key priorities and perspectives of both sides of the conflict—avoiding the appearance of unguided “incrementalism” as a key Palestinian concern, and emphasizing the tangible benefits of peace on the Israeli side in contrast to the costs of continued occupation and conflict.
 - o The people-to-people programs of public diplomacy should be used to diminish negative stereotypes of Israelis and Palestinians, marginalize spoiler actions, and engage “veto groups” with greater transparency to prevent their alienation from official negotiations.
 - o Special attention should be given to the Arab Peace Initiative (API), which will bring additional partners to the Palestinian side in terms of responsibility for the outcome of peace negotiations and can be a major inducement for Israelis in terms of normalized relations with the Arab world.

Public Diplomacy Outlook in Palestine

Recent public opinion polls in Palestine show a significant decrease in public support for Israeli–Palestinian negotiations and the peace process in general. During the 1990s, more than 80% of Palestinians surveyed supported peace talks with Israel.⁵ Twenty years later, the percentage of supporters varies between 50% and 60%, depending on conditions on the ground during the survey dates.

Palestinian support for peace talks with Israel rose slightly after the restart of direct negotiations in 2013 and, according to a poll by the Arab World for Research & Development (AWRAD), a slim majority of respondents (51% among West Bank respondents and 46% among Gaza respondents) supported the most recent round of dialogue.^{6,7} The majority of Palestinians surveyed (52%) also supported a two–state solution, with support in the West Bank (57%) higher than in the Gaza Strip (44%). With regard to the proper strategy to gain independence, a majority of Palestinians in the AWRAD poll (60%) preferred peaceful approaches to achieving an independent state, including nonviolent resistance (19%); direct negotiations (22%); and an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations (19%).

A second poll revealed the overwhelming lack of confidence that peace negotiations will lead anywhere.⁸ For example, the poll showed that while 50% of the public supported Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’ decision to resume direct Palestinian–Israeli negotiations, 69% expected these negotiations to fail. A majority (56%) of respondents also believed that the two–state solution is no longer practical due to settlement expansion, and a larger majority (68%) believed that the chances for the creation of a Palestinian state in the next five years are very small or nonexistent. Concerning the option of a single, binational state, the so–called “one–state solution,” 66% of the public opposed this option, while only 32% said they support an agreement in which Jews and Arabs enjoy equal status in one state.

5 “Public Opinion Poll No. 23,” Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, June 30, 1996, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll23c.html#append>. Results drawn from question #13.

6 “Negotiations, Evaluation of Government, and Elections,” Arab World for Research and Development, January 2, 2014, <http://www.awrad.org/page.php?id=77JBIUULWea9850458AcEMBIG32py>.

7 “Palestinian Public Opinion–September 2013,” Palestinian Peace Coalition and the Geneva Initiative, September 17, 2013, <http://www.geneva-accord.org/mainmenu/ppc-palestinian-public-opinion-polling-september-2013>.

8 “Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 50,” Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, December 22, 2013, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2013/p50e.html>.

While a majority of Palestinians prefer a peaceful, two-state settlement for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a majority of those polled unfortunately do not believe there is an Israeli partner willing to sign a realistic peace agreement. The failure of the peace process from Oslo to the most recent round of U.S.-mediated talks has decreased the level of support from Palestinians and Israelis. Those who strongly supported the two-state solution 20 years ago have not shifted to another framework for resolving the conflict, but have undoubtedly moderated their expectations. One can say that a majority for

One can say that a majority for peace still exists, yet the same majority does not believe the goal of an independent Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel is achievable anytime soon.

peace still exists, yet the same majority does not believe the goal of an independent Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside Israel is achievable anytime soon.

Palestinian public opinion is shaped by several elements. First, the reality on the ground as the result of Israeli policies, especially regarding settlement building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, creates confusion about the intent of Israeli policies and the possibilities for alleviating hardships related to the occupation.

Second, the lack of contact between

Palestinians and Israelis breeds distrust and furthers the negative attitudes of each side toward the other. This dynamic has increased in the last 10 years and applies not only to interactions between the Israeli army, settlers, and the Palestinians, but also to the majority of people in Palestine and Israel proper.

A third component undermining confidence in a sustainable peace agreement is the absence of substantive information about the negotiations. The most recent round of talks between the Israelis and Palestinians was tightly controlled, and information on the substance of discussions was scarce. Although some private and confidential conversations are needed to reach compromises between the parties, negotiations conducted in complete secrecy leave the public to learn about key events from secondary sources, including unconfirmed media reports that can be misleading and counterproductive. The lack of information results in an inability for people to judge accurately the proposed solutions as leaked by the media.

Public Diplomacy Outlook in Israel

A majority of the Israeli public supports a two-state solution and, while pessimistic about the outlook for peace, sees the value of continuing efforts to reach an agreement.⁹ According to a recent survey conducted by New Wave-Nielsen Alliance, two-thirds of the Israeli respondents showed an interest in reaching an agreement based on a regional approach and the Arab Peace Initiative.¹⁰ For example, 72% responded that Israelis are interested in reaching an end-of-conflict agreement. Furthermore, 63% responded that they are “sure” or “think” that they would, in principle, support a regional peace agreement, even before the components of this agreement were presented to them. However, a significant majority (77%) is also convinced that the Palestinians are not interested in reaching a similar agreement.

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The stagnation of the peace process in recent years and the breakdown of direct negotiations in April have diminished Israeli confidence in the peace process and trust in Palestinian intentions for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. A majority (68%) of Israelis surveyed after the breakdown of negotiations supported the government’s decision to suspend the talks. Likewise, most of the Israeli public views Hamas-Fatah reconciliation as a setback for the peace process, with 58% disagreeing that reconciliation means greater validity for a future agreement.¹¹

In addition to this discouraging reality on the ground, leading Israeli politicians launched strong campaigns preempting any consideration of negotiating Israeli concessions by playing to the fears, traumas, and distrust among many segments of Israeli society. Even more extreme, concerted “price tag” attacks terrorizing Palestinian communities aim to unleash a vicious circle of violence to undermine the peace negotiations.

9 “The Peace Index–November 2013,” The Israel Democracy Institute, November 28, 2013, http://www.peaceindex.org/files/Peace_Index_Data_November_2013_Eng.pdf.

10 “Israelis and the API,” New Wave-Nielsen Alliance, February 26, 2014, <http://www.israelpolicyforum.org/sites/ipforum2/files/IPI%20Group%20API%20Poll%20-%20Feb%2026,%20NewWave%20-%20Nielsen%20Research.pdf>.

11 “The Peace Index–April 2014,” The Israel Democracy Institute, April 29, 2014, http://en.idi.org.il/media/3164007/Peace_Index_Data_April_2014-Eng.pdf.

Nonetheless, the pragmatic, pro-peace camp within the current Israeli legislature potentially controls 59 of the 120 seats (Yesh Atid 19, Labor 15, Hatnua 6, Meretz, 6, UAL-Ta'al 4, Hadash 4, Balad 3, Kadima 2) and can possibly counterbalance the pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from right-wing parties opposing any Israeli concessions. President Shimon Peres has said that after his term ends in the summer of 2014, he will continue promoting a peace agenda and strengthening the pro-peace coalition in the Israeli legislature.

The current pause in direct negotiations offers an important opportunity to launch a public diplomacy campaign addressing Israeli and Palestinian conceptions about the failure to achieve peace. Both sides want Palestine to be a successful, prosperous, secure, and stable state and fear the consequences of it becoming a failed state. A clear, U.S.-led public diplomacy strategy for peace in the Middle East is needed to replace the atmosphere of despair with one of hope and confidence in the renewal and the sustainment of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

Goals and Strategies for Expanded U.S. Public Diplomacy

Recent opinion polls in Israel and Palestine reveal major misconceptions surrounding attitudes toward peace both between and within the two societies. These gaps in understanding highlight the need for greater public diplomacy efforts in support of peace, and for a public diplomacy strategy that restores confidence in the path of negotiations and a successful outcome. Increasing public support is critical not only to change the foundations of negotiations, but also to support a future peace deal, which will likely be tested by public referendums in Palestine and Israel.

Building on current public diplomacy efforts, a U.S. public diplomacy strategy should address the following specific goals:

- Engaging the opinions, interests, and perspectives of a wider segment of Israeli and Palestinian societies, including groups that have traditionally been excluded or alienated by past peace initiatives;
- Informing and educating the Israeli, Palestinian, and regional public on the values and principles the U.S. and its allies believe will support a final settlement;
- Drawing increased attention to the costs of maintaining the status quo and the negative impact of unilateral action by either side as well as accentuating information and analysis on the benefits of ending the conflict and all claims by establishing a successful, secure, and stable Palestinian state through a Permanent Status Agreement; and
- Highlighting credible mechanisms through which an agreement might be reached and sustained, and encouraging the adaptation and adoption of successful models of cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian civil societies.

Increasing public support is critical not only to change the foundations of negotiations, but also to support a future peace deal, which will likely be tested by public referendums in Palestine and Israel.

These goals involve not only strategies to build networks of validators and constituencies for U.S. policy positions, but also ones to consider new ways for U.S. policy to address

the fundamental concerns of the Israeli and Palestinian public. Connecting a public diplomacy strategy to policy formulation is essential to not only change perceptions among the Israeli and Palestinian publics, but also to make the situation on the ground more conducive to negotiations for a permanent status agreement.

Five key strategies for a public diplomacy effort aimed at conflict transformation are listed below and then described in detail:

1. Increase awareness that the United States is pursuing a two-state solution to further essential American national security interests in line with the existential needs of Israel and Palestine;
2. Similarly, convey the flexibility of the American mediation plan to leave space for Israeli and Palestinian reservations—to “agree to disagree” to the American positions—while moving forward along milestones laid out by the U.S. government;
3. Change perceptions and the situation on the ground through a series of planned successes based on the principle “what has been agreed upon shall be implemented”;
4. Mobilize regional and international support in reference to the Arab Peace Initiative; and
5. Expand and sustain ongoing people-to-people efforts to create good neighborly relations and a “culture of peace.”

1. Emphasize U.S. National Security Interests

Peace between Israel and Palestine is a clear U.S. national security interest in the Middle East that will strengthen American ties with Israel on the one hand, and with the Arab and Islamic world on the other. The United States should act not merely as an honest broker, but in its own strategic interest. In addition, Israel and Palestine, separately and together, need the political, diplomatic, security, and economic support of the United States. Thus, a sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is an essential interest of all parties, and it is important that this message is delivered consistently and clearly to the American, Israeli, and Palestinian public.

The many failed attempts at Israeli-Palestinian peace since direct talks began at the Madrid Conference in November 1991 have eroded the legitimacy of leaders on both sides to negotiate a sustainable agreement to end the conflict. Neither the Israeli nor the Palestinian leadership has enough political will or capital on their own to agree to the necessary concessions for a peace deal. In this context, American leadership and guidance are essential.

The Israeli public understands perfectly well that maintaining U.S. support requires a good faith effort on the issue of peace. Speaking to the Israeli public, as well as to the country's political leadership, the main public diplomacy messages should be: 1) that the U.S. commitment to the peace process—and the achievement of a two-state solution—is

unshakeable; and 2) the two-state solution will sustain Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state.

Speaking to the Palestinian public, the main U.S. public diplomacy message should be the steadfast commitment to realizing a sovereign Palestine by ending the occupation and creating an independent Palestinian state living in peace and security with all its neighbors.

2. Maintain Flexibility to Raise Israeli and Palestinian Support

In order to raise public support for peace in Israel and Palestine it is essential for both governments to appeal to broad segments within their own constituencies and not be perceived as coerced into collaboration. Presenting a U.S. peace proposal as the product of U.S. interests allows Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to raise reservations and build domestic support by including demands beyond the parameters laid out by the U.S. position. Allowing for constructive engagement with the U.S. framework will help consolidate official positions on both sides and counteract the negative impact of political fragmentation within both the Israeli governing coalition and between Palestinian factions.

This mechanism permitting the parties to “agree to disagree” has been used successfully in reaching the 1998 Good Friday Agreement in the Northern Ireland peace process and was instrumental in securing agreement for the Israeli-Palestinian Performance-based Roadmap for Peace in April 2003.¹² In spite of the reservations on both sides, Israel and the Palestinian Authority — along with the international community — implemented a relatively effective Palestinian state-building effort along the Roadmap guidelines.

3. Increase Public Support through State-building and Conflict Transformation Agreements

It is pivotal for the policymakers in Palestine and Israel to be convinced about the feasibility of the negotiations and their outcome in order for the public to buy into the process. As demonstrated by the Oslo Accords in 1993, Palestinians and Israelis can quickly move from celebration to hopelessness after a preliminary deal has been reached if positive change is not seen on the ground. Public support can diminish even faster when spoilers on both sides create a vicious circle of violence through mutual acts of terror. In this respect, a key point for U.S. public diplomacy must be to maintain a secure and stable environment. Public diplomacy should showcase a common struggle against violence committed by either side, as well as the binding nature of negotiations, which prevents unilateral actions by both sides and builds momentum through policies that implement what has been agreed and grows public confidence in the process and the vision of the two-state solution.

¹² See Jonathan Powell, *Great Hatred, Little Room: Making Peace in Northern Ireland* (London: Vintage Books, 2009), 90–107.

The Baker Institute team has developed in detail a number of potential pathways to achieve Israeli-Palestinian agreements on state-building and conflict transformation in support of a public diplomacy campaign. Shared understandings on the following issues would be coordinated with public diplomacy efforts to model successfully negotiated outcomes that improve the daily lives of Israelis and Palestinians. Economic initiatives in particular are needed to strengthen the Palestinian economy and empower the negotiating process.

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Water

The 2006 Track II dialogue led by the Baker Institute team indicated that the technological advances reducing the cost of water desalination and wastewater recycling have created the foundation for a mutually beneficial agreement addressing water rights and usage.¹³ In workshops led by the Baker Institute team, both parties committed to shared principles for ensuring equal water rights and quantities, conserving water resources, addressing water scarcity, and standardizing water use in Israel and Palestine. Based on these principles, a coordination and cooperation agreement on water issues providing a clear win-win approach could be concluded in short-term negotiations.

Furthermore, a successful agreement could enable international financing for wastewater treatment plants and economic development, increasing business investment in agriculture, housing, tourism, and more. Particularly along the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem, the Kishon Valley in the Jenin-Gilboa, and Jericho and the Dead Sea, potential investors have already prepared plans for development in Palestinian tourism and agriculture. Even a limited water agreement would in many ways improve the living situation, build trust, and change the perceptions of those on the ground.

Initiative for the Palestinian Economy (IPE)

Secretary Kerry and the U.S. peace team, USAID, Quartet Representative Tony Blair, and the Palestinian Authority prepared the Initiative for the Palestinian Economy as an instrumental part of the most recent round of negotiations. Each IPE project requires administrative consent from Israeli authorities. If a negotiated package could provide

¹³ See Yossi Yakhin, "Water in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," Rice University's Baker Institute, July 2006, http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/3771c374/rp_2006_005.pdf.

Israeli consent for the entire program, the IPE in essence would extend Palestinian economic activities into Area C. This agreement would open the door for increased international and regional investment in Palestine, and substantial cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli business communities. The IPE's emphasis on the development of small and medium enterprises has the potential of mobilizing the necessary social capital from investors and business owners to advocate for peace.

Following Secretary Kerry's suggestion, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce created the Middle East Commercial Center (MECC) combining private investors, multinational companies, and chambers of commerce in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and the Gulf countries. This initiative provides the opportunity to create multiple cross-country networks and promote dialogue and business relations.¹⁴

Land, Air, and Sea Transportation

The Baker Institute team has prepared a detailed concept to increase the unfettered movement of people and goods while protecting public safety.¹⁵ The proposal calls for road construction in Palestine and the extension of the Israeli railway network to the West Bank and Gaza, thereby connecting Israel and Palestine with Jordan and, potentially, Egypt. The plans could also include a Palestinian seaport in Haifa Bay and an airport on the Israeli side of the Jenin-Gilboa border. The new transportation networks would be under Palestinian civilian control with Israeli security oversight. Like the agreements on water and the IPE, facilitating agreements on transportation would add to Palestinian economic growth, extend Palestinian activities into Area C, and create the necessary infrastructure for the future state of Palestine.

The Jerusalem Metropolitan Area

The establishment of two capitals in Jerusalem (Yerushalayim and al-Quds) is an essential component of any potential Permanent Status Agreement. Although the issue requires further direct negotiations, both parties should work to reach understandings on the coordinated development of the metropolitan area of Jerusalem. While far-reaching compromise may be an overly optimistic goal, a more limited concept where Israelis and Palestinians coordinate and cooperate on key municipal issues would be a major breakthrough for mobilizing public diplomacy in support of a final agreement.

All these programs would raise public support and complement the overall public diplomacy strategy by demonstrating the dividends of peace, creating visible change on the ground, and mobilizing diverse groups of politicians, business owners, and community leaders to advocate for peace. However, while these limited initiatives help, they must be complemented by movement to reach final agreement on the permanent status issues.

¹⁴ "Remarks at the Middle East Commercial Center Meeting," U.S. Department of State, February 25, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/222584.htm>.

¹⁵ See "Getting to the Territorial Endgame of an Israeli-Palestinian Peace Settlement," a special report by the Israeli-Palestinian Workshop of the Baker Institute's Conflict Resolution Forum, February 2, 2010, <http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/1f9376a2/BI-pub-IPTerritorialEndgame-020210.pdf>.

4. Mobilize Regional and International Support

For both the Palestinian and Israeli public, the full regional support of Israeli–Palestinian peace negotiations by the Arab states—particularly Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states—is critical to a successful outcome. The clear basis for wider Arab involvement is the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API). Although announced 12 years ago, only limited effort has been made to present the API's core concept in Israel and consider the practical steps necessary for the normalization of relations between Israel, Palestine, and the surrounding region.¹⁶ An American public diplomacy strategy for Israeli–Palestinian negotiations could facilitate regional support through the following initiatives:

- Given the changed regional environment resulting from the “Arab Spring,” establish a Jewish and Arab committee to explore updated potential scenarios for Israel's acceptance of the Arab Peace Initiative as an important term of reference in peace negotiations;
- Encourage more substantial Arab investment in Palestinian state-building efforts;
- Combine Palestinian state-building efforts with policies for regional economic integration among the economies of Israel, Palestine, and the wider region; and
- Prepare a regional security structure to promote stability and prosperity amid regional transitions and to underpin the ongoing negotiating process.

American public diplomacy should likewise continue to engage European and other willing partners to support Israeli and Palestinian peace advocates and create additional dividends to a final agreement. Jewish, Muslim, and Christian groups from other areas (particularly in the U.S., Europe, and South America) should be consulted and brought in to support the U.S. framework for negotiations.¹⁷ A European commitment to award Israel and Palestine the status of “special privileged partners” would bring additional benefits of peace to both economies, especially in the technology, research development, and financial sectors.¹⁸ The inclusion of Israel and Palestine in regional development planning, such as the European Union's Horizon 2020 initiative for strengthening research and innovation, would also be mutually beneficial.¹⁹

16 Mitch Ginsburg, “Saudi royal turns down ex-IDF intel chief's invite to the Knesset,” *The Times of Israel*, May 26, 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/ex-idf-intel-chief-invites-saudi-royal-to-the-knesset/>.

17 Mick Davis, “Rejecting two states means endangering Israel—and the Diaspora,” *Haaretz*, January 3, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.566892>; and William Booth, “Pope Francis hosts Israeli, Palestinian leaders at ‘prayer summit,’” *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/pope-francis-hosts-israeli-palestinian-leaders-at-prayer-summit/2014/06/08/b9adc57e-ef48-11e3-bf76-447a5df6411f_story.html.

18 Patrick Maisonnave, “The EU's offer still stands, despite the Israeli government's resounding silence,” *Haaretz*, January 3, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.566869>.

19 “Israel, EU sign horizon 2020 scientific cooperation agreement,” *Haaretz*, June 9, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/1.597705>.

5. Expand and Sustain Israeli-Palestinian People-to-People Initiatives

Increasing bottom-up cooperation is essential for conflict transformation efforts connecting Israeli and Palestinian officials on one hand, and between people, on the other. These activities diminish stereotypes and help add transparency to the process of negotiations by opening direct channels of dialogue and communication with the public. Below are three people-to-people programs that can be strengthened and promoted by U.S. public diplomacy.

Increasing bottom-up cooperation is essential for conflict transformation efforts.

Police Cooperation

Coordinated Israeli-Palestinian programs against criminals on both sides of the border are important confidence builders, as both societies suffer from criminal actions. Such cooperation should emphasize empowerment of Palestinian police forces and coordinated deterrence against theft, narcotics, and prostitution, particularly in areas where jurisdictions meet, such as the Greater Jerusalem area. Campaigns to prevent Jewish and Arab hate crimes and stop cycles of violence are also powerful public diplomacy tools demonstrating effective cooperation.

Cross-border Infrastructure

The 1999 cross-border cooperation agreement between the Palestinian Governorate of Jenin and the Israeli municipality of Haifa (and the regional councils of Gilboa and Beit She'an) established five programs to better align the shared interests of the approximately 500,000 residents of the region.²⁰ Called "Cooperation North," the agreement committed the parties to the coordinated development of infrastructure and to business and economic cooperation—including the creation of a Palestinian industrial park and complementary Israeli logistics center; coordination of civilian security; joint human resource development; and educational and cultural exchange.

While the agreement was undermined by the violence of the second intifada in 2000, many of the programs have been restarted in recent years. Highlighting successful cross-border cooperation should be central to the U.S. public diplomacy strategy as it reveals a clear improvement in the day-to-day lives of the people living in the region. Successful programs also create models for better relations between Israelis and Palestinians and can be adapted and implemented in other cities and areas.

20 Sharon Roling, "'Cooperation North': A Model of Cross-Border Partnership," *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 7, no. 1-2 (2000), <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=285>.

Education for Peace

Polls held in Israel asking about criteria documenting progress toward peace have shown that more than 80% of the Israeli public view education for peace as a central criteria for progress in negotiations. On the Palestinian side, residents in the West Bank and Gaza have been confronted mainly with the costs of conflict and occupation. Education about the political, economic, and social benefits of peace is needed on both sides. The issue of school curriculums has been included in peace talks at least since the formal follow-up to the 2007 Annapolis Conference, when the Israeli and Palestinian delegations reached understandings on promoting “a culture of peace and nonviolence.”²¹ Developing a coordinated program that encourages and evaluates education for peace initiatives on both sides could be another effective tool for U.S. public diplomacy.

Additional “bottom up” program campaigns should be considered, including:

- Working with leaders from the settlement community to prepare for the negotiated relocation of settlements;
- Engaging religious leaders to understand and inform discussions within their communities;
- Facilitating dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian families whose relatives have been killed either by military action or terror, in order to encourage participants to become spokespersons for peace;
- Addressing Israeli and Arab communities to develop practical concepts bridging Israeli and Palestinian societies; and
- Utilizing the media, including new social media platforms, to connect journalists and opinion makers.

21 “Joint Understanding Read by President Bush at Annapolis, November 2007,” Council on Foreign Relations, November 27, 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/israel/joint-understanding-read-president-bush-annapolis-november-2007/p14883>.

Conclusion

The end of the most recent round of direct negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians has increased the need for unofficial channels of dialogue between the parties. Leaders on both sides are currently considering unilateral actions that prioritize domestic political concerns at the expense of a negotiated solution. Nonetheless, broad segments within both the Israeli and Palestinian public continue to view the model of “two states for two people” as the only acceptable framework for resolving the conflict.

Given the disconnect between the preferred endgame and the lack of confidence that such an outcome is currently attainable, the role of the U.S. and its partners should not be to force Israelis and Palestinians into an arrangement neither side desires. Rather, the current pause in direct negotiations should be used to implement an enhanced soft power campaign targeting key public diplomacy goals. Three of these goals—engaging and understanding public opinion, providing information to both sides on the benefits of peace, and educating and promoting the values and principles of U.S. involvement in the conflict—are central to existing public diplomacy work in Israel and Palestine and should be enhanced.

This report concludes that a fourth goal—promoting potential mechanisms for a sustainable agreement—is necessary to connect public diplomacy efforts to policy formulation, shape a more positive environment for negotiations, and increase the likelihood of Israelis and Palestinians working bilaterally toward peace with the assistance of the U.S. and international partners. As an initial framework to pursue this goal, this paper presented five bottom-up strategies for conflict transformation: identifying peace as a national security interest; conveying flexibility in third-party framework positions; mobilizing regional and international support; and expanding government-to-government and people-to-people interaction.

The power of public diplomacy lies in the ability to build networks that support values and principles in order to shape opinions toward policy. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, public diplomacy is a valuable tool for listening to opinions on the ground and communicating U.S. interests. However, the dramatic increase in the region’s youth populations and connectivity that catalyzed the Arab Spring have also created new demands for public diplomacy efforts in the Middle East. Strengthening public diplomacy efforts and connecting public diplomacy programs to U.S. policies toward Israeli-Palestinian negotiations are essential steps in increasing the reach and impact of the U.S. role in resolving the conflict.

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