

TRUMP'S TOUGHEST DEAL

While President Trump Sounds Intent on Achieving Palestinian-Israeli Peace, the Obstacles Are Formidable. Should He Fail, the Slide Toward a One-State Reality Will Continue

By Shai Feldman and Khalil Shikaki

Since early 2017, a number of developments seem to have improved the odds of a positive breakthrough in Israeli-Palestinian relations. The most promising among them was the election of U.S. President Donald Trump who in a meeting with the *New York Times* editorial board on November 22, 2016 expressed his hopes of seeing his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, lead an effort to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.¹ Subsequently, Trump charged his longtime associate, Jason Greenblatt, with engaging Israeli and Palestinian leaders in exploratory talks, some with Kushner's participation.

Another potentially positive development was the seemingly greater interest of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the Emirates, as well as Egypt and Jordan in closer cooperation with Israel provided that the latter take steps to resolve its conflict with the Palestinians. Finally, on the Palestinian domestic front, Hamas has been showing increasing signs of realism and pragmatism, reflected in a modest amendment of its articulated goals as well as in what appeared as greater willingness to concede some dimensions of its control of Gaza in the framework of a broader reconciliation with Fatah and the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Yet these potentially positive recent developments have taken place on the background of a very sad reality. Indeed, rarely since Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem in June 1967 have conditions for resolving the conflict been worse than they have been during the past half decade. Moreover, in the absence of significant progress toward resolving the conflict, facts are

being created "on the ground" that will make any future effort to negotiate and implement an agreement to resolve the conflict even more difficult, if not entirely impossible. With Israel continuing to control the entire area between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, the slide toward a "one-state reality" will continue.

▷ **President Donald Trump on his first visit to Palestine/ Israel, Jerusalem, May 23, 2017. Jonathan Ernst/Reuters**



This essay will ascertain these challenges by contrasting them with the realities that allowed dramatic progress in Arab-Israeli peacemaking in 1991–95.² It will then take note of the aforementioned more recent positive developments and evaluate their significance. Finally, it will assess whether these developments are likely to prove robust enough to overcome the adverse conditions that have characterized the past few years.

Waning Pax Americana

To understand the current stalemate, it is useful to reflect on a previous four-year period (1991–95) that constituted something of a “golden era” in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. That relatively short period witnessed not less than four significant breakthroughs: the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, the 1992–95 multilateral negotiations, the 1993 Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Oslo Accords, and the 1994 Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty. These breakthroughs were made possible by a unique set of positive circumstances in the global arena, in the Middle East region itself, and in the domestic politics of the key protagonists.

In the global arena, the Soviet Union had just collapsed and the Cold War had just ended, leaving the United States as the sole superpower and thereby creating a global unipolar “American moment.” This, in turn, allowed the United States to design and implement a “Pax Americana” in the Middle East. At the beginning of this period the United States was led by President George H.W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, both motivated to forge a new global order, and a new Middle East regional order, so that America could avoid a repeat of the Gulf War.

In the region, a U.S.-led coalition (that, importantly, included Syria as well as Egypt) had just defeated Iraq in the 1990–91 Gulf War, tilting the balance of power against the rejectionists (Iraq, Libya, and Yemen) and in favor of the region’s more pragmatic players (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the smaller members of the Gulf Cooperation Council). The Gulf War exposed both Jordan and the PLO to external pressures: both were seen as siding with Saddam Hussein, thereby earning them the wrath of their financial backers in the Gulf. Jordan had also angered Washington for the same reason, enabling the Clinton administration to persuade King Hussein that he needed to take a dramatic positive step in Arab-Israeli peacemaking if the U.S. Congress was to be persuaded to allow renewed financial assistance to his country. Finally, the United States at that time enjoyed considerable leverage with Israel, because the collapse of the Soviet Union had brought a million new Jewish immigrants whose absorption required \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees.

The domestic politics of some of the key players also helped make this short period a “golden era” of Arab-Israeli peacemaking. In Israel, the 1992 elections brought the

Labor Party, led by Yitzhak Rabin, back into power. Rabin was committed to reaching a peace breakthrough, and as a hero of the 1967 war, he enjoyed the requisite credibility: he was broadly trusted to make the right call as to what concessions Israel could make for peace without jeopardizing its safety and security. Jordan's King Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat enjoyed similar standing in their respective polities, and both were motivated by the danger of financial ruin. In Arafat's case, that was on top of the threat he was facing from rival Palestinian leaders (like Faisal Husseini) who continued to reside in the West Bank, Gaza, or East Jerusalem and whose standing was secured by their role in the 1987–90 First Intifada.

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Given that the stars were rightly aligned in the global, regional, and domestic political realms, it is not entirely surprising that the early 1990s produced positive breakthroughs in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. Unfortunately, the opposite has been the case for most of the past decade and a half. Not surprisingly, very little if any progress toward peacemaking was made, allowing the slide toward a “one-state reality” to continue.

While the “American moment” lasted for more than two decades, U.S. efforts in the past fifteen years to utilize its global primacy to advance Arab-Israeli peace have been sporadic. Only at the end of its second term in office did the George W. Bush administration make its first serious attempt to help resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with the launching of the Annapolis Process in November 2007.³ Yet even then, U.S. involvement in the talks was minimal, as it refrained from offering proposals to help the parties bridge the gap between their positions. Between March and September 2008, when President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert arguably made the most substantial progress in the history of Palestinian-Israeli permanent status negotiations, the Bush administration largely limited itself to taking note of the progress made, rather than capitalizing on it by offering the parties the “ultimate deal”—a grand bargain based on that progress.

The United States continued and, indeed, enhanced its involvement during President Obama's two terms, as evidenced in the 2009 efforts led by former senator George Mitchell and the 2013–14 attempts orchestrated by Secretary of State John Kerry. In the first of these two efforts the president was personally involved at critical junctures, as were members of his White House senior staff. Yet even Obama refrained from building on the progress made in the context of the Annapolis Process, or using that progress as a point of departure for his own efforts. He also refrained from taking the step that was key to U.S. successes in Arab-Israeli peacemaking in previous eras—as implemented by Henry Kissinger in 1974–75, by President Jimmy Carter in 1978–79, and by President Bush and Secretary of State Baker in 1991—namely, the willingness to utilize U.S. leverage to press the parties to accept important compromises. President Obama leveraged his personal involvement in the process only once, when he pressured Israel to implement a limited settlement construction freeze—and that intervention was directed at improving the environment for negotiations, not at extracting Israeli or Palestinian concessions on any of the core permanent status issues. Afterward, the United States leveraged neither its security assistance to Israel nor its financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority to induce Netanyahu and Abbas to negotiate seriously during the ten months of the partial Israeli settlement construction freeze; nor did it mobilize Europeans to exploit their financial assistance to the PA, or their trade and other cooperative relations with Israel, for a similar purpose.

An Arab World in Turmoil

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict cannot be resolved without the active support of key Arab states. Jordan and Saudi Arabia have a direct interest in issues revolving around Jerusalem, and Morocco holds the Jerusalem file for the Conference of Islamic States. Similarly, the Palestinian refugee issue cannot be addressed without the help of key Arab states, as without them, no scheme involving the permanent resettlement of a considerable number of refugees in Arab states would work.

Yet the condition of the Arab World currently bears no resemblance to the circumstances that prevailed in 1991–95 or when the Arab League convened in Beirut in March 2002 to adopt what came to be known as the Arab Peace Initiative.⁴ Although Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan remained committed to the Arab Peace Initiative while insisting that Israel must first formally accept it as a basis for future negotiations, they have been consumed by the domestic challenges that culminated in or resulted from the so-called Arab Spring. In the Egyptian case these include a faltering economy, along with unrelenting terrorism in the Sinai and, in the case of Jordan, more than 700,000 Syrian refugees. Moreover, since 2011 four countries—Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen—have been beset by civil wars and their attendant devastation. Under such

circumstances, even the small number of Arab states that remained intact have had more urgent matters to deal with than helping resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The Arab civil wars have caused key regional players like Saudi Arabia and Egypt to view the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through a new lens. While remaining committed to the Palestinian cause, these players have been affected by the very heavy toll that the recent regional horrors have already taken. The six-year Syrian civil war alone has already resulted in more dead and wounded, and produced far more refugees and internally displaced persons, than the Arab-Israeli conflict did through its entire history.

Israel's Rightward Drift

In the Israeli domestic arena, the most important driver of the long stalemate is the increasing rightwing tendencies among the electorate, triggered by five years of the Second Intifada (2000–2005) culminating in Hamas's 2006 electoral victory. During the past eight years, Benjamin Netanyahu won three parliamentary elections. Israel's prime minister, having now served in that capacity longer than any of his predecessors, cannot take any step that would end the stalemate on the Israeli-Palestinian front without risking the loss of his governing coalition. Netanyahu equally cannot change the composition of his coalition by replacing the parties to the right of Likud with center and center-left parties, without losing the ability to lead the right wing in the next national elections.

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The demise of the Labor Party in the years following the 2001 elections has meant that Netanyahu does not face any serious challenge from the left and the center-left. Instead, the most significant political threats—real or imagined—that he faces are from within the political right. Netanyahu must continually prove his dedication to the right's core values and objectives, and hence his legitimacy as an authentic leader of their cause. Israel's prime minister is increasingly challenged by the likes of Jewish Home party

leader and Minister of Education Naftali Bennett, who calls for abandoning any attempt to resolve the conflict and for annexing some 60 percent of the West Bank.

The dominant Israeli narrative about the consequences of Israeli withdrawals since 2000 presents another barrier to compromise. Israelis' understanding is that their withdrawals from Lebanon in May 2000 and from Gaza in the summer of 2005 resulted in the strengthening of Hezbollah and Hamas, respectively—which led, in turn, to the 2006 Second Lebanon War and to three military confrontations with Hamas in 2009, 2012, and 2014. This belief has made it easier to frighten Israelis about the likely consequences of a withdrawal from the West Bank—the area adjacent to Israel's center core, where the country's main population centers are located and where some 80 percent of its gross domestic product is produced.

The carnage in Syria, and to a lesser extent in Iraq, Libya, and Yemen, since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the eruption of the so-called Arab Spring in late 2010, has had a similar effect on Israeli public opinion. As images of civil war and upheaval appeared in Israeli media on an almost daily basis, Israelis became even more persuaded that the Middle East is an unforgiving neighborhood, where taking risks could prove a major folly—and that instead they should “hunker down” and await better days.⁵ Furthermore, the Israeli Jewish public is relatively comfortable with the status quo and largely shares Netanyahu's assessment that Abbas is not a partner for peace. While a slight majority of Israelis remain supportive of a two-state solution, the center and center-left are too weak to push the government to accept such a solution.

A Divided, and Occupied, Palestine

On the Palestinian side, the Islamist-nationalist division is deepening. At the same time, the fragmentation within the mainstream Fatah movement has now been affirmed by Fatah's seventh convention, as Mohammed Dahlan, the former head of the PA Preventive Security Apparatus in the Gaza Strip, and other opponents of President Abbas have been expelled or marginalized. This crisis of leadership within Fatah is contributing to political paralysis, as Abbas seems to be increasingly consumed by threats to his rule—real or imagined—rather than by the challenges presented by continued Israeli occupation.

The Abbas-Dahlan conflict has significant ramifications on Fatah's ability to successfully challenge Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Dahlan, who has strong grassroots support in the Gaza Strip, can easily split Fatah's vote in half, thus facilitating a much easier Hamas electoral victory in that part of the PA. Moreover, the conflict between the two men has a regional implication. Major Arab players, most importantly the so-called Arab Quartet made up of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates, view Dahlan as a strong asset against Hamas and in any renewal of the peace

process. Abbas's refusal to reintegrate his rival in Fatah reduces the PA president's ability to gain the confidence and trust of these major Arab players.

Without a genuine Fatah-Hamas reconciliation, Abbas will probably find it difficult if not impossible to hold new elections, to regain legitimacy, or to transfer leadership to another Fatah leader. Indeed, the crisis of succession within Fatah and the PA is already weakening the Palestinians' capacity to present a coherent position in the conflict with Israel. This situation is exacerbated by the fragility and weakness of the Palestinian political system, which lacks electoral legitimacy, parliamentary accountability, and an independent judiciary.

The Palestinian public is not a force for peace: the overwhelming majority do not trust the Israelis and fear Israel's long-term aspirations. And most Palestinians believe that the majority of Israelis are opposed to a two-state solution.

The most distressing aspect of the status quo for Palestinians is that it is a dynamic state of affairs, bringing with it, on a daily basis, solid facts on the ground—primarily settlement construction—that make Israel's occupation more difficult to reverse. Furthermore, occupation policies impose significant pain and suffering on the Palestinian public and constrain any sustainable development or economic growth. Indeed, most Palestinians believe that a system of apartheid is gradually being built around them, and that the international community is not doing anything meaningful to prevent it.

Nonetheless, most Palestinians remain committed to a two-state solution;⁶ hence, Palestinian public opinion is not likely to be an impediment to a peace agreement that Abbas might reach with an Israeli prime minister. But as is the case with the Israelis, the Palestinian public is not a force for peace: the overwhelming majority do not trust the Israelis and fear Israel's long-term aspirations. And most Palestinians believe that the majority of Israelis are opposed to a two-state solution.⁷

“The Toughest Deal of All”

While the international, regional, and domestic circumstances are far from conducive for a positive breakthrough in Palestinian-Israeli relations, a number of developments that have taken place in more recent months have raised expectations in some circles that progress, while far from assured, is not inconceivable. The first is the election of

Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States. Trump's ascendance was seen as promising precisely because he is so different from any of his predecessors. And since these predecessors have all failed to bring peace to Israel-Palestine, it was not illogical to hope that an unconventional approach may succeed where all post-Oslo attempts have failed.

President Trump further nourished such hopes by repeating his commitment to give it a shot. On September 21, 2017, speaking at the outset of his meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Trump said: "We are looking seriously at peace and maybe ultimately peace for the whole of the Middle East and I think we have a pretty good shot, maybe the best shot ever. It's a complex subject, always been considered the toughest deal of all: peace between Israel and the Palestinians, the toughest deal of all. I think we have a very, very good chance."⁸

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Trump's impatience and inattention to detail might still prove to be assets in the peacemaking realm. His leadership style could diminish the odds that the United States would allow the protagonists to drown the peace process, and one another, in endless discussions of preconditions for negotiations and of the minute details of the issues at dispute. Initially, Trump also appeared highly unpredictable, causing Israeli and Palestinian leaders to fear his reactions, whether by possibly shaming them on Twitter or by punishing them by other means. Whether explicitly or implicitly, Trump leveraged these fears, leading Abbas to drop his preconditions for meeting with the Israeli prime minister, who yielded, in turn, to the newly elected president's request that he wait "just a little bit" with plans for additional settlement construction. Netanyahu also avoided any negative reaction to Trump's continuous failure to abide by his commitment to relocate the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Recent months have witnessed important changes in the Middle East that may propel key Arab states to play a bigger role in encouraging a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli

conflict. Paradoxically, the nuclear agreement reached between the P5+1 and Iran has only heightened the sensitivity of key Arab states to Iran's meddling in the region—from Iraq to Yemen. This creates an unprecedented confluence of interests between these key Arab states and Israel. Recent signals of growing Arab appreciation of this change include: the first public meeting between Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Netanyahu; a statement by the ruler of Bahrain, King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, to the effect that he would like to see an end to Arab states' boycott of Israel; and public events in the United States involving the direct engagement of Saudi Arabia's Prince Turki Al-Faisal with the American pro-Israel community. This may improve the conditions for Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the Emirates, as well as Egypt and Jordan signal their interest in closer cooperation with Israel provided that the latter take steps to resolve its conflict with the Palestinians.

President El-Sisi's speech to the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2017, was an important sign of shifting attitudes among Arab leaders. Breaking from his prepared remarks in classical Arabic, El-Sisi addressed Israelis and Palestinians informally in colloquial Egyptian Arabic saying they "should take advantage of an opportunity that may not be repeated." El-Sisi called on Palestinians "to unite behind a common goal and to accept coexistence with Israel in peace and security." He also assured Israelis by citing Egypt's long-established peace with their nation that lasted forty years, saying that this "amazing" step can be repeated with the Palestinians. "Do not hesitate," El-Sisi said, addressing the Israeli public. "We are standing with you to make this step a success."⁹

Changes in Israeli and Palestinian Leadership

On the Palestinian domestic front, Hamas has been showing increasing signs of realism and pragmatism. Responding to regional and international pressure, Hamas unveiled in May 2017 a new policy document, one that modified some of its traditional positions and principles articulated in its 1988 Charter.¹⁰ Most of these modifications, however, had already been articulated by the leaders of the movement during the past two decades. Nonetheless, walking a thin line between its moderates and hardliners, the movement sought to soften some of its positions on the peace process. Without abandoning its core traditional positions of rejecting the State of Israel and the Oslo Agreement, or its commitment to armed struggle, the movement affirmed its acceptance of a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders and stated that the conflict with Israel is not religious, or with Jews or Judaism. The document also refrained from mentioning its links to the Muslim Brotherhood, thus increasing the chances for improved relations with Egypt, which in the aftermath of Mohammad Morsi's ouster accused Hamas of meddling in Egyptian affairs.

In the same month, soon after the release of its new document, Hamas announced the election of its new head, Ismail Haniyeh replacing Khaled Mishaal. Hamas also elected a new leader, Yahya Sinwar, for its local Gaza Strip branch. The election of Haniyeh shifted the movement's center of gravity from Doha, where Mishaal is located, to the Gaza Strip, where Haniyeh served between 2006 and 2014 as prime minister. Haniyeh is Hamas's most popular leader among the Palestinian public and one of its most moderate and pragmatic figures. This development alters the weight of Hamas's regional interlocutors, downplaying Qatar's role and highlighting that of Egypt, while making the movement more sensitive to public concerns, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the election of Sinwar, one of the top leaders of the movement's armed wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, ensured the complete control of the movement's political wing over the armed one and significantly widened the movement's room for maneuver.¹¹

These developments propelled Hamas to seek closer relations with Egypt, in the hope of improving conditions in the Gaza Strip. Accordingly, Hamas showed greater sensitivity to Egypt's security concerns, particularly regarding the suspected role played by the Strip's tunnels and smugglers in supporting ISIS terrorists in the northeastern region of Sinai. Improved security cooperation between the two sides paved the way to a political rapprochement and gave Egypt an added leverage over Hamas. This leverage translated into two steps that Hamas took within a period of four months. In June 2017, Hamas reached an understanding with Mohammed Dahlan, the most prominent Palestinian ally of President El-Sisi, allowing its former enemy to gain a foothold in the Gaza Strip in return for financial support from the United Arab Emirates, access to Egyptian gasoline, and the opening of the Rafah Crossing with Egypt.¹² Hamas's decision came in response to sanctions imposed by Abbas two months earlier, reducing Gaza's access to Israeli electricity and reducing the salaries of PA employees in the Gaza Strip. These sanctions came in response to Hamas's establishment earlier, in March, of an "Administrative Committee," one that served as a de facto government for the Gaza Strip. The creation of this committee violated the terms that led in May 2014 to the formation of a single PA government, the "reconciliation government."

Responding to further Egyptian pressure, Hamas agreed in September to dismiss its de facto government and allow the reconciliation government to assume control over the Gaza Strip. Abbas responded favorably, sending the PA government to the Gaza Strip to test Hamas's commitment. He also sent his Fatah negotiators to Cairo to search for ways to resolve remaining gaps in the two sides' positions, which would lead to the implementation of a 2009 Egyptian-brokered reconciliation agreement.¹³ Assuming serious willingness on the part of both Hamas and Fatah to

actually implement such an agreement—which proved not to be the case with all previous Fatah-Hamas reconciliation attempts—such reconciliation will produce for the first time a single unified Palestinian address for resolving the conflict with Israel.

On the Israeli domestic front, Prime Minister Netanyahu is facing multiple police investigations and growing legal and ethical issues related to a number of corruption cases. Netanyahu's wife, Sara, has already been indicted but it remains unclear whether he would similarly face trial—let alone be found guilty in a court of law. The Israeli political class is already gearing up for the possibility that Netanyahu would have no choice but to leave the scene, with potential successors—both within and outside his Likud party—already positioning themselves to take advantage of this possibility.

At the same time there has been another “changing of the guards” in Israel's Labor Party with the election of Avi Gabbay, an outsider and a private sector success story with little political experience taking charge. Whether he will also end the sequence of failed Labor leaders and revive Israel's center-left by igniting the enthusiasm of the country's young generation remains to be seen.

Realities of Global Instability

Yet these new possibilities might not prove robust enough to overcome the harsh realities facing any effort to bring the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to an end, or even to reduce significantly its intensity. Increasingly, the Trump administration is facing an international environment that is anything but conducive to a U.S. effort to achieve such a breakthrough—whether or not Trump's problematic personality could contribute positively to his efforts to achieve a breakthrough in Palestinian-Israeli relations. First, while the United States remains much more powerful, economically as well as militarily, than any possible competitor, the “American moment” is over. Russia is back and is challenging the United States in a number of arenas: Ukraine, the Baltic region, and Syria. President Trump seems to have already discovered that turning President Vladimir Putin from a foe to a partner is far more difficult than he apparently imagined.

Alongside handling Putin's Russia and foreign policy crises like North Korea, the Trump administration is occupied with the challenge of a post-ISIS Middle East, and making sure that the militant group does not reconfigure and reinvent itself to fight another day under a different framework, or metastasize in North Africa, Europe, and even the United States. Washington and its allies must also deal with security challenges and humanitarian catastrophes in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya.

Other regional changes also do not bode well for any peacemaking efforts in Israel and Palestine. More than ever before, the threat perceptions and the national security interests of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia coincide with those of Israel. These will not necessarily be in the service of peacemaking. To the contrary, there may be

considerable reluctance in Cairo, Amman, and Riyadh to press Israel to make the concessions required by the Arab Peace Initiative.

While President Trump continues to sound intent on achieving Palestinian-Israeli peace, the odds that he and his close associates would be able to overcome the many obstacles to such a breakthrough are not very high. Should his efforts fail, the slide toward a “one-state reality”—the de facto transformation of the area between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River into one political unit—will continue.

Yet the pace at which the slide toward a “one-state reality” will occur is difficult to determine, as is the pace at which the costs associated with this slide will be incurred. Clearly, should the Trump administration embrace a policy of sustained engagement—let alone if it decided to launch a major and dramatic Arab-Israeli peacemaking effort—the expected slide might be slowed or even halted.¹⁴

The pace of the slide toward a one-state reality might be affected by changes in the Palestinian and Israeli domestic scenes, as well as by developments in the region as a whole. For example, the slide might be slowed if a further escalation in the geopolitical competition between some Arab states and Iran led the former to propose an amended Arab Peace Initiative that Israel might accept—and the Palestinians might not reject—as the basis for detailed negotiations. It is even more difficult to anticipate how the expected slide would be affected if Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu were to be indicted on corruption charges, or if the aging president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, were to suddenly leave the scene.

This essay is adapted from a policy brief published by the Crown Center of Middle East Studies.

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 - 2 The analysis of the conditions that allowed the “Golden Era” of Arab-Israeli peacemaking and the assessment of the conditions that have prevailed during the past five to six years are based on Shai Feldman and Khalil Shikaki, “Israel and the Palestinians: Sliding Toward a One-State Reality,” *Middle East Brief*, no. 104 (Brandeis University, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, December 2016).
 - 3 See Shai Feldman and Khalil Shikaki, “Is It Still Fall in Annapolis? Thinking about a Scheduled Meeting,” *Middle East Brief*, no. 21 (Brandeis University, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, November 2007).
 - 4 See text of the Arab Peace Initiative adopted at Beirut summit, Agence France-Presse, March 28. Retrieved from European Parliament website: <http://ow.ly/Ec2Y30g8DYV>
 - 5 See “Palestinian-Israeli Pulse: A Joint Poll” (June 2016) [Israel Democracy Institute and Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, August 22, 2016], <http://pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/>

- Poll%20Summary_16August2016%20w%20logos.pdf; see also Israel Democracy Institute, “Peace Index—October (2) 2016,” <http://www.aftau.org/document.doc?id=531> and “Peace Index—November 2016,” <http://www.aftau.org/document.doc?id=538>
- 6 See “Palestinian-Israeli Pulse: A Joint Poll” (June 2016).
 - 7 Ibid.
 - 8 Jeremy B White, “Donald Trump says he has ‘maybe the best shot’ at Israeli-Palestinian peace,” *The Independent*, September 21, 2017, <http://ow.ly/9KWz30g8CVq>
 - 9 “Egypt’s Sissi makes impromptu plea at UN for Israeli-Palestinian peace,” *Times of Israel*, September 20, 2017, <http://ow.ly/Zyan30g8D9T>
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 - 12 Fares Akram and Mohammad Daraghme, “Power-sharing deal between former foes taking shape in Gaza,” *Associated Press*, July 20, 2017. See also, “Dahlan reveals controversial Hamas deal on Gaza,” *Associated Press*, July 23, 2017.
 - 13 Oren Liebermann, “Hamas makes move toward Palestinian reconciliation,” *CNN*, September 17, 2017, <http://cnn.it/2h7O9lD>. See also, Michael Young, “Will the Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation Work This Time?” *Carnegie Middle East Center*, September 28, 2017, <http://ceip.org/2yL8Fgx>
 - 14 Dennis Ross, “How Trump Could Surprise the World on Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking,” *Washington Post*, November 30, 2016, <http://ow.ly/s2T230g8DuO>, and Martin S. Indyk, “President Trump’s Options for Israeli-Palestinian Dealmaking” (*Brookings Big Ideas for America*, December 1, 2016), <http://brook.gs/2fPmIXC>