


# The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989–2011 (Published in Collaboration with the United States Institute of Peace)

*By Daniel C. Kurtzer, Scott B. Lasensky, William B. Quandt, Steven L. Spiegel, Shibley Z. Telhami*

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"Having observed earlier periods of determined, persistent, creative and wise American diplomacy on the Arab-Israeli conflict, we are left to ponder whether that kind of American leadership and diplomatic wisdom can be recaptured. We also are left to wonder whether the supportive domestic environment in which previous administrations operated will recur, or whether Congressional and public support for Israel has limited administration options and thus changed the very nature of the American role in the peace process. Our overall conclusions in this volume represent a mix of process, politics, and substantive lessons learned, offered in the hope that a better understanding of the past can inform future policy."?from *The Peace Puzzle*

Each phase of Arab-Israeli peacemaking has been inordinately difficult in its own right, and every critical juncture and decision point in the long process has been shaped by U.S. politics and the U.S. leaders of the moment. *The Peace Puzzle* tracks the American determination to articulate policy, develop strategy and tactics, and see through negotiations to agreements on an issue that has been of singular importance to U.S. interests for more than forty years.

In 2006, the authors of *The Peace Puzzle* formed the Study Group on Arab-Israeli Peacemaking, a project supported by the United States Institute of Peace, to develop a set of "best practices" for American diplomacy. The Study Group conducted in-depth interviews with more than 120 policymakers, diplomats, academics, and civil society figures and developed performance assessments of the various U.S. administrations of the post–Cold War period. This book, an objective account of the role of the United States in attempting to achieve a lasting Arab–Israeli peace, is informed by the authors' access to key individuals and official archives.

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## Editorial Review

Review

"The collective Middle East experience of the authors is unsurpassed. Their analysis is terse, and their portrait of U.S. efforts to broker Arab-Israeli peace is bleak. . . . The authors assert that American policymakers must address the core issues, transform their natural bias toward Israel into a positive factor, recapture bipartisan resolve to tackle the issue, maintain continuity across administrations, and persuade the Israelis and the Palestinians that Washington understands and respects their fundamental interests."?John Waterbury, *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2013)

"The originality of this new book is to propose a distanced analysis that draws on 120 interviews with the implied decision-makers of American political involvement in the Middle East from 1989-2011…The authors take care to compare the remarks of their interviewees with available official documents, journalist investigations, as well as already-publicized testimonies. The result is a study that draws constantly on its foundational material, citing interviews that support and enrich the argument."?Jean-Loup Samaan,*Politique Américaine*(no. 27)

"Read it and weep. *The Peace Puzzle* brilliantly dissects what has gone wrong in what the all-star cast of authors rightly describes as 'the decline of American Mideast diplomacy.' The concluding summary of 'lessons learned' should be required reading for any American president who is serious about Arab-Israeli peace."?David Ignatius, columnist for the *Washington Post* and author of *Body of Lies*

"Because the window of the two-state solution is rapidly closing and the next American diplomatic attempt may be the last, the United States must avoid repeating some of the same mistakes that are well documented in this volume. This is not only an extremely well-researched account of what took place but also an important reminder that one cannot keep applying old policies to new realities."?Marwan Muasher, Vice President for Studies, The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and a former foreign minister of Jordan

"This is a superb account of the Arab-Israeli peace process. It offers remarkable insights into the process and exceptionally valuable lessons learned. It is the work of brilliant authors who possess unique knowledge and experience in this process. This is a must-read for anyone who desires to truly understand this critical and complex quest for Middle East peace."?General Anthony Zinni, USMC (Retired)

"The failure of American diplomacy in its persistent attempts to coax Arabs and Israelis into a peace settlement had far-reaching consequences for the Middle East, and indeed for U.S. standing in the region. The many memoirs and personal accounts that described this frustrating story of vain efforts and missed opportunities have all offered, inevitably, only partial and frequently one-sided descriptions. This is precisely what makes the thorough and balanced *The Peace Puzzle* such an indispensable work for our understanding of past failures and the lessons to be drawn from them."?Shlomo Ben Ami, Vice-President, Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax)

About the Author

Daniel C. Kurtzer is the S. Daniel Abraham Professor in Middle East Policy Studies at the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University. He retired in 2005 from the U.S. Foreign Service, having served as U.S. ambassador to Egypt (1997–2001) and Israel (2001–2005). He is coauthor with Scott B. Lasensky of *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East.*

Scott B. Lasensky served as a senior researcher at the U.S. Institute of Peace from 2004 to 2011 and is coauthor (with Daniel C. Kurtzer) of *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East*.

William B. Quandt is Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia. His books include *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*.

Steven L. Spiegel is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Middle East Development at UCLA. He is the author of *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan.*

Shibley Z. Telhami is the Anwar Sadat Professor of Peace and Development at the University of Maryland, College Park, and a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. He is the author of *The Stakes: America in the Middle East* and coeditor of *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, also from Cornell.

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