

# facilitating peace



## **AMERICAN** LEADERSHIP

### **THE US CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN HELPING TO END THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT.**

Israeli and Palestinian majorities believe the best solution to the conflict is a two-state solution – a safe and secure Israel living side-by-side in peace with an independent, demilitarized Palestinian state. Unfortunately, actions taken by both Israeli and Palestinian leaders have caused trust between the sides to plummet, resulting in deep skepticism that a two-state outcome is achievable or that the other side is truly committed to that outcome. Given these realities, the United States should consider all available options to enhance the prospects for peace and bring the two parties closer together, understanding that ultimately, the tough decisions necessary to achieve peace must be made by Israeli and Palestinian leaders themselves.

#### **Two willing partners are needed to achieve peace - but strong American mediation can help bring them together**

A viable deal will require each side to enter into negotiations willingly and to feel that the outcomes have satisfactorily addressed major areas of concern. Given that a solution would have to be agreed upon and implemented by Israelis and Palestinians themselves, it is of course obvious that no solution can be “imposed” from the outside.

Both Israelis and Palestinians stand to gain significantly from active US efforts to advance a two-state solution. During active negotiations, the US can helpfully play the role of mediator, bridging gaps, emphasizing tough truths and keeping both sides focused.

#### **A US framework for a two-state solution can point the way toward successful direct negotiations**

The United States can and should work to create favorable conditions for productive direct negotiations by laying out a vision for a two-state solution that focuses the two parties on the central issues and core compromises needed to reach an agreement. Such a vision could help to bridge gaps and establish trust, breaking through the current reality of severe distrust and recrimination. Rather than forcing the parties to start “from scratch,” it could build on decades of extensive negotiation and study that has gone along way toward developing mutually acceptable solutions to many of the major issues.

While the Palestinians and some of their allies have and may continue to seek to advance one-sided action in international fora, a strong and fair alternative presented by the US could reduce the appeal of and support for such efforts. Only when the US withdraws from its leadership role is the floor left open to imbalanced initiatives.

#### **International engagement in the peace process doesn’t “bypass” negotiations - it can help promote and strengthen negotiations**

By bringing together a broad coalition of international and regional powers with a genuine interest in seeing a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the US can help ensure that the international community plays a productive role in the context of negotiations, as opposed to an unproductive role in international bodies. These international actors can help to provide key incentives to both sides and to guarantee the successful implementation and enforcement of a final agreement.

# Under Republican and Democratic presidents, the US has worked to facilitate peace

## 1978 CAMP DAVID

President Jimmy Carter hosted the Camp David negotiations which produced an interim peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. With the parties refusing to engage directly, Carter played the pivotal mediating role, shuttling between them. When talks to formalize the agreement into a treaty stalled, Carter stepped in again and succeeded in securing the treaty.



## 1991 MADRID

Secretary of State James Baker made seven trips to the Middle East in an intensive effort to organize the first formal Middle East peace summit. The Madrid Conference paved the way for negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians that led to the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords. It also greatly expedited the development of Israeli diplomatic relations with several Arab countries and nations across the globe.

## 2000 CLINTON PARAMETERS

Before leaving office, President Bill Clinton mounted a final effort to make peace. Known as the Clinton Parameters, the plan offered proposals for dealing with the most protracted problems: settlements, Jerusalem and refugees. At the time, both sides accepted the deal with reservations.



## 2002 ROAD MAP

First outlined by President George W. Bush in a speech that called for an independent Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel in peace, the US-drafted and Quartet-backed Road Map for peace was described by the administration as "a framework for progress towards lasting peace and security in the Middle East." Israeli and Palestinian delegations reaffirmed support for the roadmap in 2005 and 2007.

**"There is no assurance that a revived peace process will succeed even with active US mediation. But without it, such a peace process is almost certainly doomed to failure."**

– Allen S. Weiner,  
co-director of the Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation



To enhance the prospects for peace, the United States should remain committed to the principles that guided previous negotiations:

A solution cannot be imposed on the parties.

Both sides must be willing to make key compromises.

The US must act as a proactive and engaged mediator, bridging gaps and building trust between the parties.

The US has a responsibility to oppose rhetoric, actions and politics by either party which harms the prospects for a negotiated peace.

The US must support Israel and pursue all potential options to help Israel reach a viable and effective resolution to the conflict.