

# Study: Israelis have abandoned belief of peacefully integrating into the Middle East

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For decades, Israelis have sought to teach Arabs and Muslims that the existence of a Jewish state was a permanent fact of life. Israelis have thought that once Arab and Muslim belief in the state's permanence could be established, then Israel could reach out to its enemies with sensible rational compromises to achieve peace and stability in the region.

In a new article in the journal *Middle East Policy*, Ian S. Lustick shows that Israelis have largely abandoned the hope of "teaching" the Arabs to accept Israel. Indeed Israelis longer think of the Middle East as a region they want to be a part of, and Arabs and Muslims no longer imagine a Jewish state as capable of living in peace with them.

In the 1990s, peace was almost achieved. However, the end of the Oslo Peace Process and the horrific violence that ensued in Gaza and the West Bank, combined with the war in Lebanon in 2006, and continued large scale Jewish settlement of the West Bank, has all but destroyed hopes that existed on each side that a negotiated end to the conflict can be found. The near hysteria in Israel, itself a nuclear power, over Iran's developing capacity to produce nuclear weapons, reflects the depth of Israeli anxieties and the country's hopelessness about chances for peace.

Having escaped from the "Lebanese muck" after eighteen years of military presence there, Israeli Jews now see the region as a whole as a kind of quagmire where rational action is futile and escape the most attractive option. This has led to cycles of politically unproductive

violence, cataclysmic Israeli and Iranian threats against one another, pervasive demoralization in Israel, and migration of Israelis out of the country.

Israel's future is in serious doubt. A two-state solution might still be possible, but only if the United States, consistent with its interests and policies but contrary to its practices, pushes strongly and immediately for this outcome.

Source: Wiley

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