

Baker Institute Report: Mapping the territorial contours of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement

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A report published today by Rice University's James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy offers concrete recommendations to U.S. negotiators on the territorial component of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement.

The report, "Getting to the Territorial Endgame of an Israeli-Palestinian Peace Settlement," draws on nearly two years of discussions between a working group of Israelis and Palestinians convened under the aegis of the institute's [Conflict Resolution](#) Forum and chaired by Baker Institute Founding Director Edward P. Djerejian.

The findings provide policymakers in Washington, Jerusalem and Ramallah with the results of a "bottom-up" approach highlighting differences and areas of possible agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian positions on the key territorial issues. A primary assumption underlying this report is that the territorial component of peace cannot be negotiated and addressed in isolation of other final status issues, including Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees and security.

"No agreement will please every constituency on either side," said Djerejian, who is a former U.S. ambassador to Syria and to Israel, as well as former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs. "But this report can provide the respective governments with a heads-up on significant problems and contentious issues that they most likely will

encounter in actual negotiations, and, at the same time, provide insights into where differences could be narrowed and agreements reached."

The two teams provided narratives and submitted different maps containing territorial scenarios for the West Bank. While they did not reach a consensus, the two teams narrowed their differences in some areas and established certain common criteria and guidelines for assessing the territorial issues. Eleven specific settlements in the West Bank were discussed in detail. Jerusalem, as a final-status issue, was not directly addressed in the report, but the most contentious settlements in the vicinity of the city were deliberated upon, and major obstacles to an agreement were acknowledged and identified.

Drawing on the deliberations of the Israeli and Palestinian participants in this workshop and the proposed options for a final territorial agreement, the report finds that a United States bridging proposal on the territorial component of peace based on the line of June 4, 1967, with agreed-upon swaps and modifications could be introduced at the right time and, depending on actual political circumstances, serve as a guide to enable gradual progress, step by step. The contours of this territorial bridging proposal are outlined in this report, as well as the need to prepare the necessary planning tools to achieve a successful outcome. The concept of "space and time" was underscored as an important part in any compromise solutions -- namely, exploring the phasing of the relocation and dismantlement of settlements over a period of time.

"In actual negotiations, strong political will on the part of the leadership of all the parties — and a viable and ongoing negotiating framework — will be necessary to help bring the parties to a final agreement," Djerejian said. "And no real progress will be made without the direct and sustained involvement of President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Special Envoy Sen. George Mitchell."

The Israeli and Palestinian participants in the discussions were former officials, both civilian and military, academics, experts from various organizations and individuals from the private sector.

More information: To read the complete report, go to www.bakerinstitute.org/publications/endgame-020210.pdf

Provided by Rice University

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