

ISS Washington Forum Conference Report

European Union Institute for Security Studies

Peace in the Middle East: Is there a way forward? Contending European and American Perspectives

A Seminar of the European Union
Washington Forum
Organised by the EU Institute
for Security Studies

by Calin Trenkov-Wermuth
& Marcin Zaborowski

CONTEXT

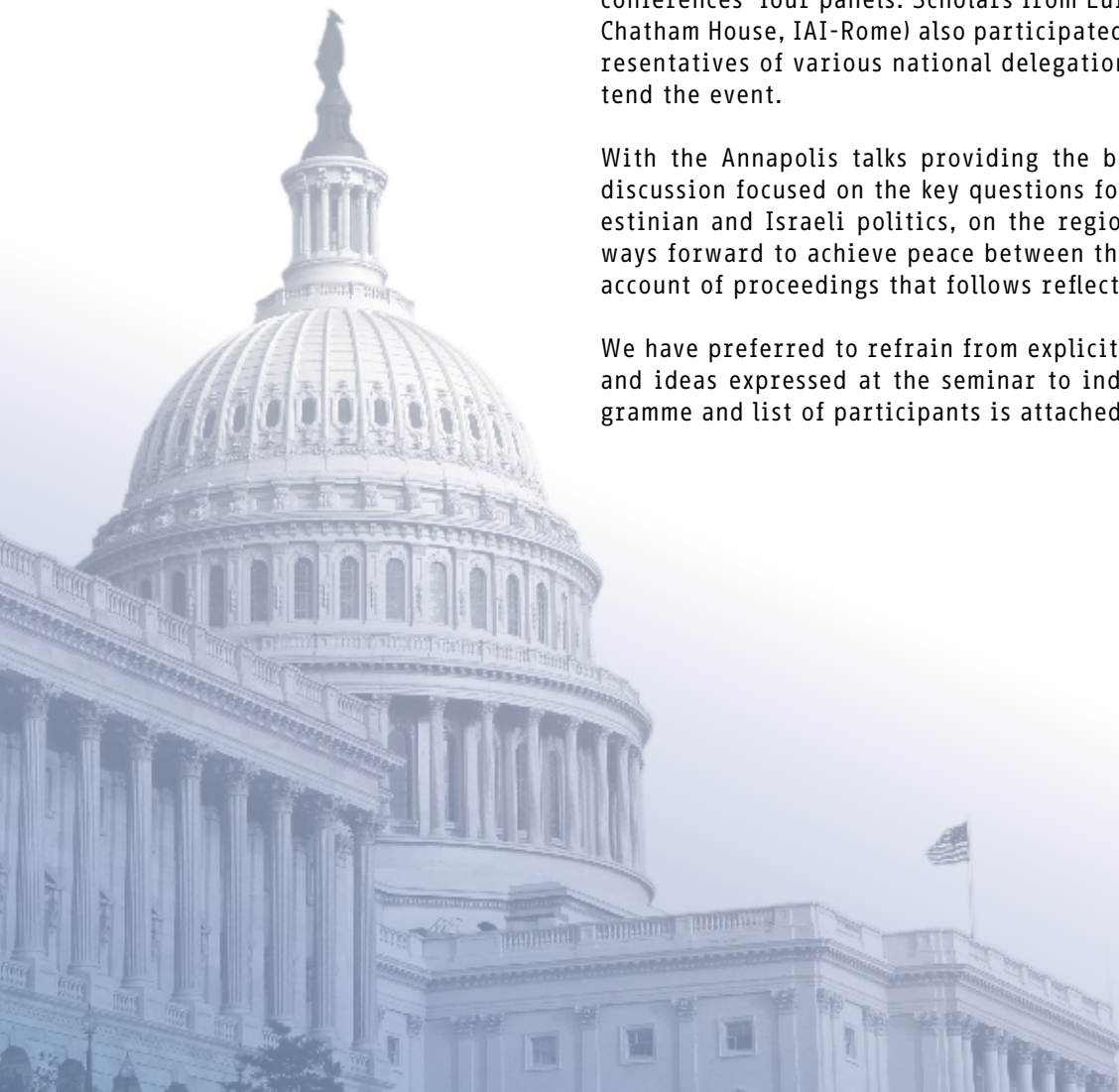
Less than a month before the Annapolis conference, on 30 October 2007, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) held a transatlantic seminar on the peace prospects in the Middle East. The event was held in Washington DC and its main objective was to provide a forum for a dialogue between the EU and the US on the key issues for a lasting settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians.

This EUISS conference was the first event convened in the framework of the European Union's Washington Forum, which will be officially launched in November 2008, and as such represented the first step towards a more permanent presence of the EUISS in Washington DC.

It was organised with the support of the European Commission's Delegation to the US and of the European Union's Portuguese Presidency. Experts from key US think tanks (including Brookings, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Woodrow Wilson Center) and universities, as well as some Congressional and State Department staff attended and participated in the conferences' four panels. Scholars from European think tanks (Clingendael, Chatham House, IAI-Rome) also participated in the conference, and the representatives of various national delegations to the US were invited to attend the event.

With the Annapolis talks providing the backdrop to the conference, the discussion focused on the key questions for a negotiated solution, on Palestinian and Israeli politics, on the regional context and, finally, on the ways forward to achieve peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. The account of proceedings that follows reflects key points of this debate.

We have preferred to refrain from explicitly attributing the various views and ideas expressed at the seminar to individual speakers. (NB: The programme and list of participants is attached at the end of this report.)



THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

- The two-state solution and the question of territorial borders are the least controversial issues
- The two most contentious issues are the questions of refugee returns and of sovereignty over key sites in Jerusalem.

There was general agreement at the conference that the main obstacles to a peace settlement are more symbolic than practical. The issues of the peace process may be divided into two categories: those where an agreement is within reach in the short term; and those which remain loaded with historical and religious symbolism and which are far more contentious.



President of Palestinian authority Mahmoud Abbas, Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Issues on which an agreement can be obtained in the short term

Whilst no aspect of the Middle East peace process is uncontroversial, there are a number of key issues which are less contentious today than they were prior to the summit at Camp David in 2000, and prior to the initiative of the 'Quartet', made up of the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States, to draw up a 'Road Map' for peace designed to lead to a final settlement of the long-standing conflict. **The two-state solution**, and thus the creation of a separate Palestinian state, to which the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority committed themselves at Oslo in 1993, is still viewed as the way forward in the process, and no longer ranks among the divisive issues.

Furthermore, a final agreement on the precise **territorial borders** of the two states has not been reached, but this issue is also not among those panellists consider to have the potential to slow down or derail the peace process. There is broad consensus on the territorial issue: Israel and the Palestinian Authority generally agree that the 1967 lines are the basis for successful negotiations. In this respect, one panellist noted that borders based on the 1967 lines with agreed modification based on one-for-one exchange would be an adequate way of addressing the issue of Palestinian control of the territories. Also, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza means that that territory is no longer under dispute; and both sides agree that the 8.5%

of West Bank territory currently incorporated within the West Bank security barrier could eventually be reduced to 5%, for which the Palestinians could be compensated. Both sides have now agreed that there has to be an exchange of territory, which should be legitimised by a UN resolution.

However, one of the panellists disagreed with this view, citing the case of the Egyptian-Israeli Camp David accord from 1978. The speaker highlighted that one of the reasons why the Egyptian public did not challenge the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement was because President Sadat insisted on and received complete sovereignty over all Egyptian lands that were occupied by Israel; while there is much more flexibility on the question as to how to deal with Jerusalem, the implication of this analogy is that Palestinian control over all Palestinian lands may be key to the success of a peace agreement that is to be acceptable to the Palestinian public.

One of the consequences of seven years of violence, since the failed Camp David talks led by President Clinton in 2000, was that both Israelis and Palestinians have become more realistic on a number of key issues, including on the question of Jerusalem. Prime Minister Barak made certain offers of concessions at Camp David, for which the Israeli public was not as prepared in 2000 as it is today. While Jerusalem's status remains highly contentious, the challenge no longer lies in resolving the question of sovereignty over the entire territory, but over key areas of the city. Ehud Olmert has had the idea of dividing Jerusalem, and the hardline leader of Israel's Russian party (Yisrael Beytenu), Avigdor Lieberman, has agreed that Palestinian suburbs should come under Arab sovereignty, in itself an 'unprecedented' position as one participant put it. Thus, agreement on the broad territorial divide of Jerusalem is within reach, but is dependent on a mutually satisfactory resolution on the key problem areas, such as sovereignty over the Temple Mount.

Contentious issues on which agreement cannot be reached in the short term

The two most contentious issues of the entire peace process are the questions of refugee returns, and of sovereignty over key sites in Jerusalem, the lack of agreement on the latter being one of the main reasons why the Camp David talks in 2000 broke down. The essence of the problem over Jerusalem's holy sites is that the Temple Mount, the holiest place in Judaism, occupies the same site as al-Haram al-Sharif, the third holiest shrine in Islam.

Panellists envisioned three potential solutions to the problem of sovereignty over the Temple Mount: the first of these is the division of sovereignty; the second scenario is shared sovereignty; and the third is the establishment of an international protectorate. On the notion of shared sovereignty, one speaker suggested that Jerusalem's old city walls could be used to define an area of shared sovereignty, with no particular specifications as to who has sovereignty over what parts of the area. Regarding the idea of the internationalisation of the territory, one of the panellists highlighted the fact that, unlike the question of territorial sovereignty over Palestinian lands, there is more flexibility on the issue of sovereignty over Jerusalem, since the international com-

munity intended to make the city an international territory already in 1947; furthermore, he felt that the Arabs do not necessarily insist on full sovereignty over the Holy Basin, but that Israel does not have sole sovereignty over the territory. Finally, one participant made the general observation that in all discussions on the matter it is important to make a distinction between matters of sovereignty and religious claims on the territory.

On the issue of **refugee returns**, the panellists agreed that the solution is essentially clear to both parties: what is required is compensation and resettlement of those refugees who would wish to move from their present abode, and there also must be a right of return to the state of Palestine for those who wish to return. Israel, for its part, must acknowledge its role in the creation of a refugee problem and pay compensation, and also allow some Palestinians to enter Israel under its sovereign jurisdiction for reasons of family reunion or under humanitarian law. It is evident that the solution to the problem will be a nationalist one, and that the vast majority of Palestinian refugees would not be allowed to return to Israel. Clearly, some Palestinians are likely to cling to the idea of a right of return to Israel for strategic reasons, even though there can be no actual right of return to Israel, and although it is unrealistic to assume that Israel will allow this to happen.

However, while the vast majority of refugees cannot return to Israel, the principle of a right is indeed extremely important, since a right to return is enshrined in a body of norms in the international system. Ideally, a formulation would be found which on the one hand addresses the demand for a right to return, but in fact 'vitiates the right itself through practical arrangements' as one of the speakers proposed. Importantly, one of the panellists observed that it is vital for the long-term resolution of the conflict that the practical settlement which is signed be seen as a final settlement of the Palestinian claims of right of return, and that finality in the settlement requires that 'right of return issues have to be confronted and not avoided.' The panellists generally remained cautiously optimistic that this core issue can indeed be resolved once the parties commence negotiations.

POLITICAL ISSUES

- **The current Israeli and Palestinian leaders are too weak to reach a lasting and comprehensive peace agreement.**
- **A peace accord would not be sustained with Hamas being excluded from it.**

There is no doubt that domestic politics in the Palestinian territories and in Israel are essential elements of the conflict. The conference debated the internal political situation within the two communities.



Marcin Zaborowski, Shibley Telhami, Martin Indyk, Luís de Almeida Sampaio, John Gatt Rutter

Israeli Politics

The Israeli domestic political situation rendered any substantial progress in the peace process at Annapolis extremely difficult. In the first instance, public opinion polls indicated that the Israeli Jewish population was not ready for a comprehensive settlement in the run-up to the summit. While a clear majority was in favour of a negotiated solution, it was not prepared to compromise even on the less symbolic issues: 59 percent, for instance, opposed transferring Jerusalem's Arab neighbourhoods to Palestinian sovereignty, many believing that a division of Jerusalem would not be possible. The only way that this position could change, argued one participant, is if the Israeli public became convinced that this might in fact be a sustainable solution. Secondly, Ehud Olmert's government remained unpopular and weak. The Prime Minister was facing opposition from various sides, and his approval ratings in Israeli opinion polls were very low.

The panellists, however, were divided on the implications of Olmert's domestic political standing for the potential for negotiations with the Palestinians. While some saw Olmert's coalition as relatively broad and stronger than Barak's coalition in 2000, therefore situating Olmert favourably for negotiations, others saw the coalition as fragile, with the potential to break down if the government were to attempt to take a position seen as giving any ground on the question of Jerusalem and other contentious issues. The results of the public opinion polls clearly reinforced Olmert's cautiousness with regard to the peace process, making it less likely that the Prime Minister would be prepared to take politically risky decisions. Thus, irrespective of the relative strength of Olmert's coalition, the Prime Minister and his government were seen as unlikely to be willing to sign up to any peace agreement with the Palestinians.

Palestinian Politics

On the Palestinian side, Abbas and Fatah have lost control over Gaza to Hamas and Abbas's tenuous hold on power results more from the weakness of the opposition party and leadership, since Hamas is politically isolated and has not been able to capitalise on its victory, than from his own strength and leadership ability, which is weakening. He remains in power essentially by default, and holds power only in the West Bank; but even there his weak capacity as a leader is demonstrated by the fact that he usually rules by

presidential decree. Some of the similarities of the political positions in which Olmert and Abbas find themselves explains the recent rapprochement between the two sides; however, Abbas's position and particularly his lack of control over the means of violence in the territory make Israel very reluctant to sign any agreements with him, since it clearly 'cannot make existential concessions to someone who does not have control of all of the guns,' as one speaker argued, and who only represents the West Bank.

In addition to the current domestic political situation in Israel and Palestine, it is the dysfunctional nature of both political systems which further complicates efforts to reach any agreement. On the one hand, the Israeli system is not designed to take very difficult decisions since usually one key step is taken by a leader before he falls; on the other hand, the Palestinian system has identity problems since it is unclear whether it is a liberation movement or a government. Furthermore, external interference in domestic politics frequently has negative consequences. A participant made the observation that the US, for instance, frequently gets it wrong: 'almost every time the US tries to intervene in domestic politics, by choosing favourites, it tends to weaken those it tries to support.' If the US wanted to strengthen Abbas, it should have embraced him as the representative of the Palestinians. The wrong way to go about this was after Hamas's election, giving the impression that Abbas was doing Israel's bidding.



Ya'ara Barnoon, Lauren Gottlieb

Hamas

Several panellists also offered their views on Hamas, and its domestic political role and standing. Essentially, Hamas represents the radical voice of the Palestinians. However, while it did gain 40 percent of the vote in the elections, one of the speakers argued that support for Hamas should not necessarily be interpreted as support for an Islamist movement: Hamas offered an alternative to Fatah, with which there was much dissatisfaction at the time. So it should be remembered that people voted for Hamas simply because it represented an alternative rather than because it was a movement with an Islamist ideology. Thus, the reason why an Islamist movement was supported is because of a real lack of viable alternatives. In this respect, Palestinians might turn their back on radical movements if such an alternative were to present itself.

While Hamas is politically isolated at the moment, it nevertheless remains potentially a key spoiler of the peace process. There are many challenges in dealing with Hamas, including its refusal to recognise Israel, its radicalism, its rejection of negotiations, and its willingness to use violence internally, but one panellist took

the view that the movement's Islamist nature is only a matter of concern for the people living in Gaza, and not necessarily a problem for the peace process. What could, however, become a problem for the peace process is the fact that the militant factions within Hamas are growing louder and stronger, and that a gradual process of fragmentation of authority within Hamas is taking place. The process began with the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, and continued with the takeover of Gaza, which was out of the hands of Hamas's political leadership and the leadership in Syria. As a participant highlighted, 'the more time passes, and the more Hamas is divided internally, the more difficult it will be to resolve the crisis.'

The common US-EU position on Hamas, i.e. the refusal to engage with it, is based on the fact that Hamas does not recognise Israel's right to exist. However, due to Hamas's ability to derail the peace process, and due to the fact that no peace deal which excludes Hamas can be sustainable in the long run, many European and American panellists agreed that some form of engagement will be necessary. A number felt that engagement could be particularly useful in helping to draw out the more moderate elements in Hamas. The EU has a history of understanding the Arab world better than the US does, and the position that all Quartet parties hold is that there could be more of a division of labour. In this respect, a panellist highlighted that the EU could potentially stake a more independent position, and that a European engagement with Hamas should be perceived in terms of a European contribution to transatlantic relations. The EU's towing of the American line on Hamas has not only weakened the EU's influence and prestige in the region, but also the EU's influence in the Arab world, and the relative value of the European engagement for the US. Interestingly, a participant also argued that Israel itself needs to change its attitude on engagement with Hamas. Indeed there is less public opposition in Israel to seeking a ceasefire with Hamas than is commonly perceived. Most Israelis believe that both Hamas and Fatah have blood on their hands. They care less about who that partner is, and more about whether that partner can deliver and fulfill its agreements. They have little faith that the PA under President Abbas can actually implement any agreement. And as for Fatah itself, the Palestinian Ambassador to the US indicated it is willing to engage with Hamas after the meeting in Annapolis.

Some participants, however, were categorical in their rejection of engagement with Hamas. One speaker notably argued that engaging Hamas would be wrong not only because of its political positions, but because it would be interpreted as rewarding Hamas's continued use of violence and its military takeover of Gaza: 'since they are illegitimate in Gaza, we cannot legitimate them by engaging them.' At the same time, however, the same speaker recognised that excluding them from the peace process is a problem, which is why the entire issue with Hamas does not lend itself to a sensible policy solution. Therefore, the only way forward he sees is to lend as much credibility to the process of final status negotiations and implementations of road map obligations, and to ensure that the process has as much support as possible, for instance by including the Syrians, so that it can become clear to Hamas that the process is going forward, and that there is an advantage to moderation.

THE ROLE OF REGIONAL POWERS

- Syria and Iran are potential spoilers of any peace agreement in the region.
- It is unclear yet if Syria's alliance with Iran is merely tactical or strategic and long-lasting.
- The so called 'wedge approach' whereby the West drives Syria away from Iran could only work if the US administration fully engaged with Damascus.

One of the key reasons why regional actors nowadays are involved with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is because being seen to address the problem helps authoritarian dictators and leaders to maintain their legitimacy with their own restive publics. While Europe served as an example to most regional powers in the 1930s, leading many Arab states to attempt to Europeanise, these efforts were abandoned after the regimes failed to confront the creation of the state of Israel. After 1948, this failure led to the replacement of most regional regimes surrounding Palestine by Arab nationalists; being liberal and pro-Western evidently did not help in resolving the Arab nations' most acute concern.

The majority of the panellists agreed that the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians cannot be resolved without taking the regional context into account. In this respect, three countries that play a significant role were discussed, namely Syria, Iran, and Lebanon. However, there were varying views on, firstly, the extent to which each of these plays a role, and secondly, how to address that role. One of the panellists argued that after the summer of 2006 with the wars in Lebanon and Gaza and the deteriorating situation in Iraq, it has become difficult to isolate any of the conflicts in the region. Iran and Syria were involved in all of them, which gave the conflicts a broader regional dimension. Thus, he felt that one cannot address one conflict without dealing with the others, all of which are also part of a regional confrontation between the US and Iran. In this respect, he suggested that it may be advisable to revive the Arab Peace Initiative, since it provides a framework for broader regional involvement, particularly at a time when Arab-Israeli relations are more promising than Israeli-Palestinian ones. Some, however, felt that adopting an approach which is too broad prevents essential bilateral steps from being taken.

There was also some disagreement on the role of Syria in the conflict. A speaker outlined two scenarios as to how the current situation with Syria may play out. The first, which is decidedly pessimistic, suggests that ever since Syria lost hope that it would regain the Golan Heights from Israel, its tactical alliance with Iran, which was initially designed to secure a better negotiating position vis-à-vis Israel, has shifted to what is now a strategic partnership. The danger in this is that Syria and Iran

will continue to act as spoilers in the Middle East. The second and somewhat more optimistic scenario, which can best be described as a 'wedge approach,' holds that the best way of dealing with this situation would have the US and the EU create sufficient incentives for Syria to disengage with Iran, so as to drive a wedge between Syria and Iran, and to thereby confront Iran with a new political reality on the ground. This approach is essentially based on the assumption that Syria has played the Iranian card only for tactical purposes, and that it would acquiesce to Western demands in Lebanon and elsewhere as soon as it attained its goals.

However, the proponent of these scenarios underlined that while it has already been attempted, the wedge approach has failed to work thus far. And although it should still be attempted by the US and the EU, it is also unlikely to work in the future, in part because no US administration, be it Democratic or Republican, is likely to pursue negotiations with Damascus wholeheartedly. If Syria cannot be encouraged to break with Iran, then the current regional situation, with Syria abetting Iran's actions and supporting Hizbollah in a manner that prevents a settlement of Lebanon's internal political conflict, will continue. However, if Syria can be 'wedged' away from Iran through diplomatic incentives, new possibilities for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, and for internal developments in Lebanon, would open up.

However, some of the panellists rejected the notion that the 'wedge approach' would positively contribute to the dissolution of the Syrian-Iranian partnership, believing that this would be a sign of capitulation, the cost of which is too high. Others also disputed the view that the new strategic partnership between Syria and Iran will necessarily lead these powers to continue to act as spoilers, arguing that Syria has embarked on a course of moderation, and that Iran has no genuine sense of solidarity with the Palestinians. Therefore, while Iran will generally maintain an attitude of hostility towards Israel, and while it cannot back away from its involvement in the conflict, having invested too much credibility in the issue, both Syria and Iran could indeed alter their respective positions if they were to be involved in the peace process and offered a satisfying deal.

WHAT ARE THE WAYS FORWARD IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

- A long-term ceasefire agreement between all parties, including Hamas.
- The peace process in Northern Ireland as a model for the region.
- The international community could act as a guarantor of security in the occupied territories.

Several key ideas were discernible from the panellists' presentations as to what the ways forward are in the Middle East peace process, and what role the international community can play in that respect. One of the key proposals emerged from a speaker's presentation, and centres on the notion of a long-term ceasefire. He argued that given the unbridgeable gaps on the core issue and the inability of President Abbas to implement any agreement, the way forward is not through a final settlement, but through a long-term ceasefire. However, while it would need to include a total cessation of all violence against Israel, and possibly third party security arrangements, a long-term ceasefire deal with Hamas could be possible under the right conditions. It is in the interest of both Israelis and Palestinians to seek a ceasefire, which Hamas has advocated in the past. There is also evidence that Hamas has respected ceasefires in the past. In essence, such an interim arrangement would allow the peace process to move forward given that it is presently difficult to reach a final settlement. There is no guarantee that Hamas can be brought into the equation. But without them any progress is unlikely.

The challenges to a ceasefire are certainly great: from the Israeli perspective, it presents difficulties because there are no ways of verifying whether Hamas is arming itself, and Israel also fears losing operational freedom in the West Bank. And on the Hamas side, there is a problem in that the militant factions within the organisation are growing stronger, and authority is splitting between such militant factions and Hamas' political leadership, as already highlighted. A further impediment is Fatah, which believes that it should have a monopoly on power, and which, if it has the backing of the international community, will try to thwart any progress that includes Hamas as a stabilising force. In essence, he argued that while Palestinian unity is an essential prerequisite for a ceasefire agreement, and the challenges of trying to achieve a ceasefire are thus great, given the broader constraints, it is the only way forward. Moreover, due to the inherent difficulties of the Annapolis initiative, settling on a ceasefire agreement has several key advantages: firstly, any such deal would need to include Hamas, and thus an important part of the political equation would be back in the process; and secondly, a ceasefire scenario would allow Palestine and Israel to reach a new status quo without making any costly political concessions and compromises, which at this point are unlikely given Abbas's and Olmert's respective domestic political standings.

In his intervention, one of the panellists made some important parallels between the Middle East Peace process, and the peace process in Northern Ireland, which he felt holds important lessons for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ways forward towards its resolution. This is the case because the issues at the heart of the dispute in Ireland are also at the heart of the dispute in Palestine: land and sovereignty over that land. Foremost among these lessons was the need for a detailed vision, or 'picture', of what an eventual peace agreement could entail. Alluding to the 1974 Sunningdale Agreement, during which a vision which addressed all parties' major concerns was drawn up, and which subsequently served as the road map for further negotiations in Northern Ireland, the speaker felt that a similar picture could

result from the Annapolis initiative. This vision could then be used not only to guide further negotiations, but also to offer hope and to oblige any potential spoilers to justify how their actions will result in a better resolution than that already envisioned in the 'picture'.

Furthermore, several other valuable lessons could be gleaned from the experience of the 1990s peace process in Northern Ireland: firstly, that there should only rarely be preconditions to talks between the warring factions, since the key elements to any agreement tend to be resolved towards the end of a peace process, and not at its outset. The IRA, for instance, did not accept the decommissioning of its arms as a precondition for negotiations, and this precondition had to be dropped eventually. From that point onwards, the process moved on two parallel tracks – political negotiations towards an agreement, and the decommissioning of weapons – which were formally independent of each other. While decommissioning is indeed a justifiable precondition to the coming into force of an agreement, it should not serve as a precondition to the start of negotiations. And thus, a similar two-track method could be applied in the Middle East. However, it is vital that any conditions are 'crystal clear as to their meaning,' which is not currently the case with the Road Map for Peace. The second lesson is that in order to maintain a peace process, it will be necessary at times to turn a blind eye to violence instigated and perpetrated by a few isolated radicals, since one should not allow a few individuals to spoil the prospect of peace. This lesson will be important for the way forward in the peace process should any spoilers attempt to thwart progress through violence. And the speaker's final recommendation was that one of the most important elements in drafting a peace agreement is to assure both parties that their views are respected, even if an agreement on certain issues cannot be reached.

Two final proposals on the peace process were made during the conference: the first of these centres on the notion that the international community could act as the guarantor of security on the ground in what are now the occupied territories. This idea includes the possibility of a tangible military presence on the ground. In the past, Israel strongly objected to the idea of any international peacekeeping force being present; however, following its war with Hizbullah in Lebanon in 2006, it has come to accept this notion. In this respect, the presence of an international peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon could serve as a precedent to be replicated in the Palestinian-Israeli context. And the second suggestion was that the risks and dangers of peacemaking are so high that each side will probably have to get – whether it is in the Israeli-Palestinian or Israeli-Syrian negotiations – something pretty close to one-hundred percent of what they need. These two negotiations cannot be done 'on the cheap,' which in the panellist's view means recognition by the outside mediator of one fundamental point: instead of trying to talk each side out of what it needs, we need to focus each on what it will cost them to get what they want. For example, if Syria wishes to revert back to the June 1967 lines, that is acceptable; but Syria will then need to seriously consider what it is prepared to offer Israel in order to reacquire that land.

• 29TH OCTOBER

Welcome dinner at the Ritz Carlton Hotel
(7:30pm)

• 30TH OCTOBER

Opening Session

(9:00am-9:30am)

Luís de Almeida Sampaio, Portuguese Presidency of the EU, Lisbon

Tom Goldberger, US Department of State, Washington DC

Álvaro de Vasconcelos, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Session 1: Basic issues for a negotiated solution

(9:30am-11:00am)

Chair: **Marcin Zaborowski**, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Territory: contiguity and Jerusalem

Economics: reconstruction and relations with neighbours including Israel

Speakers:

Luís de Almeida Sampaio, Portuguese Presidency of the EU, Lisbon

John Gatt Rutter, Council of the European Union, Brussels

Martin Indyk, Brookings Institution, Washington DC

Shibley Telhami, University of Maryland, Washington DC

Session 2: Political questions

(11:15am-12:45pm)

Chair: **Nathan Brown**, The George Washington University, Washington DC

Fatah, the Palestinian Authority and political options

Future relationships with Hamas and political Islam

Domestic Politics of Israel

Political reconciliation and cooperation

Speakers:

Alain Dieckhoff, CERI, Paris

Haim Malka, CSIS, Washington DC

Marina Ottaway, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC

Working lunch at the Ritz Carlton Hotel

(12:45pm-2:00pm)

Keynote speeches:

Afif Safieh, Ambassador, Embassy of Palestine, Washington DC

Eynat Schlein-Michael, Minister-Counsellor for Middle Eastern Affairs, Embassy of Israel, Washington DC

Session 3: What role for regional actors?

(2:00pm-3:30pm)

Chair: **Ian Lesser**, German Marshall Fund of the US, Washington DC

Lebanon and Syria

Iran

Jordan and Egypt

Speakers:

Daniel Brumberg, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC

Kenneth Katzman, CRS-Congress, Washington DC

Walter Posch, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Nadim Shehadi, Chatham House, London

Session 4: Round table

What role for the EU and the US?

(3:45pm-5:30pm)

Chair: **Álvaro de Vasconcelos**, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Speakers:

John Bruton, Head of the Delegation of the EU Commission, Washington DC

Robert Malley, Crisis Group, Washington DC

Aaron David Miller, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington DC

PANELLISTS

Nathan J. Brown is Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University, where he directs the Institute for Middle East Studies. He also serves as Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Daniel Brumberg is an Associate Professor of Government at Georgetown University and Co-Director of Democracy and Governance Studies at Georgetown. He is also Acting Director of the Muslim World Initiative at the United States Institute of Peace. He has published extensively on issues of political and social reform in the Muslim World, and has conducted research in both the Middle East and Southeast Asia.



John Bruton, Álvaro de Vasconcelos, Aaron David Miller

John Bruton is Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to the United States. He was the Prime Minister (Taoiseach) of the Republic of Ireland from 1994 to 1997 and has held various ministerial-level positions in Ireland. He presided over the Irish EU Presidency in 1996, and was deeply involved in the Northern Irish Peace Process leading to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. He previously served as a leading member of the Convention that resulted in the first-ever draft European Constitution in 2004, and was also Vice President of the European People's Party (EPP) from 1999 to 2005.

Alain Dieckhoff is Director of Research at the CNRS (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, Paris). He teaches also at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. He works on politics and society in Israel and on Israeli-Palestinian relations. He has published several books and numerous articles on these topics.

John Gatt-Rutter is a Maltese diplomat with significant experience in the Middle East. He is a member of the Middle East/Mediterranean Task Force of the Council of the European Union with responsibility for the Middle East Peace Process and the Palestinians. He spent three years in the Middle East as Deputy Head of the Maltese Embassy in Cairo and handled the Middle East file for four years at the Maltese Permanent Representation to the European Union.

Thomas Goldberger is Director of the Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs at the US Department of State. This office supports the State Department's engagement in Arab-Israeli peace efforts. He has served at the US Missions in Turkey, Jordan, France and Saudi Arabia.

Martin Indyk directs the Saban Center for Middle East Policy. He was US Ambassador to Israel and Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs during the Clinton Administration. He currently focuses on the Clinton administration's diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Kenneth Katzman is a Senior Analyst in Persian Gulf Affairs at the Congressional Research Service. In that capacity, he analyzes US policy toward Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Gulf region for the US Congress. During 1996 and 2001-2002, he was seconded to the House International Relations Committee. He is author of a book (1993) on Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Ian Lesser is Senior Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the US in Washington. Before joining GMF, he spent over a decade at RAND where he specialised in Mediterranean and security affairs. He is a former member of the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff, US Department of State.

Haim Malka is Deputy Director of the Middle East Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. His research focuses include North Africa, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and political Islam.

Robert Malley is Middle East and North Africa Program Director at the International Crisis Group. He has previously served as Special Assistant to President Clinton for Arab-Israeli Affairs (1998-2001), and also as Executive Assistant to Samuel Berger, the National Security Advisor (1996-1998). He was also Director for Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the National Security Council (1994-1996).

Aaron David Miller is currently a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. Over a period of more than twenty years, he worked as an advisor on Arab-Israeli negotiations for six Secretaries of State. His most recent book *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace* will be published in March 2008 by Bantam-Del.

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