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Prospects for Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations

Media Mention of Ghaith al-Omari in - March 18, 2014 - 11:00pm

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Daniel C. Kurtzer retired in 2005 with the rank of Career-Minister following a 29-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service. From 2001-2005 he served as the United States Ambassador to Israel and from 1997-2001 as the United States Ambassador to Egypt. He served as a political officer at the American embassies in Cairo and Tel Aviv, Deputy Director of the Office of Egyptian Affairs, speechwriter on the Policy Planning Staff, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research. Throughout his career, Kurtzer was instrumental in formulating and executing U.S. policy toward the Middle East peace process. Since leaving government service, Kurtzer has served as an advisor to the Iraq Study Group; as a member of the Board of the American University in Cairo; the Advisory Council of the American Bar Association's Middle East Rule of Law Initiative, and the Middle East Institute; as the first Commissioner of the professional Israel Baseball League; and as a member of the New Jersey-Israel Commission. He is the co-author of *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East*; co-author of *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989-2011*; and editor of *Pathways to Peace: America and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. PhD Columbia University.

Ghaith Al-Omari is Executive Director at the American Task Force on Palestine (ATFP). Prior to that, he served in various positions within the Palestinian Authority, including Director of the International Relations Department in the Office of the Palestinian President, and advisor to former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. In these capacities, he provided advice on foreign policy -- especially vis-à-vis the United States and Israel -- and security. He has extensive experience in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, having been an advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team throughout the permanent status negotiations (1999–2001). In that capacity, he participated in various negotiating rounds, most notably the Camp David summit and the Taba talks. After the breakdown of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, he was the lead Palestinian drafter of the Geneva Initiative, an unofficial model peace agreement negotiated between leading Palestinian and Israeli public figures. Mr. al-Omari is a lawyer by training and

a graduate of Georgetown and Oxford Universities. Prior to his involvement in the Middle East peace process, he taught international law in Jordan and was active in human rights advocacy.

Steven Simon joined the IISS in January 2013 as Executive Director, IISS-US, and Corresponding Director, IISS-Middle East. Prior to this, he was Senior Director for Middle East and North Africa on the National Security Council staff in the Obama Administration. Before reentering government, he served as the Hasib Sabbagh Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, a consultant on Middle East security, Assistant Director and Senior Fellow at the IISS, and as a Senior Analyst at the RAND Corporation. His previous government service included five years of service on President Clinton's National Security Council Staff as Senior Director for Transnational Threats. He is co-author of the prize-winning book *The Age of Sacred Terror*, as well as *The Next Attack*, *The Sixth Crisis*, *Iraq at the Crossroads*, and *Helping a Palestinian State Succeed*.

The discussion was moderated by Ben Fishman, Consulting Senior Fellow for the Middle East and North Africa, IISS and took place at IISS-US^[3], 2121 K Street NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20037.

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