

# **THE PEACE PROCESS AND REGIONAL STABILITY**

**BY**

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AMBASSADOR OF JORDAN TO THE UN**



**THE FIFTH  
ANGIER BIDDLE DUKE LECTURE**

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The National Committee on American Foreign Policy (NCAFP) was founded in 1974 by Professors Hans J. Morgenthau, George D. Schwab, and others to serve as a nonprofit, independent foreign policy think tank to help shape U.S. foreign policy. Among members are experts from the worlds of diplomacy, academia and leaders from business and the professions.

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**Dr. George D. Schwab**  
**President, National Committee on American**  
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**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, EXCELLENCIES,  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

**O**n behalf of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, I welcome you to the Fifth Angier Biddle Duke Lecture and bring you greetings from our chairman, William J. Flynn, who, unfortunately, cannot be with us tonight. We are honored to have His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, ambassador of Jordan to the United Nations, as our special guest lecturer. He will address us on "The Peace Process and Regional Stability."

Angier Biddle Duke, as many of you know, was associated with the National Committee almost from its inception. He served as president in the 1970s. For close to 30 years before his tragic death in 1995, Angie was deeply involved in every aspect of the National Committee's work.

To commemorate the extraordinary human being that Angier Biddle Duke was and to acknowledge the passion of his public life—politics, especially the field of foreign affairs—the National Committee established an endowed lecture series bearing his name and reflecting his interests. I thank everyone who has contributed to the fund. Each contribution will be listed in a special National Committee publication that will contain Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein's lecture.

Now it is my privilege to introduce former Ambassador to Norway Robin Chandler Duke, who will introduce His Royal Highness. Because of time constraints and the magnitude of Robin's work, I can highlight only a few of her activities and accomplishments. Robin has been affiliated with Population Action International as director, cochair, and national chair. She serves as a consultant to the United Nations Population Fund and is president emeritus of the National Abortion Rights Action League. She headed the U.S. delegation to the UNESCO conference in Belgrade and was a delegate to both the 1980 UN Conference—the first on population and development—and the

1983 UN Conference on Population in the Arab World. Ambassador Robin Chandler Duke is a founding member of the U.S.-Japan Foundation. She received the Albert and Mary Lasker Award for Public Service in 1991, and for her work in humanitarian affairs she has been decorated by the governments of Spain and Luxembourg.

Robin. . . .



## Ambassador Robin Chandler Duke

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you, George. I'm particularly delighted to have the opportunity to introduce our speaker this evening because I have a special, warm, and profound affection for Jordan. When my husband was chief of protocol in the early sixties, we met His Majesty King Hussein in Washington and escorted him around the country. Then he very graciously invited us to Jordan. We were received by the Princess, the mother of the present King, and had a wonderful tour of the country. His Royal Highness's parents, the Court Chamberlain to the King of Jordan and his wife, and Princess Sarah, the wife of our speaker: We are very very proud you are all here in a family gathering that includes graduates from Johns Hopkins, Brown, and Harvard. I salute and applaud all the members of the global Jordanian group that is with us tonight.

His Royal Highness, the ambassador of Jordan to the UN, has a very illustrious background and is more than well prepared to deal with the task at hand in the United Nations. He has had a very interesting education, which has enhanced his ability to bring authority and great skills to his task as ambassador. He graduated from Johns Hopkins in 1983 with a B.A. degree and received his Ph.D. in modern international history in 1993 from Cambridge University, Christ College. He received military training in the Jordanian Desert Police and in 1994 joined the UN Peace Forces as a political officer representing the secretary general of the United Nations in Yugoslavia and Croatia. In 1996 he was appointed by the Foreign Ministry of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan deputy permanent representative to the United Nations. In addition to his two major tours in the UN, he was named permanent representative of the permanent mission of Jordan to the United Nations in 2001.

I am delighted to present to you His Royal Highness Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, ambassador of Jordan to the United Nations.



**H.R.H. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein  
Ambassador of Jordan to the United Nations**

**THE PEACE PROCESS  
AND REGIONAL STABILITY**

**D**earest friends: I thank you, George and Robin, for your kind words of introduction. I would like to begin by conveying to all of you my delight at being here tonight and the honor I feel in having been invited to present the Angier Biddle Duke Lecture. My dear wife, Princess Sarah (who has the pleasure of listening to her husband talk all day long), will tell you that you are a very brave people, or as George Bernard Shaw once put it famously: "When a man has anything to tell in this world, the difficulty is not to make him tell it but to prevent him from telling it too often!" What follows naturally is my personal view and not necessarily the views of my government.

I have been invited to speak on the Middle East tonight where, as you all know, events continue to unfold precipitously, as they have done since the end of March. Hitherto our crisis was marked by a fairly steady deterioration punctuated by a cycle of killing in a clear pattern that established itself early: assassination, suicide bombing or drive-by shooting, and then a deadly reprisal—leading to another round of lethal bombings or drive-by shootings or an assassination and then massive retaliation. And so it went with numbing regularity.

At times the public execution of the Oslo peace process, however relentless, was so gradual that notwithstanding warnings issued by Arabs and Israelis alike over the obvious potential dangers of the crisis, it almost appeared that the international community could simply not muster the energy required to confront reality: It seemed too resigned or too helpless to force an end to it. Every now and then, of course, the crisis was given a sudden tug downward whenever a severe action or reaction occurred often following a period of relative calm, and the international community again clamored for a greater

investment of effort to end the crisis. Yet in spite of condemnations and appeals for restraint, with deaths on both sides fueling greater violence, the crisis has continued unabated.

The suicide bombing in Natanya at the end of March this year and the subsequent reoccupation by the Israeli Army of seven major towns in Areas A (those areas under the full nominal control of the Palestinian Authority) seemed to put the Oslo process to rest and together with greater activity across the blue line, the Middle East edged itself closer to all-out bedlam.

But processes rarely suffer a conclusive death, and Oslo, I believe, will be no exception. Not only was it underpinned by references to the Madrid conference and UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which remain the core of any realistic formula for peace in the region, but the Oslo process was also a psychological journey that no matter how dreadful the present situation did yield results in the way each side views the other. Prior to Oslo or even Madrid, a state of mutual negation existed in the minds of Israelis and Palestinians alike, and there was little to no meaningful dialogue between the two sides. Oslo brought them psychologically closer and began to flip a vertical relationship in which for two and a half decades one side was the subjugator of the other into something resembling more of a partnership: a meeting of equals. That partnership has now been stripped but not completely by mutual antipathies. With what little remains of the partnership, all the individual, more personal relationships—the remnants of thousands of meetings held between the two sides—we can perhaps rebuild a peace process.

How do we start? Perhaps we must first ask ourselves how was Oslo flawed? Oslo's premise was simple and logical—if not brilliant. Take UN Security Council Resolution 242 and stretch its implementation over a fixed period, dividing it into a series of incremental steps that involve the gradual transfer of land and authority from the occupying power to a freely elected Palestinian Authority. All the time test the commitment of the other side and build trust—the glue that holds the whole process together—and go on. If success is achieved, by the fifth year what hitherto were the most entrenched difficulties separating the two sides have been faced with a handsome store of goodwill. And with the understandings reached at Taba in

January of last year, they almost got there.

Oslo's genius was to combine the legal framework for the removal of the occupation—something long demanded by the Arabs—with a psychological dimension—so important for the Israelis. Since the process of implementing 242 was to be incremental, it relied heavily on the manner in which the protagonists adjusted their perceptions of each other, for the better, it was hoped, and so ultimately Oslo's success or failure hinged on the continuing presence and involvement of specific people: the leaders themselves.

Rabin's assassination at the hand of Yigal Amir in 1995 demonstrated this very clearly. Although we accepted the projection that Oslo's implementation was going to be a case of progressing in fits and starts, from the death of Rabin onward a serious wobble began to develop: the assassination of Yahya Ayash soon after Rabin's death, two deadly suicide attacks by Palestinian extremists, instability along the blue line and attacks on Lebanon, a subsequent change of government in Israel—all within a few short months—and then delays in Oslo's implementation, more transitional arrangements, another change in government in Israel, and further delays. All in all, by the time we reached Camp David II, what was to be a five-year time frame had lapsed into seven years, five of which were marked by some positive developments but mostly by setbacks and frustration.

Because Oslo's success rested to a great extent on the presence of specific persons to nurture the trust required to convince their own people to believe in the process, when one of those persons, Rabin, was removed by the actions of an extremist, the process's center of gravity shifted from the beliefs of specific persons and their relationships with one another to other variables, the most important of which was the framework itself. Here we reach the root of the entire problem, which I will address shortly. Why the shift from persons to issues? After all, Rabin was not the only actor on the Israeli side; take Peres, for example (the architect of the process itself). Could not he, exceptional and brilliant as he is, have been a substitute for Rabin and have provided an anchor

for Oslo? When Rabin died, he, of course, was at the helm of Israeli politics. It was Rabin who led Israel's forces in June 1967 and Rabin who led Israel into Oslo through the force of his personality. Not only did he hold a special place in the minds of Israelis, but he also had won the respect of all his Arab interlocutors. Without him and until Barak's succession in 1999, Israel's baseline position—one governed by inherent caution—returned. This feeling of doubt was also, of course, reinforced by the sporadic and murderous suicide attacks perpetrated by Palestinian militants against civilians in Israel proper.

In the final analysis, Rabin and Arafat may not have liked each other, but their interactions—those imperceptible emotional bonds and the psychological processes essential to their establishment—provided the basis for a growing partnership. With Rabin gone, all of this disappeared rapidly, and the decision to override such feelings with one's more natural suspicions and doubts only grew. The desire to look more carefully at what was not there—a mutually agreed final architecture for peace in the Middle East—also increased.

In the Arab mind, indeed from the point of view of much of the international community, after Rabin's assassination, a subtle shift from personal perspectives to the legal framework itself was not unwelcome, for in any case Oslo's final destination was clear: When 242 and 338 were implemented completely, or in return for an end to Israel's occupation and complete withdrawal from all Arab lands seized in 1967 and 1973, a comprehensive peace would ensue.

The Israeli position was and still is more complicated. At the time of its signing, the Israeli right—today's disciples of Jabotinsky—rejected the Oslo accords outright. From their perspective, why return what in any case they had come to believe was theirs by biblical right. Since then, a large segment of the right continues to express nothing but utter contempt for what Oslo prescribed and generally envisioned; whereas others, including Netanyahu and Sharon, have shown a resigned acceptance of it. Their acceptance of the principle of land for peace, however, was based on the premise that not all the land, only some land—the actual quantity to be negotiated in the final stages—

was to be returned in exchange for a comprehensive peace.

The left in Israel considered it inevitable, if not desirable, that there should be a viable Palestinian state encompassing boundaries that broadly approximate the 1967 borders. Otherwise, Israel would have no long-term future as an integral part of its own region. The left believed that the occupation was destroying Israel's soul, its character, as much as it was destroying the lives and livelihoods of the Palestinians. The occupation was colonial and, worse still, it was not appropriate for Israel—considering the historical and enormous sufferings of the Jewish people—to degrade another people in their entirety for whatever reason and to deny them many of their most basic rights. But the left also shared with the right the judgment that the actual shape of the final borders not be predetermined but be left to final status negotiations.

Hence the Oslo peace accords, negotiated by the Labor party, made no explicit mention of Israel's occupation and left open the question of settlements and final borders, among other issues, until the final status negotiations. Successive Israeli governments, left and right, did not, therefore, view their settlements policy as a contravention of Oslo. If not for any ideological reason or security concern, then we must assume that the building of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories was a means of creating leverage leading to the surrender of the settlements at a later stage by Israel as a concession in a final compromise.

From the Palestinian perspective, however, creating political leverage with the lives of people—settlers numbering in the hundreds of thousands—seemed implausible, and therefore they surmised that the settlements were there to stay and were counter to the purpose and the whole logic of Oslo: land for peace. Labor's view of what 242 meant did not tally with the view held by the Arabs and much of the international community.

Without a common frame of reference, which would have enabled the Israelis and the Palestinians and the Arab states to envision the final shape of the two-state solution, and with sporadic suicide attacks, assassinations, and the continuing implementation of the settlements policy, the objective of a final

settlement, in the context of understanding the rough details, was cast adrift. Each step in the interim phase, therefore, led to intense bickering and mutual recriminations between the two sides, as each jockeyed for a favorable position prior to the start of the final status talks. And more to the point, as we have just noted, each side held a different interpretation of what that objective would be. Moreover, because there was no common goal beyond the general desire for peace, complications multiplied willy-nilly, or as Hannah Moore once put it: “Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eye off the goal.” By 1999 the end of the Oslo process beckoned without agreement over what exactly it was supposed to lead to.

When the Camp David II negotiations began in the summer of 2000, the hope on both sides was for a speedy settlement of all remaining thorny issues. Although much has been written in the American press about Arafat’s rejection of Barak’s offer and the Clinton parameters, which I will not go into now, it must also be remembered that whatever happened in form, in substance until January 2001, both sides did subsequently immerse themselves in negotiations and burrow into the details, relying in large measure on the Clinton parameters. By then the intifada was, of course, in full swing.

What is the current situation? With the intifada extending beyond 20 months, the continuation of the suicide bombings and Israeli incursions, the stirring up and renewal of hatred on the part of each population group for the other, and their persistence in clinging to extreme positions in the belief that answers are to be found in the specific and narrow recesses of their thinking, there is little to feel hopeful about.

Yet there are some positive developments: The overall atmosphere of anxiety and exhaustion shared generally by both people over what the region has been through may, if the people themselves are shown an exit, permit the peace process to spring back to life. Enough death, suffering, and destruction have occurred. The situation reminds me of a story about a team from *National Geographic* crossing into Jordan in about 1951 or 1952 and being greeted by a Jordanian customs official who proclaimed: “Welcome to the Land of the Prophets; no re-

gion in the world has needed them more!” The way out has been charted by four processes: the Tenet Security work plan, the Mitchell Committee recommendations, the Taba understandings, and the Saudi peace initiative, which has become the Arab peace initiative since the Arab summit meeting in Beirut. The first two are short-term measures to establish a cease-fire and then reinforce it with a series of measures to restore confidence, stabilize the situation, and open the way for political negotiations, which we hope will take place sometime this summer on what we pray will be a final settlement. The modalities are still being discussed.

The Saudi/Arab peace initiative is significant, for it places the Taba negotiations in the context of the wider Arab world and for the first time spells out explicitly what everyone in the Arab world has always known implicitly: Land for peace means the return of all occupied Arab land in return for a comprehensive peace with all the Arab states. This settlement would naturally include security guarantees for Israel, normal trade relations, and so on. The final architecture of both the two-state solution concerning Israel and Palestine and Israel’s position in the Middle East is to us, therefore, quite precise. Although it is true that many details still need to be worked out by both the Israelis and the Palestinians in reviving discussions ended in January 2001, in the end, a warm peace between Israel and the Arab world is not only desirable but also possible. And Jordan, as the second Arab state neighboring Israel that entered into a peace treaty with it, has already demonstrated that it is capable of conducting a normal relationship with Israel. Prior to the intifada, to my knowledge, never so much as a complaint of any sort was registered in connection with the visits of hundreds of thousands of Israelis to Jordan and those of the great many Jordanians who reciprocated. Harmony prevailed notwithstanding the fact that Jordan hosts the largest number of Palestinian refugees—those who have the most to feel upset about when it comes to Israel. We in Jordan, from His Majesty King Abdullah down, have, therefore, been urging the Israeli government to embrace the Saudi/Arab initiative.

What is likely to happen? In general terms, diplomats are often required to offer a best estimate of what may occur in a variety of crises on the international agenda. On the basis of

what we've seen already, we could argue that unless we make a concerted push for a final peace settlement in the next six months, the intifada will likely continue irrespective of who leads the government in Israel or what measures it takes, for as long as Israel continues its military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza without a political solution looming on the horizon, Israel will coexist with fear and instability. Worse still, in reacting to a specific event, Sharon's government may decide to destroy the Palestinian Authority altogether, withdraw unilaterally from the occupied territories, and leave behind a terrified Palestinian population without proper infrastructure, services, or an authority to govern it. The territory would then be one of sheer lawlessness: a territory seething with hatred and teeming with all sorts of unsavory armed groups. Why would Sharon want that? Naturally, it could be argued that he would be under pressure to react to a specific event, and in any case almost everyone in Israel favors some sort of separation from the Palestinians. A stratagem of that sort would also free Israel of the obligation, as an occupying power, to care and provide for the entire Palestinian population, while permitting the Israeli Army to choose when and how to intercede, therefore lessening the risks posed to Israeli soldiers. It would also create a situation so inhospitable for most Palestinians that many would perhaps consider leaving voluntarily—a tempting prospect to those on the right of Sharon who speak enthusiastically of “transfer,” a euphemistic term for ethnic cleansing.

The alternative to this bleak scenario is a plan containing a timeline put forward at an international peace conference convened on the basis of the four processes I mentioned earlier. A common understanding about the shape and structure of the final arrangement would make use of Oslo's legacy of personal contacts and people's exhaustion and their desperate need for a way out—all creating a momentum for peace that would eclipse the virtual absence of trust that exists now.

We diplomats, like all our colleagues, whether in the intelligence community or the academic world, are miserable at making predictions. Why? Because, simply put, we are only human. We are not prophets; nor are we soothsayers; and so although we often know where a crisis is likely to occur—in which region or particular state—and who will be the likely decision makers,

it is almost impossible for us to determine precisely when and how a triggering event will occur, making anticipatory remedies challenging, if not difficult, to execute. What is certain is that the most lethal triggering event will involve a collision of variables resulting from an intervention by an unforeseen force: Enter the the master author of the unforeseen—historically the extremist, the assassin, the gunman, the suicide bomber.

From the Palestinian side, groups that may be the potential spoilers of any emerging and renewed peace process are those currently launching appalling attacks on civilians inside Israel: Hamas, Jihad al Islami, Kata'ib al Aqsa, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Also, within the Palestinian community, many of the youth have been so radicalized by Israel's heavy-handed reprisals against their communities, such as the use of collective punishment and the destruction of homes, over and above the occupation, that they may well reject any peace overture toward Israel and decide to turn on the Palestinian leadership as well as on other Arab governments who support it.

On the Israeli side, members of the extremist group Kach, with others, have recently reemerged to form a new group aimed at menacing and attacking Palestinians. But more ominous is the growth of the Israeli right wing, which only thirty years ago was on the fringe of Israeli politics and now has become mainstream. Its opposition to any peace deal involving the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian state on all the land occupied in June 1967 could spell disaster.

It is worth remembering that the Israeli government maintains the military occupation not by tickling the civilian Palestinian population into submission but by placing it at the end of a gun. Reprisals and acts of violence and revenge on both sides must come to an end. Every death, whether Palestinian or Israeli, is a catastrophe, and in the final analysis, it is unnecessary. A full peace with security for Israel and all the countries in our region is not beyond us. Ultimately, if we are all to survive and flourish in the Middle East, our moral reasoning must prevail over our baser natural instincts.

Twelve years ago Hollywood produced a film entitled *Awakenings*, dramatizing the story of Dr. Oliver Sacks whose experiences with patients afflicted with encephalitis lethargica was nothing short of remarkable. His patients—catatonic patients—were incapable of moving or showing any emotion. Testing a new theory, Dr. Sacks administered to them the drug most commonly associated with Parkinson’s: L-DOPA, and, to his great delight, almost all his patients experienced enough of a recovery to experience life’s simpler pleasures again, after many years of imprisonment within their own bodies. Soon thereafter, however, the drug began to lose its effect, and, tragically, almost all the patients relapsed and were returned to their former state. Let us pray that Oslo and the peace process do not constitute merely one fleeting moment of hope that came to brighten our days and then, just as suddenly, escaped us.

Finally, the international media appear to focus so much attention on killing and dying that their reporting reminds me of a story my father, Prince Ra’ad (who, together with my mother, Princess Majda, is with us tonight), likes to tell of my grandfather. On being reminded by his father that his examinations were around the corner and exhorted to be more serious about his college studies, my father said to my grandfather, as any young man would say today, “But I need to live life to the fullest, for who knows tomorrow I could be killed or I may die.” “Ah, yes,” my grandfather responded, “but you could also live.” So let us not dwell on or worry so much about death and killing and think more about living and dream of a common future together in peace in the Middle East.



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