

## ITAMAR RABINOVICH

President of the Israel Institute, Distinguished Global Professor at New York University (NYU) and Distinguished Fellow at the Brookings Institution

For me, the consequence of no movement on the Israeli-Palestinian issue is the transition from a two-state solution to a one-state solution, which for me is a nightmare. My concern for a two-state solution comes primarily from concern with the future of my own country. It is vital for us to separate from the Palestinians and to have a two-state solution. This means a Palestinian state as a nation state of the Palestinian people and Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, coexisting peacefully with one another.

At present, we seem to be deadlocked and the question is, how do we come out of the deadlock and move again onto an open highway? Right now, if you open a peace conference tomorrow that tries to reach a two-state solution, I am afraid it will fail. We have a right-wing Government in Israel and we unfortunately have weak leadership in the Palestinian authority. This is led by a gentleman I respect, but who is reaching the end of his career.

We have Hamas in Gaza, which does not accept the authority of the Palestinian Authority. We have a US administration that is not considered by almost everyone in the Middle East to be a potential sponsor of the peace process. This is with the same degree of success that previous administrations had in the '90s and in the first few years of this century. Whatever else happens in the Middle East, what you described regarding concerns in Abu Dhabi is not helpful to that.

You could say, logically speaking, that if you cannot reach a final status agreement that we could go for an interim agreement in order to stop the current mayhem and bloodshed. This is not acceptable to the Palestinian side, because they would say that an interim solution would just perpetuate the status quo. It would serve to preserve Israeli control, so it is not acceptable. If it is not acceptable, what can we do? My proposal is this. Secretary Kerry, as we remember, admitted the failure of his latest effort to organise a deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Before this, in the late spring and early summer of 2014, he presented Abu Mazen, President Abbas, with a paper that included concessions he had obtained from Netanyahu. He said, 'Let us work with this,' but it was not accepted by Mahmoud Abbas.

My proposal is this: take this paper, in which Netanyahu made significant concession, he did not advertise them, because he is afraid of his own party and coalition, but they were significant. Accept it as a framework and say, 'This could be the endgame,' and in the meantime, let us talk about an interim solution with the endgame in sight. This should resolve the issue of Palestinian concern regarding an interim solution becoming a permanent solution. It would enable us to open a negotiation on the many possibilities that we have for dealing with the immediate problems.

Let me just mention in this context Area C in the West Bank. 60% of the West Bank is controlled by Israel and there is a lot that can be done there. A lot of other measures can be taken that would improve life and start rebuilding the confidence that has now been lost between Israelis and Palestinians. To sum up, present the Kerry framework as a vision for final status. Start the negotiation on a series of measures and rebuild the confidence and the trust that have been lost. Get us out of the present mayhem, into what will hopefully become a major highway to a better state of things.