

DÉBAT

Terry Martin, journaliste, présentateur de journal télévisé

The willingness, of course, would need to be there on both sides – that is clear – but I am just wondering under whose auspices? Volker Perthes?

Volker Perthes, sous-secrétaire général et chef de l'examen stratégique indépendant de la MANUI (Mission d'assistance des Nations Unies pour l'Irak)

I think the auspices is an easy one. You can have it under the auspices of the United Nations. However, the question is who leads the conference? I think if you do not have the heavyweights in, it will not lead to anything.

Remember 1991. If, at that time, the US had not been there together with the Soviet Union, which was on its last breath, it would not have gone forward. Therefore, it is very clear that the US has to be at the head table, leading it and putting all its weight behind it.

Then you have to ask who are the main associates which the United States needs in the current geopolitical and regional situation? Here, I would say China has to be at the head table and others, but China has to be there.

Then you have to have the Arab states who already have peace with Israel at the head table. We do not have to make peace between Israel and the Emirates, or between Israel and Jordan, or Israel and Egypt, or Israel and Morocco. However, these states have to be there as key mediators.

Terry Martin

When you say the main players that need to be at the head of the table and dealing with this, what about the elephant in the room? What about Iran?

Volker Perthes

Well, the elephant has to be at the table, but not at the head table.

Terry Martin

Okay, so Iran does need to be a part of this and that would imply direct talks with Iran, which would be an interesting prospect in itself. I saw you wanted to intervene quickly or not? Just quickly, and then I am going to open the floor.



Nabil Fahmy, doyen émérite à l'Université américaine du Caire, ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères d'Égypte

Yes, very quickly. It is impossible to take a step to deal with Gaza if you do not also link it to where you are going after Gaza. Arabs will not create a force or be responsible for Gaza after all the devastation that has occurred on the ground, unless they can argue that this is a step towards the two-state solution. Therefore, there has to be not only a statement, but also a linkage to where we are going towards the end of this.

Let me just make one last point. You should not be surprised why the Arabs are looking at the West as being biased. You are biased. However, what surprised people in the Arab world is not your bias, it is how far that bias is when you stand up against a ceasefire, against even humanitarian ceasefires. When you attend a war cabinet, then you can only blame yourself for the perception you leave.

Terry Martin

Okay, that was in reference to Joe Biden's visit to Israel.

We are going to open up the floor now. I see many questions on both sides. We will start from the one in the middle, then to the right and then to the left. Sir?

Stanislas Cozon, directeur général, Global Sectors, Capgemini

I am Stan Cozon from Capgemini. I have one observation and a question.

My observation is that, to my knowledge, the last time there was a serious attempt at a two-state solution was 23 years ago with Bill Clinton, Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat. Trying to translate that today, clearly it cannot be Netanyahu and Hamas, so there has to be a change in governance on both sides to make this happen, with the support of this conference that you have been talking about.

My question is, fast-forwarding to, let us say March next year, assuming that this conference takes place with the intent of having a two-state solution blessed by the community we mentioned before, what would that look like? It cannot be Gaza Palestine Jordan, it does not make sense. Therefore, what could be the order between two states under this scheme?

Terry Martin

Thank you very much. Just a comment before we pick up one more.

I just want to point out that, in the year 2000, during Camp David, when Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat met in the United States, I was working for CNN at the time and it was one of the most poignant moments of my life when we got Saeb Erekat on the phone, walking out of the White House, and I put the question to him, 'Why are you walking away from this deal, which seems so close to a two-state solution?'. He told me, 'The right of return of refugees'.

There are multiple issues, but this is something that also, I am sure, would have to be addressed along with the future of Jerusalem and the West Bank.



Yes, ma'am?

Mona Makram Ebeid, sénatrice égyptienne, conseillère du haut représentant des Nations unies pour l'Alliance des civilisations, ancienne députée

Thank you, sir. I enjoyed the remarks that Itamar Rabinovich made, which was, 'Let us talk now about the day after'. I have followed lately the comments of, what he calls himself, the next leader of the Palestinian authority once Mr. Abbas passes away, which I do not think is too far away.

He believes that there is no such thing as a two-state solution, that Netanyahu has killed it. Therefore, now, we have to talk about the one-state solution, that is what he says. He thinks that the beginning of this is to get Mr. Netanyahu out. I think that Mr. Rabinovich said exactly the same thing because they can have a new government. With a new government, it will probably be the people who are now demonstrating against Netanyahu who will form this new government and who will be much more amenable to speak about the solution of the Palestinian question.

What I just said, that this Palestinian leader lives here. He is called Mohammed Dahlan. He has excellent connections with Israel, with Egypt, with the ruler here, and I think that he should be put at the table to discuss what could happen because he has supporters inside Gaza.

Terry Martin

Thank you very much. Yes, he has been giving us some interesting interviews, providing some insights. Now, to the gentleman who has his hand up, if we could get the microphone there, and then we are going to get some responses from the panel.

Hiroyuki Akita, chroniqueur pour *Nikkei*, Japon

Thank you very much. Hiro Akita, Nikkei, from Tokyo. I have just two quick questions about the long-term geopolitical landscape.

Question one, what is the prospect of the Abraham Accords paradigm? It seemed to make sense before October 7, but now it will get suspended unless a two-state solution is realized.

My second question is, if the Abraham Accords trend gets suspended, in the meantime, how will the Gulf states coexist with Iran?

Thank you.

Terry Martin

Thank you very much. All relevant points and questions. We are going to just take these three first, get a response and, if we still have time, sir, we will get to you.

Anyone on the panel like to take any of those points that were made? We have got a couple of things on the table.



Itamar Rabinovich, vice-président de l'Institut d'études de sécurité nationale (INSS) à Tel Aviv, Distinguished Fellow à la Brookings Institution

Itamar Rabinovich here.

Terry Martin

Very well, please join us. The floor is yours.

Itamar Rabinovich

Okay. The key is to bring the Palestinian authority back into the picture. First, if there is an interim arrangement in Gaza with Arab Peace Initiative, it has to be temporary; and the Palestinian authority that was expelled from Gaza violently by Hamas should return to Gaza and administer it.

We should invigorate the Palestinian authority and again make it a viable partner for Israel to discuss a long-term two-state solution. Putting it on the agenda again would enable the Arab states to join it.

We do not have too much time. Remember, it is an election year in the United States and we do not have very many months to wait until that happens. Therefore, action should begin immediately.

Terry Martin

Thank you very much. Yes, sir?

Nabil Fahmy

There was a question about what kind of two-state solution. If I take you back not only to the Camp David negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and ultimately the Clinton parameters, but I even take you back to what you said earlier, the Taba talks. All of the details of every single item are dealt with there. There was no formal approval of these items, for different political reasons.

My point, really, is that it is not about the need for someone to come up with a new formula for the border. It is 1967, possibly with some minor exchanges or refugees, that is in the Arab Peace Initiative, which talks about the agreement on the return of refugees, and so on and so forth, including East Jerusalem. It is about the lack of political will.

What I was trying to say at the beginning is, let us put the essence, in as much detail as we can, of what the package would look like to resolve this once and for all. If it results in a change of leadership on one side or on both sides, ultimately that is not my concern. My concern is the change moving towards peace between Arabs and Israelis, particularly the Palestinians, rather than moving towards a new cycle of violence.

There is no permanent security if the conflict continues.

Terry Martin

Great, thank you. We will take one more question from the gentleman here in the second row, and that will be our last question for today. We are out of time.

Riad Tabet

Il me semble que tout le monde est d'accord pour une démarche diplomatique qui aboutirait à mettre les partis sur une même table et négocier. Mais n'oublions pas qu'il y a eu des gens, plusieurs conférences, plusieurs réunions pour n'en citer que quelques-unes, Camp Davis, Madrid, Oslo, qui n'ont pas abouti à une solution de paix telle que réclamée par les Palestiniens pour avoir leurs droits. C'est-à-dire un État palestinien avec Jérusalem Est comme capitale. Ce processus a échoué à cause de la gouvernance du gouvernement palestinien qui n'a pas suivi. Maintenant ma question à Monsieur Rabinovich est : est-ce que la crise de Gaza va faire prendre conscience en Israël de la nécessité d'un pouvoir politique qui accepterait le droit palestinien à un État ?

Terry Martin

Very good. Mr. Rabinovich?

Itamar Rabinovich

Yes, I can answer that.

Terry Martin

Go ahead.

Itamar Rabinovich

Yes, I can answer that. Public opinion polls in Israel show that 80% of the Israeli public have lost their faith in the government and there is a debate whether you go through a change of government in the middle of a war or if you want to wait until the end of the fighting.

This could happen either through a new election or through other mechanisms that the Israeli constitution arrangement states. I am sure that, sooner or later, there will be a different government in Israel more inclined to partner with the other side.

Terry Martin

Thank you. Thank you very much. I am afraid we are out of time. I have been told not to go over and I also know that some people have to catch a plane, so we are going to leave it here.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for being with us. Thanks to our panel. A warm round of applause for a great discussion.