

Panel: The Future of the Middle East Peace Process (Lilac/Tulip)

Date/Time: April 26, 2012 / 14:30-15:45

Organizing Institution: Moshe Dayan Center

Talking Points for: Paul Rivlin
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There have been several attempts to reach in the Middle East using economics. The basic idea was that improved economic conditions would ease conditions on the ground and encourage political changes as prosperous countries do not go to war.

This has not worked and may be due to a miss reading of history. One of the most important and successful attempts to use economics to ensure peace was the founding of the European Economic Community. The EEC, which involved the partial integration of six European economies – including former enemies France and Germany – was the outcome of a political decision to limit sovereignty in economic affairs so as to promote cooperation and coordination. That decision came first and reflected fundamental changes in the way in which France and Germany saw each other. Of course there were other factors such as the Cold War but this does not detract from the radical changes in perception and policy at the political level.

The Middle East needs the same: a change in the way each side sees the other and a willingness to change conditions on the ground. As with the Cold War, there are other factors involved, but they only reinforce the need for change. Economics will work when the political decision has been made.

** The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.*
