

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

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Organizing Institution: Moshe Dayan Center

Talking Points for: Uzi Rabi
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The Arab Spring has brought about tumultuous changes to Israel's neighboring countries. As leaders were overthrown and Arab crowds went to the streets all over the Middle East, this inevitably affected the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the ever changing Middle East, the conflict does not stand on itself -- to the contrary; it is deeply affected by regional developments and by the stance of regional players. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the future characteristics and regional role of Israel's neighboring regimes is unsure, as is exemplified by the situation in Egypt and Syria. The outcome will affect the dynamics of the conflict.

During the Arab Spring, Israel took on the role of spectator, watching the events unfold first with prudence and later with dismay. The most significant consequence for Israel was the toppling of its longstanding ally, Hosni Mubarak. Moreover, Israel is concerned about the replacement of Bashar al-Assad in Syria with an Islamist government, dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood. Reason for concern, for example, is the deteriorating security situation in the Sinai. Israel should adapt its strategy to the new political culture that is in the making in the Middle East, and it should learn how to deal with the new political factors that are emerging.

The Arab Spring also highlighted the need for a new strategy to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both Israeli and Palestinian leaders should reconsider resuming negotiations, in order not to risk a Palestinian Spring, and in view of the dissensions in Palestinian politics, and inter-Hamas rivalries. Even if negotiations do not lead to a comprehensive agreement, it will give both parties a frame of reference for their conduct and a relative lull.

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