THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
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BLIND SPOT:
AMERICA AND THE PALESTINIANS, FROM BALFOUR TO TRUMP

Washington, D.C.
Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Introduction:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BYMAN: Good morning and welcome. I'm Daniel Byman. I'm a senior fellow here at Brookings. I want to thank you all for coming out on a beautiful spring day. We are delighted to be doing a book event for Khaled Elgindy who has done a fantastic book called *Blind Spot: America and the Palestinians, From Balfour to Trump.* It is available outside.

This is a truly remarkable book as I'll discuss. But I want to begin by saying is how unusually qualified Khaled is to write this book. He was a fellow here at Brookings for many years, and before that, he served as a senior negotiator advising the Palestinian government in Ramallah. He has held positions on Capitol Hill. And in general, he's able to bring multiple perspectives to his work. And this shows tremendously in *Blind Spot.*

It's a book that at times, is a harsh even scathing critique of American foreign policy. But at times, it's sympathetic, and it's always very nuanced about the political realities that are confronting the United States but especially, the United States with regard to the Palestinian relationship.

And as we are adjusting to the new foreign policies of the Trump Administration, this book seems particularly pressing because one of its key points is a willful U.S. disregard for Palestinian politics. And we've seen that, I would say, rather blatantly under President Trump. But what's remarkable when you read this book, is to see it again and again throughout the decades, that what we're seeing now is not new. It may be more open, but it's nothing new. And it's really a striking, both historical tour, but especially, something that I think is incredibly relevant as we're trying to understand how the United States and the Palestinians move forward in the years and decades to come.

I'm particularly delighted today, not only to welcome Khaled to speak on his book, but also to welcome, Laura Rozen. Laura is a senior diplomat correspondent with Al-Monitor. She has held several other senior reporting posts. What I will simply say is, if you follow the Middle East and you're on Twitter, you're following Laura. All right, she is one of

the deep resources for all of us who are interested in the region and trying to get smarter on it.

And so, without further ado, what I'd like is for Khaled to begin by simply offering some remarks on his book, and then we're going to turn things over for a discussion and reaction by Laura. So, please join me in welcoming Khaled. (Applause)

MR. ELGINDY: Thank you, Dan, and thank you, Laura, for being here today. And thank you all for joining today's conversation.

I thought I'd start out with a bit of a scene setter, give some indication of why I wrote the book and why I wrote the book the way I did. The thing that struck me most during my research into the last 100 years or so of U.S.- Palestinian relations or probably more accurately, nonrelations, was how similar the dynamics were from one period to the next. I often felt in reading about events in 1936 for example, that they could've just have just as well happened in 1956 or 1986 or 2006.

For example, there's this exchange between two Palestinian witnesses and members of Congress in a 1922 hearing on the Balfour Declaration. There's something about the tone that I would encourage you to read it. It's online. Or you could just read that section of the book. But there's something about the tone that is very familiar. And of course, throughout this 100 years, Palestinians appear and are forgotten in a sort of cyclical process.

I would say actually, that we can identify several common threads. And this is why I looked at the whole 100-year period. There are several common threads really that run through that entire period, on the American side and on the Palestinian side. These won't be earth shattering. They won't surprise you. But I'm going to lay them out anyway.

The first is the high influential Zionist or pro-Israel lobby. The second a highly sympathetic Congress. A Congress that is very receptive to that message. And the third, and I think this is some ways the main theme of the book, is a highly conflicted and ambivalent executive branch, usually in the form of the tension between the State

Department and the intelligence community on the one hand, and the White House and the President on the other. And there's a real tension. I think that reflects a deeper tension between the perception of U.S. interests on one hand and the forces of domestic politics on the other. And we see that time and again, that there is this ambivalence. Every president, really, over the last 100 years kind of took a position for and against itself at the same time. We see this from Wilson all the way right up until today.

Speaking of today -- so this kind of raises the question in my mind of -- and this is an issue that I struggled with for the past two years or as I was trying to identify a historical analog to the current moment, to Donald Trump in particular. In some ways, Trump is a lot like Arthur Balfour himself. The Jerusalem Proclamation as the Administration likes to call it, was very similar to the Balfour Declaration in the sense that you have a major world power pledging something that it did not own to one of two groups with competing national claims.

There are parallels also with Harry Truman. I think not since Harry Truman, have we seen a U.S. president take such a consequential and important foreign policy decision, not since Harry Truman recognized Israel in defiance of the State Department, have we seen such an important decision being taken almost exclusively on the basis of domestic political considerations.

But if I had to pick one U.S. president who I think is most similar to Donald Trump, not in terms of his politics or his personality, but from the standpoint of the role that he plays in history, it would be Lyndon Johnson. Let me explain what I mean by that. Many people don't remember, back before the current peace process, back before 1967, there was another peace process. Before 242 and 338, there was 181 and 194. These were the two U.N. resolutions that the peace process between 1948 and 1967 was based on. This was the international consensus, 181 of course, being the U.N. Partition Resolution that defined Israel's borders and of course, the would-be Palestinian state that never came into being and the status of Jerusalem.

Resolution 194 dealt with the refugees. It dealt with the status of Palestinian refugees and their right to return to their homes and receive compensation.

So, between these two resolutions, they dealt with the core issues of the conflict; borders, Jerusalem, and refugees.

The most important of these two resolutions was 194. Dealing with the refugees as the central issue that defined the Arab-Israel conflict in that moment. That was the most important issue. It was the most destabilizing issue. It was the issue that was seen as defining the conflict between what to do with these million or so Palestinian refugees who fled their homes into neighboring Arab states.

At first, Truman, like most of the international community, was extremely frustrated with the Israelis and their refusal to allow any form of repatriation of the refugees. According to Truman's peace envoy, Mark Etheridge, Israel bore, "Particular responsibility for those who have been driven out by terrorism, repression, and forcible ejection."

Under what was set up, in fact, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for the Palestine refugees, was set up in 1949 to look after the needs of the refugees, and the U.S. became its largest donor, in part out of a sense of responsibility for the creation of the refugee crisis to begin with.

Truman himself who was quite sympathetic as you know to the Zionist cause and immediately recognized Israel after it declared its independence in May of 1948, he himself was quite frustrated with the Israelis and wrote, this is another quote, that he was, "Rather disgusted with the manner in which the Jews are approaching the refugee problem." His words, not mine.

All three presidents that followed, I mean Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, all tried to convince the Israelis to accept some form of limited refugee return, even as they conceded that the bulk of the refugees would never go home.

Fast forward to Lyndon Johnson, and both the political significance of the refugee issue and its causes were entirely lost. Johnson in fact, became the first president

not to try to deal with the refugees in any way.

By 1966, Israel had notified the State Department officially that it would no longer even entertain any proposals involving repatriation and would consider such proposals tantamount to calling for Israel's destruction.

Johnson's views actually tracked rather closely with those of Israeli leaders. In his memoirs, Johnson wrote, and this is a quote, "I was aware of the deep resentment Arab leaders felt over Israel's emergence as a nation state. I knew that many Arab refugees in the area still had not been absorbed into community life. I knew that resentment and bitter memories handed down from generation to generation could only endanger all those who lived in the Middle East. I was convinced that there could be no satisfactory future for the Middle East until the leaders and the peoples of the area turned away from the past, accepted Israel as a reality, and began working together to build modern societies unhampered by old quarrels, bitterness, and enmity."

This is less than 20 years after the creation of the refugee crisis, barely a generation has gone by. And the understanding of the United States of the nature of the refugee problem, its causes, and the fundamental causes of the Arab-Israeli conflict had been radically transformed in that period from Truman to Johnson.

The same dynamic of historical and political amnesia that erased the refugee crisis and Washington's role in it from our collective memory here in Washington, is happening again today with regard to Israel's occupation. And the parallels are there. Every U.S. president since 1967 upheld U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and the Land for Peace formula. 242, of course, was the basis of every Arab-Israel negotiation since 1967, including the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, the Syria-Israel negotiations of 2000, and the Oslo Accords of 1993.

After 2000, 242 was sort of reinterpreted when the United States accepted the idea of the creation of a Palestinian State. 242 was re-understood in the context of the creation of the Palestinian State in the West Bank in Gaza alongside Israel.

Since then, we've seen three presidents try and pursue this goal of ending Israel's occupation and creating a Palestinian State, Clinton, George W. Bush, and Obama. Even as they downplayed the centrality of the occupation and found ways to bypass 242, for example, by on the one hand, opposing settlement construction and on the other hand, creating a whole slew of loopholes that allowed Israel to continue building in some of the most sensitive areas. So, again, this ambivalence is a recurring theme.

By the time Trump comes along, once again, both the political significance of the main issue that is driving the occupation and its role in the process were completely lost. This is a process by the way, that I refer to in the Johnson context as from deferral to denial, that we persistently defer the issue until at a certain point, a president comes along who denies its importance to begin with.

The Israeli right and its hardline supporters in the United States have for some time now been denying the existence of the occupation altogether. In 2016, the Republican Party officially scrubbed any reference to the two-state solution from its party platform while declaring that, "We reject the false notion that Israel is an occupier."

The same ideological view also forms the basis of Trump's policy. They no longer talk about ending occupation of course, because as Ambassador Friedman often refers to the alleged occupation of Judea and Samaria using the biblical terminology for the West Bank. But the word "Occupied Territories" itself, has been removed from official State Department reports.

The U.S. policy is no longer based on Resolution 242 and the Land for Peace formula, as we saw most recently in the decision by the Trump administration to recognize Israel sovereignty in the Golan Heights. And as we know from the Jerusalem Proclamation of December 2017, that that issue, that central issue to both sides, is now off the table. As is of course, the refugee issue. As in the time of Johnson, there is now kind of a political diplomatic and even legal vacuum that exists.

The broader point that I'm making here is that whenever there's been a

tension between the requirements of the peace process on one hand and the demands of the U.S.-Israel special relationship and the pressures of the pro-Israel lobby on the other, it's usually the latter that has one out. In that sense, Trump really isn't a new approach to the peace process as he claimed but in reality, the culmination of the old approach.

As I'd alluded to, there had been years of U.S. Administrations of eroding the basic ground rules of the peace process, what we negotiation nerds refer to as the terms of reference of the peace process" like Resolution 242. We've seen that especially on the issues of settlements and Jerusalem. Many now fear formal annexation of the West Bank by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But the reality is that creeping annexation has been going on for many years, often with American (inaudible) and occasionally even explicit support.

We also can't forget the fact that the very laws that got us to where we are today, the moving of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, the shutting down of the PLO Mission, and so forth, were passed in the 1990s at the height of the Oslo process.

So, herein lies the main lesson, and I'll end with this point and perhaps what may be the key to understanding the failure of the Oslo process, which is that the peace process has been shaped, not just by its advocates and supporters, but by its critics and opponents as well. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. ROZEN: Thank you so much for your great introduction, Khaled. As I was reading your really excellent book last week to prepare for this conversation, the long-awaited Muller Report came out. So, I spent the last several days trading off between reading the report and your book. And it really is --

MR. ELGINDY: I'm sorry.

MS. ROZEN: Genuinely, as compelling and timely and competitive for my attention. So, kudos to you, and thank you to Dan and to Brookings for the privilege to be able to discuss it today.

Your book looks in a very clear-eyed way at the history of U.S.-led Mideast

peacemaking efforts. And your central thesis is that the U.S. approach has consistently tended to exacerbate the fundamental asymmetry in the conflict with between the Israeli strength on the one hand and Palestinian weakness on the other. And that imbalance has contributed to the failure to reach a resolution.

But you conclude that the demise of what had been an outdated and highly ineffective peace process perhaps, offers an opportunity to rethink old assumptions and formulas. Can you speak to that possible opportunity, especially with the Trump (inaudible) team led by Jared Kushner suggesting they are not wed to the old models, including the two-state solution, and Kushner saying that they may present their peace ideas as early as June?

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, I mean, you know, the collapse of the process has left a vacuum. There's a political vacuum. We don't have a framework for how to think about this issue and its resolution. We're so used to the old framework of 242 and the Oslo process, but none of that is relevant currently.

I think where there's an opportunity is, you know, across the board. We have the ability to fill that vacuum with whole new range of ideas. You know, I'm not prepared to say that the two-state solution is absolutely, positively dead. I think it is theoretically possible. It requires a very, very different political configuration in terms of Israeli politics, American politics, and even Palestinian politics for it to happen, but it's theoretically possible. Highly unlikely in my view, but theoretically still possible.

But I do think that we have an opportunity now to rethink the whole framework so that if we're not talking about land for peace, maybe there's a different formula like rights for security, for example, focusing on those two areas that are most important to each party. Israel wants security, and Palestinians at the end of the day, aren't just after a patch of territory that they can hoist the flag on. What they're really after, and this is one of the constants that we've seen over the last 100 years, really, after the basic right of self-determination, if there's one constant that Palestinians have been -- the one constant

demand it's that.

And so, maybe we can think of new ways that we can achieve both Israel security and Palestinian basic rights. That could be one state, a bi-national state. It could be some form of confederation. Some hybrid model. But we absolutely need to start exploring all of the range of possibilities.

MS. ROZEN: Why haven't there been more traction for Palestinian political voices that would advocate possibly a rights for security formula? You cite Abbas Hassan in the book, saying he's more interested in rights than in a Palestinian state or two states.

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, and I mean I think, you know, I use him just as a model cause I do think his view is kind of representative of the generational shift that has happened in Palestinian society. You know, the Oslo generation is now, you know, is getting older and has politically lost its relevance. And the young people are -- by young, I mean, under 40, basically, are sort of looking at alternatives.

But the reality is, you know, it's one thing to have ideas that are an impulse or a vision, those are all necessary, but what we don't see on the Palestinian side is a political leadership that is pushing that along the way we saw a political leadership that was pushing a two-state solution along for many decades before it was actually accepted by the international community by the United States and Israel.

And so, you need that kind of political leadership. And right now, I can't think of a credible Palestinian political movement that is openly advocating for something like a one-state solution. There are lots of proposals out there, but I can't think of a political actor that is rallying under that banner. It may happen. It may happen in the next few years. And I think especially given the kind of leadership vacuum that exists on the Palestinian side, it wouldn't surprise me if it happened sooner rather than later.

MS. ROZEN: You cite President Obama's Middle East Peace Advisor, Rob Malley, "I believe President Obama felt that if the parties were not going to move, it was better to do nothing than to perpetuate the illusion that the peace process would lead to

peace. A process for the sake of process was simply a way to enable and prolong a damaging status quo."

So, let me ask you, is there virtue in doing nothing? And if Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt call you, do you think it would be better for them to not present their peace ideas than to present a plan which seems very likely to be rejected by the Palestinians?

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, I mean I have enormous respect for Rob and of course, Rob did serve in the Obama Administration. I disagree with him on this point. I understand the view that it's better to do nothing than something that could potentially be harmful or maintain the illusion. But the reality is that the Obama Administration on the whole did maintain the illusion. It twice engaged in permanent status negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians with a great deal of fanfare, first in 2010 and then in Obama's second term under Secretary of State John Kerry.

So, it did engage in that illusion, and it was actively involved. It had a view on Israeli settlements. It wasn't prepared to enforce that view in any way. It wasn't prepared to impose any consequences for what it said was a very harmful policy. On the other hand, it was prepared to impose consequences on the Palestinians for things like going to the United Nations and seeking recognition of a Palestinian State, which on its face, is at least affirming a two-state solution, whereas Israeli settlements clearly are designed to undermine a two-state solution.

And so, the Obama Administration was actively involved in putting pressure on one side to not do things even though they were in my view perfectly consistent with the goals that the administrations have laid out, which is a two-state solution.

So, I don't accept the premise that the Obama Administration was totally disengaged. And of course, it wasn't. Even at the end of its administration, at the end of Obama's time in office, he signed this massive aid package with Israel, $38 billion over 10 years in military assistance. The largest in history. And it also abstained from a U.N.

Security Council resolution on settlements.

So, it was actively involved at all levels, not necessarily in a constructive way. But, you know, so --

MS. ROZEN: Well, talk about the -- remember the backlash to their re-framing on that resolution. And then also, I remember, at the beginning of the Obama Administration, they did push on settlements. Right? And there was tremendous backlash to that.

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, I mean that was the remarkable thing is the administration came in. they inherited a horrendous situation. Obama took office I think just a few days after a cease fire in Gaza, you know, after the first of many devastating wars. I think something like 1400 Palestinians killed and 10 Israelis. And of course, you have this division between Hamas and Fatah in the West Bank. And shortly after he comes to office, Netanyahu is elected prime minister and puts together a very right-wing ruling coalition.

So, all these major challenges that he inherits, and yet he has a very clear-eyed diagnosis of the situation and says, you know what, we have to tackle this issue. It's a priority. From day one he took it one, appointed George Mitchell as his special envoy. And when he talked about Israel settlements, it really seemed like he had learned from previous administrations and says look, when I say settlement freeze, I don't mean some settlements, you know, and now I'm paraphrasing Hilary Clinton when she was secretary of state, not some settlements, but all settlements. And she was quite clear that they weren't going to allow those same loopholes that previous administrations did and then of course, they did. As soon as they got pushed back from Netanyahu's government and from Capitol Hill, they pulled back and said okay. You know, they basically went along with the same exemptions that past administrations -- well, go ahead and build in East Jerusalem. Go ahead and build in the Blocks. Go ahead and build, you know, it doesn't apply here. It doesn't apply there. And so, you know, he took a very strong stand but then backed down.

And so, the lesson that I took from that was if -- and I believe that he

genuinely understood what was required to achieve a two-state solution. And he understood how bad things were. But at the end of the day, he chose to kind of pull back and do the absolute minimum.

And so, in that sense, it's considerably worse than I think Rob's analysis that it wasn't that U.S. did nothing because it was better than doing something harmful. It did the absolute minimum.

MS. ROZEN: At the end after they tried, and they realized the parties were not receptive to it.

MR. ELGINDY: The parties weren't receptive, but also, look, if you leave it to the parties, you have continued conflict. Right? There's a reason there's a conflict. There's power asymmetry that's fueling the conflict. There are behaviors on both sides that exacerbate the conflict. That's the definition of a conflict. And that's why you need a third party to intervene to break those dynamics. And if you're not prepared to take some political risks and invest some political capital into breaking those very dynamics that caused the conflict, then you're not really valuable as a mediator.

And so, what was needed under Obama and why I subject him to such a harsh critique is that what was needed at that point was a president who was prepared to reverse all of these negative trends. And that meant, you know, investing some political capital and taking some political risks. And instead, Obama sort of, you know, contented himself with sort of putting everything in a holding pattern. Let's just kind of do the absolute minimum to prevent and explosion or the total collapse of the process but without investing too much. And here we are.

That inertia left the incoming president with an enormous opportunity to just do away with the old playbook altogether.

MS. ROZEN: I do want to ask about that. I mean there've been a series of actions where Trump has moved the embassy to Jerusalem, cut off aid to the U.N. agency that serves Palestinian refugees, cut off U.S. economic assistance to the Palestinians,

ordered the closure of the PLO office in Washington.

On the other hand, he's been bestowing gifts left and right to Israel and to Prime Minister Netanyahu. In particular, including recent Israeli recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights and taking the language of occupied out of the State Department Human Rights reports.

There is like no pretense of any balance anymore. How much continuity do you see between Trump and his predecessors on that, and how much is it a more radical departure?

MR. ELGINDY: I mean, look, there's a couple different ways to look at the Trump Administration. You could look at it as a total departure because they've (inaudible) from 242 and all the old, you know, rules. The old playbook doesn't apply to this administration. And that's discomforting I think for a lot of folks in Washington.

But in terms of the reality of the policies that he's pursuing, there is a lot of continuity. There isn't continuity in terms of the official rhetoric. But there is continuity in terms of the actions that are taken. But I would say in the most extreme and almost caricature form.

So, Trump really is sort of the caricature of -- an absurd caricature of what the U.S. has been doing in various ways, putting its thumb on the scale in Israel's favor, giving Israel a buy really when it comes to any real obligations in terms of the peace process, putting lots of restrictions on the other hand on the Palestinians.

And so, that carrot and stick reversal, putting, you know, giving the Israelis lots of carrots and lots of sticks for the Palestinians, has just been intensified and kind of taken to an absurd extreme. And so, in that sense, there is continuity. In terms of the rhetoric though, there's a clear break because they're not talking about 242 and a two-state solution.

MS. ROZEN: But, you know, if Abbas called Trump tomorrow and said, you know, I'm really angry about the Jerusalem move decision, but, you know, let's talk, do you

think Trump would be receptive to -- even with all these punitive moves against the Palestinians beyond the embassy move, are they mad that the Palestinians won't talk to them, or do you think that they just wanted to cut them off anyhow?

MR. ELGINDY: I mean again, there's more continuity there because Congress was already moving in that same direction of denormalizing its relations with the Palestinians starting in 2011 and '12 under a host of different pretexts. And there've always been these pushes to kind of close down the PLO mission.

I think it's indicative -- look, it's sort of they don't believe that Palestinian approval is central to the success of whatever peace process they have in mind. And so, whether there is a PLO mission in Washington or not, is not really relevant. And if they can use it as a stick to pressure the Palestinians, then they will. And they've pretty much exhausted -- I can't think of any sanction that they haven't taken against the Palestinians. There's pretty much nothing left. There's no aid left to cut. There's no office left to -- I mean I suppose, we're sort of sliding into the role now, the Administration is sliding into the role of an actual spoiler where they may actually go out and maybe try to convince other donors to withhold. I mean I don't know, but I'm saying that would be the logical next step if they don't see some, you know, capitulation by the Palestinian leadership.

MS. ROZEN: Do you see any negotiations arising before 2020, before Trump leaves office?

MR. ELGINDY: No, I don't. And even --

MS. ROZEN: Is there some gesture Trump could do that you think now would bring them back?

MR. ELGINDY: I don't think so. I think the Palestinian leadership at this point has decided finally that they have more to lose by engaging in a U.S.-led process than by boycotting it.

So, in the past, they've been very reluctant, even though there were sort of blow after blow after blow, loss after loss, that the peace process really hasn't improved

Palestinian life. It hasn't brought Palestinian statehood closer. Even the enormous success of things like (inaudible) state-building project everybody said was a huge success. That didn't produce any rewards politically.

And so, that disconnect really harmed the credibility of the Palestinian leadership that had banked so heavily on the peace process, that this is the way to deliver Palestinian statehood.

And even with all of the evidence that it was not leading to Palestinian statehood, they stuck with it. They stuck with the process because you can't boycott the United States.

But I think Trump has changed that equation for them, that the Trump Administration has no interest in even a semblance of accommodating Palestinian's most minimal expectations or grievances. So, I can't imagine them reengaging with this administration without a serious gesture like a reversal of one of these major decisions.

MS. ROZEN: And you note in the book, a kind of growing partisan divergence in the U.S. political context of the Republican Party being more aligned with the Israeli right and more voices on the Democratic left, like Sandra's, talking about Palestinian rights. On the one hand, there's more diverse voices. On the other, there's no consensus U.S. policy, no stable position, that carries over from administration to administration with adjustments. Is U.S. mediation more a curse than a blessing?

MR. ELGINDY: At this stage or which point in history?

MS. ROZEN: Trump seems like a new -- you know, he talks about the Iran deal. It seems like you don't make a deal with the U.S. anymore under Trump. You make a deal with the administration, and it will very likely be reversed in the next --

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, I think it's important, that prospective is important. So, this isn't the only issue that the Trump Administration is sort of an outlier on or that, you know, where it's kind of pursuing policies that are completely at odds with its allies, its traditional allies in Europe and elsewhere or the international consensus. So, the Iran deal's

another good example.

And so, this is an administration that is highly unpredictable, except in the sense of, you know, whatever might be useful in terms of the President's immediate need for attention and kind of ego inflation.

But as far as a foreign policy doctrine, I don't see a real coherent approach to foreign policy at all. And this is just one aspect of that.

MS. ROZEN: One of the episodes I wasn't aware of is how much the Israel-Egyptian peace process was in a way in competition with the Palestinian track. And different U.S. advisors would try to manipulate one or the other to advantage. What do you see in the current context I guess with Trump move very close to the Egyptian president and some of the regional strongmen?

MR. ELGINDY: I mean Egypt obviously has always been a major player in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. And for a time when the United States, for example, didn't have a direct relationship with the PLO leadership, it had to go through third parties. And usually countries like Egypt, for example, in the 70s, Anwar Sadat was a major interlocular for the Palestinians, who was constantly urging the Americans, you got to talk to the PLO on some level. There have been others, the Saudis and others have played a similar role.

But Egypt of course, has a border with Gaza and with Israel. And so, it is a direct -- it's an issue that is not only Egypt has kind of a big brother for the Palestinians, a country that has some heft in the region and can sort of advocate on their behalf, it's also a national security issue for Egypt to have the kind of instability that we've seen in Gaza for example, it's very important.

So, I mean I understand why Egypt wants to play that role. I think the Administration has maybe overly ambitious expectations in terms of the extent to which Arab states like Egypt, the Saudis, the Emiratis are prepared to completely bypass the Palestinian issue in order to make common cause with Israel. It sort of reminds me, you know, in the 80s, there was this policy that the Regan Administration was pushing called Strategic

Convergence --

MS. ROZEN: Exactly. Yeah.

MR. ELGINDY: Where if only we can get, you know, the Israelis and the Saudis to join forces against the Soviet menace, that would --

MS. ROZEN: Now, it's against Iran. It's exactly the same --

MR. ELGINDY: It's exactly the same thing. Of course, they have a more direct interest when it comes to Iran. But no Arab leader I think can completely -- they can of course, neglect the Palestinian issue, but I don't see them bypassing completely the most minimal Palestinian expectations just to sign on to a deal that I think most people don't have a lot of faith in.

MS. ROZEN: Where are we on time? Let me see if I should --

MR. BYMAN: About 10 minutes.

MS. ROZEN: Okay. I guess the most admiration of a U.S. mediation you showed in the book was for the James Baker effort and Madrid. Why do you think it came closer?

MR. ELGINDY: I don't know that it came close to resolving something, but it was definitely a landmark in that it was the first time the Palestinians had been brought in to the peace process. So, for years, they American rhetoric was yes, we recognize that the Palestinian issue is central to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but their official policy was to not talk to the PLO and to reject the idea of a Palestinian state. And so, it didn't have much wiggle room.

I just lost my train of thought. What was the --

MS. ROZEN: Oh, on James Baker -- yeah, yeah.

MR. ELGINDY: James Baker, right. And so, it was important to bring the Palestinians in to the process for the first time. Even though it wasn't officially under the PLO banner, everybody knew that the PLO was more or less instructing the Palestinian negotiators, and that the PLO had an indirect role.

From the standpoint of the Palestinians though, they greatly admired Baker for that reason and also, because he treated them as coequals. Not just rhetorically, Palestinians are an important part of the process, but he sat with them. He negotiated with them. He heard them out. He debated with them. He agreed with them. He disagreed with them on various things. And they hadn't been treated that way before. It kind of gives you a sense of just how low the bar is really for Palestinians. He was an American secretary of state taking their concerns seriously and negotiating with them, which in a sense is, you know, to give him credit, is pretty remarkable because Israel obviously is a sovereign state and very close ally of the United States. There's a whole, you know, multi-tiered relationship with Israel on, you know, everything from science and technology to youth and sports. And, you know, in addition to the strategic relationship, what are the Palestinians? The Palestinians are an occupied population, a non-state actor at best, the PLO, with a, you know, checkered history of involvement in some, you know, acts of terrorism.

And so, that was a pretty major move on Baker's part to kind of affirm the legitimacy of a Palestinian interlocular and by extension, a Palestinian experience and narrative and presence. That was new, and they greatly appreciated that.

MS. ROZEN: In your own role during the George W. Bush Administration, the peace negotiations at Annapolis, why did that not succeed?

MR. ELGINDY: I don't know where to begin with that. The George Bush Administration, honestly, in all objectively, as objective as I can be, did so much damage to the process. It's really hard to quantify.

From the moment it took office, the kind of incoherent policy being articulated. We're for a Palestinian state, but then immediately placing all these conditions on Palestinian statehood after 911. And of course, in the context of Palestinian suicide bombings and terrorism and major Israeli offensives in the West Bank to, you know, in response in an attempt to crush the Palestinian uprising, just watching the Bush Administration in how it dealt with that situation was very similar to the situation in 1982 --

MS. ROZEN: Exactly.

MR. ELGINDY: -- when Israel invaded Lebanon. Where, you know, there were Israeli excesses, and the Administration was not happy with Israeli behavior, and at some point, I think used pretty harsh language like now means now. When we say withdrawal now, we mean now. And being ultimately sort of helpless to prevent what ended up being really the destruction of the Palestinian authority at the hands of Arial Sharon during that period. And that had major repercussions.

When Sharon went about, you know, his own war on terrorism and systematically was trying to root out what he called the infrastructure of terrorism, but really ended up destroying the infrastructure of a future Palestinian state and in some cases, the actual physical infrastructure in terms of, you know, power plants and, you know, roads and bridges, and whatever, there was a lot of damage done. And in a way, that set the tone for everything that came next, which is, you know, Hamas' election. Well, first, we had the Gaza disengagement where a new Palestinian leader had come to power after Arafat's death but still no political horizon afforded. There's a decline in the violence.

And so, again, this disconnect between cause and effect. Bad behavior didn't necessarily always lead to sanctions. And good behavior didn't always necessarily lead to rewards. And it's, you know, it's sort of the U.S.-Israel relationship and by extension, the U.S.-Palestinian relationship was sort of detached from the realities on the ground and from this thing we called a peace process.

So, by the time you get to 2005, 2006, Hamas is elected in part because the Palestinian Authority is seen as so weak. It is physically weakened. It is politically weakened by the Gaza disengagement, which sort of went south and Hamas comes to power. And now this creates a whole new set of problems. More sanctions on the Palestinians. Even more weakening to the point of a civil war and the split that has been really has basically -- the process has been paralyzed since the 2007 split between Hamas and Fatah. There wasn't really going to be a meaningful peace process thereafter, in part,

because Hamas could easily play the role of a spoiler as it did in 2008. Once war broke out, that destroyed -- that caused the negotiations that were going -- the Annapolis negotiations that I was involved in, those collapsed. And we've seen that happen time and again where Gaza erupts in violence, and that basically scuttles whatever diplomatic process was happening.

And so, you know, that is a legacy of the Bush Administration and its policy, its intent on maintaining that division between the Israelis and Palestinians.

And so, I think if there is a moment that the peace process actually died, I know people have different theories, you know, some people say it died in 1995 when Rabin was assassinated, but I think really it's been in total decline, it's being dying a slow death, but the decline I think really dramatically increased in 2005. Once the Gaza disengagement failed, and then you have this kind of domino effect of blow after blow to the Palestinian leadership, Hamas' election and then the split, Hamas' takeover of Gaza and then these periodic wars. We haven't had a meaningful process since then.

And now, finally, people have kind of come to the conclusion that, you know what, maybe this Gaza situation is kind of destabilizing. We should probably do something about it. But after what? After all this damage had been done, basically after any meaningful peace process was killed.

MS. ROZEN: Oh, is there -- sorry about that.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, Laura, thank you, Khaled. You mentioned possibly Israeli security for Palestinian self-determination. I didn't quite understand the connection. I mean Israel's security really is a red herring. Israel has all the security in the world, and the Palestinians have none. So, this caveat has been used as a ploy and an impossibility. Also, the self-determination with a new nation state law. I mean that -- that is impossible to achieve.

So, my question to you is a question that I posed last week elsewhere. Say that all Palestinians today live in a de facto one state, you know, with no rights whatsoever.

Israel has control over every single Palestinian between the Mediterranean to the river. At what point, will we recognize this as, you know, as such, you know, will there be like a milestone, a watershed event, you know, will there be like a sign, welcome to the one-state (inaudible) when you cross state lines and so on? Thank you.

MR. ELGINDY: I mean I can't predict the future. I don't have that kind of influence with Palestinian leaders. I'm not sure that there is really a credible leadership that could even answer that question. But I'll say this, you know, going to my sort of preface that we began with, we're in a moment where there is a real vacuum. There is -- and I know this isn't very satisfying, but the old rules don't apply anymore. There's a political vacuum. There's a diplomatic vacuum. We don't have the framework for how we go. That's by definition disorienting.

When that happened before in that period of say of the mid-60s when before the 1967 War and, you know, let's say by 1965 when there was no real interest in pursuing a Arab-Israeli peace process much less dealing with the Palestinian issue, there was no real Palestinian leadership, at least one that was representative. And what it took to fill that vacuum was June 1967 and another kind of massive Arab-Israeli war where now after the balance of power had shifted and there was a new diplomatic -- there's more diplomatic interests, and there are now these new terms of reference, there's Resolution 242, and that fills the void.

So, it may be that we need some major dramatic event like 1967 that will fill the void. I don't know. Or that is if I had to bet, I would say, that's probably more probable than its kind of emerging organically to create some new international consensus around a new framework. You know, in part, I don't see a Palestinian leadership taking on that role. I don't think that they have the wherewithal. I don't think that they're interested in that. I think they are still clinging to the old model. They're still clinging to the idea of 1967 borders and 242 and Palestinian state and the West Bank and Gaza, East Jerusalem as its capital. So, they're not ready to move in that direction.

Even Hamas isn't ready to move in a different direction. Hamas has kind of implicitly signed on to the 1967 framework, you know, minus recognition of Israel. And of course, they won't explicitly say 242.

So, I don't see someone who's going to carry that banner moving forward. And until we do see that, you know, we're going to be in this kind of amorphous netherworld, politically and diplomatically.

MS. ROZEN: I think that gentleman, that gentleman, and then you. Sorry, I think he's like three rows behind you.

QUESTIONER: Khaled, thank you for your scholarship. I think it's very important in this town, especially, to be reminded of the history of this situation.

I have a comment and a question. I really disagree with your analysis of the importance of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates and others more quietly bypassing the whole Palestinian issue and developing their own relationships with Israel. I think it's a major shift, and I don't think we're quite analyzing it correctly.

My question is, what difference is the appointment of Mohammad Shtayyeh going to make in terms of the future of the Palestinian leadership? It seems like a brilliant move by Abbas, something that we probably wanted but didn't think Abbas had it in him to do. So, can you tell us what you think of that appointment?

MR. ELGINDY: Sure, but can you give me a sense of what you mean by really move -- in what sense?

QUESTIONER: Well, I mean it's a new generation. A person who has a lot of experience in the negotiations and a fresh approach to the situation.

MR. ELGINDY: Okay. I think -- I mean I know Muhammad Shtayyeh, I have a lot of respect for him. I think he is extraordinarily capable and will serve the position well. But I look at it from a broader political standpoint. The resignation of Rami Hamdallah and the appointment of Muhammad Shtayyeh is a sign that Mohammad Abbas has moved away from even the pretense of reconciliation with Hamas. And so, in that sense, it's a

setback because we now have instead of a nonpartisan, technocratic government that was agreed on by all parties, including Hamas, even though couldn't really function in Gaza, now that's been abandoned, and we have a Fatah government explicitly. And that won't, you know, that's going to be very harmful for prospects for reconciliation. And so, in that sense, I think it's damaging.

In technical terms, what it will mean for things like the Palestinian budget and other kinds of technical issues that he'll be dealing with, it might very well be but a net positive. But in broader political terms, I see it as a setback because this Palestinian division is paralyzing. It is causing total stagnation in Palestinian institutions and their decline. You know, when you have no oversight of any kind, there's no legislature, there's not even the pretense of oversight, we have a president who's ruling entirely by decree. So, all of these are very damaging in terms of governance but also in terms of the future of these institutions if there ever will be a Palestinian state.

MS. ROZEN: Can I have the gentleman behind the one who just asked a question?

QUESTIONER: Thank you. My question is linked to the previous comments as you talked about Egypt and other Arab countries, could you maybe elaborate a little bit more on how Arab countries see this current situation between U.S. administration and the Palestinians, whether there are any major important differences between Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf and also, between the leadership in those countries and what has been called to the Arab street? Thanks.

MR. ELGINDY: I mean obviously there are nuance differences between various Arab governments. I think most of the regimes that you mentioned are generally positively predisposed to dealing with the Trump administration and cooperating with it on a whole range of issues. And also, I think they appreciate the fact that they're not going to get a lot of pushback on things like rights and democracy and transparency and the things that at least in the past were rhetorical points for U.S. administrations. This administration is not

really interested in those things. They like that. They are authoritarian, so they appreciate that kind of long leash. And they also have common interests. We talked about the common perception of the threat from Iran.

But I think there is a limit, if I'm understanding your question correctly, I think there is a limit as to how far these governments are willing to go. And, you know, this isn't the first time that Palestinians have been neglected by the Arab states even severely. So, you know, we've seen this in the past, and it sort of, you know, all of these things happen in cycles.

So, yes, there is a moment I think because of Palestinian political weakness, because of the geostrategic situation, because of Israel's sense of triumphalism and it's kind of, you know, it's at the peak of its power regionally and internationally, the Palestinians are divided and weak. And so, all of these things lend themselves to neglect. You know, they encouraged people to well if Palestinians don't care about their own situation, why should we be more Palestinian than they are? If they can't overcome their kind of parochial differences then -- So, I think there are a lot of pretext and reasons for Arab states to neglect the issue, but I don't think, I can't imagine, any of these Arab governments -- and we've seen already indications from the Saudis where the crown prince says one thing, gives an indication that they're inclined to accept the Trump plan, and then we see the king weighing in, you know, pushing back against that and sort of reaffirming, you know, the traditional Arab stance of Palestinian statehood and East Jerusalem as its capital and so on.

So, there is a limit partly because of Palestinian, I mean partly because of local public opinion that still even if Arab leaders are disengaged from the Palestinian issue, I think it's still an issue that resonates with ordinary, whether it's Egyptians, Jordanians, Saudis, or Emirate. And it's one of the few issues actually that there is still a consensus on in the Arab street, so to speak. You don't have the same consensus on Syria for example or on Yemen or on other kind of regional -- or even to the extent which Iran is a threat.

But the Palestinian issue is an old one. It's been around for a long time.

And it's one that is still very emotive for a lot of Arabs and people in the region in general. So, I see that there are some limitations on how far these Arab rulers can go without, you know, sort of completely sidelining the Palestinian question.

MS. ROZEN: I was trying to get those two women.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Khaled. Thank you so much for this book. I think it's long overdue.

I wanted to ask about multilateral engagement on this issue. One thing that you pointed out in the book was the role the U.S. played in the quartet, sort of to box out multilateral engagement. And this was something also I think in the Obama Administration we saw. So, I'm interested to hear more about that and also where you think that might go in the future, you know, since we're going to have the unveiling of the Trump plan that I doubt will see much traction.

And then the other piece that I want you to talk about a little bit is the role that Congress played with the various administrations. Was there a pattern that you saw in terms of the role Congress played? When I read your book, I felt like Congress was either trying to tie the hands of the Administration when the Administration was ready to make a breakthrough, but they were also there to support the Administration when it was taking a more harsher view. And if you could just kind of talk to that a little bit.

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, on the first part, on the quartet. Yeah, the quartet emerged, you know, the quartet was a corrective to the Oslo process. It was introduced as a way to counterbalance the American monopoly on the peace process on the one hand. And the quartet's peace plan, the roadmap, was another corrective in the sense that it was designed to make the process more mutual. There's parallel implementation. There are specific benchmarks for each side. There are phase I, phase II, phase III, and so on. Mutual accountability. And so, that phenomenon was intended as a corrective to what was a flawed Oslo process that eventually, you know, hit a dead end, and then we had the collapse of Camp David and the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising.

The problem with that corrective was undermined from the get-go. The roadmap was stillborn. The roadmap that was based on kind of updating and correcting these flaws in the process was totally sidelined by the Bush Administration. And in the process, the quartet itself was sidelined.

So, the quartet, you know, the idea was that you would have the four most important, most powerful actors in this process, the United Nations, Russia, The United States, and the European Union, who could really bring all the positive and negative incentives to bear on both sides. But that wasn't how it operated. It was a consensus-based institution. And so, it operated on the basis of the lowest common denominator, which was almost always the United States. The United States consistently wanted to water down the language on settlements, to not refer to Palestinian rights. And so, you end up with these very blasé quartet statements. And at one point, I think -- I think I mentioned this in the book, Elliot Abrams, who was very actively, you know, a member of the Bush Administration, even said that, you know, our fear initially was that the quartet would bring us to where say the U.N. and Europe was. Instead, we brought them to where we are. And I think the quintessential example of that was the quartet principles or the quartet conditions that were imposed on the Palestinians after Hamas' election, which said we won't deal with, the international community won't deal with the Palestinian government that doesn't accept Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and accept past agreements.

And that of course -- so, there's differences of interpretation. But it was the American interpretation that won out because of that lowest common denominator phenomenon and also, because of the power dynamics. The United States and Israel have a very, very, very close bond. And so, if they decide to do something bilaterally, that essentially short circuits the whole purpose of this multilateral thing called the quartet. And that is very often what happened. So, you would have, you know, again, this kind of working for and against your peace process at the same time, or in some cases, it's not just ambivalence, it's duplicity. So, there's was an official roadmap, but never mind that official

peace plan that we've all endorsed and worked on for a year, what really matters is this bilateral agreement that we have between Dov Weisglass and Condi Rice, you know, the two national security advisor, Israeli and American on here's what a settlement freeze is, never mind what it says in the roadmap. A settlement freeze means, you know, you can build upward but not outward, and so on and so forth.

So, that bilateral relationship between, you know, in other words, the quartet or any multilateral body, could not overcome the strength of that bilateral bond between the United States and Israel that essentially dictated the terms and defined the peace process on its own terms.

Oh, you asked also about the role of Congress. So, real quick, yeah, I think Congress has consistently worked in that role that you mentioned of tying the Administration's hands, ensuring that there were plenty of sticks to use with the Palestinians, and ensuring that there were no sticks to use with the Israelis. And so, that has been one of the primary constraints on every American president who has tried to take up this issue.

And so, even when you have a president -- and so, in fairness to Obama, even when you have a president who is inclined, who sort of gets it, who understands what is needed, he's constrained. And part of his constraint wasn't just his inability to -- unwillingness to take political risks, that was part of it, but also, that American politics had shifted, kind of in parallel. There's a segment of American politics, and this is true throughout the 100 years, that is kind of pegged to design this movement and to Israeli politics in general. And it's almost an organic connection between them. And that's true of the Republican Party.

So, if you look at how Israeli governments have steadily shifted to the right, so too has the Republican Party. Today's Republican Party cannot talk about a two-state solution. They've abandoned that whole notion. They explicitly deny that there's anything called an Israeli occupation. So, they're so over that. And that's exactly where the Israeli right is.

And so, that and, you know, we've had many years of a Republican-controlled Congress. Just as an illustration, when Obama said, you know, the one thing he was willing to say, he wasn't prepared to say something dramatic on Jerusalem, but he was prepared to reiterate that a future resolution should be based on the 1967 lines with whatever modifications and land swapping and so on. And he was immediately attacked by the Republicans who accused him of -- you threw Israel under the bus. He had essentially reiterated almost verbatim the same language that George W. Bush used a few years earlier. Of course, there was no outcry then by Republicans. So, American politics has become more constraining in that respect as well.

QUESTIONER: Thank you for holding this event. I'm of the opinion that American feelings towards what is going on in Palestine and Israel would change if the public were better informed about what is actually happening over there. And when I visited Israel and Palestine a few times in the last couple of years, the Christians of Israel and Palestine, for them, the Evangelical movement was very, very important. It was, you know, British Evangelicals or the Evangelicals of Great Britain that actually were instrumental in the Balfour Declaration and in having, you know, in just setting up Israel in the first place. And obviously we know that the Evangelicals here are very, very supportive and, you know, very active.

So, do you think there would be any benefit to opening up, you know, that issue more because we don't hear about it in our sort of regular media? Do you think it would be beneficial to talk about, you know, that issue, that it's the Evangelicals that support this state?

MR. ELGINDY: In what sense? Do you mean to talk about their --

QUESTIONER: Well, I'm just wondering, you know, just in terms of understanding that where the support from Israel really comes from.

MS. ROZEN: Oh, Evangelical support for Israel being a prominent political issue.

MR. ELGINDY: If there's a way to sway Evangelicals, you mean?

QUESTIONER: No, just to sway -- just --

MS. ROZEN: Highlight their role in --

QUESTIONER: (inaudible) just being informed. Just understanding, just for, you know, us as Americans to --

MS. ROZEN: Influencing U.S. policy.

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, I mean I agree. Obviously, Evangelicals are a major part of Trump's base. And one could make a very compelling case that the whole Jerusalem Embassy move was designed to placate that particular constituency as opposed to let's say, American Jews.

So, they're obviously very influential, and their influence has grown over the years. But I think there is a deeper, you know, my own prospective is that the Evangelicals are tapping into a preexisting stream, cultural and ideological stream that is already there. And that's, you know, I hope at least some of that comes out in the book. But there's I think we often overlook the very strong cultural dimension to this issue.

And so, when I think of Christian Zionism, I'm not only thinking in terms of the Evangelicals and dispensationalists and the people, you know, who are taking photos in front of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, I'm also thinking of the lay Christians who are not necessarily Evangelical, but because of the nature of Protestantism, because of the nature of western history, there's a kind of -- there's a world view that's associated with that, which is look, the Jews are the people of the Bible. We know what that means. We recognize that. They get very, you know, Arthur Balfour was a Christian Zionist in the sense he wasn't even Evangelical, but the Bible was important to him, so was British colonial power. But the confluence of the two I think was really very powerful.

So, when you have a geostrategic interest that you can identify and it aligns also with your cultural inclination, you know, sort of people have a Sunday school understanding of the world. The Jews are in the Bible, the Arabs are not, and the Muslims

or the Arabs maybe kind of are. And in addition, you know, there's this cultural baggage that goes back to the Crusades. And a lot of the language, for example, there's a kind of secular Christian Zionism, is what I'm referring to, in the Tea Party, for example, where their world view is that there is a pitched civilizational battle between Judeo-Christian civilization and these Islamic hordes who are trying to destroy it. It's obviously, you know, very simplistic and bigoted. But that is a current I think that has existed for a long time. And it's very easy to tap into and to sort of, you know, look, the Palestinians are on that side of the issue. They're Muslims. They're part of that phenomenon, this threat that we see.

And so, that's a very difficult -- I think the antidote to that, the response to that is a different ideological narrative that has to emerge around things like universal values and rights and human dignity. And I think that exists also. But what hasn't existed is sort of framing the Israel-Palestine issue in that ideological framework. Certainly, the Palestinian leadership never did. One of the problems I think that the Palestinian leadership made was to be sort of uber pragmatic and this constant focus on U.S. interests. Well, U.S. interests are always going to be filtered through a social cultural ideological lens of some sort.

And so, they didn't have a narrative. They said look, a West Bank and Gaza state is good for U.S. interests because, you know, the Palestinian issue is so central in the region, and it will, you know, their arguments were based almost entirely on U.S. interests. There wasn't an ideological component that went along with it. And I touch on that a little bit in the book with some quotes from Salam Fayyad who really had some really, I think fascinating insights into precisely that question.

MS. ROZEN: Yes.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Carl (inaudible), a retired U.S. Customs Special Agent, 911 responder, domain reference at www.anidealiveson.net.

My question is drawn from a fairly new book by Joan Mellen, titled *Blood in the Water.* It's about the 1967 attack by the Israeli military on the U.S. NSA listening vessel, the Liberty, that was in the Eastern Mediterranean. And that there was a cooperation at the

highest levels of U.S. government in that attack occurring, intending to be a false-flag attack that could be blamed on Egypt as a pretext to bringing the U.S. into the war.

My question from the prospective of a 911 responder, is whether we're missing a huge blind spot in the parallel with 911, in that since 911, we now and for 18 years, Israel has been essentially the prime beneficiary of us radicalizing Islam in proximity and then militarily attacking (inaudible) leading up to war with Iran. So, is that our blind spot? Did we miss a parallel between the USS Liberty and 911?

MR. ELGINDY: I'm not sure I fully get the question, but I'm not an expert on the USS Liberty. I mean I know of the incident. I don't see a parallel between the USS Liberty and 911. But that, you know, that's just me, I guess.

I think there's also --

MS. ROZEN: What? I'm sorry.

MR. ELGINDY: No, I think there's also -- Debra, also had some questions.

MS. ROZEN: Oh, please. Go ahead. And how much time do we have, Dan?

MR. BYMAN: Eight minutes.

MS. ROZEN: Can I take -- do you want to take two?

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, let's take a couple more now.

MS. ROZEN: Okay.

QUESTIONER: Could I go back to one of the points that you made in your opening remarks? You said that there really hasn't been a replacement of the old land for peace, and you were talking about security versus rights as a potentially new paradigm. What do you see are the major obstacles to that being adopted by any of the parties? And do you see any ways of overcoming those obstacles?

MS. ROZEN: And who was the person that sent that -- Deborah?

MR. ELGINDY: Yeah, Debra from (inaudible).

MS. ROZEN: Can you point? I'm sorry, I don't know which one.

MR. ELGINDY: Oh, right there. Kevin's in the way, so you can't see her.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Debra Shushan from Americans for Peace now.

Okay. So, my question is asking you, Khaled, to look ahead and to talk about what you see as the prospects for a major change in U.S. foreign policy coming from the next president. And I'd be interested if you would talk specifically about Bernie Sanders, since he is the Democratic contender who clearly seems to have thought the most about Israel and Palestine, has been the most outspoken on it, has been willing to take on Netanyahu who is saying that he hopes that he will lose this election, called the Israeli government racists, and hinted at conditioning military aid.

So, I'm interested in what you see is the prospect for a major shift? And if I could be so cheeky as to put you in the position of advisor to the next president, what would you call for them to do on day one and moving forward from day one, so that they perhaps could come in to office with the right intentions like Obama did but be more effective? Thanks.

MS. ROZEN: I think those are the last two.

MR. ELGINDY: Okay. In terms of the obstacles to security for rights or as a framework, I mean I just threw that out there in very lose terms. I don't expect the security council to meet and, you know, formulate a new 242 based on security for rights. But it something that we should think about.

I do think, I (inaudible) somewhat with Syed, I do think Israel has legitimate security concerns. At the same time, I also think, obviously, the Palestinians also have security concerns as the occupied population, which had been completely neglected, by the way, under a U.S.-led peace process. But then I also think that security is very often abused, as is the word terrorism, as is the word, you know, lots of things are abused by politicians to expand the scope of what they want to do.

But I do think Israel has legitimate security concerns, and that those can be addressed. And I also believe that Palestinians deserve basic rights of citizenship, either in

an independent Palestinian state or as part of some Israeli state or future entity that or whatever it may be called. They are stateless, and they need -- they deserve that basic right.

And so, there are a lot of obstacles to getting there. One, is this enormous polarization that we have, and this kind of sense of triumphalism on the Israeli side and on the American right, that, you know, basically, it is of the view that look, the Israeli's won, the Palestinian National movement/narrative has been defeated. And it's time to accept that defeat and sort of, you know, make your peace with it. And I think that's what the Kushner plan sort of is really all about. It's about encouraging Palestinians to make their peace with basically their defeat, and that the terms, to put it very dramatically, the terms of their surrender.

So, the politics are a big, big obstacle. I think on the Israeli side and on the American side, another major obstacle, and this is one that I hope comes through in the book even though it's focused mainly on U.S. policy, but the absence of a credible, coherent, effective Palestinian leadership. I cannot emphasize how crucial that is and how dangerous it is. Bad things happen when Palestinians don't have a credible leadership. And specifically, I'll refer to the period of the late 1930s and early 40s when the Palestinian leadership was completely decimated by the British in response to the uprising, and they felt the effects of that. So, then came the partition and all of that, and they were unable to effectively mobilize either resources to defend themselves or to mobilize diplomatically. They were severely, severely handicapped.

So, it really starts with having an effective Palestinian political leadership. And that doesn't presently exist. It may exist in the near future, I don't know. My sense is that it probably will, you know, it could 5, 10, 15 years. I don't know.

As far as prospects for major change in the next U.S. president, I think obviously, it depends on if the next U.S. president is the current U.S. president or somebody from another party. I do think that the conversation is changing on Israel-Palestine in the

political spear. It used to be out in the grassroots, and now it's filtering up into the political world, and we've seen that in 2012, we've seen it certainly in 2016 with the Sanders' campaign. He was really the first serious presidential contender I can think of to speak about Palestinian rights. This is unheard of. And it's bound to be an issue. I think all the indications are is that it will be an issue in 2020. And so, there's a changing conversation inside the Democratic Party, especially, but also, sort of with the public at large on this issue.

And so, I do think that there is potential for a very different approach to this issue, particularly if we see a continuation of the kind of trends like, you know, hardline Israeli government and whether or not they move towards formal annexation. But they are certainly stepping up things like settlement activity and home demolitions that is likely to eventually erupt in some sort of violence or instability. There's going to be pushback at some point. And a future U.S. president that is also listening to a different framework that is rooted in rights and universal values, that will be part of I think what -- especially if a democrat is elected, that will be part of the next administrations thinking on some level. It will inform their thinking on a certain level. I don't know whether it will lead to things like imposing military sanctions on the Israelis or some other -- I, you know, I don't think we're politically quite there yet. But we are, you know, influencing the political discussion, and it's starting to affect the policy.

You know, the fact that, you know, my book and other similar books are out there and (inaudible) has an excellent book that's sort of very complimentary to mine looking at the law and the Palestine questions. And there are a whole crop of books out there. There are people who are -- who want to rethink this issue, who want to think differently about this issue. And so, I think there is real potential to do that in 2020.

MS. ROZEN: What a great way to close. Thank you so much.

MR. ELGINDY: Thank you, Laura. (Applause)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2020