In Search of a Viable Option
Evaluating Outcomes to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Based on a report by Dr. Shira Efron and Evan Gottesman, with a foreword by Ambassador Daniel B. Shapiro

Despite critiques of the two-state solution, and concerns over waning support for it, a two-state outcome remains the only implementable plan that safeguards Israeli security while maintaining Israel as Jewish and democratic.

The new study, "In Search of a Viable Option" examines several proposed outcomes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: These options were rigorously analyzed and assessed on 18 criteria (see reverse), including:

Maintenance of Israel as a Jewish state

Domestic and international political viability

Maintenance of Israel as a democracy

Ease of implementation

Provision for Israeli security

Direct and indirect costs

Fulfillment of Palestinian self-determination

Timeframe to implementation

Each model has some advantages, but most have significant drawbacks. They either do not maintain Israel as both Jewish and democratic, create overwhelming security risks, or face severe challenges to implementation.

Outcome	Evaluation
Two-state solution	The only option that maintains Israel as Jewish and democratic; implementable, yet faces significant logistical and political challenges.
Maintaining the status quo	Rates at or slightly above the midpoint in a majority of the criteria, explaining its durability, yet far more unstable than it seems; annexation, deterioration in the security situation, or political upheaval could quickly make current trends unsustainable, quickly shifting assessments of the status quo.
An Israeli-Palestinian confederation	Maintains Israel as Jewish and democratic, but creates security and implementation challenges that are nearly insurmountable, with little support from Israelis and Palestinians.
A Jewish non-democratic state	Unable to maintain Israel as both Jewish and democratic, rejected in whole by one of the two parties to the conflict.
A democratic binational state	Unable to maintain Israel as both Jewish and democratic, rejected in whole by one of the two parties to the conflict.
The Jordanian Option	Maintains Israel as Jewish and democratic but creates security and implementation challenges that are nearly insurmountable, and is wholly rejected by Jordan as the main stakeholder.
The Trump Plan	Unable to maintain Israel as both Jewish and democratic, and is rejected in whole by one of the two parties to the conflict.

It is critical to keep the two-state option viable and hold other proposals up to scrutiny.

Criterion	Two-State Solution	Continuation of Status Quo	Isr-Pal Confederation	One Democratic State	One Jewish State	Jordanian Option	Trump Plan
Jewish	Dark Green	Orange	Light Green	Red	Yellow	Dark Green	Yellow
Democratic	Dark Green	Orange	Dark Green	Dark Green	Red	Dark Green	Orange
Palestinian Self-determination	Dark Green	Orange	Light Green	Orange	Red	Red	Orange
Security	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Ease of Implementation	Orange	Light Green	Orange	Red	Yellow	Orange	Orange
Israeli Public Support	Light Green	Yellow	Orange	Red	Yellow	Light Green	Dark Green
Israeli Government Support	Red	Dark Green	Red	Red	Dark Green	Light Green	Dark Green
Palestinian Public Support	Light Green	Red	Orange	Orange	Red	Orange	Red
PA Support	Dark Green	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Hamas Support	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red
Acceptance by Jordan and Egypt	Dark Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Red
Acceptance by Arab World	Dark Green	Yellow	Light Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow
U.S. Acceptance	Light Green	Dark Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Dark Green
Acceptance by Russia and China	Dark Green	Yellow	Dark Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Acceptance by EU and Int'l Orgs.	Dark Green	Yellow	Dark Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Red
Direct Costs	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Red
Indirect Costs	Dark Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow
Timeframe to Implementation	Orange	Dark Green	Orange	Red	Dark Green	Orange	Orange

Color — **Explanation**

- Dark Green — Strong performance against criterion
- Light Green — Slightly less strong performance yet above the the midpoint
- Yellow — Midpoint performance
- Orange — Relatively poor performance
- Red — Extremely poor performance

All of the information contained in this fact sheet and the full report is current as of February 2020.

ISRAEL POLICY FORUM