
This review should start with a personal statement. My name appears several times in the text and footnotes of Laura Zittrain Eisenberg and Neil Caplan's book. At the time, I was Israel's chief negotiator with Syria, and the negotiations I conducted are analyzed and critiqued by the authors. I obviously do not think that this disqualifies me as a reviewer, but the readers of this review should be aware of my personal stake in the book's subject matter.

Numerous books have been published in recent years about the Arab-Israeli peace process, some of them academic studies, some of them memoirs or personal accounts and some of them polemical or partisan.

Two pairs of authors (Samuel W. Lewis & Kenneth W. Stein, and Daniel C. Kurtzer & Scott B. Lasensky) drew on decades of Arab-Israeli peace making—both successes and failures—to advise future peace makers on how to conduct Arab-Israeli negotiations.

Eisenberg and Caplan joined forces in order to construct a new genre. They identified seven paradigms (such as timing, third party involvement, and psychological factors) as analytical tools, to be used in the analysis of past successes and failures and as building blocks by future policy planners. The case studies they chose are the most resonant successes (Camp David I, the Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement of 1994) and failures (Camp David II, the Israeli-Syrian negotiations) along a tortuous path which began in the 1970s, and in early 2011 seems to have become hopelessly bogged down. They brought impressive credentials to the task: Caplan is the author of books on Arab-Zionist and Arab-Israeli diplomacy and Zittrain authored a book on Zionist-Lebanese relations. The result is a first-rate study that reflects the authors' familiarity with and understanding of Arab-Israeli relations spread over more than a century of conflict and diplomacy, their gift for presenting complex problems in clear prose, and the thoroughness of their research.

The approach chosen by the authors proved successful. By using the seven paradigms, they avoided problems only too familiar to readers of lengthy, detailed accounts of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Fairly complex negotiations, such as the Israeli-Palestinian and the Israeli-Syrian negotiations, can now be studied in depth by the reader. While this approach is useful for such complex case studies, it proves to be somewhat of an overkill when it comes to lesser cases, such as the Israeli-Lebanese peace agreement of 1983, which was in fact stillborn—no elaborate mechanism is needed to understand its failure.
The reader is, nevertheless, presented with a very effective account and analysis of the major events of the peace process, set in motion in the aftermath of the October War, with special emphasis on the 1990s.

The Syrian chapter offers an opportunity to clarify the controversial issue of Rabin's "deposit" in August 1993. Eisenberg and Caplan do not do justice to the late Yitzhak Rabin when they say that he "unwittingly complicated matters for years to come when he authorized Warren Christopher to find out from Asad whether in exchange for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, Syria would be willing to accommodate Israeli security concerns and sign a peace treaty to be implemented in stages over the next five years" (p. 147).

What Rabin in fact did was offer both the U.S. mediators and the Syrians a mechanism for resolving the stalemate on the Israeli-Syrian track created by Asad's insistence that any serious negotiation must be preceded by an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal. By depositing a hypothetical willingness to withdraw from the Golan Heights with the American secretary of state, Rabin opened up the opportunity for genuine negotiations with Syria. Why this was not taken advantage of by the Syrian party and the U.S. mediators is a critical, albeit separate, question in its own right. The authors then proceed to deal with the question whether Rabin had committed Israel to a full withdrawal to the borders of 4 June 1967. They go on to treat the issue as a matter of contention between Israel and Syria, while the real disagreement on this was actually between Israel and the United States. While Rabin definitely did not regard the deposit as a "commitment," the U.S. Administration tried to turn it into one and used the term "commitment" when referring to the "deposit" in the following years. It is also important to clarify the problem of the lines of 4 June 1967. Originally, the Syrian delegation to the peace negotiations did not use the term "withdrawal to the lines of June 1967," but rather the term "full withdrawal." When Christopher brought Rabin's deposit to Asad, Asad did not explicitly raise the issue, but he did ask whether Israel had any further "claims." Rabin and his team did not quite understand what he meant by "claims" and their answer was that Israel had none. As is well-known, Rabin, disappointed with Asad's response, chose to pursue the Palestinian track and sign the Oslo Accords, so that the Israeli-Syrian negotiation was in fact suspended for about nearly a year. When the negotiations were resumed, one year later, Secretary Christopher went to Damascus to put it on track. It was then, for the first time, that Hafiz al-Asad explicitly demanded an Israeli withdrawal to the lines of 4 June 1967, adding yet another difficulty to already complex negotiations. Rabin and his team eventually found a way to deal with this as well. Subsequently, the negotiations led to two meetings of Syria's