

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE RIPE FOR NEGOTIATIONS?

Summary of factors supporting Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and likely results:

1. **Political conditions in Israel support negotiations with the Palestinians.** The Israeli government is stable, but even in the case of a vote of no-confidence in the government due to possible concessions during negotiations, the majority of Knesset members would likely vote to support continued negotiations with the Palestinians, as long as Israeli security can be assured and protected for the long haul.
2. **Domestic conditions in the West Bank are favorable.** Over the last 18 months, security, standard of living, and cooperation with Israelis have steadily increased. Palestinian leadership, although fragmented, is united in its commitment to conduct negotiations for statehood. A Palestinian public mandate is not a prerequisite for negotiations; the leaders can make concessions without public support.
3. **There is support from surrounding Arab entities.** The Jordanians, Egyptians and Arab League support negotiations. Their common interests are the desires to: weaken Hamas, reduce the influence of Iran, and mitigate radical Islam as a political force.
4. **The context is ripe for negotiations.** The present time is particularly conducive to reaching agreement, due to the: unbearable status quo, positive changes on the ground (security and economy), confluence of interests (limiting Hamas growth), desire for normalcy, conflict fatigue, committed US mediation, international desire to mitigate the influence of Islamic extremism, intent to sow seeds for long term benefits, Arab states and League support, and fear of Iranian nuclear power and aggressiveness.
5. **Pre-negotiations have laid the groundwork for lasting agreements by reaching degrees of resolution on some issues.** Agreements, however minor, engender optimism and could keep talks going.
6. **Enduring areas of disagreement have the potential to be resolved if both sides compromise.** These issues include: territory, refugees, Jerusalem, security, demilitarization, water, international monitors, economic prospects, etc.

7. **The Obama administration has publicly stated its role should be as engaged bridge builders and mediators.** This role has proven more successful in the past, over the roles of umpire, dictator of terms or coercer of concessions.

What can be expected to unfold?

Under what circumstances and over what period of time will Israel return territories acquired in the 1967 war, and what will Israel receive in return in terms of security by virtue of an accord, agreement, or treaty?

1. The timeline for agreements will likely not be the timeline for execution; implementation will be carried out in phases over long periods of time in an effort to gain mutual trust.
2. Issues of agreement on minor issues will likely be hammered out gradually and strategically before final status talks, to avoid imploding the negotiations over key issues of disagreement and in order to gain trust.
3. Negotiations and agreements will not likely impact how the populations view and feel about one another.
4. Deadlines and phased agreements may not be made public, so as not to jeopardize the negotiations.
5. These agreements will likely unfold over several Palestinian and Israeli administrations; hence political successors will have to build off current progress into the future.
6. Major changes in territory or demographics will depend upon resolution of some final status issues.
7. Neither Palestinians nor Israelis can be expected to act contrary to their national interests, regardless of international pressure. Each side has its own "red lines." For Palestinians, they remain steadfast in their objective to end all Israeli settlement activity and evolve a viable and contiguous Palestinian state. For Israel, the objective is to provide security for the state and its citizens at all costs, which entails participating in monitoring their own security, even if foreign monitors are engaged in peace keeping.