



News Release
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In-depth commentary on The Kerry Negotiations from four top Palestine experts published by *Journal of Palestine Studies*

Washington, DC, June 16, 2014 – A four part commentary published in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* provides comprehensive analysis of the Kerry negotiations. Four leading scholars in the field, Diana Buttu, Raja Khalidi, Samia al-Botmeh and Mouin Rabbani, provide diverse perspectives on aspects of the negotiations including international law, economic tactics and incentives, access to resources, sovereignty and historic precedents.

“In spite of its manifest failure to produce anything more than an extension of Israeli occupation and colonization—which was clearly the objective for some—the ‘peace process’ has a zombie-like capacity to keep stumbling forward,” says **Rashid Khalidi**, Edward Said Professor at Columbia University and editor of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, in his introduction to the commentaries.

Diana Buttu, former fellow at Harvard Law School and a lawyer specializing in negotiations and international law, examines the tactical emergence of a new Israeli demand, to recognize Israel as a “Jewish state,” noting that this demand “is nowhere to be found in any of the official agreements that have been reached with the State of Israel, whether those signed by Egypt (1979), Jordan (1994), or the PLO (Oslo, 1993–99 and the 2003 road map).” She discusses the dangerous implications of this new demand, including the abdication of rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as the rights of Palestinian refugees to return.

Raja Khalidi, a Palestinian development economist who served with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for many years, provides a persuasive and extensive commentary on the economic aspect of the Kerry negotiations, including the estimated \$4 billion international investment plan announced in May 2013 to grow and develop a private-sector-led Palestinian economy. “This is quintessentially a delaying tactic to distract ordinary people from political issues by focusing their attention on questions of economic survival instead.” says Khalidi, pointing to similar historic Israeli campaigns aimed at “quality of life” strategies to achieve “economic peace” and obfuscate Palestinian resistance to occupation.

Samia al-Botmeh, an assistant professor in economics at Birzeit University, asks important questions in her commentary, including, “is development in a purportedly sovereign Palestinian state attainable in light of Israel’s continued colonial control?” Spotlighting the Kerry framework

proposal's recommendation that Israel maintain "security" control in the Jordan Valley, the most fertile agricultural land within the West Bank, situated along the eastern water aquifer, Botmeh demonstrates how "Israeli security control effectively means Israel's continued political and economic domination of the territory."

Mouin Rabbani, a senior fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies, discusses the premises of the negotiations and the dangers presented by both their failure as well as their potential success. "Washington is redefining the meaning of a two-state settlement to empty it of substance, effectively removing any form of Palestinian self-determination from the international agenda." He outlines the historic evolution of the "Peace Process" and warns that a framework for further negotiations "will redefine Palestinian rights and move them yet further away from the purview of international law, where they rightfully belong."

This article "Commentary: The Kerry Negotiations" appears in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Issue 171 (Spring 2014) published by the Institute for Palestine Studies and University of California Press.

Full text of the article is available upon request. Contact Paige Brownlow at 202-342-3990 ext. 13 or paigeb@palestine-studies.org to obtain a copy or to schedule an interview with any of the authors.

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