

One state or two?

By [David Heim](#)

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A two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine crisis has been growing more and more distant. Prospects suffered yet another blow last week when a government commission in Israel [recommended](#) that all Israeli settlements in the West Bank be declared legal.

The stance, if adopted by the Israeli government, would mean that Israel is entitling itself to create settlements wherever it wants in the occupied territory. According to the commission, led by retired Supreme Court jurist Edmund Levy, Israel is not technically occupying the land.

The left-leaning lobby group J Street [called the proposed policy](#) “disastrous” for Israel. Perhaps more significant, a group of moderate-to-conservative U.S. Jews—including Thomas Dine, a former executive director of the lobby AIPAC, and E. Robert Goodkind, a former president of the American Jewish Committee—[warned](#) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that adopting the panel’s findings would “place the two-state solution, and the prestige of Israel as a democratic member of the international community, in peril.”

The letter of warning was organized by the Israel Policy Forum, a moderate group (located somewhere on the political spectrum between J Street and AIPAC) that has been dormant for the past several years. (AIPAC has been silent on the Levy panel’s statement.)

Meanwhile, the *Washington Post* ran [an extensive piece](#) by Scott Wilson on why President Obama’s efforts to revive peace talks in the Mideast have foundered. The *Post* argues that early on, Obama lost Israelis’ trust because he did not correctly read their level of anxiety—exemplified by the fact that he didn’t follow up his landmark speech in Cairo, where he made an opening gesture toward the Muslim world, with a visit to Israel.