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Track Two Diplomacy and Regional Security in the Middle East



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Source: [International Negotiation](#), Volume 6, Issue 1, pages 49 – 77

Publication Year : 2001

DOI: [10.1163/15718060120848955](#)

ISSN: 1382-340X **E-ISSN:** 1571-8069

Subjects: [International Relations](#)

Keywords: [track two diplomacy](#); [regional security negotiations](#);

[Middle East](#); [arms control negotiations](#)



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Over the past decade former, and sometimes current, adversaries in the Middle East increasingly have been engaged in regional security dialogues, a form of track two diplomacy. Despite the proliferation of such dialogues, we know very little. This article reviews the nature and content of a variety of track two security dialogues among Arabs and Israelis and evaluates their effectiveness. What have such dialogues accomplished to date, and what are their limitations? By what standards should we measure their success? Can such dialogues be improved in the Middle East and other conflictual regions? The article suggests that those who are responsible for major policy shifts in track one (the official negotiating process) will be disappointed and perceive such dialogues as ineffective. We evaluate track two based on what the process itself produces, both in terms of changing regional perceptions among

regional security policy in an incremental fashion, we are more likely to see its value. In this sense, the research su
students of negotiation who suggest that outcomes are not always the sole objective or the appropriate measure o
negotiations; the negotiation process itself also has value. Despite problems and limitations, track two diplomacy h
mechanism in building regional understanding and knowledge in the arms control and regional security realm. Su
applied to other issues and regions during the lengthy process of building peace among adversaries.

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