



News, Research and Events

September 11, 2020



## America in the world: A history of U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy

In a recent webinar moderated by Baker Institute Director [Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian](#), [Ambassador Robert Zoellick](#) provided a glimpse into his new book "[America in the World: A History of U.S. Diplomacy and Foreign Policy](#)." Zoellick served for eight years under Secretary James A. Baker, III, at the Departments of State and the Treasury, as well as the White House. He later became president of the World Bank, U.S. trade representative and deputy secretary of state. Having had such a varied career in political service, Zoellick explained that his intention was to write a book that highlights the practical craft of diplomacy. From Alexander Hamilton to Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan, Zoellick's book examines the successes of historical negotiators and diplomats. It also explores some of the core traditions of diplomacy, including the importance of building strong, international alliances and of having congressional and public support when serving as a diplomat.

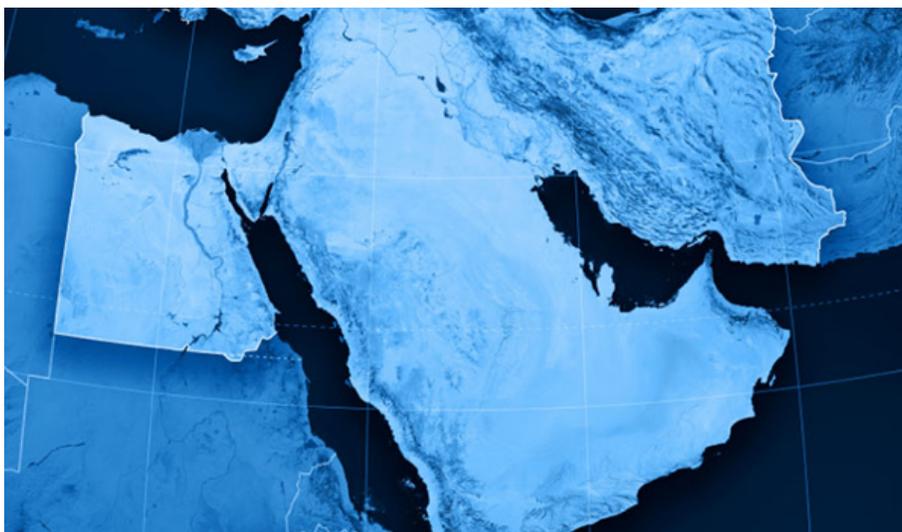
Zoellick also answered questions from viewers about how to build stronger relationships with Canada and Mexico, how to address the rise of China as a geopolitical competitor and what he believes is the greatest challenge for American diplomacy in the coming years. Throughout the webinar, Zoellick emphasized the importance of working cooperatively with other nations. "If 'America first' becomes 'America alone,' we're not going to be as effective a country," he said. To watch the full webinar and for a link to purchase Zoellick's book, please visit the [event page](#).

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***“There will be new challenges to mitigate the risks of voting fraud, but those challenges are secondary to the primary importance of voting itself.”***

Dan Wallach, Baker Institute Rice Faculty Scholar,  
in a blog for [Medium](#)

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## **The Gulf states and the Middle East peace process**

Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will sign their historic agreement normalizing relations at a White House ceremony on September 15. What does the deal mean for the Middle East peace process and the Gulf states in particular? In a recent Baker Institute brief, [Kristian Coates Ulrichsen](#), fellow for the Middle East, examined how the positions of the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — toward the Israeli-Palestinian issue have evolved in recent years, and analyzed how the Gulf states have reacted to the announcements first of President Trump’s peace plan in January 2020 and subsequently to the August 13 UAE-Israel normalization deal.

According to Ulrichsen, with the partial exception of Kuwait, the position of the Gulf states toward Israel has shifted from varying degrees of outright hostility through the 1970s and 1980s to one of pragmatic and increasingly open accommodation since the 1990s. Today, most of the GCC nations have some degree of engagement with Israel. Oman and Qatar have prioritized low-level trade and pragmatic diplomacy with Israel, while Bahrain’s leaders have openly called for a paradigm shift in the region’s relationship with Israel. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have also drawn closer to Israel in regional geopolitics and security, and the UAE and Israel announced plans to work together on Covid-19 research prior to their normalization of ties.

Although the Gulf states openly rejected Trump’s “Peace to Prosperity” plan, unveiled in January 2020 without any Palestinian representatives present, there is demonstrably a greater willingness in (most) Gulf capitals to work with Israel, Palestinian leadership and the United States to support a breakthrough in the peace process, writes Ulrichsen. However, key issues remain unresolved for any serious push for a meaningful peace settlement, whether in a second Trump term or a Joe Biden presidency. To learn more about the relationship between the Gulf states and Israel and the prospects for a peace settlement, read the full [issue brief](#).

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## Upcoming Events

### Webinar — **The future of U.S.- Mexico relations: Politics and diplomacy.**

This webinar, based on the recently published volume “The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: Strategic Foresight,” describes how the political and diplomatic layers of the U.S.-Mexico relationship are likely to unfold over the next two decades.

**September 14 | 1:30 pm**

**Webinar — The age of addiction: How bad habits became big business.** Author **David Courtwright** discusses his most recent book, which chronicles the triumph of what he calls “limbic capitalism” — the growing network of competitive businesses targeting the brain pathways responsible for feeling, motivation and long-term memory. **September 15 | 3:00 pm**

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