The Magazine

# Advice to Trump's Middle East Envoy: Don't Stop with Netanyahu and Abbas

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This week marks the Trump administration's first foray into on-the-ground Middle East peace diplomacy. Jason Greenblatt, who carries the title of assistant to the president and special representative for international negotiations, arrives today in Israel and begins what promises to be a journey filled with hopes, challenges, achievements, and frustrations.

I know this beat well. While serving in the Obama administration, I accompanied or hosted Secretaries John Kerry and Hillary Clinton, and Special Envoys George Mitchell and Martin Indyk, on dozens of such visits.

They tend to follow a particular rhythm: as soon as the secretary or envoy lands, he or she goes straight into the familiar diplomatic exchanges — meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his top advisers in Jerusalem; then travels to Ramallah for talks with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and his team. Middle Eastern hospitality often requires that a meal be included. The hosts lay out their grievances, version of history, and desires for the next phase of diplomacy. Candidly, that means each side tries to get the United States to adopt its positions and impose them on the other side. These meetings, which often require shuttling back and forth, can become even lengthier and more technical as documents are drafted, language is haggled over, and stakes rise. And that's before our envoys add visits to Arab capitals, coordination with Quartet partners (the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations), and hosting visits to Washington.

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https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/13/jason-greenblatt-trump-envoy-israel-palestine/