



Gratz Insider, May 2017 - Story Continuation

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## **Middle East Expert David Makovsky Will Share His Insight at Gratz Gala**

Coming just before President Trump's first official visit to the Middle East, Makovsky's speech at the gala will be particularly timely. In his remarks, he will cover three main topics: U.S.-Israel relations, U.S. relations with the Mideast as a whole and Israel's relations with its Sunni Arab neighbors.

Surprisingly, good news comes in the context of the Israeli-Sunni Arab relationship. Makovsky will describe "a convergence of interests" between Israel and some of the Arab states, resulting in the development of some unexpected - and largely under the radar - new relationships. According to Makovsky, Prime Minister Netanyahu has even gone as far as to reference "our Arab allies."

This encouraging new development is in part a function of the Iran nuclear deal, which is likely to strengthen Iran's influence in the region. The threat of an emboldened Iran is a common cause for concern that serves to unite Israel and the Sunni Arab countries. Makovsky will discuss this phenomenon in more detail, as well as the potential opportunities that could arise from a changing Middle East.

At The Washington Institute, the largest research institute focusing solely on the Middle East, Makovsky is director of the [Project on the Middle East Peace Process](#). Given his expertise in this area, he served as a senior advisor on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that took place in 2013-2014 under Secretary of State John Kerry. Makovsky is also a longtime adjunct professor in Middle East studies at Johns Hopkins University's prestigious graduate school the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.

From 1989 to 2000, Makovsky worked as a journalist covering the Middle East peace process. During this time period, he served as executive editor of The Jerusalem Post, diplomatic correspondent for Haaretz and special Jerusalem correspondent for U.S. News and World Report. In 1994, he became the first journalist writing for an Israeli publication to visit Syria.

Makovsky's writings on the Arab-Israeli conflict appear in major news publications. His articles both on the conflict and on other Middle East issues are available on the [The Washington Institute's website](#).

We selected Makovsky as the gala speaker because he is a recognized authority in an area of interest to the Gratz community. However, we later discovered a warm and wonderful coincidence connecting Makovsky to Gratz in a way that makes his appearance at our gala that much more meaningful. It turns out that his wife's family has enjoyed a close relationship for many years with the family of Gratz professor Dr. Saul Wachs, who will be celebrated at the gala with a tribute in honor of his retirement. So, for the distinguished speaker and the beloved professor, who will share the stage at the gala, it is quite a small world indeed.

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*For more information on the Gratz Jeffrey B. Plevan Annual Gala or to register for this event, click [here](#). You can also contact our event coordinator, Mindy Cohen, at [mcohen@gratz.edu](mailto:mcohen@gratz.edu) or at 215-635-7300, ex. 155.*