General Idea:

   Main problem in Israel is the conflict between Israelis and Arabs, both because
     20% of Israelis are unfairly treated and it affects the very nature of the
     state

   Three important events regarding Is/Arab relations:
     1991: Van Lear Institute in Jerusalem
     1999-2001: Israel Democracy institute
       Produced a document on the subject
     Second Intifada marks a major deterioration between parties
   Today there are no dialogue groups between Israelis and Israeli Arabs
     Atmosphere and current thinking is in Israel that agreement is impossible

   Four reasons why such a process is worth embarking on:
     Situation is new and time has passed
     The fact that this process is being done outside of Israel altogether may
       lead to greater potential for agreement
     Inclusion of non-Israelis could impact the agreement
     Previously all meetings have been very intellectual and academic, this
       would be a mediation process

Structure:

   Meeting of entire group for 3 days and one afternoon
   Remote location
   Write a draft proposal
   Meet 7 months later to discuss document again, and see if a third meeting is
     necessary
   Initial meeting today is to decide agenda, time frame, participants and lay down a
     time line for the year
   Late May has been suggested as a possible date for the workshop
   Additional short meetings of the Core Group will be necessary before the
     Workshop (meetings present a difficulty since facilitators and other
      members of the Core Group are travelling extensively this
      semester)
   3 Groups of People
   Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs, and Americans

   Who should be in the group in the future? Bigger group or smaller group?

What is the aim/finished product? Are we looking for a written paper/proposal? Would
this be a unanimous group consensus? Who would be the author? Is there room for
dissenting views? Who is the audience (should it spark debate in Israel)? Is this for Israeli
or other audiences? How representative should the group be (for an authoritative
statement the makeup of the group may have to be altered)?

Would statement be one of principles and ideas or would this be tactile ideas that would/could be implemented?

Even with limited participation, an agreement or consensus statement will demonstrate the possibility for talks and general agreement.

Lower expectations: let us focus on creating new ideas, but a document is not completely necessary. Involving less involved, less experienced parties may be very helpful. We can take ideas and then see how feasible they are and make suggestions. We should focus on the creation of new ideas and possibilities. New initiatives are there, but are generally only groups of one side.

Past groups:
>While groups have reached real agreement, including written agreements and good publicity, they have had little impact.
>There have been agreements on great numbers of agreements, but there have been problems of semantics.
>There are many agreements in past processes, but agreements on final status should not be forced through.
>**Having a document that demonstrates agreement, but also allows for dissent and differing opinions is probably the best option**
>A large part of the problem rests on the confused and uncertain identity of Israelis and Palestinians
>**Aim should be to create a document that states what we agree on and what we agree to disagree on**
>**Most groups have been meetings created by Jews with Arabs invited, except for last group in Cyprus**
>Israel Studies for Jerusalem Studies (Jewish group): Have completed an agreement and are currently polishing the final draft
>Three year project on comprehensive reform of Jewish state in many areas, gov't community Jewish-Arab relations etc. (10 areas) to come up with a plan to modify Israeli ideas
>Four day meeting in Cyprus- 15 Arabs, 15 Jews, all Arabs were signatories to the "new vision" documents, most Jews were not in the field of Arab-Jewish relations (reversal of usual relationship/structure)
>>Group almost came apart because of divisions, but overcame this
>>There is agreement on some areas "civic/public domain" "public space" is primary focus of group, how to reform 'public space' so that it will encourage discussion
>>Includes discussion of the nature of the Israeli state
>Arab Groups:
>>Future vision initiative is one of the main projects (60 Arabs) - sparked ~500 articles in response
>>Haifa declaration, contains similar ideas to future vision

Draft for a future democratic constitution of Israel, based on norms of liberal democracy

Legal status of Israeli Arabs

Difficulty with all these initiatives lies with implementation of ideas

Future vision group have written a policy paper demonstrating how implementation would work

Based on the idea that we will discuss daily practical issues, rather than over-arching ideological problems

Israel Democracy Group has created another initiative, that will discuss the Jewish State within the context of Israel-Arab relations

Many of these groups have included participants from a wide spectrum of opinions, political ideology, and religion (though right wing is generally not terribly interested)

Generally Islamists are excluded from joint meetings, though some have been included on occasion and these few have generally been positive

What are the gaps in these recent initiatives?

Issue of extent of efficacy of initiatives (methodology, who participated, was there any implementation, who was represented)

What do you do once you have some agreement? (consensus document, general ideas, agreements and disagreements, exploration of ideas)

What is the capacity for groups to reach out to real people- massive gaps between academic elites and the public (what impact do these projects have, how do they affect the Arab in the street, the Jew in the street)

Lack of international outreach (organisations, influences, can we influence American public opinion of policy/diaspora groups)

Can we be effective no matter what we do? While an agreement on ideas may be possible, are there any practical solutions that can be reached without a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Do we assume two states/peace? Or are we working within the current framework?

How do we address the gaps between elites and public? What can we envision in practical terms?

What can we do given the power differences?

Jewish majority is extremely unlikely to give up Jewish nature of the state, irrespective of the Arab minority

What are potential solutions, since this is likely to be highly problematic issue in Is-Arab relations

Debate in Washington can be problematic, since Washington has agreed to the establishment of a Israel as a Jewish state – terminology we use may have to be carefully constructed

We should decide what specific aspect of the issue that we want to Address

Should we be a study group that gives ideas to elites from both sides of the conflict, to try to help them reach some consensus

It is extremely important to work with elites since they are generally setting policy

New ideas and analysis for elites to consider would be extremely useful

Need some fundamental agreements on principles in order for group to be worthwhile

1) **Solution for the Palestinian-Israeli problem should be a two-state solution (this is a principle, but not a precondition – we recognise that the issue of Israeli Arabs must be discussed whether a two state solution appears imminent or not and irrespective of progress towards the two state solution)**

2) **Jews in Israel are a people and a nation with the right to self determination (the manifestation of this right is subject to debate and interpretation)**

3) **There is a Palestinian people, and the Palestinian people have the right to self determination (Arabs in Israel are a national minority that are part of this nation of Palestinian people)**

4) **Democratic procedures (in the true sense of democracy) must be followed in any attempt for change in Israel – both the minority and majority must be committed to democracy and treated the same (no violence, no authoritarian movements, no militias)**

5) **Recognise inherent contradictions of Israeli democracy**

Methodology

Role in situation: we should become advocates of the process, while still maintaining out individual principles

Basic principles must be consented to in consensus

Find an "extra mile" for facilitation/expand the pie

Process is aided by the fact that facilitators have good deal of knowledge and involvement, rather than complete 3rd party

Document would have a number of issues that have consensus and also include the issues that did not have consensus but still merit discussion

The agreed upon issues should be based on new ideas- creation of paradigm shift on conflict

We can no longer wait for the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to talk about differences

Examples of paradigm shift:

Creation of a Palestinian *Arab* state, in relation to the Israeli *Jewish* state, which lends itself to equality

US-Cuba track two relations finding agreement on normalisation and separating issue into smaller segments for agreement

Get consensus on easier issues, while still tackling the difficult problems

Use of track two as an aid to track one (Peru/Ecuador, Lesotho)

ARIA method

    Adversarial, including reverse role play

    Focus on needs, rather than positions (active listening)

    Get participants to move beyond advocating a position to creating solutions

    Create a re-entry action agreement so that we can implement agreement

Facilitators will help organise the meetings, and begin discussion

    Also want to help train participants in conflict transformation techniques

Organising the meetings in US has two-fold purpose:

    Distance from conflict

    Can involve diaspora groups or those wish shared American-Arab and American Israeli identity

Agreements should be released as they happen, not wait for a final document

Facilitators will act as drivers, but drivers to where the participants want to go

Will include emotional attachment to issue, rather than ignore this aspect that often is pushed to the side in meetings

Facilitators are not participants, will not arbitrate

    Having facilitators who have a personal connection and knowledge of the conflict is both a blessing and a curse

Process is flexible, can be expanded as participants wish

ARIA lends itself well to action and re-entry

BUT participants must buy into the process

Do we need a unified foundation for a starting point?

Does a group like this need a facilitated process?

    This group will probably be a founding group that sets parameters for a larger group that will be facilitated

Having both ideas and goals at the same time are very important since both can lead to greater progress

We should recognise that there are inherent contradictions with Israeli democracy, and there are many different parties that are paying for this contradiction

At some point a mechanism must be created to rectify these inherent inequalities

Israelis are generally unaware of this inherent contradiction and hotly deny this. This group must therefore acknowledge this contradiction, particularly since the left and mainstream Israeli people do not (fallacy of misplaced concreteness)

    There is a major difference between acceptance and embrace – we accept Iran as the Islamic republic and Egypt as an Arab state, but still expect them to allow equality and treat others equally

We want to explore a way to move both sides from the trap that an

acknowledgement of the other side requires a loss of identity on their own side

Principled intellectual agreements and conclusions will be very different than a lower level, more pragmatic approach

Participants
Core group- people with institutional affiliation (what problems may arise from including other institutions as 'partners')
U of MD, American University, and USIP are the proposed/prospective partners/sponsors
What kind of legitimacy (esp. in the Arab world) will we have if we have no Arab/Palestinian/Muslim partner?
Put the emphasis on the actual people participating, not on the institutions they come from (and may not be representative of)
Keep the sponsors more private and general, represent the final document under our names, (the Maryland Process) and so avoid institutional tie-ins or controversial group names
How wide do we want the political spectrum to be?
Advantageous to be as wide and as diverse as possible, but the individuals themselves must be open minded and tolerant
Should the group include third parties as full partners? Should it include diaspora groups?
Sign as blocks- the Jewish Israelis, the Arab/Palestinian Israelis, and the Americans (which includes both Jewish and Arab Americans)
Cannot take funds from governments (grants from USIP do not count as government money)
Helps greatly to have the International Institute at AU as a partner, rather than solely having Guildenhorn as the sponsor
USIP would be an extremely valuable partner as well