

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 15, 2009 10:20 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: Ross story

**Importance:** High

FYI

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Sent:** Monday, June 15, 2009 10:20 AM  
**To:** 'McDonough, Denis R.'; Donilon, Thomas E.  
**Subject:** FW: Ross story - Umm Hello  
**Importance:** High

Denis/Tom:

Can we discuss how we are going to handle the roll-out of this story?

It appears you all may already have a strategy but I want to ensure we have effective coordination and we just go the inquiry below with the follow-on article attached.

cdm

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Crowley, Philip J  
**Sent:** Monday, June 15, 2009 10:14 AM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Subject:** FW: Ross story  
**Importance:** High

PJ

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Wood, Robert A (PACE) [mailto:WoodRA@state.gov]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 15, 2009 10:13 AM  
**To:** Ross, Dennis B; Crowley, Philip J; Kelly, Ian C  
**Subject:** Ross story

Dennis,

How do you want us to handle this Haaretz piece? AP is inquiring.

Last update - 12:10 15/06/2009

Why is Dennis Ross being ousted as Obama envoy to Iran?

By Barak Ravid, Haaretz Correspondent

Tags: Israel News, Dennis Ross

Dennis Ross, who most recently served as a special State Department envoy to Iran, will abruptly be relieved of his duties, sources in Washington told Haaretz. An official announcement is expected in the coming days.

The Obama administration will announce that Ross has been reassigned to another position in the White House. In his new post, the former Mideast peace envoy under President Bill Clinton will deal primarily with regional issues related to the peace process.

Washington insiders speculate that a number of reasons moved the administration to reassign Ross. One possibility is Iran's persistent refusal to accept Ross as a U.S. emissary given the diplomat's Jewish background as well as his purported pro-Israel leanings. Ross is known to maintain contacts with numerous senior officials in Israel's defense establishment and the Israeli government.

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Diplomatic sources in Jerusalem surmised that another possibility for Ross' ouster is his just-released book, "Myths, Illusions, and Peace - Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East."

Ross, who co-wrote the book with David Makovsky, a former journalist who is a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, argued against a linkage between the Palestinian issue and the West's policy against Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Ross and Makovsky also raised the possibility of military action against Iran.

"Tougher policies - either militarily or meaningful containment - will be easier to sell internationally and domestically if we have diplomatically tried to resolve our differences with Iran in a serious and credible fashion," they wrote.

Another possible reason for the reshuffle could be Ross' dissatisfaction with his present standing in the State Department, particularly given the fact that Washington's two other envoys to the region - George Mitchell, who is overseeing the Mideast peace process; and Richard Holbrooke, who is dealing with Pakistan and Afghanistan - wield great influence and are featured prominently.

A diplomatic source in Jerusalem speculated that perhaps Ross preferred to work for the National Security Agency, which answers directly to President Barack Obama, and would thus be considered a more enhanced role.

Last year, Ross was an advisor to Obama's successful presidential campaign. Before Obama's inauguration, speculation was rampant as to which job Ross would assume in the new administration.

On February 24, 2009, he was officially appointed as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's advisor on the Persian Gulf and special envoy to Iran.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1093058.html>

