

Tamara Cofman Wittes

Tamara Cofman Wittes is a senior fellow and the director of the [Center for Middle East Policy](#) at Brookings. Wittes served as deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs from November of 2009 to January 2012, coordinating U.S. policy on democracy and human rights in the Middle East for the State Department. Wittes also oversaw the Middle East Partnership Initiative and served as deputy special coordinator for Middle East transitions. She was central to organizing the U.S. government's initial response to the 2011 Arab Awakening.

Before joining the State Department, Wittes was a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, where she directed the Middle East Democracy and Development (MEDD) Project. In that capacity, Wittes conducted research into political and economic reform in the Middle East region as well as U.S. efforts to promote democracy there. Wittes previously served as Middle East specialist at the U.S. Institute of Peace and director of programs at the Middle East Institute in Washington. She has also taught courses in international relations and security studies at Georgetown University. Wittes was one of the first recipients of the Rabin-Peres Peace Award, established by President Bill Clinton in 1997.

Wittes is the author of *Freedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy* (Brookings Press, 2008) and the editor of *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process* (USIP, 2005). She holds a B.A. in Judaic and Near Eastern studies from Oberlin College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in government from Georgetown University. She serves on the board of the National Democratic Institute, and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and Women in International Security.

Affiliations:

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