

United States Iran Policy and the Role of Israel, 1990-1993

Henry Rome

To cite this article: Henry Rome (2019) United States Iran Policy and the Role of Israel, 1990-1993, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 30:4, 729-754, DOI: [10.1080/09592296.2019.1670999](https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2019.1670999)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2019.1670999>



Published online: 10 Jan 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



United States Iran Policy and the Role of Israel, 1990-1993

Henry Rome 

Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

ABSTRACT

In 1993, the Clinton Administration announced that containing the 'hostile' and 'dangerous' government of Iran would be a key tenet of its Middle East policy. To some scholars, the Administration's decision reflected the influence of Israel and its supporters in Washington over American foreign policy. However, this conventional wisdom is misguided. Bill Clinton inherited and endorsed the Iran policy of his predecessor, George H.W. Bush, who concluded that Iran's support for terrorism and pursuit of nuclear technology warranted a strong response. Bush decided on this approach when Israel was distracted and unconcerned about Iran. In fact, Israeli leaders only began drawing attention to the risks posed by Iran after America changed its policy.

Over the past decade, scholars have closely scrutinised the role of foreign governments and domestic interest groups in shaping United States Middle Eastern policy. Most controversially, John J. Mearsheimer, Stephen M. Walt, Trita Parsi, and others argue that Israel and its supporters in Washington play an outsized role in driving American policy. This analysis is a historical assessment of one such claim: that Israel and like-minded lobby groups drove the Clinton Administration's 1993 policy towards Iran. In addition to testing this argument, it fills a gap in the literature concerning the American and Israeli approaches towards Iran in the early 1990s.

On 18 May 1993, less than four months after taking office, the Clinton Administration articulated a new Middle East policy, 'Dual Containment': the United States would contain both Iraq and Iran whilst advancing the Arab-Israeli peace process begun at Madrid in late 1991. To some observers, Dual Containment represented a significant change in American policy towards Iran and Iraq. Instead of continuing the decades-long strategy of balancing the states against each other, Clinton's Administration decided to confront Iran and Iraq simultaneously. In this shift, Mearsheimer, Walt, and Parsi see the hand of Israel and its American supporters. The origin of Dual Containment plays a small but pivotal role in Mearsheimer and Walt's *The Israel Lobby* and Parsi's *Treacherous Alliance*, exemplifying arguments that Israel and its allies exercise undue

influence over American foreign policy.¹ This narrative has largely gone unchallenged.

Yet, the historical record does not support this conclusion. Understanding Clinton's Iran policy begins with his predecessor, George H.W. Bush. During Bush's Administration, Washington seriously considered forging a new relationship with Tehran based on trust built following the release of hostages in Lebanon and Iran's help during the 1991 Gulf War. But Iran's acquisition of sensitive nuclear technology and its alleged support for assassinations and a bombing caused the Administration to reverse course. Instead of pursuing rapprochement, Bush's Administration developed a new Iranian strategy – one that Clinton's Administration inherited and endorsed with Dual Containment.

During the Bush Administration's evolution of views towards Iran, Israel's voice was conspicuously absent. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir (1983–1984; 1986–1992) focused on supporting an influx of refugees from the former Soviet Union and obstructing peace talks with Israel's Arab neighbours and the Palestinians – two issues over which he clashed repeatedly with Washington. By comparison, Iran had a low priority. Some Israeli officials were concerned with Iran's activities in Israel's region, including close ties with the Lebanese group Hezbollah and a burgeoning relationship with Hamas.² But Shamir's government viewed these threats as both local and manageable, not part of a region-wide confrontation with Tehran. Israel's allies and supporters in Washington, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee [AIPAC], followed the Israeli government's lead. Public outreach and lobbying during the Bush years focused primarily on securing loan guarantees for Israel. In contrast, Shamir's successor, Yitzhak Rabin (1974–1977; 1992–1995), adamantly believed that Iran posed a wide-ranging threat to Israel and should be confronted directly, not through regional allies and proxies. Still, by the time Rabin started raising alarm about Iran, the Bush Administration had decided to isolate and contain Tehran. Rabin's strident opposition to Iranian behaviour appears less an effort to lobby Washington than align with it.

In this context, it is important to define the positions of Israel and the 'pro-Israel lobby', being careful not to conflate government policies with an often-ill-defined collection of political organisations and activists in the United States. Thus, the term 'Israel lobby' needs avoiding: it inaccurately implies that the advocates lobby *on behalf of* Israel's government. Instead, the term 'pro-Israel lobby' describes organisations that 'seek to influence United States government policy toward Israel in a direction that they believe is in Israel's interests'.³ AIPAC, the most influential pro-Israel organisation, receives the brunt of scrutiny from Mearsheimer, Walt, and Parsi. Working to 'facilitate, maintain, and improve relations between the United States and Israel' on behalf of 'Israel's supporters in the United States',⁴ AIPAC does not receive funding from Israel nor lobby on its behalf.⁵ Indeed, relations between Israel and AIPAC fluctuate depending on the party in power in Israel. Likud's Shamir had a very close

working relationship with AIPAC and, during the 1991 loan guarantees controversy, worked hand-in-glove with the group to try to override Bush's policy.⁶ Yet, AIPAC had a poor relationship with Labour's Rabin, who blamed AIPAC for the damaging and unsuccessful fight over those guarantees. He subsequently worked to weaken its influence in Washington.⁷ In addition, there are the views of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations [Presidents Conference]; not a lobbying group, it plays an influential role in channelling and representing the views of the American pro-Israel community.⁸ Under the Bush Administration, tension would grow between these groups and the White House over its approach towards Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict – but not Iran.

When Bush took office in January 1989, the Middle East was low on the Administration's policy agenda. Bush's foreign policy advisors were preoccupied with the deterioration of the Soviet Union, the prospect of German reunification, and political turmoil in China – challenges dwarfing the Middle East in scope and consequence.⁹ Moreover, Bush had a compelling political reason to keep Iran at arm's length: persistent questions about his role in the Iran-Contra affair whilst serving as vice-president (1981–1989). He consistently denied any involvement in the affair, but the topic dogged him throughout the campaign and his presidency.¹⁰ Finally, Iran demanded little attention from Washington policymakers. It was emerging from a devastating eight-year war with Iraq that severely stunted its economy and crippled its military. Tehran's nuclear programme was nascent and its regional influence limited. Iran was not routinely threatening Israel's existence; in fact, Israel was one of Iran's only supporters during the Iran-Iraq war.¹¹ Instead, for Bush's Administration, the main point of contention with Iran in 1989 was securing the release of American citizens kidnapped in Lebanon. Washington was uncertain of the extent of Iran's affiliation with the kidnappers, many of whom were connected with Hezbollah or operating under its aliases. It reckoned nevertheless that Iran held the most influence over the Lebanese groups.¹² Aside from hostages, the Administration was concerned with Iran's alleged support for terrorism, but the hostage issue received top billing – in Bush's words, the '*sine qua non*' to improved relations with Iran.¹³

Bush raised the hostage issue on his first day in office. In his inaugural address, he said that Americans were 'held against their will in foreign lands' and that 'assistance can be shown here and will be long remembered'. In a message aimed at Iran's government, he said, 'goodwill begets goodwill'.¹⁴ Bush re-enforced his public message with a classified policy directive instructing his government to 'be prepared for a normal relationship with Iran' provided it facilitated the release of the hostages and ended support for terrorism.¹⁵ Bush subsequently authorised direct and indirect negotiations with Iran.¹⁶

Bush's inauguration offer reached Iran at a time of domestic upheaval. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the revolution's leader, had died; a new supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, ascended to power; Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani,

a pragmatist, became president; and the country demobilised after war. Retrenchment was the order of the day. Still, Iranian views of America had hardly softened. Washington supported Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war and destroyed much of Iran's navy in clashes in the Persian Gulf. Only six months earlier, an American warship accidentally shot down Iran Air Flight 655, killing 290 civilians.

Still, Rafsanjani took a risk and accepted, if only implicitly, Bush's offer by personally intervening on behalf of some of the hostages.¹⁷ Robert Polhill, held for more than three years, was released in April 1990, the first American freed since 1986;¹⁸ two more followed by August 1991.¹⁹ United Nations [UN] special envoy Giandomenico Picco has argued that Tehran played the primary role in facilitating the releases, given its close relationship with the Lebanese groups holding them.²⁰ The Iranians relied on more than persuasion; according to a journalistic account, citing American officials, they paid Lebanese groups between US\$1-US\$2 million for the release of each hostage.²¹ Bush publicly thanked Iran for its role in securing the release of these hostages, but with several Americans still in custody, no goodwill emanated from the United States.

Iraq's surprise invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 changed the Iranian-American dynamic. The Administration broadened its demands on Tehran beyond releasing the hostages: Bush requested that Iran remain neutral and enforce UN sanctions against Baghdad. Sultan Qaboos of Oman, the ever-present interlocutor with Iran, told Bush that the Iranians were willing to accept these demands provided its military received unspecified 'parts and equipment'.²² In a separate conversation, the Omani foreign minister said Rafsanjani 'had nothing to ask from the United States except that you look at Iranian affairs differently now'; Rafsanjani also expressed willingness to 'pay cash' for US\$1 billion-worth of spare parts.²³ Bush told the Omani foreign minister: 'Someday we will have improved relations [with Iran] Given the changes in their belligerent status, maybe there is an opening'.²⁴

By weighing somewhat warmer ties with Iran whilst containing Iraq, the White House was falling back on traditional American policy in the Gulf. For two decades, Washington threw support behind Iran or Iraq to balance one against the other. In the 1970s, presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter strongly backed Iran as the supposed 'island of stability' in the Middle East.²⁵ The foundation of the Iranian-American relationship found basis on countering Soviet encroachment in the region. One manifestation of this co-operation was a joint United States-Iran-Israel effort to keep Soviet-backed Iraq off balance by providing military support to Iraqi Kurds in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Following the Iranian revolution, Washington switched sides and backed Baghdad with intelligence and weaponry in the Iran-Iraq war.²⁶ The Bush Administration continued assisting Iraq after the disastrous conflict ended, overlooking Baghdad's abuse of American aid and

its aggressive regional posture.²⁷ Now, as the United States contemplated war against Iraq, would it tilt back towards Iran?

In late September 1990, the National Security Council [NSC] convened to discuss ways to press a potential opening with Iran. Overlooked in scholarly analysis of this period, this policy assessment demonstrated the lengths of Washington's willingness to ensure Iranian co-operation against Iraq.²⁸ Although considering these measures in terms of the Gulf crisis, Bush told Qaboos that the United States had two goals: '[F]irst, we want Iran to keep the pressure on [Iraq]; and second, in the long run, we want better relations with Iran'.²⁹ The NSC recommended several measures: lifting the ban on imported Iranian oil; supporting international lending to Tehran; and permitting the transfer of sensitive commercial technology related to civil aviation. The Administration ultimately chose to lift the oil restrictions, a decision considered a 'strong inducement to Iran'.³⁰ The Administration also publicly supported Iran's application for a US\$250 million World Bank loan, Iran's first request for aid since the 1979 revolution.³¹ The NSC debated whether to provide additional incentives but decided against supporting a Japanese loan or licencing civil aviation technology; the latter proposal was apparently rejected due to suspicions that Iran was involved in the 1988 Libyan-bombing of Pan-Am Flight 103.³²

As the mission against Iraq shifted from sanctions enforcement to war in early 1991, Iran continued supporting American objectives. When Baghdad despatched 122 combat planes to Iran for shelter against American-led coalition attacks, Iran assuaged American concerns by promptly impounding them.³³ Tehran agreed to ignore coalition warplanes that accidentally strayed into Iranian airspace and committed to help rescue any pilots who crashed in its territory. There is also evidence that using Iranian airspace was not accidental. Dick Cheney, Bush's secretary of defence, later said the Americans routed cruise missiles through Iran *en route* to targets in Iraq.³⁴ The war also facilitated an unprecedented level of dialogue, with Washington and Tehran communicating through intermediaries as frequently as three times per week, including sensitive military deployment information.³⁵ Despite this assistance, the United States remained sceptical of Iranian intentions. Bush decided not to 'go to Baghdad' in the Gulf War and overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime partly for fear that Iran would take advantage of the power vacuum and extend its influence in Iraq.³⁶ Bush was also hesitant to upgrade relations further at that moment because Washington's core concern – the hostages – had yet to be resolved.

Washington's direct outreach to Tehran, and the halting co-operation that followed, did not raise alarm bells in Israel. From Bush's inauguration until mid-1992, Israeli-American relations involved three issues: Would Israel negotiate with the Palestinians? Would Israel retaliate against Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War? Under what circumstances would Israel receive loan guarantees? The debates amongst the Bush Administration, the Israeli government, and the pro-

Israel lobby on these issues were intense and polarising, damaging to both the bilateral relationship and the pro-Israel lobby's standing in Washington.

From the outset, the personal relationship between Bush and Shamir was poor. Bush considered Shamir untrustworthy and obdurate, whilst Shamir saw Bush as unsympathetic and biased against Israel.³⁷ The White House made little secret that it preferred an Israel led by Shamir's Labour opponents, and Shamir's supporters accused Bush of interfering in Israel's 1992 elections to unseat Shamir. Yet, the growing distance between America and Israel extended beyond personality or even policy differences. Their 'special relationship', forged during the Cold War, was shifting. Over the previous four decades, Israeli-American ties found basis on several factors, including shared political, moral, and religious systems and values; long-standing bonds between Americans and Israelis; and shared strategic interest in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nevertheless, no factor was more important than Israel's role as a counterweight to Soviet expansion in the Middle East.³⁸ This foundation evaporated with the Soviet collapse. The loss of a *Realpolitik* basis for close Israeli-American relations drove spirited debate amongst Israeli leaders and in the pro-Israel community in Washington about how to revive the relationship. This task became especially urgent after the 1991 loan guarantee fiasco.

In September 1991, Shamir requested that Washington guarantee loans of US \$10 billion. For Israel, these guarantees were essential to support the immigration of more than one million Soviet Jews over five years. A state of only 4.6 million people, Israel was ill prepared to absorb the refugees, and a loan guarantee would allow Israel to borrow at lower interest rates.³⁹ However, Bush was concerned that approving the guarantees would undermine Washington's position as a neutral arbiter in the upcoming Madrid peace conference, slated for October-November 1991. Bush asked to postpone the request for four months; Shamir refused. The Israeli prime minister considered the loan guarantees a humanitarian issue divorced from the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁴⁰ Moreover, he thought Bush owed Israel after the Gulf War. Iraq had fired 43 Scud missiles at Israel, striking Tel Aviv and Haifa, and Israeli leaders were committed to retaliating.⁴¹ Bush adamantly opposed a direct Israeli response, fearing it would fracture the wartime coalition. Shamir decried the policy as 'inhuman' but agreed to stand down.⁴² For Shamir, granting the guarantees was the least Bush could do in gratitude.

Following Bush's refusal, Israel turned to AIPAC to secure a veto-proof majority in Congress for legislation providing the guarantees.⁴³ AIPAC and other pro-Israel groups marshalled some 1,200 supporters to Capitol Hill for a 'National Leadership Action Day' to lobby senators and representatives in September 1991,⁴⁴ but the campaign backfired. Bush refused to compromise, publicly rebuking Israel and its supporters: he said he was 'one lonely little guy ... up against some powerful political forces'.⁴⁵ Forced to choose between

Israel and Bush, Congress sided with the president. 'There was a fight,' recalled Dan Meridor, a confidant of Shamir who served as Israeli minister of justice. 'And [Bush] won the fight'.⁴⁶

One issue absent from these acrimonious debates was Iran, rarely discussed amongst Israeli political leaders, let alone brought to Washington's attention. Meridor did not remember the Iranian threat raised in Cabinet discussions 'at all'.⁴⁷ Yehuda Ben Meir, another close Shamir ally, said, 'Iran was a minor issue'.⁴⁸ It did not come up in high-level conversations between the United States and Israel, according to then-Secretary of State James Baker.⁴⁹ Inside the Israeli government, the military and intelligence communities divided. Israel's external intelligence service, Mossad, historically held a hawkish view of Iran. Shabtai Shavit, Mossad director from 1989 to 1996, said that Israeli concern about Iran's intentions and capabilities began in earnest in late 1991.⁵⁰ Ilan Mizrahi, director of Mossad's Intelligence Division, confirmed the timeline.⁵¹ According to Shavit, Mossad obtained information that Iran was developing its Shahab-3 medium-range ballistic missile. With a range of 1,300 kilometres, the missile could target all of Israel. Further, in the 'beginning to mid-90s,' Shavit said Mossad obtained information that Iran was designing a warhead to carry a nuclear weapon. Yet, Israeli Military Intelligence [Aman] disagreed. By 1990, having dismantled its Iran section and reassigned intelligence analysts to focus on other areas,⁵² Aman opposed 'putting financial capabilities into faraway foes' and overruled Mossad's assessment.⁵³ Other military and intelligence officials agreed with Aman. Ehud Barak, chief of the Israel Defence Forces General Staff (1991–1995), recalled, 'It was known that Iran was starting to work, but it was the kind of a serious threat on the far horizon'. Referring to the nuclear programme, he said, 'It was quite embryonic at the time, and it was clear that it would take many years for them to succeed'.⁵⁴ A senior Mossad officer, Uri Ne'eman, and the Ministry of Defence's chief scientist, Uzi Eilam, confirmed Barak's assessment.⁵⁵

Whilst Israeli leaders clashed with their American counterparts, Iranian officials sought methodically to improve ties with Washington. The Gulf War marked a new period of direct Iranian-American communication and co-operation, and Rafsanjani looked to build on this momentum by addressing the hostage issue. Within seven weeks between October and December 1991, the five remaining American hostages in Lebanon were freed and, shortly thereafter, the bodies of two others who died in the custody of or were killed by Lebanese militias returned.⁵⁶ Tehran and Rafsanjani, in particular, played the leading role in resolving the crisis.⁵⁷

The United States immediately began to reciprocate, providing 'goodwill' in exchange for Iran's 'goodwill'. On 28 November 1991, it agreed to pay Iran US\$278 million in compensation for Iranian military materiel impounded in the United States after the 1979 revolution.⁵⁸ The settlement was part of a larger Bush initiative to settle claims that had languished, largely due to

Washington's stalling, at the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal in The Hague. In response to the announcement, one scholar noted, 'it's clear they [the Iranians] see the settlement as a token of American goodwill'.⁵⁹ United States officials strenuously denied any connexion between the claim settlement and hostage release, but Bush told the Omani foreign minister privately that the settlement was 'clearly tied to the hostages'.⁶⁰ The Administration also continued to allow American companies to import Iranian oil, a decision taken in November 1990 to encourage Iranian co-operation with sanctions against Iraq. In 1991, Iran sold US\$230 million of oil to American firms compared to US\$7 million in 1990.⁶¹

Finally, on 9 December 1991, five days after the release of the final United States hostage, UN Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar released a brief report formally blaming Iraq for initiating the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980.⁶² De Cuéllar's conclusion was tied to the fate of the hostages and represented a key piece of UN leverage in the hostage talks supported by the United States.⁶³ 'Iran felt vindicated' by the report, which confirmed a longstanding Iranian claim and opened up the possibility that Iran could seek hundreds of millions of dollars in damages from Baghdad.⁶⁴

Despite these measures, the Administration recognised that Iran expected a more substantial 'goodwill' gesture to move the relationship forward. Starting in December 1991 or January 1992, it evaluated a series of additional measures that would potentially set a new trajectory for Iranian-American relations. According to a Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] official, Bruce Riedel, involved in the review, the central question was 'Should goodwill now beget goodwill?'⁶⁵ The *New York Times* reported that Washington evaluated options such as 'lifting the ban on oil sales to America,' which the United States had already done partially.⁶⁶ Another option included lifting the embargo on American imports of Iranian carpets and pistachios.⁶⁷ A third proposal, according to Riedel, was to reduce financial support for radio stations broadcasting what the Iranians considered 'hostile propaganda' into the country. Yet the policy review ended in April 1992 with a clear conclusion. Not only would Washington not seek to improve ties with Tehran, it would treat Iran as a threat needing containment.⁶⁸ This shift set the course for the Administration's approach towards Iran and motivated Clinton's strategy. Why did Bush's Administration back down from its 'goodwill begets goodwill' promise after Iran's help with the hostages and the Gulf War? And what role did Israel and the pro-Israel lobby play in this decision? The most significant factor in this shift lay with changes in Iran's behaviour, not lobbying by the Israeli government or pro-Israel groups. Whilst conducting its policy review, Washington linked Iran to escalated nuclear and terrorist activity. Taken together, these Iranian actions torpedoed any prospect of American outreach.⁶⁹

United States intelligence directly linked Iran to two violent events during this period. The first was the assassination of former Iranian Prime Minister Shapour

Bakhtiar in August 1991 in Paris. By the end of 1991, French and Swiss investigators accumulated evidence implicating elements of the Iranian regime in the assassination.⁷⁰ Arrest warrants were issued across Europe for Iranian officials including an advisor to an Iranian minister and a diplomat related to Rafsanjani. At a time when Iran was working to release American hostages from Lebanon, Bakhtiar's slaying 'led many in the White House to conclude that the Iranians had merely exchanged hostage taking for assassinations'.⁷¹ Second, less than a month before the policy review concluded, American intelligence linked Iran to a devastating attack on the Israeli Embassy in Argentina. On 17 March 1992, a truck packed with explosives detonated outside of the Embassy, killing 29 civilians – 25 Argentinians and 4 Israelis – and wounding nearly 250.⁷² The Islamic Jihad organisation claimed responsibility. The CIA held Hezbollah responsible for the attack, even though the Lebanese group denied any connexion to the bombing or Islamic Jihad.⁷³ In reality, Islamic Jihad serves as the 'external security organization' of Hezbollah.⁷⁴ The Bush Administration linked Hezbollah to Iran for two reasons. First, it considered Hezbollah an Iranian 'surrogate'; thus, at the least, Tehran would have approved an attack.⁷⁵ Second, Argentinian authorities directly blamed members of the Iranian Embassy in Buenos Aires for aiding the attackers.⁷⁶ Iran denied any involvement.

No evidence exists that either operation intended to influence the policy review. Bakhtiar's killing came amidst an Iranian campaign to eliminate adversaries throughout Europe that spanned the 1980s and 1990s. Islamic Jihad stated that the Embassy bombing was in retaliation for Israel's assassination of Hezbollah's secretary-general, Abbas Musawi, a month earlier.⁷⁷ Still, from the Bush Administration's perspective, the incidents bolstered the view that Iran's foreign policy remained hostile to American interests.

Yet, the bombing and assassination paled in comparison to Washington's alarm over Iran's nuclear advancements. Whilst the policy review proceeded in Washington, Iran engaged in a wide-ranging campaign to acquire sensitive pieces of nuclear technology. This campaign coincided with provocative public statements from Iran and revelations about Iraq's nuclear programme. Ultimately, United States intelligence concluded for the first time that Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons. Whilst acknowledging that most of the nuclear-related equipment had plausible civilian applications, intelligence officials had concern about several specific purchases, as well as the scale of acquisitions in general: Iran secretly obtained 1,800 kilograms of natural uranium from China. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], this acquisition violated Iran's international nuclear safeguards obligations. Iran also bought a calutron and tried to obtain a large research reactor from China;⁷⁸ attempted to purchase a ten-megawatt heavy-water research reactor from India;⁷⁹ sought equipment for fuel fabrication and uranium dioxide conversion from Argentina;⁸⁰ and endeavoured to contract a German firm to reconstruct the

Bushehr power reactor.⁸¹ Washington used diplomatic pressure to halt most of these attempted acquisitions.⁸²

Iran received the greatest nuclear assistance from Russia. The CIA reported in March 1992 that Moscow intended to sell Iran two reactors and establish technical nuclear co-operation. A formal agreement between Moscow and Tehran would occur in August. Moscow was unwilling to acquiesce in American requests to cancel the agreement.⁸³ Reckoning that the Russian project would be 'ill-suited to the production of weapons material,' CIA analysts noted, 'the proposed cooperation could, however, create opportunities for Iran to acquire training and equipment proscribed under the [1968] nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty'.⁸⁴

Some of Iran's attempted acquisitions received special scrutiny given their potential relevance to nuclear weapons development. For example, heavy-water research reactors are efficient at producing weapons-grade plutonium and highly inefficient at producing electricity.⁸⁵ That Iran sought to acquire such a reactor raised further concern because India used a similar one to fuel its own nuclear weapons programme.⁸⁶ Another important element of Iran's attempted acquisitions was their near simultaneous timing. Iran was not moving from seller to seller when it found a transaction blocked; it attempted to acquire very different types of technology from several sources at roughly the same time.

From the American perspective, an additional cause for concern was an interview by Iranian Vice-President Ata'ollah Mohajerani, a Rafsanjani ally, in October 1991. In comments to the *Abrar* newspaper, Mohajerani stated, 'The nuclear capability of the Muslims and of Israel should be equal or neither should have any; otherwise, if Israel has nuclear capabilities, so should the Muslims'.⁸⁷ American officials were publicly uncertain how to interpret the interview. The *New York Times* reported that the comments 'were unsettling to American policymakers who have sought to portray Iran's foreign policy as pragmatic'.⁸⁸ The *Washington Post*, meanwhile, reported that officials said, 'the remarks may represent a significant statement of Iranian intentions'.⁸⁹ For American policy-makers, Iran's nuclear-related acquisitions and statements did not occur in a vacuum. They emerged at a time of shifting attitudes towards nuclear technology and a rising sensitivity about the risks of nuclear proliferation. Two issues weighed on Washington. First, the Soviet Union's dissolution elevated nuclear non-proliferation amongst American foreign policy objectives.⁹⁰ The Soviet demise triggered a slew of new concerns about the spread of nuclear weapons technology ranging from the dismal state of physical security at far-flung former Soviet bases to the career prospects of former weapons scientists lured to defect.⁹¹ Nuclear non-proliferation was suddenly at the top of policy-makers' agenda. By spring 1992, the State Department Policy Planning Staff called the issue 'the central security challenge of the 1990s'.⁹²

Meanwhile, confidence in international nuclear safeguards took a significant hit after the Gulf War, when international inspections revealed that Iraq had established a vast nuclear weapons programme.⁹³ Despite undergoing twice-yearly IAEA inspections, Iraq kept secret a uranium enrichment programme that employed more than 20,000 people, cost more than US\$10 billion, and operated at 25 sites across the country.⁹⁴ Riedel recalled:

The nonproliferation community was quite surprised at the size of the Iraqi nuclear program, once UN inspectors went in, and how close the Iraqis had come. And, I think that that led to an overall, across-the-board global view that we need to up our game because we had almost gotten it terribly wrong in Iraq. We couldn't afford another mistake like that.⁹⁵

Iraq pursued its programme by exploiting poor export controls on 'dual use' technology, equipment with legitimate civilian applications also relevant to weapons production.⁹⁶ The attention to Iraqi 'dual use' technology exacerbated a long-standing concern amongst experts: states can exploit civilian nuclear programmes to develop skills necessary to create a nuclear weapon. Iraq's near accomplishment attuned United States officials more to the risks inherent in obtaining all kinds of nuclear technology.

Iran's nuclear acquisitions, set in the context of concerns about the former Soviet Union and Iraq, culminated in unprecedented Congressional testimony from CIA Director Robert Gates. On 27 March 1992, he observed, 'We judge that Tehran is seeking to acquire a nuclear weapon capability. Barring significant technical input from abroad, however, the Iranians are not likely to achieve that goal before the year 2000'.⁹⁷ Although the threat had a long horizon, the Americans concluded that they ought not to sit idle whilst Iran accumulated knowhow and technology. The combined impact of Iranian nuclear advances and alleged terrorist activity convinced Bush's Administration to reject a more constructive approach towards Iran. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft notified Picco in April 1992 that the United States would not fulfil its 'goodwill' commitment because of the terrorism and nuclear issues.⁹⁸ Despite the initial declaration that 'goodwill begets goodwill,' Washington concluded outreach to Iran had failed.

Throughout the policy review, the Israeli government and pro-Israeli lobby focused squarely on loan guarantees. Snap parliamentary elections in Israel and the impending American presidential elections ensured that the issue would morph into an electoral football in both countries. It took all of the oxygen from other potential agenda items, including Iran. Nowhere was this dynamic clearer than in AIPAC's annual policy conference in April 1992.⁹⁹ The poor personal relations between Bush and Shamir were on display, with the loan guarantee dispute taking centre-stage.¹⁰⁰ AIPAC's executive director, Thomas Dine, promised, 'we cannot and will not give up until we succeed' regarding financial

assistance.¹⁰¹ Some in the crowd booed when Vice President Dan Quayle, citing the ‘bumps in the road’ for the bilateral relationship, mentioned Bush’s name.¹⁰² Publicly outlining a new strategy to mend relations the following month, Dine called on Israel’s supporters to ‘return to the basics’ and focus on Congress:

Congress also has a role to play in guaranteeing the future of American-Israeli strategic cooperation. It is argued that Israel’s strategic importance to the United States is gone with the end of the Cold War. But the truth is that Iraq’s Saddam Hussein was a greater threat in 1990, without Soviet support, than he was in 1980 with it. This holds true for Iran, Syria and Libya as well.¹⁰³

For Dine, like Israel, Iran was an afterthought. At the AIPAC conference, Zalman Shoval, the Israeli ambassador, mentioned only ‘the situation in Iran’ in a laundry list of potential concerns.¹⁰⁴

As Israelis headed to the polls in June 1992, Iran was not a major issue. During the campaign, neither Shamir nor his Labour opponent, Rabin, prioritised confronting Iran. Israeli leaders placed so little emphasis on it that Benny Morris, the historian known for his scepticism towards Israeli narratives, wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* raising alarm. Shamir and Rabin ‘have failed publicly to address’ what he considered ‘the main threat to the country: the non-conventional, and particularly the nuclear, weapons development programs of Israel’s enemies,’ including the ‘Islamic extremists of Iran’.¹⁰⁵ Ultimately, Shamir lost by ten percentage points, something Likud stalwarts blamed partly on the Bush Administration’s open preference for Rabin.¹⁰⁶

By the time Rabin formed his Cabinet in July 1992, Washington had already decided on a new Iran policy and began executing it. The initial goal was modest: work with allies to restrict the export of sensitive technologies to Iran. Nonetheless, as the strategy developed, the United States began lumping together the threats posed by Iran and Iraq, ending Washington’s long-time strategy of siding with one against the other.

The Bush Administration’s first effort focused on restricting the sale of ‘dual use’ items to Iran.¹⁰⁷ The White House sought co-operation of states including Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Netherlands to establish export controls for these items.¹⁰⁸ It was the first time that a campaign regarding ‘dual use’ technology focused on a non-communist country and the first such initiative in the post-Cold War era.¹⁰⁹ The effort remained secret until 10 November 1992, when newspapers reported that America intended to raise the issue at a meeting of G7 countries in Germany later that month.¹¹⁰

Washington’s initiative faced spirited opposition from its allies. The Europeans and Japan opposed restricting trade with the large and dynamic Iranian market – not least, because American companies benefitted from such commerce.¹¹¹ The United States was one of Iran’s biggest oil importers, and American companies exported to Iran precisely the type of sensitive

dual-use technology that the Administration implored its allies to control.¹¹² To limit American dual-use exports, Congress passed the *Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act* of 1992, which Bush signed into law on 23 October.¹¹³ By this legislation, the United States opposed exports to both Iraq and Iran, 'including dual-use goods or technology, wherever that transfer could materially contribute to either country's acquiring chemical, biological, nuclear, or destabilising numbers and types of advanced conventional weapons'.¹¹⁴ It also noted that America 'urgently ... seek the agreement of other nations' in this effort. The *Act* ordered that some of the same sanctions applied against Iraq in response to its invasion of Kuwait also apply against Iran, like a ban on exporting sensitive commercial items. By grouping together Iraq and Iran, the legislation 'presaged' the approach taken by Clinton, who defeated Bush in the November 1992 election.¹¹⁵

Clinton entered the presidency in January 1993 as a foreign policy neophyte. In contrast to Bush, who had served as ambassador to China, CIA director, and vice president, Clinton had little experience on the international stage. Yet, from the beginning of his presidency, he was fixated on addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict. Middle East peace-making was the sole agenda item for his first NSC meeting on 3 March 1993.¹¹⁶ To complement his new Arab-Israeli strategy – prioritising an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement – Clinton charged National Security Advisor Tony Lake with developing a strategy towards Iran and Iraq. The NSC official with day-to-day responsibility for this policy process, Martin Indyk, viewed efforts towards Iraq and Iran in light of the president's top priority. Clinton wanted a strategy 'that would bolster his peacemaking priorities in the Arab-Israeli arena,' Indyk wrote in his memoirs. 'Iraq's and Iran's hostility to peacemaking could jeopardize his whole effort,' he added.¹¹⁷

Indyk announced the Administration's new policy of Dual Containment in a speech at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy on 18 May 1993.¹¹⁸ The United States considered both Iran and Iraq too problematic to engage diplomatically but too strong to overthrow. Therefore, Washington would seek to contain both simultaneously.¹¹⁹ As a label, Dual Containment was a misnomer – the policy called for different strategies for Iraq and Iran. For Iraq, the United States sought to leverage UN Security Council resolutions to intensify pressure on Saddam Hussein with the ultimate objective of ending his leadership of an 'irredeemable' and 'criminal' regime. The approach towards Iran differed in style and substance. Although referring to Iran as 'hostile' and 'dangerous,' Indyk explicitly rejected regime change, focussing instead on Tehran's challenging actions: sponsorship of terrorism and assassination; disruption of the peace process by supporting Hamas and Hezbollah; subversion of pro-American Arab governments; acquisition of conventional offensive weapons to 'dominate' the Gulf; and the 'most disturbing' element, development of 'clandestine nuclear weapons capability'.¹²⁰

Unlike the Iraq strategy, the basis of approaching Iran was unilateral action, 'maintaining' the same sanctions against Iran that the Bush Administration imposed. The Iran strategy envisioned working 'energetically' with allies to block the transfer of military or nuclear equipment and trying to inhibit 'normal commercial relations'. In substance, Dual Containment hewed closely to Bush's 1992 Iran strategy.

The strategies pursued by Clinton and Bush differed in two aspects: how each Administration talked about Iran and how Iran and Iraq fitted into overall American strategy. Bush and Baker had articulated Iran's regional importance and America's desire for better relations. Conversely, Clinton discussed Iran several times at the beginning of his presidency, saying in a televised interview that he remained 'very troubled' by its actions.¹²¹ On 30 March 1993, Secretary of State Warren Christopher went further, branding Iran as an 'international outlaw' and 'one of the principal sources of support for terrorist groups around the world'.¹²²

The second difference was how Iran and Iraq fitted into the overall Middle East strategy. For Bush and Baker, the two states represented separate cases, and they dealt with each on its own terms. Clinton's Administration brought what Bush once derided as 'the vision thing' to its Middle East and global foreign policy. Iran and Iraq were not singular cases of problematic governments, as Bush saw them, but examples of a global archetype of 'backlash states' threatening the enlargement of the democratic 'family of nations'.¹²³ Iran and Iraq joined Cuba, North Korea, and Libya in this club. Against these states, Washington had a 'special responsibility for developing a strategy to neutralise, contain and, through selective pressure, perhaps eventually transform these backlash states,' Lake wrote.¹²⁴ The approach towards Iran was not an isolated strategy peculiar to the Islamic Republic but part of a larger one towards states that, in Washington's view, stood in the path of democratic enlargement. Despite the Clinton Administration's different rhetoric and outlook, however, the substance of the new president's Iran strategy very closely resembled that of his predecessor.

The announcement of Dual Containment followed months of agitation from Israel, which has led some to argue that Israel should bear responsibility for the policy's creation. Rabin drove Israel's concerns. He believed Israel faced a 'window of opportunity' in its foreign affairs: act now to make peace with the Arab states and Palestinians before Iran acquired nuclear weapons and Islamic fundamentalist groups gained more power.¹²⁵ The threat posed by 'Iran and others, the threat of a nonconventional challenge to our position may emerge in the future When this comes, it had better be when we have already established workable peace relations with the key immediate neighbours,' observed Eran Lerman, Aman's lead intelligence analyst for international issues.¹²⁶ Rabin spoke of Iran posing both short-term and long-term threats. In the short-term, Rabin saw danger in Iran backing militant

groups aiming to undermine the peace process, including Hamas and Hezbollah. More than Shamir, Rabin saw Iran's hand behind the threats these two groups posed. He warned, 'The world in general will pay if the cancer of the radical fundamentalist Islam is not halted at the house-of-study of Khomeini and his followers in Iran'.¹²⁷ In the long-term, the 'window of opportunity' was closing as Iran advanced in its nuclear programme. Making peace with the 'inner circle' of Arab states would 'reduce the risk' posed by states in the 'external circle,' such as Iran.¹²⁸ His view brought Israel in line with the United States, which had decided in April 1992 to contain Iran and whose intelligence officials warned openly about an Iranian nuclear weapon.

Yet, Mearsheimer, Walt, and Parsi all draw a direct, causal link between Rabin's perspective and the subsequent Dual Containment policy. Parsi argues that Dual Containment was the 'direct result of Israel's pressure' via a 1992 'campaign' orchestrated by Rabin and AIPAC.¹²⁹ For Mearsheimer and Walt, 'The lobby had been largely responsible for developing and sustaining Dual Containment'.¹³⁰ Whilst Mearsheimer, Walt, and Parsi note that Indyk, who announced the policy, had worked at AIPAC in the early 1980s, their explanations cannot account for why Dual Containment largely mirrored Bush's 1992 approach to Iran. As noted earlier – and recognised by a number of scholars¹³¹ – Clinton's policy represented a continuation of Bush's 1992 initiative developed before Rabin became prime minister, before the Israel/AIPAC 'campaign' reportedly took place, and before Indyk worked for the NSC.

Further, the evidence for their argument remains flawed: they all rely heavily on interviews with subjects not directly involved in the events in question. Parsi's account of Dual Containment rests exclusively on four American officials: Kenneth Pollack, Robert Pelletreau, Scowcroft, and an anonymous State Department official.¹³² Mearsheimer and Walt rely on Pollack, Pelletreau, and Scowcroft. Yet, neither Pollack, Pelletreau, nor Scowcroft were directly involved in American policy-making during the development of Dual Containment. Pollack served as a CIA analyst, not a policy-maker, from 1989 to 1995.¹³³ Mearsheimer, Walt, and Parsi write that Pelletreau served as assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs 'at the time' of Dual Containment's announcement in May 1993. But Pelletreau was serving then as United States ambassador to Egypt and not appointed assistant secretary until February 1994, nine months after Dual Containment was announced.¹³⁴ There is no evidence of involvement by Scowcroft, who served in the Bush Administration, in developing Clinton's foreign policy. Based on quotations that Parsi attributes to him, it is not clear that Scowcroft even posited the connexion between Israeli influence and American policy. He criticised Dual Containment as a 'nutty' and 'crazy' – but not an Israeli – idea.¹³⁵ Finally, Parsi cites an anonymous 'senior State Department official' who says simply that Dual Containment 'didn't make a lot of sense'.¹³⁶ As with Scowcroft, this view does not support the conclusion that Israel drove the policy.¹³⁷

If Israel did not dictate American policy, did America dictate Israeli policy? Rabin certainly felt nostalgia for pre-1979 Israeli-Iranian co-operation that made his eventual reversal striking. Before becoming prime minister, he told then-United States ambassador to the UN, Tom Pickering, 'Iran is an important country. You need to have contacts with Iran'. Pickering added, 'He remembered back, maybe too fondly, [to] the relationships that they had with Iran at the time [before] the fall of the Shah and how significant they were for Israel'.¹³⁸ Indeed, in 1987, Rabin recalled that Iran had been Israel's friend for 28 of the past 38 years: 'If it could work for 28 years ... why couldn't it happen again, once this crazy idea of Shiite fundamentalism is gone?'¹³⁹

Yet, after becoming prime minister, Rabin changed his mind. It is possible that he intentionally moved Israeli policy closer to that of the United States to strengthen ties with Washington. A shared approach towards Iran would reaffirm the value of an alliance with Israel at a time when the Soviet Union's fall undercut the geopolitical basis of the relationship. Rabin also came to power when Iran's approach towards Israel became more aggressive, which could have also influenced his shift. The March 1992 attack in Argentina shifted Israel's view towards Iran. The attack was an explicit retaliation for Israel's assassination of Musawi. Yet from Israel's point of view, Iran had upped the ante in three ways. First, the Argentine bombing was far from the battlefields of Lebanon. Second, it targeted civilians, not soldiers. Most important, Iran, not just Hezbollah, played a central role. To Israel, the attack was the first time Iran became a 'player' in attacks against Israel, not just a 'sponsor'.¹⁴⁰ With his new attitude towards Iran, Rabin brought the Israeli government's formal assessment much closer to the United States' view, strengthening the overall trajectory of Israeli-American relations.

This analysis addresses a gap in the literature on Iranian-American relations and Israel's role in that dynamic. The overlooked years of 1990–1993 find themselves sandwiched between conflict in the Gulf and Iran-Contra in the 1980s and a sanctions-driven effort to isolate Iran in the 1990s. Yet, this period was more than an interregnum in hostilities. A confluence of events, including the fall of the Soviet Union and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, presented an opportunity for the United States to reconsider its policy towards Iran. When Bush's Administration broke its promise of 'goodwill begets goodwill' and decided against advancing rapprochement with Iran, it was not due to Israel. Iran sought nuclear technology and supported what the United States viewed as terrorism, actions that shaped Washington's policy. By the time Rabin raised concern about the Iranian threat, the Americans had firmly established their policy.

By focusing on Iran policy from 1990 to 1993, this exegesis also challenges the theory that Israeli interests, expressed by either the Israeli government or pro-Israel advocates, drove American policy towards Iran. This theory arises from two assumptions. First, it accepts an active Israeli interest in shaping

United States policy towards Iran. In recent years, Israel inserted itself into the domestic debate over the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, with an Israeli prime minister urging Congress to reject a president's signature foreign policy initiative. As illustrated herein, however, it is wrong to assume that this level of intervention has always been the case. Under Shamir, Israel took little interest in Iran. Rabin's loud concern came after Bush's Administration had already decided to oppose rapprochement with Tehran. Second, the theory assumes that America has no outstanding grievances with Iran, only historical relics from the 1979 hostage crisis – that, in a bilateral setting, little stands between greater ties between the states. Between 1990 and 1993, this was not the case. Washington had a host of strategic disputes with Iran, ranging from the hostages in Lebanon to its nuclear programme. Ultimately, the Bush Administration decided to oppose and contain Iran; the Clinton Administration continued this policy because of these grievances not Israeli intervention.

Notes

1. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007); Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007). The same theories are included in many of the authors' subsequent works, referenced when relevant.
2. Henry Rome, "Access and Omissions," *Nonproliferation Review* 24, no. 3/4 (2017): 385–89.
3. Dov Waxman, "The Pro-Israel Lobby in the United States," in *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012), 80. On the other hand, Mearsheimer and Walt use a "big tent" approach, describing the "Israel lobby" as a "loose coalition of individuals and organisations that actively works to move U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction." However, in discussing Iran advocacy in the early 1990s, they focus only on AIPAC. Mearsheimer and Walt, *Israel Lobby*, 5, 113, 175–77; Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power* (NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 293.
4. Bernard Reich, *Securing the Covenant* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 73; Michael Thomas, *American Policy Toward Israel* (NY: Routledge, 2007), 102–103.
5. Dov Waxman, "The Israel Lobbies: A Survey of the Pro-Israel Community in the United States," *Israel Studies Forum* 25, no. 1 (2010): 5–28; Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 73.
6. J.J. Goldberg, *Jewish Power* (NY: Addison-Wesley, 1996), 217; Thomas, *American Policy*, 139–47.
7. Clyde Haberman, "Rabin and Pro-Israel Group Off to Testy Start," *NY Times* (22 August 1992); David Hoffman, "Rabin Criticizes Congressional Lobby for Israel," *Washington Post*, August 17, 1992; Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 77; Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 114–15.

8. Eric Alterman, *Who Speaks for America?* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Smith, *Foreign Attachments*; Mitchell Bard, *The Water's Edge and Beyond* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 6–13.
9. Author interview with Dennis Ross, April 26, 2017.
10. Robert M. Gates, “Oral History” (Miller Center, University of Virginia, 2000).
11. Israel provided weapons to Iran on behalf of the United States during the Iran-Contra affair, but Israeli “direct” sales of weapons to Iran far exceeded those transfers: Pierre Razoux, *The Iran-Iraq War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 552.
12. Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb’Allah in Lebanon* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 62–64 traces the various aliases and their meanings. Cf. Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 41–45; James Worrall, Simon Mabon, and Gordon Clubb, *Hezbollah* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2016), 47.
13. Memorandum, “The President’s Meeting with Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi of Oman,” 28 August 1990, GHWBPL [George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station, TX] Memcons and Telcons, refers to the hostages as the “major stumbling block between the two countries.”
14. George H.W. Bush, “Inaugural Address” (American Presidency Project, January 20, 1989), <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address>.
15. “U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf, 2 October 1989 (NSD-26),” GHWBPL National Security Directives.
16. In August 1989, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft asked the UN secretary general to convey the “goodwill begets goodwill” message to Rafsanjani. Bush personally passed another message through the UN in January 1990. Former Secretary of State James Baker told the author that Washington additionally offered direct negotiations with Iran “anytime, anyplace,” so long as the talks were with an official government representative, were not secret, and terrorism was on the agenda. Iran did not accept. A Bush Administration NSC official speaking on the condition of anonymity confirmed this offer. According to this official, the offer came in late 1990. A senior State Department official confirmed that Iran demanded secrecy in the negotiations. Author interview with James Baker (May 9, 2017); author interview with Bush NSC official (May 16, 2017); John H. Kelly, “Oral History,” *Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project* (1994), <https://www.adst.org/OHTOCs/KELLY,JohnH.pdf>; Giandomenico Picco, *Man Without a Gun* (NY: Random House, 1999), 111, 118.
17. R.K. Ramazani, “Iran and the United States,” in *The Middle East from the Iran-Contra Affair to the Intifada*, ed. Robert O. Freedman (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 173.
18. George H.W. Bush, “Statement on the Release of Former Hostage Robert Polhill” (American Presidency Project, April 22, 1990), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18390&st=&st1=>.
19. Idem., “Statement on the Release of Former Hostage Frank Reed” (*Ibid.*, April 30, 1990), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=18433>; David Crist, *The Twilight War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012), 386–87.
20. Picco, *Without a Gun*, 107.
21. Don Oberdorfer, “Iran Paid for Release of Hostages,” *Washington Post*, January 19, 1992.
22. Kelly memorandum, “Message to Iran on Kuwaiti Crisis,” to Kimmitt, 2 August 1990, “NSC Meeting on the Persian Gulf,” 3 August 1990, both GHWBPL Folder: Iraq – Aug 2, 1990-Dec 1990 [6], Richard N. Haass Working Files, NSC collection;

- memorandum, "Telephone Conversation with Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman," 8 August 1990, GHWBPL Memcons and Telcons.
23. Memorandum, "The President's Meeting with Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi of Oman," August 28, 1990, *Ibid.*
 24. *Ibid.*
 25. Andrew Scott Cooper, *The Oil Kings* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2011); Roham Alvandi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2014); Gary Sick, "The United States and the Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century," in *The Persian Gulf in History*, ed. Lawrence G. Potter (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 295–310.
 26. Razoux, *Iran-Iraq War*.
 27. Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East* (NY: Random House, 2016), 109–12.
 28. Haass memorandum, "DC Teleconference on near term Options for Iran," to Gates, 24 September 1990, GHWBPL Folder: Notes – August 1990 – Saudi Arabia/Iraq/Kuwait [1 of 2], Robert M. Gates files, NSC collection.
 29. Memorandum, "Telephone Conversation with Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman."
 30. "DC Teleconference on Near term options for Iran, 25 September 1990"; Caleb Solomon and Allanna Sullivan, "U.S. Approves Importation Of Iranian Oil," *Wall Street Journal*, June 12, 1991; Patrick Lee, "U.S. Firm Gets Approval to Import Oil From Iran," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1991; Robert D. Hershey Jr., "U.S. Is Relaxing Its Ban on Oil Imports From Iran," *NY Times*, December 23, 1990; Michael Arndt, "End To Iran Embargo May Be U.S. Move To Heal Ties," *Chicago Tribune*, January 29, 1991.
 31. World Bank, *Iran – Earthquake Recovery Project* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1991).
 32. Libya took responsibility in 2003 for the bombing; Felicity Barringer, "Libya Admits Culpability In Crash of Pan Am Plane," *NY Times*, August 16, 2003; Kirit Radia and Maddy Sauer, "Pan Am 103 Families Finally Compensated," *ABC News*, October 31, 2008.
 33. Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 305.
 34. Richard Cheney, "Oral History" (Miller Center, University of Virginia, 2000), <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/interviews-with-the-administration/richard-b-cheney-oral-history-secretary-defense>.
 35. Kelly, "Oral History"; Oberdorfer, "Release of Hostages."
 36. Iran's role in this calculus tends to be exaggerated. More important, Washington was wary about exceeding the international and Congressional mandate for military action, which did not countenance regime change. Thomas G. Mahnken, "A Squandered Opportunity? The Decision to End the Gulf War," in Andrew Bacevich and Efraim Inbar, eds., *The Gulf War of 1991 Reconsidered* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 121–48; Lawrence E. Cline, "Defending the End: Decision Making in Terminating the Persian Gulf War," *Comparative Strategy* 17, no. 4 (1998): 363–80; Freedman and Karsh, *Gulf Conflict*, 413–14.
 37. Dennis Ross, *Doomed to Succeed* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 220–21; Timothy McNulty, "Angry With Shamir, Bush Pulls Away," *Chicago Tribune*, May 25, 1990; Gates, "Oral History."
 38. Scholars disagree about the relative merit of the pillars of the Israeli-American relationship; this article does not litigate this complex question. But cf. Steven L. Spiegel, "U.S.-Israeli Relations in the Post-Cold War Era," *Jerusalem Letter Viewpoints* 97 (1990); Haim Malka, *Crossroads: The Future of the US-Israel Strategic Partnership* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011),

- 1–18; Reich, *Securing the Covenant*, 109–28; Shai Feldman, *The Future of US-Israel Strategic Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996). Mearsheimer and Walt, *Israel Lobby*, 49–77, discuss this issue extensively.
39. Martin Gilbert, *Israel* (London: Black Swan, 1999), 536–44; World Bank, “Population of Israel,” *DataBank*, 1990, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=IL>.
 40. Bush implicitly linked the loan guarantees to freezing construction of Israeli settlements beyond pre-1967 lines: Thomas L. Friedman, “Israel, Ignoring Bush, Presses for Loan Guarantees,” *NY Times*, September 7, 1991; Doyle McManus and Daniel Williams, “Israel Endangers Talks, U.S. Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 18, 1991.
 41. Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq and the War of Sanctions* (London: Praeger, 1999), 482.
 42. James Addison Baker and Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy* (NY: Putnam, 1995), 390; Ross, *Doomed to Succeed*, 241; Avi Shlaim, “Israel and the Conflict,” in *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict, 1990-91*, ed. Alex Danchev and Dan Keohane (London: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 59–79.
 43. Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, *Friends in Deed* (Sea Cliff: Levant Books, 1994), Kindle 5717–6115.
 44. Adam Clymer, “Pro-Israel Lobby Readies for Fight,” *NY Times*, September 15, 1991; Dan Fesperman and Tom Bowman, “Bush’s Hard Line Challenges Power of Lobby for Israel,” *Baltimore Sun*, September 21, 1991; William Schneider, “When President is Lobbyist, U.S.-Israeli Relations Are Transformed,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1991.
 45. George H.W. Bush, “‘The President’s News Conference,’ 12 September,” (American Presidency Project), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=19969&st=&st1=>.
 46. Author interview with Dan Meridor (May 8, 2017).
 47. *Ibid.*
 48. Author interview with Yehuda Ben Meir (May 5, 2017).
 49. Baker interview. William Harrop, the American ambassador to Israel beginning in January 1992, confirmed that Iran was not on the agenda: author interview with William Harrop (May 14, 2017).
 50. Author interview with Shabtai Shavit (May 11, 2017).
 51. Author interview with Ilan Mizrahi (May 10, 2017).
 52. Author interview with Eran Lerman (May 11, 2017).
 53. Shavit interview.
 54. Author interview with Ehud Barak (May 16, 2017).
 55. Author interviews with Uri Ne’eman (May 9, 2017), Uzi Eilam (May 9, 2017), Tamir Pardo (May 10, 2017).
 56. In chronological order, the Americans released in Lebanon were Jesse Turner, 21 October 1991; Thomas Sutherland, 18 November 1991; Joseph Cicippio, 2 December 1991; Alann Steen, 3 December 1991; and Terry Anderson, 4 December 1991. The body of Marine Lt. Col. William Higgins was brought to a morgue on 21 December; discovery of the body of the CIA’s William Buckley on 27 December 1991.
 57. Oberdorfer, “Release of Hostages”.
 58. Washington paid US\$260 million directly to Iran and placed US\$18 million into a Security Account for future arbitration: “U.S. To Pay Iran \$278 Million In Arms Settlement,” *Washington Post*, November 29, 1991; Elaine Sciolino, “U.S. and Iran Sign a Compensation Pact,” *NY Times*, November 28, 1991; *idem.*, “U.S. Near Deal To Settle Claim By the Iranians,” *Ibid.*, November 21, 1991; Picco, *Without a Gun*, 268. Also see the personal account of the top American negotiator, Abraham D. Sofaer, *Taking on Iran* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2013), 58–59.

59. Shaul Bakhash quoted in Mark Matthews, "U.S. Overtures to Iran Aided Hostages' Release," *Baltimore Sun*, December 5, 1991.
60. Memorandum, "The President's Meeting with Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi of Oman," August 28, 1990, GHWBPL Memcons and Telcons.
61. Still, the amount was miniscule: US\$230 million represented only 1.4 percent of Iran's average annual oil export revenue between 1989 and 1993. Akbar E. Torbat, "Impacts of the US Trade and Financial Sanctions on Iran," *World Economy* 28, no. 3 (2005): 407–34; Kenneth Katzman, *Iran: Current Developments and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1993), 13; Hassan Hakimian, *Institutional Change, Policy Challenges and Macroeconomic Performance* (London: The World Bank, 2007), 16; Solomon and Sullivan, "Iranian Oil."
62. S/23273: "Further Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 598 (1987)," December 9, 1991, 2, paragraph 6: [English] <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/133224>.
63. For an authoritative account, see Picco, *Without a Gun*, 151. Cf. Barbara Slavin, *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 180.
64. Lawrence G. Potter, "Gulf War and Persia," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. XI (NY, 2002), 396–97; Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *After Khomeini* (London: Routledge, 1995), 153; Picco, *Without a Gun*, 151.
65. Author interview with Bruce Riedel (April 27, 2017).
66. The official leading the policy review, Haass, declined an interview. He also declined to discuss the policy review during a 2004 oral history: Richard Haass, "Oral History" (Miller Center, University of Virginia, 2004).
67. Elaine Sciolino, "After a Fresh Look, U.S. Decides to Still Steer Clear of Iran," *NY Times*, June 7, 1992.
68. Some documents related to the policy review remain classified, including a "small group" meeting on Iran on 19 March 1992 in the Situation Room. The Bush Library rejected the author's request for mandatory declassification because release of the records "would violate a federal statute." The document is located at memorandum, "Small Group-Iran," 19 March 1992, GHWBPL H Files, Small Group Meetings Follow-up Files, NSC collection; Haass memorandum, "DC Teleconference on Near term Options for Iran," to Gates, 24 September 1990, *Ibid.*, Folder: Notes - August 1990 - Saudi Arabia/Iraq/Kuwait [1 of 2], Robert M. Gates files, NSC collection.
69. Picco, *Without a Gun*, 286.
70. William C. Rempel, "Tale of Deadly Iranian Network Woven in Paris," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1994; Thomas Sancton, "The Tehran Connection," *Time*, March 1994; "Swiss Arrest Embassy Worker in Bakhtiar Murder, Iran Says," *Los Angeles Times*, December 26, 1991.
71. Crist, *Twilight War*, 616.
72. Guardian Staff, "Bomb Kills 10 in Israeli Embassy," *Guardian*, March 18, 1992; Eugene Robinson, "Islamic Jihad Claims Attack in Argentina: Israel Vows Reprisal; Bombing Toll Mounts," *Washington Post*, March 19, 1992.
73. CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Iran: Enhanced Terrorist Capabilities and Expanding Target Selection (Secret)," *CIA FOIA #0000676446* (April 1992). Also see Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (NY: Random House, 2004), 267.
74. Norton, *Hezbollah*, 78; Joshua L. Gleis and Benedetta Berti, *Hezbollah and Hamas* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 65; Martin Rudner, "Hizbullah: An Organizational and Operational Profile," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 23, no. 2 (2010): 226–46; Ranstorp, *Hizb'Allah*, 63, 68–70.

75. The American assessment of the connexion between Hezbollah and Iran is noted in Margaret Tutwiler, "Briefing #70" (US Department of State, May 7, 1992); Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1991* (Washington, DC, 1992); CIA Directorate of Intelligence, "Enhanced Terrorist Capabilities".
76. See discussion of the 1992 attack in Office of the Attorney General, Republic of Argentina, *AMIA Case Indictment* (Buenos Aires, 2006), 352, 429: <http://albertonisman.org/nisman-indictment-in-english-full/>; idem., *Dictamina* (Buenos Aires, 2013), 198–99: <http://albertonisman.org/nisman-report-dictamina-on-sleeper-cells-full-text/>.
77. "Islamic Jihad Claims Bombing," *Irish Times*, March 19, 1992; William R. Long, "Islamic Jihad Says It Bombed Embassy; Toll 21," *Los Angeles Times*, March 19, 1992.
78. See information provided by Iran in IAEA Director General, "Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran" (6 June 2003), 2, paragraph 7; 5, paragraph 20. On the Chinese origin, see John W. Garver, *China and Iran* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006), 146–47. For Iran's perspective, Seyed Hossein Mousavian, *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), 54.
79. Gary Samore, *Iran's Strategic Weapons Programmes* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005), 13; Steve Coll, "Iran Reported Trying to Buy Indian Reactor," *Washington Post*, November 15, 1991; Zachary S. Davis and Warren H. Donnelly, *Iran's Nuclear Activities and the Congressional Response* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1992), 4, 11.
80. David Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States* (London: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), 199; Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition* (London: Praeger, 1999), 240; Mousavian, *Nuclear Crisis*, 54.
81. Davis and Donnelly, *Congressional Response*, 12; Shai Feldman, *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 47.
82. Edward A. Gargan, "U.S. Official in India to Discuss Limiting Spread of Nuclear Arms," *NY Times*, November 22, 1991; William Drozdiak, "U.S. Move to Halt Nuclear Technology Sales Angers Iranians," *Washington Post*, November 22, 1991; Michele Gaietta, *The Trajectory of Iran's Nuclear Program* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 79; Gary Marx, "Argentina Halts Nuclear Equipment Deal With Iran," *Chicago Tribune*, January 28, 1992; Steve Coll, "U.S. Halted Nuclear Bid by Iran," *Washington Post*, November 17, 1992.
83. Samore, *Strategic Weapons*.
84. CIA, "Russia-Iran: Planning Nuclear Power Cooperation," *CIA FOIA #0000602678*, March 19, 1992.
85. Jeremy Bernstein, *Nuclear Iran* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
86. John M Deutch, "The New Nuclear Threat," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 4 (1992): 120–34.
87. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, "Mohajerani Discusses Islamic Nuclear Programs," *FBIS-NES-91-214*, October 23, 1991.
88. Elaine Sciolino, "Report Says Iran Seeks Atomic Arms," *NY Times*, October 31, 1991.
89. R. Jeffrey Smith, "Officials Say Iran Is Seeking Nuclear Weapons Capability," *Washington Post*, October 30, 1991.
90. Wyn Q. Bowen and David H. Dunn, *American Security Policy in the 1990s* (Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996), 115–46; Robert S. Litwak, *Rogue States and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000).
91. Comprehensive assessments include William C. Potter, "Before the Deluge?," *Arms Control Today* 25, no. 8 (1995): 9; Jessica Stern, *The Ultimate Terrorists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Owen R. Cote et al., *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996); Ashton B. Carter et al., *Soviet Nuclear Fission*

- (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); George Quester, *The Nuclear Challenge in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (London: ME Sharpe, 1995). James Clapper, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, testified before Congress: “Libya and Iran, for example, continue to offer lucrative salaries for attracting FSU [Former Soviet Union] scientists and engineers, especially those in the areas of weapons of mass destruction”: in “Threat Assessment, Military Strategy, and Defense Planning,” in *Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate One Hundred Second Congress Second Session* (Washington, DC, January 22, 1992), 62; author interview with James Clapper (May 1, 2017).
92. Ross to Baker, “Foreign Policy in the Second Bush Administration,” (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 30, 1992), <https://carnegieendowment.org/pdf/back-channel/1992MemotoBaker.pdf>.
 93. Scientists who participated, as well as international inspectors and scholars, have extensively documented the Iraqi nuclear weapons programme. For example, Mahdi Obeidi and Kurt Pitzer, *The Bomb in My Garden* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2004); Khidhir Hamza and David Albright, “Iraq’s Reconstitution of Its Nuclear Weapons Program,” *Arms Control Today* 28, no. 7 (1998): 9–15; David A. Kay, “Denial and Deception Practices of WMD Proliferators,” *Washington Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1995): 83–105.
 94. *Ibid.*; Sharon A. Squassoni, *U.N. Inspections for Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2003).
 95. Author interview with Riedel.
 96. James A. Acton, “On the Regulation of Dual-Use Nuclear Technology,” in Elisa Haris, ed., *Governance of Dual-Use Technologies: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2016), 8–59.
 97. Excerpt Robert Gates, “Testimony Before the House Armed Services Committee Defense Policy Panel,” March 27, 1992: https://fas.org/irp/congress/1992_hr/h920327g.htm.
 98. Picco, *Without a Gun*, 286.
 99. This attitude was not limited to AIPAC. Malcolm Hoenlein, director of the Presidents Conference, told a journalist, “We’re not giving up on loan guarantees.” After loan guarantees, a leading Jewish publication said, the “next big effort for the major pro-Israel groups” was not Iran but ensuring Israel’s allotment of foreign aid: James David Besser, “Is There Life After Loan Guarantees?,” *Jewish Advocate*, May 8, 1992. On the forty-fourth anniversary of Israel’s founding, this publication referred only “ominous nuclear rumblings” from Iran, Syria, and Libya amongst a long list of Israel’s challenges. Editorial Board, “Israel Independence at 44,” *Ibid.*
 100. Asher Wallfish and Allison Kaplan, “Ties with US Mending, Says PM,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 7, 1992; Ralph Z. Hallow, “Jewish Lobbying Group Hears from Party Chairmen,” *Washington Times*, April 7, 1992.
 101. Richard C. Gross, “Israeli Vote Further Complicates Jewish Lobby’s Role,” *Washington Times*, April 8, 1992.
 102. Ralph Z. Hallow, “Members of AIPAC Cheer Quayle, Boo Bush’s Name,” *Ibid.*; John M. Goshko, “President Shares Commitment To Israel, Quayle Tells Meeting,” *Washington Post*, April 8, 1992.
 103. Thomas A. Dine, “The Road to Better Relations,” *Jewish Exponent*, May 22, 1992.
 104. Zalman Shoval, “Guarantees: The Fight’s Not Over,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 9, 1992.
 105. Benny Morris, “Nuclear Peril, Israel’s Non-Issue,” *NY Times* (23 June 1992).
 106. Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel*, Second Edition (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 988; Moshe Arens, *Broken Covenant* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 281, 301.

107. R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. Seeks to Halt Western Export Of 'Dual-Use' Technology to Iran," *Washington Post*, November 10, 1992; Simon Tisdall and David Pallister, "Bush Urges Blanket Ban on Military Materials for Iran," *Guardian*, October 11, 1992; "U.S. Seeks Embargo On Technology To Iran," *Globe and Mail*, October 21, 1992; Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. Hopes to Broaden Ban On Arms Sales To Iran," *NY Times*, November 18, 1992.
108. Tisdall and Pallister, "Blanket Ban."
109. Smith, "Export Of 'Dual-Use'"; Jim Mann, "Iran's Nuclear Plans Worry U.S. Officials," *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1991.
110. Robin Wright, "Allies Discuss Curbing Technology Exports," *Los Angeles Times*, November 21, 1992; Simon Tisdall, "Oil Gush Produces Unlikely Bedfellows In The Boardrooms Of US And Its Allies," *Guardian*, November 28, 1992.
111. Steve Coll, "Technology From West Floods Iran," *Washington Post*, November 10, 1992.
112. Tisdall, "Oil Gush"; Geoffrey Kemp, *Forever Enemies? American Policy and the Islamic Republic Of Iran* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994), 3; Lawrence Freedman, *A Choice of Enemies* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2008), 302; Michael Ross, "U.S. Equipment Sales To Iran, Syria Criticized," *Los Angeles Times*, July 23, 1992.
113. HR5434 "Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act of 1992," <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-bill/5434/text>.
114. Only sanctions regarding conventional weaponry were "extra-territorial" as they applied to third-country corporations doing business with Iran. *Ibid.*, Sec. 1602(a).
115. Litwak, *Rogue States*, 166. Also see Suzanne Maloney, *Iran's Political Economy since the Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 449.
116. Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 13–44; Aaron David Miller, *The Much Too Promised Land* (NY: Bantam Press, 2008), 247.
117. Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 30–32. Indyk did not respond to the author's requests for an interview. See also Miller, *Promised Land*, 253.
118. Indyk served as the Institute's first executive director starting in 1985: Martin Indyk, "The Clinton Administration's Approach To The Middle East" (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>. The details of discussions that led to the policy review remain classified.
119. *Ibid.*
120. *Ibid.* In February 1993, a secret assessment by the Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee bolstered Administration concerns by noting that Iran was "building a weapons capability". The report followed increased Iranian nuclear co-operation with China. Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee, "Iran's Nuclear Program: Building a Weapons Capability," 1993; Garver, *China and Iran*, 148–50; Evan S. Medeiros, *Reluctant Restraint* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 60–62.
121. William J. Clinton, "Interview With Dan Rather of CBS News" (American Presidency Project, March 24, 1993), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46370>.
122. Elaine Sciolino, "Christopher Signals a Tougher U.S. Line Toward Iran," *NY Times*, March 31, 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/31/world/christopher-signals-a-tougher-us-line-toward-iran.html>. Both Christopher and Lake served in the Carter Administration during the hostage crisis: their personal experiences may well have contributed to sharper rhetoric about Iran.

123. Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," Mt Holyoke College (1993): <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>; idem., "Confronting Backlash States," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 2 (1994): 45–55.
124. *Ibid.*
125. Efraim Inbar, *Rabin and Israel's National Security* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 139.
126. Lerman interview.
127. Yitzhak Rabin, "Statement by Prime Minister Rabin on the Removal of Hamas Activists" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, December 20, 1992), <http://www.israel.org/MFA/ForeignPolicy/MFADocuments/Yearbook9/Pages/44%20Statement%20by%20Prime%20Minister%20Rabin%20on%20the%20Remova.aspx>.
128. Itamar Rabinovich, *Yitzhak Rabin: Soldier, Leader, Statesman* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 182. Also see author interview with Yossi Alpher, May 10, 2017.
129. Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 162, 185.
130. Mearsheimer and Walt, *Israel Lobby*, 290.
131. Litwak, *Rogue States*, 58–59; Donette Murray, *US Foreign Policy and Iran* (London: Routledge, 2010), 94; Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era* (Oxford: Praeger, 2010), 50–51; Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 121; John Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy* (NY: Routledge, 2009), 152.
132. Pollack's account comes from his *Persian Puzzle*; Parsi interviewed the other three.
133. Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 171; Mearsheimer and Walt, *Israel Lobby*, 287; Brookings Institution, "Biography: Kenneth M. Pollack," 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/experts/kenneth-m-pollack/>. Parsi cites Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 263. Mearsheimer and Walt also cite *Ibid.*, 269.
134. Pelletreau served as ambassador to Egypt from July 1991 to December 1993. For incorrect discussion of Pelletreau's position, see Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 163, 171; Mearsheimer and Walt, *Israel Lobby*, 286–87.
135. Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 171. Mearsheimer and Walt, *Israel Lobby*, 291, repeat the quote.
136. Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 178.
137. Parsi interviewed Lake and Indyk; he did not cite them in describing the policy: *Ibid.*, xiv.
138. Author interview with Tom Pickering (May 15, 2017).
139. Inbar, *Rabin*, 138–39.
140. Author interview with former senior Israeli intelligence official (May 2017).

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Roxane Farmanfarmaian, Graham Allison, Gary Samore, Chuck Freilich, and David Menashri for their input and advice, and Michelle Bogart and John Blair at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library for their assistance.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

ORCID

Henry Rome  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0724-326X>

Notes on contributor

Henry Rome is an Iran and Global Macro analyst at Eurasia Group, a political risk research and consulting firm. At the time of writing, he was a graduate student at the University of Cambridge, from which he earned an MPhil in International Relations and Politics with Distinction. His research has appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, the *Non-Proliferation Review*, and *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. The views presented here are personal.