

America, Israel, and the Middle East: Confronting the Challenges of Tomorrow

Aug 6, 2008



In-Depth Reports

FEATURING

Donald Kerr, U.S. principal deputy director of intelligence Itamar Rabinovich, former Israeli ambassador to the United States R. James Woolsey, former director of central intelligence Dennis Ross, counselor and Ziegler distinguished fellow, The Washington Institute Natan Sharansky, former Israeli cabinet minister and human rights advocate Zvi Rafiah, former congressional liaison, Israeli embassy, Washington, D.C. Ghaith al-Omari, former political advisor to Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas Theodore Kattouf, former U.S. ambassador to Syria and the United Arab Emirates David Makovsky, director, Project on the Middle East Peace Process, The Washington Institute Haim Ramon, deputy prime minister of Israel

SIXTY YEARS AGO, the United States was the first country to recognize the new state of Israel, lending important diplomatic support to the fledgling country. Today, the United States is Israel's leading ally, reflected not just in the two countries' close strategic ties, but in the depth and breadth of connections across the political, social, economic, and cultural arenas.

The path from diplomatic recognition to strategic cooperation was neither smooth nor easy. From the showdown with Israel over the Sinai Campaign in 1956, to the "reassessment" of relations in 1975, to the face-off over loan guarantees in 1991, crisis and discord have been persistent subthemes of the relationship. Through it all, however, shared values, common interests, and deep people-to-people bonds have laid the foundation on which today's strategic partnership is built. How the two governments work together -- and with nations around the world -- to meet the challenge of Iranian nuclear ambitions may determine not just the direction of bilateral relations in the decades ahead, but the fate of the global nonproliferation regime and the survival of the Jewish state itself.

For its twentieth Soref Symposium, which took place May 29-30, 2008, The Washington Institute convened an exceptional group of scholars, diplomats, experts, officials, and policy practitioners for an in-depth look at the past, present, and future of the U.S.-Israeli partnership.

The keynote address by Donald Kerr discussed emerging threats, challenges, and opportunities in the Middle East. Three panel discussions followed: * America and Israel at Sixty: The Strategic Partnership at a Crossroads * Prospects for the Bush Administration's Unfinished Business in the Middle East * Israel: Challenges at Home and Abroad ❖

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