This presentation is based partly on a summary of a recently completed book that was published in 2008 by Routledge: The Iranian Revolution and the US Policy of Dual Containment (http://www.routledgemiddleeaststudies.com/books/The-United-States-and-Iran isbn9780415773966).

The presentation provides an outline of the US government policy toward Iran and, by association, Iraq since 1979.

To the extent that this policy must be understood in its historical context, I will examine the historical background for the formation of the policy.

Sasan Fayazmanesh
This presentation is based partly on my book:

*The United States and Iran: Sanctions, Wars and the Policy of Dual Containment*

http://www.routledgepolitics.com/books/The-United-States- and-Iran-
isbn9780415773966

- The presentation provides an outline of the US policy toward Iran since the revolution of 1979.
- To the extent that this policy must be understood in its historical context, I will examine the historical background for the formation of the policy.
US-Iran Relations: A Brief Historical Background

An analysis of US-Iran relations often starts with some “original sin”:

- The events of 1979, according to some American analysts
- The events of 1953, according to many Iranian analysts

Since the events of 1953 led to those of 1979, one should start with the former.
1953: “Operation AJAX”

In 1953 the CIA staged a coup d’état in Iran, overthrowing the constitutionally elected government of the Iranian Prime Minister, Dr. Mossadegh.


With the help of British agents, the CIA brought back the self-exiled Mohamed Reza Shah.
What followed was a cozy and symbiotic relationship between the US and the Shah for a quarter of a century.
For the US, the relationship meant:

- Economically, the Shah maintained the interests of the US corporations, particularly the oil companies, aerospace industry, and financial institutions. This included recycling petro-dollars into purchasing military goods and Eurodollar deposits (by the mid 1970s, the Shah was the largest buyer of US military goods).
It should be noted that in the 1970s, the US told the Shah to expand Iran’s non-oil energy base by building a number of nuclear power plants. One such plant, which started to be built in the mid 1970s is in Bushehr:
Politically, the Shah acted as the gangster of the Persian Gulf, stifling any aspiration for independence or democracy (e.g., he put down the revolutionary movement in Dhofar in 1973-76).
For the Shah, the relationship meant maintaining an absolute monarchy combined with a theater of the absurd.
For the Iranian populace, the relationship meant:

- An uneven **economic development**, characterized by corruption, waste, skewed income distribution, and ultimately high rates of unemployment and inflation by the late 1970s.

- A dictatorship characterized by:
  - Lack of the most basic freedoms, including the freedom of expression, speech, and organization,
  - The existence of massive secret police (**SAVAK**) trained and maintained mostly by the CIA & Israeli Mossad,
  - Jails overflowing with political prisoners,
  - Disappearances, torture, and executions.
Note that the US had no problem with the lack of basic human rights in Iran. Even as late as 1978, on the eve of the Iranian Revolution, President Carter, the champion of “human rights,” traveled to Iran and said:
“Iran is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership and to the respect, admiration and love which your people give to you. There is no leader in the world for whom I feel such deep gratitude and personal friendship as the Shah.”

An “island of stability,” Iran was not!

In 1979, Iran exploded in revolutionary turmoil.

Masses of people, from every segment of society, poured into the streets to end the rule of the Shah.
Shah’s dictatorial rule had managed to eradicate effectively every organized opposition to his rule except one—the clergy whose lives were intertwined with the fabric of the society.
Thus, when in 1979 Iran exploded, one organized force managed to come out on top—the clergy, led by one exiled grand Ayatollah, Khomeini.
In the showdown between the Shah and Khomeini, the former lost.

He went into exile once again and after traveling about for a while, he arrived in the US for “medical care.”
Shah’s arrival in the US triggered “students following the line of Imam” to attack the “nest of spies,” the US Embassy, in November 1979 and take 52 Americans as hostages in exchange for the Shah.
A few days after the takeover of the US embassy, the Carter Administration invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to freeze all Iranian government assets and properties.

This act was initially instituted in 1977 to protect the interest of US corporations, particularly the financial institutions, such as the Chase Manhattan Bank.
After many months of negotiations, the US and Iran signed the Algiers Accord in 1980, setting up the Hague Tribunal to settle all financial claims between the US and Iran.

Iran agreed to release the hostages and pay reparations to the US corporations. The US agreed to unfreeze the Iranian assets and not to interfere in Iran’s affairs again.


In 1980 the US government, led by Zbigniew Brzezinski, started a new policy that would later be called the “dual containment policy.”

This policy consisted of trying to “contain” both Iran and Iraq economically and militarily in favor of the US’s client states in the region, mainly Saudi Arabia and Israel.
The relationship between Iran and Iraq had been a stormy one during the Shah’s reign.

- The Shah had tried to destabilize the Iraqi government in 1972 on behest of the US and Israel.

- Iraq had territorial claims over entire Shatt al-Arab (Arvand river)

Saddam Hussain and the Shah of Iran during the Algiers Agreement, 1975
It appears that the Carter Administration, and in particular, Zbigniew Brzezinski, used the tense relation between Iraq and Iran to start a war between the two. Both Carter (Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President) and Brzezinski (Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor, 1977-1981) deny this accusation.

Actually, when Iranians first made such allegations, many months before Saddam’s invasion of Iran, Brzezinski called them “lunatic assertions.”

But there is plenty of evidence to show that the Carter Administration played a great role in starting the war:
The reporter, Robert Parry, who worked as a correspondent for the *Associated Press* and *Newsweek* in the 1980s has posted on his website a document which he contends shows the Carter Administration’s complicity in Saddam’s invasion of Iran. The document, Perry contends, is a “two-page ‘Talking Points’ prepared by Secretary of State Alexander Haig for a briefing of President Reagan” after Haig’s first trip to the Middle East in April 1981:

(http://www.consortiumnews.com/2003/haig-docs.html)

Haig:

“Both Sadat and Fahd provided other useful intelligence (e.g. Iran receiving military spares for U.S. equipment from Israel). It was also interesting to confirm that President Carter gave the Iraqis a green light to launch the war against Iran through Fahd.”

- Haig has refused to talk about this document and, therefore, its authenticity has not been confirmed.
- Also, the US government has not allowed documents related to Iran-Iraq war to be declassified.
But even without access to official documents, one can show by reading the US and European newspapers of the time that Iranian allegations were not “lunatic assertions” and that the US:

1) Intended to overthow the Iranian government and, as such, was warming up to Saddam Hussein even though Iraq was on the list of “terrorist states,”

2) Saw the war as a possible way of releasing the US hostages, and

3) Used Iranian exiles, such as the former general of the Shah, Oveissi, as a go between to carry messages to Saddam and to encourage him to attack Iran.
Note:

General Gholam Ali Oveissi, Shah’s former ground forces commander, “on Sept. 8, 1978, opened fire on an anti-shah demonstration, killing hundreds in what has come to be known as the Black Friday massacre” (The Washington Post, May 17, 1980).
In September of 1980 Saddam declared Shatt al-Arab “totally Iraqi and totally Arab” and invaded Iran.

He further claimed that 3 Islands in the Persian Gulf belong to Iraq.
After starting border skirmishes with Iran, on September 23, Saddam attacked 10 Iranian airfields.

The war was on!
President Carter declared “strict neutrality in the conflict” on the part of the US. However:

The US rushed to help Saddam by sending

- 4 AWACS and
- a number of support personnel
to Saudi Arabia 6 days after Saddam’s invasion.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were the main allies and financiers of the Saddam Hussein.
The Iran-Iraq war was one of the longest, costliest and most brutal wars of the 20th century. It lasted 8 years and was conducted in the style of WWI, using masses of people in the trenches.
The war had catastrophic consequences in terms of human toll and economic loss.
In late 1983 Saddam, unable to win the war, started to use chemical weapons against the Iranians and, later on, against Iraq’s own Kurdish population.
Question: Who supplied Saddam with chemical weapons and gave him the green light, to use them?

Answer: The United States of America.

It has now become common knowledge that:

- the US supplied much of what Saddam needed in building chemical weapons, including anthrax (see, for example, Denver Post, October 10, 2001, Washington Post, December 30, 2002).

- Donald Rumsfeld, the Middle East envoy, met Saddam right after the first use of chemical weapons. Video: Saddam-Rumsfeld December 20, 1983, Meeting: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/
In 1983, it was written in *The Christian Science Monitor* (December 21, Wednesday) that:

“White House envoy Donald Rumsfeld arrived unexpectedly in Iraq Monday for the first visit by a senior US official in 16 years and discussed bilateral relations and Mideast issues with Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz “in a cordial and frank atmosphere,” the official Iraqi news agency said.

The agency did not mention any possibility of restoring diplomatic relations severed in 1967 after the Arab-Israeli war. . . Iraq and the US have recently renewed contacts at high levels, the most important being a meeting in Paris in May between Mr. Aziz and Secretary of State George Shultz. The US government has removed Iraq’s name from a list of countries alleged to support terrorism.”
Not only did the US remove Iraq from its list of “terrorist nations,” but it did the following:

- In 1984 the US established full diplomatic relations with the government of Saddam Hussein.

- In the same year, it started to provide Iraq with direct military information. Saddam acknowledged this by saying, on May 12, 1984, that “we have benefited from the AWACS in Iraq.”

- Also in the same year, Iran was put on the list of terrorist nations, so that it would not receive arms from any country (this was part of “Operation Staunch,” launched in 1983).

In general, between 1984-87 the US passed at least three sanction bills against Iran with the hope of preventing it from winning the war against Saddam Hussein:

- The January 13, 1984 designation of Iran as a supporter of international terrorism, invoking a ban on any foreign assistance, loan or transfer of arms to Iran;

- The executive order of October 29, 1987, stating that no goods of Iranian origin may be imported into the United States;

- The November 17, 1987, Iranian Transactions Regulations, setting forth detailed licensing procedures for goods exempted from the import ban;

Yet, despite all US help, Iraq could not win the war.

Thus, when in 1986, Iran scored victories in Iraq’s Faw peninsula, the US engaged Iran directly. For example:

- it re-flagged Kuwaiti ships,
- it sunk Iranian boats and oil platforms, and
- **USS Vincennes shot down an Iranian civilian plane**, killing 290 on board.
The shooting down of the Iranian civilian airliner by the US was the beginning of the end of the Iran-Iraq War.

Iran reached the conclusion that they could not win a war against the US and Iraq. They therefore accepted a ceasefire in 1988.

Note that all US actions were contrary to the Algiers Accord.
Question: Was the US satisfied with the result of the Iraq-Iran War?

Answer: Not exactly!

The “dual containment” policy that was started by Brzezinski, and continued afterward by the likes of Brent Scowcroft, was a delicate balancing act that meant to “contain” both Iran and Iraq.

Thus, at times during the Iraq-Iran War the US acted as a double agent, supplying Iran with

- Military information, and
- Arms through Israel (“Iran-Contra scandal”—more on this later).
Ultimately, the April Glaspie affair, Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait and the US war against Iraq must be understood in the context of the “dual containment policy.”
In the famous conversation between the two on July 25, 1990, the US Ambassador seemed to express a sense of indifference on the part of the US toward the way Hussein would settle his problem with Kuwait.

In response to Hussein’s comment that Kuwait is waging an “economic war” against Iraq and that Iraq needed higher oil prices, the Ambassador said that

“I know you need funds. We understand that and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country. But we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.” (The Washington Post, September 13, 1990)
The Role of Israel

As mentioned earlier, similar to the US, Israel had a symbiotic relationship with the Shah as well. The relationship included:

- **Economic deals**, including the export of oil from Iran to Israel;
- **Military relations**, including helping the Shah with **missile technology** to counter Iraq;
- **Intelligence services**, including **Mossad** and **Shin Bet** helping the notorious **SAVAK** put down dissent and training internal security.
Indeed, the last representative of Israel to Iran (1978), Uri Lubrani, was the former head of Israeli security service Shin Bet.


There were, however, certain differences between the Shah’s relation with the US and Israel. For example,

- The Shah had an open relation with the US.
- With Israel, however, the Shah tried to keep the relation secret:
  - Israel had no embassy in Iran and there were no signs on its mission building.
  - Many Israeli officials arrived in Iran’s airport late at night and in disguise.
Many Iranians, however, knew of the close relation between the Shah and Israel and despised the Israeli support for the Shah’s rule.

This resentment came into the open on a number of occasions. For example,

- In the **Asian soccer games** in Tehran in 1968, a crowed attacked an effigy of **Moshe Dayan**,
- Spontaneous demonstrations took place after **Yom Kippur War**,
- **El AL Office** was attacked in Iran in 1977.
The “Islamic Revolution” ended the cozy relation between the Shah and Israel.

- 1500 Israelis residing in Iran were evacuated in haste,
- Bilateral military relations stopped,
- The flow of oil to Israel was cut off,
- Israeli mission was closed and the Palestinian flag was raised over it.
Israel now saw both Iran and Iraq as enemies that must be destroyed. Similar to the US, it also adopted a “dual containment” policy of trying to destroy both countries by prolonging the war. But there was one difference:

As Thomas Friedman once observed, Israel wanted to see the Iran-Iraq war continue, but reasoned that “my enemy’s enemy is my friend”


As such at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, Israel sold arms to Iran and did the same during the “Iran-Contra Scandal.”
As the war progressed and an Iranian victory became a distinct possibility, Israeli reasoning shifted to “Iraq has no common border with Israel, while Iran, through her messengers and her religion, is actually on our border” and that the “rule of ‘My enemy’s enemy is my friend’ does not hold when my enemy’s enemy is also my enemy.” (Friedman, 1986)
With the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war, the first US invasion of Iraq and destruction of the country, Israel turned its attention mostly to overthrowing the Iranian government.

In addition to direct cooperation with the US, Israel used its powerful lobbies, such as The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) to underwrite US foreign policy in the Middle East.

On AIPAC see:

Our Current Agenda
What We’ve Recently Achieved
What They Say About Us
Press Releases

When the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) began in the 1950s, only one name was associated with the newly formed organization -- Si Kenen -- founder and Washingtonian. Today, AIPAC has 65,000 members across all 50 states who are at the forefront of the most vexing issues facing Israel today: stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, fighting terrorism and achieving peace. And above all, ensuring that Israel is strong enough to meet these challenges.

For these reasons, The New York Times has called AIPAC the most important organization affecting America's relationship with Israel, while Fortune magazine has consistently ranked AIPAC among America's most powerful interest groups.

Through more than 2,000 meetings with members of Congress - at home and in Washington - AIPAC activists help pass more than 100 pro-Israel legislative initiatives a year. From procuring nearly $3 billion in aid critical to Israel's security, to funding joint U.S.-Israeli efforts to build a defense against unconventional weapons, AIPAC members are involved in the most crucial issues facing Israel.
AIPAC, as its website states, manages to pass just about every Israeli sponsored legislation dealing with the Middle East, particularly those against Iran.

For example, you see such “take action” announcements on a daily basis on AIPAC:
In the wake of Iran's nearly 20 years of secret development of nuclear weapons and ongoing efforts to undermine the work of U.N. arms inspectors, Congress has passed legislation aimed at halting Tehran's nuclear program. The Senate unanimously passed a resolution condemning Iran's failure to adhere to International Atomic Energy Agency agreements and continuing efforts to develop a nuclear capability. This resolution (S. Con. Res. 81), introduced by Sens. Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Richard Lugar (R-IN), and Joseph Biden (D-DE), urges the U.N. Security Council "to address the threat to international peace and security posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program and take such action as may be necessary." Earlier this year, the House passed similar legislation calling upon signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including the United States, to use all appropriate means to deter, dissuade, and prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Thank your Senators and House members for supporting these resolutions.
Note:

In late August 2004 FBI discovered a spy network in the Department of Defense (under Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith) which passed confidential documents on Iran to AIPAC and from there to Israel.

But nothing happened to AIPAC.

Indeed, representatives of both Presidential candidates, namely, Condoleezza Rice and Richard Holbrooke, appeared at AIPAC’s “Largest-Ever National Summit” on October 24-25 in Hollywood, Florida, to pay homage to an agency that was accused of involvement in spying.
But AIPAC does not really need spies to conduct its business.


Many of the Washington Institute staffs and advisors are or have been policy makers in the US.

(See: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC11.php?CID=133&newActiveSubNav=Board%20of%20Advisors&activeSubNavLink=templateC11.php%3FCID%3D133&newActiveNav=aboutUs.)
Since the early 1990s various factions in the Washington Institute have been working within the US administrations to shape the US policy toward Iran.

The first such individual was Martin Indyk.

Indyk is an Australian native who had at one point served as press advisor to Yitzhak Shamir.
Subsequent to his arrival in the US, he held the following positions

- Executive director of the Washington Institute (1985);
- Position paper writer on dual containment;
- Adviser to Dukakis, Bush, and Clinton;
- Senior director for Middle East matters at the National Security Council (1992);
- Special Assistant to President Clinton;
- Ambassador to Israel (1995);

In 2000 Indyk was accused by the FBI of mishandling classified material.
At the behest of Israel, Martin Indyk formulated and pushed forward three reasons for continued US sanctions against Iran:

- Iran’s support for “international terrorism”;
- Opposition to the peace process in the Middle East;
- Pursuit of “weapons of mass destruction.”
These three accusations have been used by both the Clinton and the current administration in order to overthrow the Iranian government and replace it with a US-Israeli friendly one.

The difference between the policies of the two administrations are as follows.
The Clinton Years
During the Clinton Administration the US and Israeli governments relied mostly on **US sanctions to bring down the Iranian government.**

Numerous sanctions passed against Iran, each tougher than the next.

For example:
The Iran-Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act of 1993, banning any transfer that aids Iranian or Iraqi attempts to acquire chemical, biological, nuclear, or destabilizing numbers and types of advanced conventional weapons;

The executive order of March 15, 1995, which prohibited a US citizen from entering into contracts for the financing or overall management or supervision of the development of petroleum resources located in Iran or over which Iran claims jurisdiction;

The executive order of May 6, 1995, prohibiting exportation from the United States to Iran of goods, technology or services, including trade financing by US banks;

The last major sanction enacted in 1996 was called the “Iran-Libya Sanctions Act” (ILSA) or “D’Amato’s act.”

It was named after the senator from New York, Alfonse D’Amato, who was closely associated with the Israeli lobby groups.

ILSA imposed secondary sanctions against any third country investing in Iran.
However, after ILSA, the intensity and frequency of sanction bills slowed for the following reasons:

- **US** sanction laws had become too extreme and non-enforceable,
- **Madeline Albright** became **Secretary of States** and replaced Warren Christopher, who had personal grudges against Iran,
- **US** corporations started to play an active role in opposing sanctions.

This last reason was, indeed, fundamental.
These US corporations, which for years had been trying to get back to Iran, but were prevented by the Israeli lobby from doing so, included some of the most well-known figures in their corporate lobbies.

For example,

- the oil lobby brought out Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft, John Sununu, Richard Cheney, James Baker and Lloyd Bentsen.

- the agricultural lobby brought out Representatives Lee Hamilton and Phil Crane, and Senators Richard Lugar, Larry Craig, and Byron Dorgan.
The US corporations also helped to create a number of fronts in 1997 to fight sanctions, such as

the American Iranian Council (AIC) and the Iranian Trade Association (ITA).

And, in 1997, they finally banded together to create an umbrella lobby group called

“USA*Engage,” an offshoot of the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC).
The heavy weapons that US industries brought into action against US sanctions slowed the advancement of Israeli forces in articulating the US foreign policy toward Iran.

The result, however, was a chaotic policy that took no particular direction.

We can see the chaotic nature of this policy by looking at the speeches and actions of some of the members of the Clinton Administration.
In 1999 Clinton himself gave a famous speech, in which he said:

“Iran has been the subject of quite a lot of abuse from various Western nations. I think sometimes it’s quite important to tell people, look, you have a right to be angry at something my country or my culture or others that are generally allied with us did to you 50 or 60 or 100 or 150 years ago.”
I feel your pain!
This was, of course, the same President who four years earlier had said in front of the World Jewish Congress:

“Iran is the inspiration and paymaster to terrorists.”

Or:

“You simply can’t do business with people by day who are killing your people by night.”
The greatest admission of guilt, however, came in March 2000, when Madeline Albright gave a speech in front of the AIC in which she stated:

“In 1953, the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran’s popular prime minister, Mohammed Mossadegh…the coup was clearly a setback for Iran’s political development and it is easy to see why so many Iranians continue to resent this intervention by America in their internal affair.”
She further stated:

“As President Clinton has said, the United States must bear a fair share of responsibility for the problems that have arisen in US-Iranian relations. *Even in more recent years aspects of US policy towards Iraq during its conflict with Iran appear to have been regrettably shortsighted, especially in light of our subsequent experience with Saddam Hussein.”*
The Bush Years
When President Bush was first “elected” he brought into power a number of people who are known as “neoconservatives” (neocons)


See also Reflections of a Neoconservative by Irving Kristol, 1979.

On the web see:


Or RightWeb:

http://rightweb.irc-online.org/
Many of these neocons served as advisors in the Bush Administration.

You can find the profile of their key figures and their writings on the web. For example,

http://www.csmonitor.com/specials/neocon/index.html

You can also see the institutions they are affiliated with on the web. For example,

http://www.csmonitor.com/specials/neocon/spheresInfluence.html
When these neocons came to power in the first Bush Administration, *The Jerusalem Post* wrote a lengthy article about some of them and stated that (December 8, 2000):  

“Both Perle and Wolfowitz have been especially outspoken critics of Clinton’s policy toward Iraq and the peace process. . . Both Perle and Wolfowitz are the type of candidates the pro-Israel lobby is pushing.”
And again, in January 19, 2001, in an article entitled “All the president’s Middle East men,” Jerusalem Post, after enumerating how many people Israel has in the new Administration, wrote:

“Paul Wolfowitz . . . The Jewish and pro-Israel communities are jumping for joy. . . He has been one of the loudest proponents of a tough policy toward Iraq focused on finding a way to bring down Saddam Hussein’s regime.”
The Jerusalem Post then prophetically wrote:

“What you will have are two institutions grappling for control of policy.”

It then added:

“It is no secret in Washington—or anywhere else for that matter—that the policies will be determined less by Bush himself and more by his inner circle of advisers.”
The Jerusalem Post was right!

Neocons, such as Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, John Bolton, etc. found a perfect President in the White House to pursue their policies, a President who was not known exactly for his immense knowledge of the Middle East, superb intellect and great aptitude.
See “Bush Bloopers”!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBm5ZSWbD14
Q: How were the policies of the neocons different than the policies of those who came before them?

A: The basic difference is in form, rather than substance. Their policies were aggressive, ruthless and Machiavellian in character.

Given these policies, all they needed was a “catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.”

“The Catastrophic and Catalyzing Event”
September 11, 2001
9/11 gave the “neocons” a perfect opportunity to carry on their policies.

With regard to Iraq they put forward many reasons for invading it:

- Building WMD, particularly nuclear weapons
- Supporting terrorism
- Harboring Al-Qaeda
- Lack of democracy
- Violating human rights
- Invading Kuwait and Iran!
- Having used chemical weapons against Kurds and Iranian!
But the two main reasons that the “neocons” used for invading Iraq were:

- Saddam’s WMD
- Saddam’s relation with Al-Qaeda

They mostly settled on WMD.
In an interview with *Vanity Fair*, in May 2003, and after having found no WMD, Wolfowitz said:

“for bureaucratic reasons, we settled on one issue—weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on.”
Shock and Awe!

The War Was On
But long before the invasion of Iraq, the Israelis and "neocon" counterparts were targeting other countries in the Middle East as well, particularly Iran.

This was especially necessary since right after 9/11, the Iranian government, Europeans and the State Department actually found an opportunity to improve relations between Iran and the US.

Israelis and "neocons" moved quickly to kill this rapprochement in the bud.
On September 21, 2001, *The Jerusalem Post* wrote:

“Former prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, testifying before the House Government Reform Committee, said yesterday that if the US includes terrorism-sponsoring regimes like Syria, Iran, or the Palestinian Authority in a coalition against worldwide terrorism, then the alliance ‘will be defeated from the beginning.’ . . . Netanyahu, aligning himself with those like Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz—who would like the US war to include action against Iraq, a terrorist-sponsoring state bent on acquiring weapons of mass destruction—warned that a failure to preempt acquisition by Iraq or Iran of such capabilities would lead to hundreds of thousands of casualties.”
On October 12, 2001, *The Jerusalem Post* wrote:

In his visit with President Bush, Sharon warns him of “existential threats to Israel emanating from Iraq and Iran.”

On November 16, 2001, *The Jerusalem Post* writes: “Israel has loudly protested any signs of US cuddling up to Iran and certainly would fear any expansion of Iranian influence over Afghanistan in a post-Taliban world.”
On January 4, 2002, *The Jerusalem Post* quoted Netanyahu to say:

“American power topples the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and the al-Qaida network there crumbles on its own. The United States must now act similarly against the other terror regimes—Iran, Iraq, Arafat’s dictatorship, Syria, and a few others. Some of these regimes will have to be toppled, some of them punished and deterred.”
Similarly, in an interview with Ariel Sharon, *The Times of London* (2/5/2002) wrote that according to Sharon:

“Iran is the center of ‘world terror,’ and as soon as an Iraq conflict is concluded, he will push for Iran to be at the top of the ‘to do list’ . . . He sees Iran as ‘behind terror all around the world’ and a direct threat to Israel.”
Then, of course, on January 6 came the Karine-A affair! (See *The Jerusalem Post*, January 6, 2002)
In short, the Israelis and their “neocon” counterparts in the US government changed the direction of the US foreign policy toward Iran:

On January 30, 2002, President Bush gave his famous State of the Union Address, in which he referred to Iraq, Iran and Korea as the “Axis of Evil.”

In the speech he said: “Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people’s hope for freedom.”
David Frum, a “neocon” speech writer, took credit for writing the segment of speech dealing with the “axis of evil.”
- The 2002 State of the Union Address made it clear who had the President’s ear.
- The “neocons” and the Israelis were now in full charge of the US policy towards Iran.
- The Bush Administration’s Iran-policy was now identical to that of Likud Party.
A campaign now began to do to Iran what had been done to Iraq.

The campaign involves just about all the accusations leveled against Iraq:

- Building WMD
- Supporting terrorism
- Harboring Al-Qaeda
- Helping insurgency in Iraq
- Lack of full democracy
- Violating women’s right
- etc.
But, similar to the Iraq case, for “bureaucratic reasons,” the neocons and Israelis settled mostly on one issue: Iran’s “development of nuclear weapons”

This charge has been repeated almost on a daily basis for the past few years.
In my book I trace the history of US-Israel accusation that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. I point out that:

• In 1984 the “neoconservative” Kenneth L. Adelman (the US Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency at the time) argued Iran will have a nuclear weapon in two years.

• The Jerusalem Report of March 26, 1992, stated: “Israel keeps a wary watch on Teheran’s march to the Bomb. By the year 2000, Iran will almost certainly have the Bomb.”
• In 1992 the CIA Director Robert Gates had told a House Armed Services subcommittee that Iran could have a nuclear bomb “by the year 2000 if the West does not prevent it” (*The Washington Post*, November 17, 1992).

• Actually, beginning in 1992 the Israeli sources started to contend that Iran already has 3 or 4 nuclear warheads, all purchased from former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan.
The alleged purchase of nuclear warheads by Iran continued well into the late 1990s:

- On **April 9, 1998**, *The Jerusalem Post* stated “Iran received several nuclear warheads from a former Soviet republic in the early 1990s and Russian experts maintained them, according to Iranian government documents relayed to Israel and obtained by *The Jerusalem Post*.”

- On **April 10, 1998**, *The Jerusalem Post* stated “Iran paid $25 million for what appears to have been two tactical atomic weapons smuggled out of the former Soviet Union in a highly classified operation aided by technicians from Argentina.”
• All such news were, of course, complete fabrication.

• But the US and Israel continued to manufacture these news with more frequency after the US invasion of Iraq.

• Each time, the fabricated news became more sensational.
For example,

On September 23, 2004, in the U.N. General Assembly
Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom stated:

“The international community now realizes that Iran—
with missiles that can reach London, Paris, Berlin and
southern Russia—does not only pose a threat to the
security of Israel, but to the security and stability of the
whole world.
Indeed, Iran has replaced Saddam Hussein as the world’s
number one exporter of terror, hate and instability.”
On October 25, 2004, in the Israeli Parliament, Sharon stated:

“Iran is making every effort to arm itself with nuclear weapons, with ballistic means of delivery, and it is preparing an enormous terrorist network with Syria and Lebanon.”
On August 17, 2004, at the Hudson Institute, John Bolton stated:

“Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons capability is moving it further and further down the path toward international isolation. We cannot let Iran, a leading sponsor of international terrorism, acquire nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them to Europe, most of central Asia and the Middle East, or beyond. Without serious, concerted, immediate intervention by the international community, Iran will be well on the road to doing so.”

“As Condoleezza Rice told Fox News two weeks ago, ‘The Iranians have been trouble for a very long time. And it’s one reason that this regime has to be isolated in its bad behavior, not quote-unquote, ‘engaged.’”
In my book I show that not only such allegations became more frequent but that with each day passing and no nuclear weapons, or even evidence of development of such weapons, showing up, the ever-changing prediction of the doomsday appeared to be pushed forward into the future.

Throughout, of course, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has maintained that there is no evidence of diversion of nuclear material in Iran.
But the US and Israelis did not take no for an answer.

On an almost daily basis they repeated their accusations, beat the war drums and threatened Iran with military attacks.

For example,

On January 21, 2005, Dick Cheney stated:

“Israelis might well decide to act first, and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards.”
On January 27, 2005, Shaul Mofaz, Israeli Defense Minister, stated:

“We know that Iran has a very high desire to achieve the goal of possessing nuclear power. The fact that in Iran there is an extreme regime and that they already have long-range surface-to-surface missiles, means that having a nuclear power will create a threat to the free world. . .

“Iran is very close to the point of no return, which means the enrichment of uranium, and we believe that the leadership of the U.S. together with the European countries should stop as soon as possible this military nuclear program in Iran.”
On February 2, 2005, in his State of the Union Address, Bush stated:

“Today, Iran remains the world’s primary state sponsor of terror – pursuing nuclear weapons . . . The Iranian regime . . . must give up its uranium enrichment program and any plutonium reprocessing, and end its support for terror.”
On February 16, 2005, Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom stated:

Iran is “trying very hard to develop the nuclear bomb. . . The question is not if the Iranians will have a nuclear bomb in 2009, 10 or 11, the main question is when are they going to have the knowledge to do it. . . We believe in six months from today they will end all the tests and experiments they are doing to have that knowledge.”
According to *The Washington Times*, on February 21, 2005:

“Members of the Israeli parliament publicly have called for pre-emptive strikes now.”

On February 22, 2005, Bush stated:

“This notion that the United States is getting ready to attack Iran is simply ridiculous. Having said that, all options are on the table.”
Much of the double talk or military threat was posturing and engaging in psychological warfare.

A military attack against Iran is difficult and could have long term consequences.

Therefore, such an attack has never been the first-choice option of the US-Israel.
What the US and Israel tried to do was to repeat the Iraqi scenario, that is

- Pass severe UN economic sanctions against Iran.
- Wreck the Iranian economy and weaken the Iranian government.
- Overthrow Iran’s government afterward.
Ultimately, they succeeded in passing three UN sanction resolutions against Iran:

Security Council Resolution 1737 in December 2006

Security Council Resolution 1747 in March 2007

Security Council Resolution 1803 in March 2008

Among other things, these resolutions demanded that Iran halt all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

They also imposed financial sanctions against certain individuals, organizations and banks.

In addition, they asked states to be vigilant against the entry of certain Iranians into their countries.
Iran has defied the resolutions, arguing that they are illegal, since they violate Iran’s right under Article IV of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty:

“Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty.”

Attempts by the Bush Administration to pass a fourth UN sanction resolution against Iran ran into difficulties for a number of reasons.

In particular, the rising oil prices, followed by a massive economic downturn, slowed down the US policy of containment of Iran.

In the end, the Bush Administration ran out of time to do to Iran what it had done to Iraq.
The Obama Years

Stay tuned!