

Richard Nixon Confronts the Persian Gulf, 1969-1972

When the British Labour party announced withdrawal of British forces from the Persian Gulf in January 1968, the United States faced a potential power vacuum in the area. The incoming Nixon administration, however, preoccupied with the Soviet Union and China and the war in Vietnam, had no intentions of replacing the British in the Gulf. The president and national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, realized that it was not possible to reverse British withdrawal and urged the United Kingdom to retain as much as possible of their former position in the region. To avoid further military commitments, the United States encouraged Iran and Saudi Arabia to maintain area security. Missed by most scholars, Nixon and Kissinger engineered the rise in oil prices between 1969 and 1972 to enable Saudi Arabia and Iran to purchase the necessary military hardware to serve as guardians of the Gulf.¹ Rather than fighting the demand for raising oil prices, the United States seemed to be holding its hand over the Arab producers, even radical anti-American regimes. James Akins, the state

¹ Daniel Yergin, The Prize: The Epic quest for Oil , Power & Money (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 581-86; J.B. Kelly, Arabia, the Gulf and the West (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980); 346-50; Douglas Little, American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945 (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 65-69. For an alternative view, see: Richard C. Thornton, The Nixon Years: The Reshaping of American Policy (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2001), 69-88.

department's (and later Nixon's) chief oil expert practically begged the oil producers to increase prices in an essay in Foreign Affairs. In addition, Akins totally rejected force as an alternative to keep the producers in check. Libya was the first Middle Eastern oil producer to successfully assault the Anglo-American government/company front, accompanied by a barrage of anti-Western propaganda and activities. Still Akin's ruled out the use of force: "As for the possibility of using force (actually suggested by a handful of imperialists *manqués* [emphasis in original]), suffice it that it was never for moment considered". Given Libyan strongman, Muammar Qaddafi's, future antics and anti-Western actions, Akin's conclusion on Libyan oil policy is highly revealing: "The Libyans were competent men in a strong position; they played their hand straight, and found it a winning one".² In addition, also missed by most scholars, Nixon and Kissinger encouraged Iraqi Kurds to rebel to contain the growing threat of radical Iraq to their clients as well as seeking to contain revolutionary movements on the lower Gulf.

Only Britain maintaining as much as possible of its former position could be rated as an unqualified success by the Nixon administration. Ironically, with its announcement of leaving the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971, Labour had maneuvered itself into a position of heavy responsibility combined with steadily decreasing influence. Problems in the Gulf abounded, requiring continued British attention and work if they were to leave the area in good order and avoiding another Aden type situation, where their November 1967 departure was accompanied by chaos and terrorism. There were numerous border claims to sort out, as well as opportunistic new ones emerging in the wake of British withdrawal. Iran claimed Bahrain by virtue of temporary occupation in the 18th century, and the Abu Musa Island from the

² James E. Akins, "The Oil Crisis: This Time the Wolf is Here", Foreign Affairs (April, 1973): 462-90; Jack Anderson, Fiasco (New York: Times Books, 1983).

sheikhdom of Sharjah and the Tunbs Islands from the sheikhdom of Ras al Khaimah. The foreign office feared this dispute between Iranians and Arabs could result in military confrontation, complicating British efforts to leave on schedule. If the shah occupied the islands, Britain might have to use force in accordance with its treaty obligations. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia renewed his dormant claim to the Buraimi oasis, in the British protected territories of Abu Dhabi and Muscat and Oman, but the foreign office discounted the king using military force to press his case. While challenging the declining imperial authority, Britain at the same time needed the assistance of the shah and the king to press Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, 'Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah to federate into the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Then, all good things could happen; Britain would help create a union force incorporating the Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS). The TOS were a mercenary force commanded by British officers, controlled by the British government not owing allegiance to any ruler. By local standards, it was well trained, experienced and effective. Progress toward the UAE was painfully slow, both because of internal squabbles among the potential members of the union and Irani and Saudi territorial claims. With the British announcement to leave, the rebellion in Dhofar, Oman deepened. The foreign and commonwealth office believed the substantial British investment in the Sultan's Armed Forces could successfully contain the uprising, making it possible to withdraw British forces according to the established timetable.³

³ Foreign and Commonwealth Office memorandum, "Political and Security Factors Affecting the Process of British Military Withdrawal from the Persian Gulf", October 7, 1969, FCO 8/985/NB 10/27, Public Records Office, Kew, England (hereafter cited as FCO with appropriate filing designations).

For all their bluster about reversing Labour's withdrawal decision of January 1968, after their surprise victory in the election of June 1970, the Conservatives adhered to Labour's policy. But in contrast to Labour's wish of cutting the umbilical cord of empire, the Tories wanted to retain as much influence as possible in the Persian Gulf. During the Anglo-American talks on the Gulf in June 26, 1972 the foreign office explained the new British role in the area:

Britain intended to play as active and prominent a role in Gulf affairs as was possible in existing political circumstances. The modernisation of British relations with the Gulf States had proceeded smoothly, and instead of the low profile usually adopted by Britain in such post-independence or post-colonial situations, British influence remained strong and visible throughout the area.⁴

Foreign minister, sir Alec Douglas-Home began a series of consultations with the Gulf rulers to ascertain whether Labour's policies could be reversed. The major powers of the Gulf, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait opposed continued British presence after 1971, while the lesser sheikdoms wanted Britain to remain, although only Dubai was prepared to say so publicly. Remaining under such circumstances would have opened Britain to charges of imperialism and provided water to the propaganda mills of Iraq and the revolutionary movements on the Arabian peninsula, making a continued presence exceedingly difficult.⁵ The new prime minister, Edward Heath, explained to the cabinet on July 23, 1970 that Britain's objective in the Gulf, was: "to secure a progressive reduction in expenditure while encouraging and assisting the local Rulers to shoulder their own responsibilities within the framework of an

⁴ Comment by A. D. Parson, FCO, June 26, 1972, FCO 8/1806/NB 3/30401.

⁵ David Holden, "The Persian Gulf: After the British Raj", Foreign Affairs (July, 1971): 721-35.

effective federal organization”.⁶ The shah was persuaded to drop his claim to Bahrain, in return for Britain’s tacit acceptance of Iran occupying the Persian Gulf islands to which he had laid claim. The United Arab Emirates were proclaimed on December 2, 1971, but was the most fragile of creations patched together rather hurriedly by the departing British. Bahrain and Qatar opted out of the new federation. Sharjah’s ruler was murdered two months after the inauguration of the UAE in an attempted coup, while Sharjah and Fujairah fought a small war over local territorial issues in 1972.⁷ Still, even after 1971 vestiges of the British position remained in the Persian Gulf. According to James H. Noyes, United States deputy assistant secretary of defense, Britain still had important political, commercial and military ties to the area. The military ties in addition to air facilities on the Masirah island off the coast of Oman, included regular air and naval visits, joint exercises with the local states and military forces assigned to Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi and Qatar. The Americans were well pleased with the residual of British influence in the Gulf. “So while small in number and without direct operational functions as British military per se”, Noyes observed, “their importance is

⁶ Heath to cabinet, July 23, 1970, Cabinet papers (hereafter cited CAB with appropriate filing designations) CAB 128/47 pt. I, CM (70) 8th Conclusions, Public Records Office; F. Gregory Gause, “British and American Policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973”, Review of International Studies 11 (1985): 247- 73.

⁷ G. G. Arthur, “Persian Gulf: Annual Review for 1970”, FCO 8/1570/NB1/2; foreign minister Douglas Home to prime minister Edward Heath, November 12, 1970, Prime Ministers’ Records (hereafter cited as PREM with appropriate filing designations) PREM 15/538, Public Records Office; Nadav Safran, Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security (London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 137.

considerable”.⁸ Britain’s treaty of friendship with the UAE provided for the provision of British military advisory teams.⁹ In fact, as one authority notes the British withdrawal from the UAE was more apparent than real. British nationals still dominated the commercial and banking life of the sheikdom, while British officers ran its military forces.¹⁰ The whole point of Tory policy, Home explained his American counterpart was to establish an indirect British presence “so that we could exercise the maximum political influence with the minimum British presence”.¹¹

While Britain wanted Faisal’s assistance in leaving a peaceful Gulf behind, Britain’s relations with Saudi Arabia were complicated. Aside from Buraimi, the king was still upset with Britain for leaving Aden and the Gulf. The king only reluctantly agreed to cooperate for a stable transition in the Gulf. Suspecting that the main British concern was orderly withdrawal, lessened Faisal’s need to continue his special relations with Britain.¹² Distancing himself from Britain, Faisal could not afford to alienate the Americans. Attempting an independent posture in the Middle East, Faisal had created an ‘Islamic Alliance’ in 1964 to counter Egyptian dictator Gamal Abdul Nasser’s appeals to Arab nationalism and maintain a

⁸ Noyes, testimony, February 2, 1972, “U.S. Interests in and Policy toward the Persian Gulf”, Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Near East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 92 Cong: 2nd Sess. (Washington: GPO, 1972), p. 6.

⁹ R. M. Burrell and Alvin J. Cotrell, “Iran, the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian Ocean”, National Strategy Information Center (New York, 1972), 21.

¹⁰ John Duke Anthony, Arab States of the Lower Gulf: People, Politics, Petroleum (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1975), 228.

¹¹ Mc William Rogers and Home, July 11, 1970, FCO 7/1828/ALUSJ/548/12.

¹² British embassy Jidda to FCO, April 3, 1969, FCO 8/1122/ NB S2/2.

certain distance from the great powers. As the king grew older, he put more and more store in his Islamic credentials, not only as a guardian of the holy places but also as an instrument for gaining support for Saudi policies in the Arab and Muslim world. Faisal viewed American policies in Yemen, which had recognized an anti-Saudi Arabian regime, support of Israel, and failure to counter the growing Soviet influence after the six-day war with distaste. The king, however, was realist enough to know that ties with the United States were so substantial that the links could not be broken without endangering the survival of his regime. Several American presidents had guaranteed Saudi security against unprovoked aggression, and, the United States was the leading arms supplier to the kingdom. American companies and technicians were closely interwoven with the Saudi administrative and economic fabric, while ARAMCO supplied 80 per cent of Saudi revenue.¹³ The United States, therefore, had little cause for concern when designating Saudi Arabia as one of its pillars in the Persian Gulf. The other pillar was Iran, as a substitute for Britain in the Persian Gulf.¹⁴

Deeply upset by Israel's victory in the six day war, the war itself worked to Faisal's advantage. In return for a substantial subvention of Egypt, the Saudi Arabian monarch forced Nasser to withdraw Egyptian forces from Yemen. Ostentatiously united in the fight against Israel, there was a deep undercurrent of Egyptian and Saudi mistrust and rivalry.¹⁵ Having

¹³ British embassy Jeddah to FCO, April 3, 1969, FCO 8/1172/ NB S2/2, secretary of state William Rogers to American embassy Jeddah, March 24, 1970, State Department Central File, Political Affairs and Relations, SAUD-US, National Archives, College Park, Maryland (hereafter cited as POL with appropriate designations).

¹⁴ Douglas Little, "Gideon's Band: America and the Middle East since 1945", Diplomatic History 18: 4 (Fall, 1994): 513- 40.

¹⁵ American embassy Jidda to state department, December 3, 1969, POL 17 Saud-UAR.

broken relations with the United States, Nasser was forced to turn to the Kremlin in an effort to regroup his losses after the six day war. With the aid of massive Soviet military assistance, Egyptian artillery bombarded Israeli positions along the Suez canal in early 1969, in what Nasser termed a 'war of attrition'. When Israel responded with air raids deep into Egyptian territory, Moscow eagerly supplied Nasser with surface to air missiles and even Soviet pilots. Ironically, having seemingly secured a strong foothold in the eastern Mediterranean, the Soviet Union was unceremoniously evicted from Egypt by Nasser's successor Anwar Sadat in 1972 in attempt to seek American goodwill. American relations with Egypt were still broken when Nasser died of a heart attack in September 1970, committed as he had always been to Arab nationalism, telling Nixon's envoy plainly that he did not trust the United States.¹⁶ Nasser hinted to the United States he might be willing to restore relations if the Americans pressured Israel to return to its pre-1967 borders. The new realist team in the White House, president Nixon and national security advisor Henry Kissinger saw little reason to placate a supplicant Nasser, requesting favors while offering nothing in return. "Why we should pay a price", Kissinger condescendingly sniffs in his memoirs, "for the restoration of relations which he had cut off under a totally false pretext was never made clear". As long as the Egyptian leader harbored large numbers of Soviets, championed radical Arab nationalism with its concomitant anti-American rhetoric, Nasser offered Kissinger and Nixon little incentive to restore American relations with Egypt.¹⁷ In reality; Nixon continued the

¹⁶ Kissinger to Nixon, April 22, 1970, UAR Vol. III, 1 Feb-30 April, 1970, Richard Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, National Security File (hereafter cited as RNNSC), National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

¹⁷ Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1979), 347 (for quote), 378.

traditional American policy of conciliating Nasser: “We are prepared for a restoration of relations on the basis of mutual respect whenever conditions are appropriate”.¹⁸

To cover the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, the president introduced the Nixon-doctrine, which also had global implications. The United States would still honor its treaty obligations and provide nuclear cover to its allies and economic and military assistance in lieu of American troops, while the threatened country (read Vietnam) had to do the fighting. Cynical commentators claim that, in Vietnam, the bodies changed color, reduced American losses and covered American troop withdrawals. Reducing American commitments, the Nixon doctrine called for close American allies to substitute for the United States. In Asia the close ally was Japan, while in Africa Zaire, Angola (then a Portuguese colony) and South Africa divided the honor. In the Middle East, Nixon believed the shah fit the job description as regional policeman.¹⁹ Much has been made by scholars of Iran being called in the context of the Nixon doctrine, to fill the power vacuum in the Persian Gulf for the Americans, arguing the president and Kissinger tilted towards Iran to counter growing Soviet influence in Iraq. But regional issues were also of importance, Iraq supported revolutionary movements on the Arabian Peninsula to counter the growing influence of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

¹⁸ Nixon to Nasser in Kissinger to Nixon, March 29, 1969, UAR vol. I, Jan. 1969-31 Aug. 1969, RNNSC.

¹⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 298-99; Raymond L. Garthoff, Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1985), 1078; Walter LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-1990 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 262.

Nixon wanted to build up Iran to one of the strongest powers in the Middle East. When Nixon and Kissinger flew directly from the Moscow summit in May 1972 to Tehran, it was for the shah a flattering confirmation of his importance. In Tehran, Nixon and Kissinger permitted the monarch to purchase any conventional weapons he desired from the American arsenal, and the shah bought in a grand style. Walter LaFeber notes: “The shah responded by ordering planes and other equipment” as if he was going through the Sears, Roebuck catalog, “in the words of one [American] official”. Finally, the shah had the means to make Iran a great power, and, combined with rapidly rising oil prices, his dream of making Iran into one of the five leading industrialized powers in the world seemed possible.²⁰ To pay for all this military hardware, Nixon and Kissinger encouraged the Iranian monarch to increase oil prices. The Nixon administration had little concern about continued low oil prices, but rather wanted to secure the flow of oil to the west.²¹ The United States purposely undermined the close Anglo-American cooperation with the major oil companies after 1945. The president’s special adviser on the Middle East, Hal Saunders, observed: “There are some who argue that a takeover of the companies is only a matter of time and that there is no point in investing a lot of the President’s prestige in fighting that problem”.²² The British, too, supported the increase

²⁰James A. Bill, The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations (London: Yale University Press, 1988), 192; Garthoff, Détente, 74; LaFeber, America, 263.

²¹ Acting secretary John Irwin, memorandum to the President, “Iran’s Negotiations with the Oil Companies: Where We Stand”, January 26, 1973, Iran – Oil, HAK office files, RNNSC, box 137.

²² Saunders to general Scowcroft, February 5, 1973, in ibid.

in oil prices, benefiting from increasing arms sales and Saudi and Iranian assistance in suppressing the rebellion in Oman.²³

The resulting Iranian military expansion was of gigantic proportions, arms were bought on a scale never seen before. Between 1972 and 1977, Iran bought weapons and weapons systems for \$16.2 billion, while the Iranian defense budget increased by 680 per cent. At the same time, oil prices increased drastically, but most of the profits went to the United States to pay for all this military hardware. The Iranian army was on paper much stronger than the British army, but the reality was different. Lacking the infrastructure and educated personnel to service the sophisticated military machinery, the shah imported large numbers of Americans to run his armed forces. Americans bringing with them the best and the worst from the United States, having little understanding, respect or knowledge of Iranian society. There were numerous unfortunate episodes, which fuelled the enormous hatred of America coming to surface during the Iranian revolution of 1979. Episodes such as lightly dressed American women strolling through a mosque, American teenagers on motorbikes riding through the Shah mosque, while Iranians were often referred to as 'sand-niggers' and 'ragheads'.²⁴

Iraq was the only obstacle for the shah's dream of dominating the region. Iran and Iraq had been mutually antagonistic since the Iraqi revolution in 1958, but this came only on top of centuries of ethnic and religious rivalries. The Iraqis are in the main Arabs and the Iraqi elite are Sunni-Muslims, while most Iranians are non-Arabs and Shia-Muslims. In the wake of its revolution, and deeply conscious of being Iran's inferior in population, wealth and economic

²³ Frank Brenchley, Britain and the Middle East: An Economic History 1945-87 (London: Lester Crook Academic Publishing, 1989), 205.

²⁴ Bill, The Eagle and the Lion, 202-203, 381-382; Kelly, Arabia, 300-309.

growth, Iraq signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union in April 1972, just a month prior to Nixon and Kissinger's visit to Tehran. Both the United States and Iran had a common interest in breaking up the Iraqi-Soviet coalition, as standard scholarly accounts go, and when the shah proposed that Iran and the United States jointly support the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq, he found an eager audience in Nixon and Kissinger. Great Britain and Israel, each for its own reasons joined in supporting the Kurds.²⁵ Overlooked by most accounts, additional motivation for destabilizing Iraq was its strong support of revolutionary movements on the Arabian Peninsula.²⁶

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) secretly transferred 16 million dollars to the Kurds between 1972 and 1975. While the amount was insignificant, its symbolic value was great, since the leader of the Kurdish rebellion, Musta Mustafa Barzani, believed that this meant an American commitment to aid his cause, or at the very least to protect his people. For Barzani this was important, since he never trusted the shah. Israel also supported the Kurds, because the Israelis feared a militant Iraq (a fear that was confirmed when Israel bombed Iraqi nuclear reactors in 1981). The combined American, British, Iranian and Israeli assistance enabled the Kurds to fight Iraq to a stalemate, at a heavy cost to the regime, since the bulk of the Iraqi army was engaged against the Kurds.²⁷ American relations with Saudi Arabia were important too in the policy of pressuring Iraq. Henry Kissinger admits as much in his memoirs, pledging in March 1974 to coordinate American policy with Saudi Arabia on the Arabian Peninsula “to assuage the growing Saudi uneasiness about being squeezed in a radical pincer movement

²⁵ Bill, *Ibid.*, 280-281; Garthoff, *Détente*, 316.

²⁶ Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, 138.

²⁷ Bill, *The Eagle and The Lion*, 204-207; Garthoff, *Détente*, 316.

between Iraq in the north and South Yemen in the south". Kissinger assured Faisal that the enemies of Saudi Arabia were the enemies of the United States.²⁸

Neither the United States nor Iran wanted the Kurds to succeed, but to force Iraq to expend manpower, material and revenue to punish it for the agreement with the Soviet Union and support of guerillas on the Arabian Peninsula. The shah was well aware that if the Iraqi Kurds succeeded, his own Kurds might rebel. The United States did not believe that Barzani was a reliable partner, given his strong Soviet connections, exile in the Soviet Union and USSR arms supplies to him and the Kurds in the 1950s. The United States began to limit its aid in 1973, and when the shah gained territorial concessions from Iraq in 1975, he immediately cut off aid to the Kurds as his part of the bargain. When the shah turned off the aid spigot, the United States followed suit. In addition, the shah closed his borders to the Kurds. Iraq then finally managed to crush the fifteen year long Kurdish rebellion.²⁹

To manage the new relationship with Iran and Saudi Arabia (and later Egypt) the United States state department and treasury set up Joint Commissions with these countries. Under the umbrella of the Joint Commissions, thousands of American civil servants and employees from the private sector took part in multidollar development schemes in the areas of defense, economic and agricultural development, technology transfer and nuclear energy. But mostly, the Joint Commissions "acted as arms salesmen supreme".³⁰ Britain too joined in the arms

²⁸ Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson and Michael Joseph, 1982), 975.

²⁹ Bill, The Eagle and the Lion. 204-7, Garthoff, Détente, 1108.

³⁰ Statement by senator Frank Church, March 18, 1975, Multinational Corporations and United States Foreign Policy, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Multinational

bonanza.³¹ Selling large quantities of military hardware, hardly constitutes a policy nor is it an effective substitute for policy. Nixon and Kissinger's attempt at managing the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf ended in dismal failure. The Nixon administration encouraged its allies to raise oil prices in order to pay for large amounts of American military hardware. In announcing the Nixon doctrine, Nixon anointed Iran and Saudi Arabia as flag-bearers for the United States. The United States hid under the Iranian security blanket for almost a decade. Given the weakness of the regime and the shah's nonsensical dreams of turning Iran into one of the top five industrial and military powers in the world, the policy was cavalierly irresponsible. American attempts to nudge Saudi Arabia into taking a more active role on the Arabian peninsula were unsuccessful.³² It is difficult to point to a single occasion on which Saudi Arabia has served as a strategic asset. Similarly, leaving Saudi Arabia wallowing in oil money and medieval stupor, a seedbed for Islamic fundamentalists, has created a huge future problem for the United States.

The decision to leave the Persian Gulf was the end of fixed British positions (with the exception of Masirah Island) in the Middle East. In that sense, Labour succeeded in cutting the umbilical cord of empire; in another sense, the British never left. On the eve of the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, they deposed the sultan of Oman in 1970 because

Corporations of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, pt. 9

(Washington: GPO, 1975), 259- 60.

³¹ Anthony Sampson, The Arms Bazaar: The Companies, The Dealers, The Bribes: From Vickers to Lockheed (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 294, R. J. Andrews to The Lord Bridges, July 24, 1972, PREM 15/990.

³² Joseph Sisco to Kissinger, "Saudi Arabian Role as a Factor in U.S. Policy in the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf", May 18, 1972, POL 7 SAUD.

of his lackluster response to the growing insurgency in his country. Thereafter, Britain with Jordan and Iran, conducted a sustained anti-guerilla campaign in Dhofar culminating in victory in 1975. Critics alleged that Britain deliberately allowed the rebellion to fester in order to prolong British influence in Oman.³³

As events have shown, the United States is finding that there are few if any realistic substitutes for the special relationship in the Middle East and elsewhere. Henry Kissinger observes that, with the exception of the Edward Heath (1970-74) interregnum, the special relationship is alive and well. The United States appreciates the British contribution to the common enterprise, Kissinger notes “both in the sophistication of British diplomacy and the seriousness of the British military effort”. Aside from the United States, Britain’s was the largest and most effective allied contribution to the Gulf war in 1991, while Britain in 1993 was the first NATO country to dispatch forces to Bosnia.³⁴ Even before the tragic events of September 11, 2001, George Bush insisted that Britain was America’s staunchest ally. During the current campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, Britain has again proved to be the most reliable American partner. But given the current debacle in Iraq, it is an open question how wisely the Anglo-Americans have been in their application of force.

³³James H. Noyes, The Clouded Lens: Persian Gulf Security and U. S. Policy (Stanford: Hoover University Press, 1979), 21.

³⁴ Henry Kissinger, Years of Renewal (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 603.