

# **Lest We Forget**

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**Americans for Middle East  
Understanding**

**November, 2006**

Many of the events catalogued here have been treated in depth in AMEU's bimonthly publication, *The Link*. See our website: [www.ameu.org](http://www.ameu.org).

## Lest We Forget

***The Israeli lobby in Washington has successfully influenced the U.S. Congress to give billions of non-repayable dollars each year to Israel on the premise that Israel's loyalty and strategic importance to the United States make it an ally worthy of such unprecedented consideration.***

***Is it?***

***In his Farewell Address, George Washington warned Americans to avoid a passionate attachment to any one nation because it promotes "the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists."***

***In 1948, U.S. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, an opponent of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, warned that, even though failure to go along with the Zionists might cost President Truman the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and California, "it was about time that somebody should pay some consideration to whether we might not lose the United States."***

***Israeli actions over the past 53 years involving U.S. interests in the Middle East seriously challenge the "strategic asset" premise of the Israeli lobby. Some of these actions are compiled in the list that follows:***

**September 1953:** Israel illegally begins to divert the waters of the Jordan River. President Eisenhower, enraged, suspends all economic aid to Israel and prepares to remove the tax-deductible status of the United Jewish Appeal and of other Zionist organizations in the United States.

**October 1953:** Israel raids the West Bank village of Kibya, killing 53 Palestinian civilians. The Eisenhower administration calls the raid "shocking," and confirms the suspension of aid to Israel.

**July 1954:** Israeli agents firebomb American and British cultural centers in Egypt, making it look like the work of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in order to sabotage U.S.--Egyptian relations.

**October 1956:** Israel secretly joins with England and France in a colonial-style attack on Egypt's Suez Canal. Calling the invasion a dangerous threat to international order, President Eisenhower forces Israel to relinquish most of the land it had seized.

**1965:** 206 pounds of weapons grade uranium disappear from the Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation plant in Pennsylvania. Plant president is Zalmon Shapiro, a former sales agent for the Israel Defense Ministry. C.I.A. Director Richard Helms later charges that Israel stole the uranium.

**June 1967:** Israel bombs, napalms and torpedoes the USS Liberty, killing 34 Americans, wounding 171 others, and nearly sinking the lightly armed intelligence ship. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Thomas Moorer, charges that the attack "could not possibly have been a case of mistaken identity."

**June 1967:** Against U.S. wishes Israel seizes and occupies Syria's Golan Heights.

**June 1968:** Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir rejects U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers' Peace Plan that would have required Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories; she calls upon Jews everywhere

to denounce the plan.

**March 1978:** Israel invades Lebanon, illegally using U.S. cluster bombs and other U.S. weapons given to Israel for defensive purposes only.

**1979:** Israel frustrates U.S.-sponsored Camp David Accords by building new settlements on the West Bank. President Carter complains to American Jewish leaders that, by acting in a "completely irresponsible way," Israel's Prime Minister Begin continues "to disavow the basic principles of the accords."

**1979:** Israel sells U.S. airplane tires and other military supplies to Iran, against U.S. policy, at a time when U.S. diplomats are being held hostage in Teheran.

**July 1980:** Israel annexes East Jerusalem in defiance of U.S. wishes and world opinion.

**July 1981:** Illegally using U.S. cluster bombs and other equipment, Israel bombs P.L.O. sites in Beirut, with great loss of civilian life.

**December 1981:** Israel annexes Syria's Golan Heights, in violation of the Geneva Convention and in defiance of U.S. wishes.

**June 1982:** Israel invades Lebanon a second time, again using U.S. cluster bombs and other U.S. weapons. President Reagan calls for a halt of all shipments of cluster bomb shells to Israel.

**September 1982:** Abetted by Israeli forces under the control of Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, Lebanese militiamen massacre hundreds of Palestinians in Beirut's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. President Reagan is "horrified" and summons the Israeli ambassador to demand Israel's immediate withdrawal from Beirut.

**September 1982:** Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin rejects President Reagan's Peace Plan for the occupied territories.

**January-March 1983:** Israeli army "harasses" U.S. Marines in Lebanon. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger confirms Marine commandant's report that "Israeli troops are deliberately threatening the lives of American military personnel . . . replete with verbal degradation of the officers, their uniforms and country."

**March 1985:** Israeli lobby in Washington pressures the U.S. Congress to turn down a \$1.6 billion arms sale to Jordan, costing the U.S. thousands of jobs, quite apart from the financial loss to American industry. Jordan gives the contract to Russia. A frustrated King Hussein complains: "The U.S. is not free to move except within the limits of what AIPAC [the Israeli lobby], the Zionists and the State of Israel determine for it."

**October 1985:** Israeli lobby blocks \$4 billion aircraft sale to Saudi Arabia. The sale, strongly backed by the Reagan administration, costs the U.S. over 350,000 jobs, with steep financial losses to American industry. Saudi Arabia awards contract to England.

**November 1985:** Jonathan Jay Pollard, an American recruited by Israel, is arrested for passing highly classified intelligence to Israel. U.S. officials call the operation but "one link in an organized and well-financed Israeli espionage ring operating within the United States." State Department contacts reveal that top Israeli defense officials "traded stolen U.S. intelligence documents to Soviet military intelligence agents in return for assurances of greater emigration of Soviet Jews."

**December 1985:** U.S. Customs in three states raid factories suspected of illegally selling electroplating technology to Israel. Richard Smyth, a NATO consultant and former U.S. exporter, is indicted on charges of illegally exporting to Israel 800 krytron devices for triggering nuclear explosions.

**April 1986:** U.S. authorities arrest 17 persons, including a retired Israeli General, Avraham Bar-Am, for plotting to sell more than \$2 billion of

advanced U.S. weaponry to Iran (much of it already in Israel). General Bar-Am, claiming to have had Israeli Government approval, threatens to name names at the highest levels. Rudolph W. Giuliani, U.S. Attorney General for the Southern District of New York, calls the plot “mind-boggling in scope.”

**July 1986:** Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy informs the Israeli ambassador that a U.S. investigation is under way of eight Israeli representatives in the U.S. accused of plotting the illegal export of technology used in making cluster bombs. Indictments against the eight are later dropped in exchange for an Israeli promise to cooperate in the case.

**January 1987:** Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin visits South Africa to discuss joint nuclear weapons testing. Israel admits that, in violation of a U.S. Senate anti-apartheid bill, it has arms sales contracts with South Africa worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Rep. John Conyers calls for Congressional hearings on Israel-South Africa nuclear testing.

**November 1987:** The Iran-Contra scandal reveals that it was Israel that had first proposed the trade to Iran of U.S. arms for hostages. The scandal becomes the subject of the Tower Commission Report, Senate and House investigations, and the Walsh criminal prosecution inquiries.

**April 1988:** Testifying before U.S. Subcommittee on Narcotics, Terrorism and International Operations, Jose Blandon, a former intelligence aide to Panama's General Noriega, reveals that Israel used \$20 million of U.S. aid to ship arms via Panama to Nicaraguan Contras. The empty planes then smuggled cocaine via Panama into the United States. Pilot tells ABC reporter Richard Threlkeld that Israel was his primary employer. The arms-for-drugs network is said to be led by Mike Harari, Noriega's close aide and bodyguard, who was also a high officer in the Israeli secret services and chief coordinator of Israel's military and commercial business in Panama.

**June 1988:** Mubarak Awad, a Palestinian-American advocate of nonviolence, is deported by Israel. The White House denounces the action, say-

ing, "We think it is unjustifiable to deny Mr. Awad the right to stay and live in Jerusalem, where he was born."

**June 1988:** Amnesty International accuses Israel of throwing deadly, U.S.-made gas canisters inside hospitals, mosques, and private homes. The Pennsylvania manufacturer, a major defense corporation, suspends future shipments of tear gas to Israel.

**November 1989:** According to the Israeli paper Ma'ariv, U.S. officials claim Israel Aircraft Industries was involved in attempts to smuggle U.S. missile navigation equipment to South Africa in violation of U.S. law.

**December 1989:** While the U.S. was imposing economic sanctions on Iran, Israel purchased \$36 million of Iranian oil in order to encourage Iran to help free three Israeli hostages in Lebanon.

**March 1990:** Israel requests more than \$1 billion in loans, gifts, and donations from American Jews and U.S. government to pay for resettling Soviet Jews in occupied territories. President Bush responds, "My position is that the foreign policy of the U.S. says we do not believe there should be new settlements in the West Bank or East Jerusalem."

**June 1990:** Officials in the Bush administration and in Congress say that Israel has emerged as leading supplier of advanced military technology to China, despite U.S.'s expressed opposition to Israeli-Chinese military cooperation.

**September 1990:** Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy asks the Bush administration to forgive Israel's \$4.5 billion military debt and dramatically increase military aid. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens expresses concern over expected \$20 billion in U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia and asks for an additional \$1 billion in military aid to Israel. Facing rising congressional opposition, White House backs off from plan to sell Saudi Arabia over \$20 billion in military hardware. Bush administration promises to deliver additional F-15 fighters and Patriot

missiles to Israel, but defers action on Israel's request for more than \$1 billion in new military aid. Arens questions U.S.'s commitment to maintain Israel's military advantage in the Middle East.

**October 1990:** "Aliya cabinet" chair Ariel Sharon encourages increase in settlement of Soviet Jews in East Jerusalem, despite his government's assurances to the U.S. that it would not do so. Bush sends personal letter to Prime Minister Shamir urging Israel not to pursue East Jerusalem housing. Shamir rejects appeal.

**November 1990:** In his new autobiography, former President Reagan says Israel was the instigator and prime mover in the Iran-Contra affair and that then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres "was behind the proposal."

**January 1991:** White House criticizes Israeli ambassador Zalman Shoval for complaining that U.S. had not moved forward on \$400 million in loan guarantees and that Israel "had not received one cent in aid" from allies to compensate for missile damage (in Gulf War)." U.S. says comments are "outrageous and outside the bounds of acceptable behavior."

**February 1991:** Hours after long-disputed \$400 million loan guarantees to Israel are approved, Israeli officials say the amount is grossly insufficient. Next day, Israel formally requests \$1 billion in emergency military assistance to cover costs stemming from the Gulf War.

**March 1991:** Israeli government rejects President Bush's call for solution to Arab-Israeli conflict that includes trading land for peace. In a report to Congress, U.S. State Department says Soviet Jewish immigrants are settling in the occupied territories at a higher rate than the Israeli government claims. During tour of West Bank settlements, Housing Minister Sharon says construction of 13,000 housing units in occupied territories has been approved for next two years. Plans contradict statement by Prime Minister Shamir, who told President Bush that the Israeli government had not approved such plans.

**April 1991:** Prime Minister Shamir and several members of his cabinet reject U.S. Secretary of State Baker's suggestion that Israel curtail expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories as gesture for peace. U.S. calls new Jewish settlement of Revava "an obstacle" to peace and questions Israel's timing, with Secretary Baker due to arrive in Israel in two days. Hours before Baker arrives, eight Israeli families complete move to new settlement of Talmon Bet. U.S. ambassador to Israel William Brown files an official protest with the Israeli government about establishment and/or expansion of settlements in the West Bank. Housing Minister Sharon says Israel has no intention of meeting U.S. demands to slow or stop settlements. Secretary Baker, in a news conference before leaving Israel, says Israel failed to give responses he needed to put together a peace conference.

**May 1991:** Israeli ambassador to U.S. Zalman Shoval says his country will soon request \$10 billion in loan guarantees from Washington to aid in settling Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel. Secretary Baker calls continued building of Israeli settlements "largest obstacle" to convening proposed Middle East peace conference.

**May 1991:** President Bush unveils proposal for arms control in Middle East. U.S. administration confirms that Israel, which has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, has objected to provision on nuclear weapons.

**June 1991:** Prime Minister Shamir rejects President Bush's call for Israeli acceptance of a greater United Nations' role in proposed Arab-Israeli peace talks.

**July 1991:** Israeli Housing Minister Sharon inaugurates the new Israeli settlement of Mevo Dotan in the West Bank one day after President Bush describes Israeli settlements as "counterproductive."

**September 1991:** President Bush asks Congress to delay considering Israeli loan guarantee request for 120 days. Ignoring pleas of U.S. administration, Israel formally submits its request. Prime Minister Shamir

says U.S. has a “moral obligation” to provide Israel with loan guarantees, and that Israel would continue to build settlements in the occupied territories.

**October 1991:** The Washington Post reports that President Bush waived U.S.-mandated sanctions against Israel after U.S. intelligence determined that Israel had exported missile components to South Africa.

**November 1991:** Hours after concluding bilateral talks with Syria, Israel inaugurates Qela’, a new settlement in the Golan Heights. Secretary of State Baker calls the action “provocative.”

**February 1992:** Secretary of State Baker says U.S. will not provide loan guarantees to Israel unless it ceases its settlement activity. President Bush threatens to veto any loan guarantees to Israel without a freeze on Israel’s settlement activity.

**March 1992:** U.S. administration confirms it has begun investigating intelligence reports that Israel supplied China with technical data from U.S. Patriot missile system.

**April 1992:** State Department Inspector issues report that the department has failed to heed intelligence reports that an important U.S. ally – widely understood to be Israel – was making unauthorized transfers of U.S. military technology to China, South Africa, Chile, and Ethiopia.

**May 1992:** Wall Street Journal cites Israeli press reports that U.S. officials have placed Israel on list of 20 nations carrying out espionage against U.S. companies.

**June 1992:** U.S. Defense Department says Israel has rejected a U.S. request to question former General Rami Dotan, who is at center of arms procurement scandal involving U.S. contractors.

**July 1992:** General Electric Company pleads guilty to fraud and corrupt business practices in connection with its sale of military jet engines to

Israel. A GE manager had conspired with Israeli Gen. Rami Dotan to divert \$27 million in U.S. military aid with fraudulent vouchers. U.S. Justice and Defense Departments do not believe that Dotan was acting in his own interest, implying that the government of Israel may be implicated in the fraud, which would constitute a default on Israel's aid agreements with the U.S.

**June 1993:** U.S. House of Representatives passes bill authorizing \$80 million per year to Israel for refugee settlement; bill passes despite \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees to Israel and against evidence from Israeli economists that Israel no longer needs U.S. aid.

**October 1993:** CIA informs Senate Government Affairs Committee that Israel has been providing China for over a decade with "several billion dollars" worth of advanced military technology. Israeli Prime Minister Rabin admits Israel has sold arms to China.

**November 1993:** CIA Director James Woolsey makes first public U.S. acknowledgement that "Israel is generally regarded as having some kind of nuclear capability."

**December 1993:** Time magazine reports convicted spy Jonathan Pollard passed a National Security Agency listing of foreign intelligence frequencies to Israel that later was received by Soviets, ruining several billion dollars of work and compromising lives of U.S. informants.

**December 1994:** Los Angeles Times reports Israel has given China information on U.S. military technology to help in joint Israeli-Chinese development of a fighter jet.

**January 1995:** When Egypt threatens not to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty because Israel will not sign, the U.S. says it will not pressure Israel to sign.

**July 1995:** U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk demands Israel abolish import barriers that discriminate against U.S. imports.

**November 1995:** Israel grants citizenship to American spy Jonathan Pollard.

**April 1996:** Using U.S.-supplied shells, Israel kills 106 unarmed civilians who had taken refuge in a U.N. peace-keeping compound in Qana, southern Lebanon. U.N. investigators, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch condemn the shelling as premeditated. The U.N. Security Council calls on Israel to pay reparations. Resolution is vetoed by the United States.

**June 1996:** U.S. State Department hands Israeli defense officials classified CIA report alleging Israel has given China U.S. military avionics, including advanced radar-detection system and electronic warfare equipment.

**December 1996:** Israeli cabinet reinstates large subsidies, including tax breaks and business grants, for West Bank settlers. U.S. says the move is “troubling” and “clearly complicates the peace process.” Israeli government rejects President Clinton’s criticism of the settlements and vows to strengthen them.

**February 1997:** FBI announces that David Tenenbaum, a mechanical engineer working for the U.S. army, has admitted that for the past 10 years he has “inadvertently” passed on classified military information to Israeli officials.

**March 1997:** U.S. presses Israel to delay building new settlement of Har Homa near Bethlehem. Prime Minister Netanyahu says international opposition “will just strengthen my resolve.”

**June 1997:** U.S. investigators report that two Hasidic Jews from New York, suspected of laundering huge quantities of drug money for a Colombian drug cartel, recently purchased millions of dollars worth of land near the settlements of Mahseya and Zanoah.

**September 1997:** Jewish settlers in Hebron stone Palestinian laborers working on a U.S.-financed project to renovate the town's main street. David Muirhead, the American overseeing the project, says the Israeli police beat him, threw him into a van, and detained him until the U.S. Consulate intervened. U.S. State Department calls the incident "simply unacceptable."

**September 1997:** Secretary of State Albright says Israel's decision to expand Efrat settlement "is not at all helpful" to the peace process. Prime Minister Netanyahu says he will continue to expand settlements.

**May 1998:** 13 years after denying he was not its spy, Israel officially recognizes Pollard as its agent in hopes of negotiating his release.

**June 1998:** Secretary of State Albright phones Prime Minister Netanyahu to condemn his plan to extend Jerusalem's municipal boundaries and to move Jews into East Jerusalem, particularly in the area adjacent to Bethlehem. Ignoring U.S. protests, Israel's cabinet unanimously approves plan to extend Jerusalem's municipal authority.

**August 1998:** Secretary Albright tells Prime Minister Netanyahu that the freeze in the peace process due to the settlement policy is harming U.S. interests in the Middle East and affecting the U.S.'s ability to forge a coalition against Iraq.

**September 1998:** Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad reports that the Israeli airliner that crashed in Amsterdam in 1992 was not carrying "gifts and perfume," as the Israelis claimed, but three of the four chemicals used to make sarin nerve gas. According to the plane's cargo manifest, the chemicals were sent from a U.S. factory in Pennsylvania to the top secret Israeli Institute for Biological Research.

**November 1998:** Israeli Foreign Minister Sharon urges Jewish settlers to "grab" West Bank land so it does not fall under Palestinian control in any final peace settlement.

**May 1999:** U.S. denounces Israel's decision to annex more land to the Ma'ale Adumim settlement.

**June 1999:** The Israeli company Ortil is reported to have stolen U.S. night-vision equipment purchased for the Israeli Defense Forces and to have sold it to "Far Eastern" countries.

**April 2001:** Prime Minister Sharon announces plans to build 708 new housing units in the Jewish settlements of Ma'ale Adumim and Alfe Menashe. U.S. State Department criticizes the move as "provocative."

**May 2001:** The Mitchell Committee (headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell) concludes that Jewish settlements are a barrier to peace. Prime Minister Sharon vows to continue expanding the settlements.

**May 2001:** U.S. is voted off the United Nations Commission on Human Rights for the first time since the committee's establishment in 1947. The Financial Times of London suggests that Washington, by vetoing U.N. resolutions alleging Israeli human rights abuses, showed its inability to work impartially in the area of human rights. Secretary of State Colin Powell suggests the vote was because "we left a little blood on the floor" in votes involving the Palestinians.

**November 2001:** Secretary of State Colin Powell calls on Israel to halt all settlement building which he says "cripples chances for real peace and security." Benny Elon, a right-wing minister in the Sharon government, says the settlers aren't worried. "America has a special talent for seeing things in the short term," he says, explaining that what Powell said he said only to get Arab support for America's anti-terrorism coalition against Afghanistan.

**March 2002:** U.N. Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan calls for immediate withdrawal of Israeli tanks from Palestinian refugee camps, citing large numbers of Palestinians reported dead or injured. U.S. State Dept. says the United States has contacted Israel to "urge that utmost restraint be

exercised in order to avoid harm to the civilian population.”

**April 2002:** President Bush repeatedly demands an immediate halt to Israel’s military invasion of the West Bank. Prime Minister Sharon rebuffs the President’s withdrawal demands, saying the United States and other nations should not “put any pressure upon us.”

**April 4, 2002:** President Bush demands that Israel halt its March 29 incursion into the West Bank, withdraw immediately, and cease all settlement building. Three days later, Secretary of State Powell says Bush’s ”demand” was a “request.”

**June 10, 2002:** Prime Minister Sharon visits White House. When reporters ask about Israel’s ongoing incursions into Palestinian towns, President Bush says “Israel has a right to defend herself.”

**September 30, 2003:** President Bush signs the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, which identifies Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

**November 25, 2002.** Israel asks the U.S. for \$4-billion in military aid to “defray the costs of fighting terrorism,” plus \$10-billion in loan guarantees to support its struggling economy.

**May 29, 2003:** Israel announces construction of a new Jewish settlement of 230 housing units in East Jerusalem.

**July 29, 2003:** Sharon rejects President Bush’s appeal to halt construction of a separation wall that Israel is building on occupied Palestinian land.

**October 22, 2003:** Former Navy lawyer Ward Boston, who had helped lead the military investigation into Israel’s 1967 attack on the USS *Liberty*, files a signed affidavit stating that President Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara had ordered those heading the naval inquiry to “conclude that the attack was a case of ‘mistaken identity,’ despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.”

**June 16, 2004:** When 9/11 Commission inquires into the motivation of the hijackers, FBI Special Agent James Fitzgerald replies: “I believe they feel a sense of outrage against the United States. They identify with the Palestinian problem.” His response is not included in the Commission’s Final Report. Its co-chairs, Lee Hamilton and Thomas Kean, later explain that including it would suggest that the United States should reassess its policy towards Israel – “sensitive ground” where it did not want to go.

**March 21, 2005:** Prime Minister Sharon approves construction of 3,500 new housing units in the Israeli settlement of Ma’ale Adumin to link it to East Jerusalem. The U.S. State Department has no comment.

**May 2005:** Newsweek reports that in the late 1990s, lobbyist Jack Abramoff diverted more than \$140,000 from charity contributions by Indian tribes to the Israeli settlement of Beitar Illit for sniper equipment and training of settler militias.

**March 2006:** Professors John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen Walt, the academic dean at Harvard’s School of Government, co-author a major paper in which they conclude: “For the past several decades, and especially since the Six-Day War of 1967, the centerpiece of U.S. Middle Eastern policy has been its relationship with Israel. The combination of unwavering support for Israel and the related effort to spread ‘democracy’ throughout the region has inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion and jeopardized not only U.S. security but that of much of the rest of the world. This situation has no equal in American political history.”

**August 25, 2006:** The U.S. State Department investigates Israel’s widespread use of American cluster bombs against a civilian population in Lebanon. Although such use violates U.S.-Israeli agreements, several current and former U.S. government officials tell *The New York Times* that “they doubted the investigation would lead to sanctions against Israel, but that the decision to proceed with it might be intended to help the Bush administration ease criticism from Arab governments and

commentators over its support of Israel's military operations.”

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