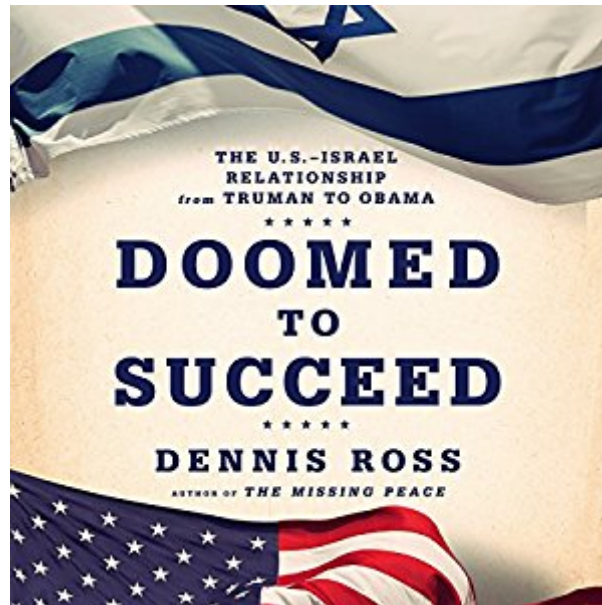


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# Doomed To Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship From Truman To Obama



## Synopsis

A necessary and unprecedented account of America's changing relationship with Israel. When it comes to Israel, US policy has always emphasized the unbreakable bond between the two countries and our ironclad commitment to Israel's security. Today, our ties to Israel are close - so close that when there are differences, they tend to make the news. But it was not always this way. Dennis Ross has been a direct participant in shaping US policy toward the Middle East, and Israel specifically, for nearly 30 years. He served in senior roles, including as Bill Clinton's envoy for Arab-Israeli peace, and was an active player in the debates over how Israel fit into the region and what should guide our policies. In *Doomed to Succeed*, he takes us through every administration from Truman to Obama, throwing into dramatic relief each president's attitudes toward Israel and the region, the often tumultuous debates between key advisers, and the events that drove the policies and at times led to a shift in approach. Ross points out how rarely lessons were learned and how distancing the United States from Israel in the Eisenhower, Nixon, Bush, and Obama administrations never yielded any benefits and why that lesson has never been learned. *Doomed to Succeed* offers compelling advice for how to understand the priorities of Arab leaders and how future administrations might best shape US policy in that light.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dennis Ross presents a clear, fact-based, and brilliant approach to understanding the Middle East. He demonstrates that the fundamental American misapprehension of the Middle East is the widespread belief that ideology plays a greater role than realpolitik in the thoughts and actions of the

various governments in the region. This belief is reinforced by the disparity between the words, both public and private, and deeds of the non-democratic Middle Eastern governments. Specifically, Ross argues that while the Arab governments support the Palestinians, Palestinian justice has never been a priority of the Arab governments, which are primarily concerned with the external and internal stability and legitimacy of their governments. Ross proves this point with many examples, including the compelling fact that Israel has managed to achieve a state of peace and non-belligerency with many of its neighboring Arab states despite its ongoing struggle with the Palestinians. Tragically, American administration's lack of understanding often causes it to take actions counterproductive to both its interests and its values, chiefly among these, its support for democracy (in the full sense of minority rights and minority participation in government), human rights, and peace. Ross's policy recommendations include:

- Continued engagement with the region - either we move proactively, or we will be forced to react.
- Offering greater support to our allies in the region (including Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia) and greater challenging of our foes (chiefly Iran) because that will greatly increase our influence in the region, which we can use to promote our values there.
- Strengthening our relationship with Israel.

A oft-stated premise of US foreign policy in the Middle East is that Israel complicates and impedes good relations with Arab nations. This truth is so well fixed in the minds of senior military and policy analysts, that many US administrations have found it desirable to create distance from Israel in order to improve our seemingly fragile Arab relationships. Now Dennis Ross supplies a cogent analysis and refutation of this thesis. Ross has held various government posts over a career spanning five presidential administrations (Reagan to Obama). He reviews US foreign policy towards Israel and the Arabs from Truman to the present, evaluating how friendly or distant each administration was to Israel, and how our relations with Israel affected relations with Arab nations, if at all. He details our many incorrect assumptions about the needs and priorities of various Arab governments over the years, and shows that the Arab leaders' primary concerns are their own legitimacy and security, and that closer US relations with Israel have never adversely impacted relations with our Arab allies. Hostile Arab nations might use Israel as an excuse, but here again, examples show their priorities have more to do with domestic or national security concerns than with Israel or the Palestinians. Conversely, US administrations that increased our distance from Israel never reaped any benefit; the most recent example being Obama's outreach to the Muslim world at the beginning of his administration. Ross's account provides a behind the scenes look at the working of our national security and policy agencies and presidential administrations. Some

surprising details emerge, with an overall more nuanced view of how policies are made and debatedâ ”or not debated.

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