

Reagan Library Topic Guide – Persian Gulf

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PERSIAN GULF

See also: [Iran](#)
[Iran-Iraq War](#)
[Iraq](#)

Scope Note

The war between Iran and Iraq lasted for most of the 1980s and involved conflicts over shipping in the Persian Gulf. This practice of attacking each other's shipping vessels, in particular oil tankers, posed a danger to an international economy critically dependent on Gulf oil exports traversing the Straits of Hormuz chokepoint

For most of the 1980s Iran and Iraq intermittently attacked enemy merchant shipping, oil tankers, and oil production facilities. The first oil tanker sunk, the *Neptunia*, was hit and sunk in 1985. By 1987, both countries were on equal footing in deploying effective anti-shipping missiles.

International shipping began to feel the effects. Particularly hard hit were Iraq's Gulf neighbors whose shipping began to suffer from Iranian attacks. Kuwaiti authorities felt especially vulnerable and called upon the international community to reflag Kuwaiti vessels as a deterrent to Iranian strikes. The US did not immediately respond, but the continued assault on international shipping and the danger of Iranian actions potentially closing the Straits of Hormuz resulted in a US-led naval intervention in 1987.

In May 1987 the USS *Stark* was hit accidentally by an Iraqi missile resulting in 37 American deaths. This incident and the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Gulf prompted the Reagan Administration to place US Navy forces in the Gulf. In addition, the US began reflagging Kuwaiti ships as American vessels and escorted them up and down the Persian Gulf.

American intervention ultimately helped contain Iranian anti-shipping activities, ensured freedom of movement for international shipping in the Gulf and pressured Tehran to seek peace with its neighbor. However, US involvement was not smooth, as the Iranians use of anti-shipping mines proved a challenge. The Persian Gulf clash between the US and Iran resulted in the mining of the USS *Samuel B. Roberts*, the sinking by US forces of Iranian frigates and the accidental shoot down of an Iranian civilian airliner.

The other consequence of the U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf was an increased Congressional call for declaring the conflict a violation of the 1973 War Powers Act. Congressional hearings were held, but no resolution was reached. The complaints became moot as the Iran-Iraq conflict came to a close in 1988.

This topic guide covers material from 1986-January 20, 1989, with a concentration on the final two years of the Reagan Administration, 1987-January 20, 1989. For more information within our holdings available for research, please see the [Iran-Iraq War](#) topic guide, the [Iran](#) topic guide or the [Iraq](#) topic guide.

WHORM SUBJECT FILE

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[FG010-01](#) case files 509336, 575127

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WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND OFFICE FILES

CHIEF OF STAFF, OFFICE OF THE
Baker, Howard H., Jr: Files
Box 4
Persian Gulf

Crippen, Dan L.: Files
Box 8
Persian Gulf Oil

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICE OF
Correspondence, Office of: Records
Box 25

AVH-494 – Support Persian Gulf with Mention of War Powers Act

COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

McGrath: C. Dean: Files

CFOA 1308

Persian Gulf (1987/1988) (1)(2)

OA 15542

War Powers: Incidents – Persian Gulf (1987/1988) (May 1987-September 1987)

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Counsel to the President, Office of: Records

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War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (06/19/1987-06/23/1987)

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War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (06/30/1987-08/07/1987)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (08/07/1987-08/10/1987)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (08/11/1987-08/18/1987)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (08/19/1987-08/31/1987)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (09/01/1987-10/06/1987)

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War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (11/01/1987-12/18/1987, 04/29/1988)

War Powers – Persian Gulf Security Arrangements [News Articles]

War Powers - Persian Gulf Incidents 03/04/1988-03/05/1988

War Powers – Persian Gulf Incident 04/18/1988 (1)(2)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Incident [Shoot down of Iranian Airliner] 07/03/1988

War Powers - Persian Gulf Incident 07/12/1988

War Powers - Persian Gulf Incident 10/19/1987

War Powers - Persian Gulf Incident 10/08/1987

War Powers - Persian Gulf Incident 09/21/1987

War Powers - Persian Gulf Incident 05/18/1987 [Attack on *USS Stark*]

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COUNSELLOR TO THE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF

Meese, Edwin, III: Files

CFOA 415

Persian Gulf Situation

DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

Bledsoe, Ralph C.: Files (DPC)

Box 175

[IPPRC – Contagion and Containment in the Persian Gulf: An Analysis of the 1980 Iran-Iraq War]

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF

Addington, David: Files

Box 5
Middle East/Persian Gulf (1)-(5)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF

Smith, Martin: Files

OA 12160

Chron Files: March 1984 [Persian Gulf, Fish and Wildlife Act, energy]

PRESIDENT OFFICE OF THE

President, Office of the: Presidential Briefing Papers: Records

Box 81

05/22/1987 (case file 524022)

SPEECHWRITING, OFFICE OF

Dolan, Anthony: Files

Box 53

Statement by the President on the Persian Gulf – 05/29/1987

Speechwriting, Office of: Research Office: Records

Box 346

10/10/1987 Radio Address: Central America, Persian Gulf, Bork (1)(2)

Speechwriting, Office of: Speech Drafts: Records

Box 333

Statement by the President on the Persian Gulf (Dolan) 05/29/1987)

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC) STAFF AND OFFICE COLLECTIONS

Burns, William: Files

RAC Box 3

[Gulf War \(1\)](#)

[Gulf War \(2\)](#)

Crisis Management Center (CMC), NSC: Records

RAC Box 8

[Maps] [Middle East - Persian Gulf] (1)(2)

RAC Box 9

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Persian Gulf: Iran-Iraq War: CPPG - 05/14/1984 (4 pm) Iran-Iraq (1)(2)

Persian Gulf: Iran-Iraq War: Iran-Iraq Crisis Planning Notices/Guidelines (1)-(4)

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[Chron File, May 1988](#)

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Persian Gulf Intelligence Support

[Persian Gulf Working Group \(PGWG\)](#)

Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File

RAC Box 45

Military Facilities in Persian Gulf & Indian Ocean (01/27/1981-01/29/1981)

Military Facilities in Persian Gulf & Indian Ocean (02/06/1981-03/12/1981)

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Military Facilities in Persian Gulf & Indian Ocean (03/13/1982-08/17/1984)

Executive Secretariat, NSC: National Security Planning Group (NSPGs)

[NSPG 0149 03/23/1987 \[Persian Gulf Security\]](#)

[NSPG 152 05/18/1987 \[Persian Gulf Security – USS *Stark* Incident\]](#)

NSPG 153 05/29/1987 [US Policy & Persian Gulf Security]

[NSPG 154 06/16/1987 \[US Policy & Persian Gulf Security\]](#)

NSPG 166 09/18/1987 [US Policy/Persian Gulf Security]

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Executive Secretariat, NSC: System File

System I

8704848 – Middle East Items for President’s Briefing – Iraq/Persian Gulf

8803609 – Prime Minister Thatcher Letter to President re: Policy in Persian Gulf

Fortier, Donald R.: Files

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SWA Persian Gulf I 01/16/1981

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SWA Persian Gulf I 04/22/1981-12/03/1981

SWA Persian Gulf I 12/04/1981-12/05/1983

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Hill Persian Gulf Work 1978-1980

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Persian Gulf RDF (Rapid Deployment Force) 1981 (1)-(5)

Persian Gulf Security Framework 1981 [1980]

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Kimmit, Robert M.: Files

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AT: Persian Gulf/Southwest Asia

Melby, Eric D.: Files

RAC Box 2

Persian Gulf Facilities

Morton, Elaine L.: Files

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Persian Gulf - General

Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, NSC: Records

RAC Box 14
Persian Gulf 1987 (01/01/1987-06/02/1987)
Persian Gulf 1987 (06/05/1987-06/14/1987)
Persian Gulf 1987 (06/15/1987)
Persian Gulf 1987 (06/16/1987-10/01/1987)
Visit of Vice President Bush to the Persian Gulf, 04/03/1986-04/12/1986 [Briefing Book
- Shirin Tahir-Kheli Copy] (2)(3)

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The Vice-President's Trip to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula 04/03/1986-
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04/12/1986-Cables) (1)-(3)

Ross, Dennis: Files

Box 1
[Gulf Contingency: Dennis Ross](#)
[Murphy-Polyakov Meeting: Dennis Ross \(1\)](#)
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Saunders, Richard M.: Files

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Shoemaker, Christopher C.: Files

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Persian Gulf Security Framework (PD-63) (08/07/1980-03/19/1981)
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[IN-HIS 1-21 Persian Gulf 06/09/1987 \(1\)](#)

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Tahir-Kheli, Shirin: Files

RAC Box 7

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Teicher, Howard: Files

RAC Box 6

Persian Gulf 1985

Thompson, Paul B.: Files

RAC Box 12

Meetings September 1985: CPPG Meeting 09/16/1985 - 4:00 Room 208 - Persian Gulf

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HANDWRITING FILE: SPEECHES (COPY SET)

Box 27, Folder 548

05/29/1987 Statement by the President on the Persian Gulf 500876 PR014-08