

## 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

[CO001-07](#) case files 346118, 424577, 474477, 493871, 493905, 495345, 495816, 497209, 497220, 497362, 497806, 497934, 499112, 499150, 499704, 502106, 503841, 503943, 504514, 505290, 506837, 506839, 506897, 506898, 507879, 508205, 509700, 510014, 510091, 511396, 512269, 512294, 513425, 515844, 516184, 516506, 516756, 517074, 517832, 518579, 519537, 520142, 520395, 521143, 521234, 521999, 523288, 523790, 525492, 526708, 526794, 531477, 532235, 532317, 532373, 532556, 534494, 534752, 535440, 535712, 535809, 537463, 540402, 545975, 546793, 547030, 548183, 548184, 555584, 555915, 555917, 564519, 573634, 575068, 575117, 575158, 575169, 575213, 575320, 575350, 575476, 579291, 579760, 579977, 580498, 580567, 581109, 582513, 583951, 584608, 584613, 586808, 588861, 591561, 592642, 592986, 593000, 595297, 597273, 612181, 700201

[CO071](#) case files 559932, 575023, 584641, 584656, 584658, 596811

[CO078](#) case file 504351

[FE002-01](#) case files 499823, 534222, 548974, 560980, 560986, 568568

[FG002-36](#) case file 545572

[FG006-01](#) case files 491583, 509512, 519539

[FG006-12](#) case files 513212, 619154

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

[FG010-03](#) case file 596964

[FG013](#) case files 519905, 532697

[FG024-01](#) case file 588294

[FG031-01](#) case file 575470

[FG038](#) case file 576514

[FI004](#) case files 497360, 505373

[FO](#) case file 495221

[FO003-01](#) case files 492845, 512952, 513477, 528833, 531937, 540689, 540714, 540992, 560942, 560959, 571309

[FO003-02](#) case files 512482, 520080, 584007

[FO008-01](#) case file 506993

[ME001](#) case files 498178, 523069, 568722

[ND007](#) case file 591401

[ND011-01](#) case file 513482

[ND013](#) case files 490556, 501971, 518875, 519087

[PR003](#) case files 491886, 524854

[PR005-01](#) case file 532187

[PR007-02](#) case files 475317, 561266, 586573

[PR013](#) case files 495630, 499893, 517976

[PR014-08](#) case files 497353, 513343, 560989

[PR016-01](#) case file 523271

[PU](#) case file 499287

[TN005](#) case files 426042, 494477, 497895, 506886, 508018, 513813, 514920, 515864, 515879, 524305, 524328, 524343, 525259, 526633, 527447, 533238, 533573, 559917, 559940, 560767, 560815, 580702

## **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)

War Powers: Incidents – Persian Gulf (1987/1988) (October 1987)

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

Counsel to the President, Office of: Records

CFOA 1177

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (06/01/1987-06/18/1987)

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

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (06/24/1987-06/25/1987)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (06/26/1987-06/29/1987)

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)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (10/07/1987-10/21/1987)

War Powers - Persian Gulf Security Arrangements (10/22/1987-10/31/1987)

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*]

War Powers – [Persian Gulf] Senator Nunn Statement – 02/29/1988

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)

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 \(2\)](#)

Dur, Philip A.: Files

RAC Box 10

Persian Gulf Intelligence Support

Persian Gulf Working Group (PGWG)

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

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]

NSPG 169 10/16/1987 [Persian Gulf]

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

Melby, Eric D.: Files

RAC Box 2

Persian Gulf Facilities

Morton, Elaine L.: Files

RAC Box 2

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)

RAC Box 18  
The Vice-President's Trip to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula 04/03/1986-  
04/12/1986 (Briefing Book) (1)-(5)  
The Vice-President's Trip to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula 04/13/1986  
(Briefing Book, Less Complete Copy) (1)-(5)  
(The Vice President's Trip to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula 04/03/1986-  
04/12/1986-Cables) (1)-(3)

Ross, Dennis: Files

Box 1  
[Gulf Contingency: Dennis Ross](#)

Box 3  
Persian Gulf; Dennis Ross

Box 4  
[Soviet/Persian Gulf FBIS Reports] (1)-(5)

Saunders, Richard M.: Files

RAC Box 4  
Persian Gulf Strategy

Situation Support Staff, White House: Records

RAC Box 1  
[IN-HIS 1-7 Iran Game 04/01/1987 \(1\)](#)  
[IN-HIS 1-7 Iran Game 04/01/1987 \(2\)](#)

RAC Box 2  
[IN-HIS 1-21 Persian Gulf 06/09/1987 \(1\)](#)  
[IN-HIS 1-21 Persian Gulf 06/09/1987 \(2\)](#)  
[IN-HIS 1-21 Persian Gulf 06/09/1987 \(3\)](#)  
[IN-HIS 1-21 Persian Gulf 06/09/1987 \(4\)](#)  
[IN-HIS 1-21 Persian Gulf 06/09/1987 \(5\)](#)

RAC Box 4  
US-Iranian Naval Engagement 10/08/1987 (Binder) (1)(2)

Tahir-Kheli, Shirin: Files

RAC Box 7  
Pakistan and the Persian Gulf

WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT: PRESIDENTIAL  
HANDWRITING FILE: SPEECHES (COPY SET)

Box 27

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