

Kenneth M. Pollack

Kenneth M. Pollack is an expert on Middle Eastern political-military affairs, with particular emphasis on Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the other nations of the Persian Gulf region. He is currently a senior fellow and director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. He served as the Saban Center's director of research from 2002 until 2009.



Dr. Pollack began his career as an Iran-Iraq military analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency, where he was an employee from 1988 until 1995. During that time, he was the principal author of the CIA's classified post-mortem on Iraqi strategy and military operations during the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991. Dr. Pollack received the CIA's Certificate of Distinction for Outstanding Performance of Duty for work before and during the Persian Gulf War. He also twice received the CIA's Exceptional Performance award, also for work related to the Persian Gulf War.

Dr. Pollack has twice served on the staff of the National Security Council. In 1995-1996, he was director for Near East and South Asian affairs, and in 1999-2001, he served as director for Persian Gulf affairs. In this latter capacity, he was the principal working-level official for U.S. policy toward Iraq, Iran, Yemen and the Gulf Cooperation Council States at the White House.

In addition to these positions, Dr. Pollack has been a senior research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University where he principally worked on long-term issues related to Middle Eastern political and military affairs for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has been the director for national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, and a research fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Dr. Pollack's latest commercial book, *A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East*, was published in July 2008, by Random House. This book assesses American interests in the Middle East, describes the threats to those interests from the many problems of the region, and prescribes a long-term, overarching approach for the United States to pursue to secure its interests by enabling a process of gradual, indigenously-driven reform throughout the Muslim Middle East. The book has been a *Washington Post* and *Foreign Affairs* best-seller and was chosen as one of the *Washington Post's* "Best Books of the Year" for 2008 as well as an Editor's Choice of the "New York Times Book Review".

In addition, in the spring of 2009, Dr. Pollack was the leader author of the Brookings Institution Press book, *Which Path to Persia? Options for a New U.S. Strategy Toward Iran*. This book, written with contributions from Brookings scholars Daniel Byman, Martin Indyk, Suzanne Maloney, Michael O'Hanlon and Bruce Riedel, examines nine different policies that the United States might pursue

toward Iran. The book purposely treats each policy objectively, laying out the differing goals, requirements, timelines, pros, and cons among them to allow the reader to decide for him or herself which approach to Iran the United States should follow. In so doing, it illustrates why the Iran debate has become so contentious, both because advocates of different policies have very different goals in mind and because none of the options available to the United States is obviously the best alternative.

Dr. Pollack is also the author of four other books: *Things Fall Apart: Containing the Spillover of a Civil War in Iraq*; co-authored with Daniel Byman and published by the Brookings Press in 2007; *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*, published by Random House in November 2004; *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991*, published in 2002 by the University of Nebraska Press; and *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*, published in 2002 by Random House, which was a *New York Times* and *Washington Post* bestseller.

Among his other work, Dr. Pollack was the principal author of “A Switch in Time: A New Strategy for America in Iraq,” a Saban Center monograph published in February 2006, which laid out a comprehensive, alternative U.S. policy toward the military, political, economic and bureaucratic reconstruction of Iraq along the lines of the “surge” strategy adopted by the United States in 2007. He is also the author of numerous articles including “The Seven Deadly Sins of Iraqi Reconstruction,” in the December 2006 edition of *Middle East Review of International Affairs*; “What Iran Really Wants,” in the November 2006 issue of *Current History*; “Iraq Runneth Over: What Next?” co-authored with Daniel Byman in the *Washington Post* Outlook section, on August 20, 2006; “Taking on Tehran,” co-authored with Ray Takeyh in the March/April 2005 issue of *Foreign Affairs*; “Spies, Lies and Weapons: What Went Wrong?” in the January 2004 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, and “Securing the Gulf,” in the July/August 2003 issue of *Foreign Affairs*.

Dr. Pollack received his B.A. from Yale University and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His dissertation was titled, “The Influence of Arab Culture on Arab Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991.” He is married and lives in the Washington, DC area.