

THE ISRAEL PROJECT

**CONFERENCE CALL:
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE TALKS**

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**SPEAKER:
MITCHELL BARD,
AUTHOR,
“THE ARAB LOBBY: THE INVISIBLE ALLIANCE THAT
UNDERMINES AMERICA’S INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST”**

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LAUREN APPELBAUM: Hello and welcome. My name is Lauren Appelbaum and I am the media and special projects coordinator here at the Israel Project. On behalf of our entire team I am very pleased that such a prominent group of journalists and other interested parties could join us today to hear from Dr. Mitchell Bard who will be speaking about his new book: "The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance that Undermines America's Interest in the Middle East," which was just released today.

Now, for those of you who do not know, The Israel Project is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing journalists accurate information about Israel. The Israel Project is not related to any government or government agency. We have offices in Washington and Jerusalem. Our team of more than 30 experts and former journalists is always ready to help you get the facts you need to cover the Middle East. So please do not hesitate to contact us if we could help you in any way.

Now I would like to introduce you to our speaker today. Dr. Mitchell Bard is the executive director of the nonprofit American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise and the director of the Jewish Virtual Library, the world's most comprehensive online encyclopedia of Jewish history and culture.

A foreign policy analyst who lectures frequently on U.S. Middle East policy, Dr. Bard has written or edited more than 20 books. Dr. Bard has also appeared on many local and national television outlets including FOX News and MSNBC. And his work has been published in academic journals, magazines and major newspapers.

He has a doctorate from UCLA with a specialty in American politics and international relations. Dr. Bard?

DR. MITCHELL BARD: Thank you very much. I want to thank Lauren for organizing this and Jennifer and everyone at The Israel Project. I appreciate everyone who has joined the call to talk about the new book "The Arab Lobby."

I guess just to give a brief overview for a few minutes before we take some questions, I know it's a pretty exciting time here in Washington with peace negotiations starting. But we will navigate later in the questions as well. The issue, I guess, people ask is why write a book about the Arab lobby? And for more than 20 years I've been doing research on U.S. Middle East policy and I have been writing about the Israeli and the Arab lobbies for parts of that period.

But in the last few years, especially, the Israeli lobby seems to be obsessively scrutinized, mischaracterized and demonized while the story of the Arab lobby really has gone untold. And I believe that the public should be aware that the Arab lobby does exist and to have a better idea of what sort of influence it has and how it went at war against U.S. values and interests.

Where is the lobby? Well it's not as easy to find as the Israeli lobby because there's no central address on H Street that you can go to like with the case of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The Arab lobby is more of a many-headed hybrid (audio difficulties).

MS. APPELBAUM: Dr. Bard? We are having trouble hearing you. I think we should call you back on your other number? Sorry for some technical difficulties. We are going to conference Dr. Bard back in, in one moment.

DR. BARD: Hello, everyone, hopefully that's better. I'm sorry. I've been having some trouble with our landline. Thought it might be better on the cell phone but we'll try this.

As I was saying the Arab lobby is not easily defined as one location. It's really two components: one, the oil-driven lobby which is really led by Saudi Arabia with the help of Arabists in the bureaucracy, oil companies and defense contractors; the other component of the lobby is what I call the domestic Arab lobby.

And it's focused primarily on the Palestinian issue. Although mostly lobbies against Israel rather than for the Palestinians, it's composed of primarily of Arab and Muslim Americans, non-evangelical Christians and to some degree the Arabists get involved as well.

One of the problems with the Arab lobby is that it's very difficult for any organizations to represent, quote, unquote, "the Arabs" or "the Muslims" because there is such a diversity of opinion and views in the Middle East, so that no one can really represent all 21 Arab states which have very different and often conflicting views of the region and their own interests.

So none of these groups really represent, broadly, "the Arabs" but represent more narrow interests. The second obstacle for the Arab lobby has been, especially in the domestic lobby, the small numbers, that there's a relatively small population of Arab Americans. It's only about 1.5 million and a significant proportion of that is made up of Christians, many of whom disagree with the agenda of most of the Arab lobby; that is, they are not particularly sympathetic to the Saudis, they are not sympathetic to the Palestinians, who many of them see as having contributed to them losing their homes in Lebanon.

The other problem that the Arab lobby has typically had is lack of public support. That while the pro-Israel community can look at polls that show 63 percent of Americans supporting Israel, only about 15 percent sympathize with the Palestinians and you look at the attitudes toward Saudi Arabia and about 60 percent have unfavorable views.

So there's not a lot of grassroots support for Arab lobby positions. Because of that they've taken a different approach than the Israeli lobby. Rather than try to build up the grassroots and have the-many-influence-the-few decision makers, the Arab lobby is taking more of a top-down approach of trying to influence the few decision makers who have the power over the many.

And this is especially true of the Saudis who have mostly operated on the level of the executive branch. And neither the pro-oil lobby, especially, or the domestic Arab lobby has had much success in Congress because of this need to take a top-down rather than bottom-up approach.

And as Prince Bandar, the former ambassador to Saudi Arabia, had said, if you take care of your friends when they leave government, you'd be surprised how much better friends you have coming into office. So they've been trying over the years to cultivate officials in the government who know that if they are sympathetic while they are making policy decisions they have a better probability of getting a position supported by the Saudis when they leave the government.

Unlike many of the people who write about the Israeli lobby I would point out that I don't see the Arab lobby as being part of some wide conspiracy. I don't say that their views are illegitimate. I think that Arab states and Arab Americans and others who support their positions have a legitimate right to promote their views as long as they are all playing by the same rules that are the ones used by all Americans and all foreign governments.

Sometimes, also, the policy is very nuanced. I don't see it as an all powerful Arab lobby in the way that the detractors of the Israeli lobby see it as all powerful. The fact is that the U.S. Middle East policy is very nuanced, that this is a competition between lobbies just as in many other issues. It's not a one-sided affair.

And that sometimes the Arab lobby wins and sometimes it loses. The most powerful part of the lobby is really the oil lobby, especially the Saudis. And that's where I focus a lot of my attention. The book covers a lot of ground starting in the early 20th century. And what I found particularly remarkable was how the Saudis have literally had us over a barrel almost from day one of our relationship with them.

When you think about it today of course the Saudis have the largest reserves of oil. They have tremendous wealth so you naturally would expect that the United States would have an interest in keeping the Saudis happy. But 70 years ago the Saudis were just beginning to pump oil. We didn't need the oil yet and they had no wealth. In fact they were frequently bankrupt and needing our financial aid.

And the question is, why didn't we from the beginning, say to the Saudis we expect you to satisfy our national interests in exchange for our helping pump your oil and keeping your kingdom safe? But we never really did that. All along it's been just the opposite where the Saudis have essentially blackmailed us with various threats to create the fear that somehow we might lose our access to oil if we didn't meet their demands.

And over the years there's been a grand bargain essentially between the United States and the Saudis. The Saudis know that for them to survive they need U.S. support. We, on the other hand, need oil for our economy so they sell oil to us. In exchange we help keep the Saudis heads connected to their shoulders.

The Saudis also have acted like drug pushers in a way. They sell oil to us at just a high enough price to keep us addicted and to discourage alternatives. If you go back to a State Department report as early as 1967, for example, the department was warning of the problems of growing too dependent on Middle East oil and was arguing for the importance of developing alternative sources of energy.

But being dominated at the time by Arabists who had a very zero-sum view of the world their conclusion was, well, it's really too hard to find alternative energy sources so what we should do instead is try to distance U.S. policy from Israel to keep the Saudis happy. And that's really been a constant theme of Arabist thinking throughout the last 70 years.

And you might look back at the peak oil prices of a couple of years ago when they reached the \$147 or so a barrel and you might think that this was a great time for the Saudis, that they would want prices to keep skyrocketing because they would just make more and more money. But at that time the Saudis announced that for them the ideal oil price would be \$70 to \$80 a barrel.

Why? Because as the prices began to reach astronomical levels there was growing concern and growing interest in alternative sources of energy and to discourage that the Saudis hoped to bring the price down. And if you look at the average price of oil this year, guess what? It's about \$75 per barrel.

Now, the Saudis use the oil profits to buy arms, about \$100 billion worth over the last few decades. But they still need our protection. So why does the Pentagon sell them the arms? Well, it's part of the grand bargain as well.

They know the Saudis don't need the weapons and can't really use them but we want to sell the weapons in order to get back some of our oil money. And the Pentagon also wants to be able to lower its production costs and keep some of the supply lines open by selling the Saudis large quantities of arms.

The bigger problem with the relationship with the Saudis and this grand bargain is that it's – the Saudis have consistently worked to undermine our interests. In particular they've been major supporters of terrorism; they supported the PLO in the past during its terrorist heyday, supported Hamas more recently. And this has undermined stability in the region and lead to direct threats on Americans.

And it's also been involved in undermining the peace efforts of various presidents starting with Jimmy Carter's Camp David initiative where Anwar el-Sadat basically told them that the peace process really needed Saudi support in order for it to grow and to be a comprehensive peace that Carter envisioned.

And Carter was convinced that the Saudis would support his peace process and his peace initiative. But, in the end, they did just the opposite and largely tried to sabotage Camp David by ostracizing Egypt from the Arab League.

Similarly, Barack Obama last year on his way to Cairo met with the king of Saudi Arabia and had been under the impression that the Saudis would cooperate in the peace initiative. And because of the tough line that Obama had taken against Israel he believed the Saudis would make their own positive gestures to show that there would be some reward to Israel for making peace with the Palestinians in terms of broader peace with the Arabs.

And the king of Saudi Arabia basically told him to jump in the lake. And in both cases, and in fact in the entire history of the relationship, even when the Saudis don't do what we ask them we always reward them. In the case of both Carter and Obama they were rewarded with large arms sales after getting no cooperation on their policies. By the way, it's very bipartisan. This isn't a Democrat-Republican issue, that all U.S. presidents have essentially taken the similar position for now towards the Saudis.

The other problem with the relationship is that the Saudis have undermined our values. The Saudis are one of the principal human rights abusers in the world. And the United States has basically looked the other way as the Saudis have discriminated not only against their own citizens but often against Americans – pursued an effectively apartheid policy towards women.

And really the only case I found where a U.S. president was willing to stand up to the Saudis was when John F. Kennedy told them that they had to abolish slavery. The Saudis were still practicing slavery a century after the Civil War and he said it had to end. And the Saudis did stop and abolished slavery, at least formally, after Kennedy took the position, showing that a determined president can change policy.

Finally, let me just finish by mentioning how the Saudis can threaten our security more directly. And that's largely through their sponsorship of terror. As the undersecretary of the Treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, Stewart Levy, said a couple of years ago, if I could somehow snap my fingers and cut off the funding from one country it would be Saudi Arabia.

The bottom line, I think, in my analysis is that Middle East policy is influenced by competing interests; that the Israeli lobby may be a strong advocate for its point of view and most people know about it because it's visible and transparent. But the Arab lobby is much more difficult to recognize and investigate. And what I've done in the Israeli lobby book is – I'm sorry – the Arab lobby is to try to pull back the veil on some of its activities so no one can pretend that an Arab lobby doesn't exist.

And now the public can at least have some idea of what the Arab lobby has done and continues to do to undermine our values and interests. I'll stop there and open it up for questions.

MS. APPELBAUM: Okay, thank you so much. Well, Harry Ploss from Texas and several others, actually, asked about your last point. They asked, "How would you compare the openness and honesty of the Arab and pro-Israeli lobbies given that some Arab charities have often been found to be front organizations for terrorism and been closed down by the authorities?"

DR. BARD: Well, I think the Israeli lobby has historically been very transparent. I mean, the principal organization is AIPAC, it's very visible, people know pretty much what it does and where its funding comes from. Other major organizations that support Israeli,

including non-Jewish organizations like Christians United for Israel and others are very transparent.

But many of the organizations lobbying for Arab interests have been less easy to pin down. Mostly what the Saudi government does is very difficult to follow because it's really done behind closed doors. That when the Saudi ambassador plays tennis or racquetball with government officials nobody usually knows about it and knows what goes on during those games or afterwards.

It's true that there have been some organizations here linked to terror. I don't think they are the mainstream of the Arab lobby by any stretch but it's one of the concerns that I think American officials have that some of the people in the United States who are interested in helping Hamas and other organizations who threaten our interests have been getting funding here. And that there are some Saudi charities that have been put on the list of organizations associated with terrorism. So it's something that has to be watched very closely.

MS. APPELBAUM: Jeffrey Sheff of California would like to know whether the titling of your book, "The Arab Lobby," implies that it is defined by Arabic ethnicity rather than by country as in the Saudi lobby or compared to AIPAC.

DR. BARD: No, the title really doesn't have to do with ethnicity. And, in fact, I say that pretty early on in the book that it really has to do with interests in the Arab world – more specifically, as I say, the interests of the Saudis and to some degree interests in the Palestinian issue. So, no, it's not really ethnic at all, it involves people who are Arab, who are Muslim, who are Christian, who are members of the State Department. It really is not ethnically based.

MS. APPELBAUM: Talking about the upcoming peace talks. A staff writer from the Jewish Tribune in Toronto and many others have asked, "Do you consider the United States as an honest broker in the upcoming peace talks or has the Obama administration leaned too far towards one side or the other?"

DR. BARD: The United States is the only game in town when it comes to being a mediator of the Middle East peace process. The Israelis and the Palestinians and other Arab parties really know that the United States is the only one that can influence either or both of the parties. So we're the only game in town.

Now, has Obama tilted too much one way or the other? I think that certainly in the first year his objective was to try to show that he was not like George W. Bush who was seen as, in the Arab view, Israel's lawyer. And he took a number of chances which I think were at least informed by or consistent with the Arab lobby view that you needed to push Israel to make concessions in order to not only bring about peace with the Palestinians but also to satisfy the Saudis.

Whether he's gone too far to one side or another I think I'll let others judge. I think, certainly, from the Israeli public opinion polls the people in Israeli have their suspicions. But in

the end the peace process is going to be determined by the leaders of the Palestinian people and Israel.

They are going to have to reach an agreement on their own and the principal obstacle has remained the unwillingness of the Palestinians to agree to any of the compromises that repeated successive Israeli prime ministers have offered.

MS. APPELBAUM: Stewart Ain of the New York Jewish Week asks for you to please assess the ability of Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to make such a deal.

DR. BARD: Well, it's a very good question. I think it won't come in as any surprise to anyone to hear me say that, on the one hand, you have Prime Minister Netanyahu, who has a reputation for being tough on security, which has made him, in many ways, I think, the ideal person to negotiate at this time because if a deal can pass his muster in terms of meeting Israel's security needs I think it has a much higher probability of success; the same as the situation of having Begin negotiating with Sadat and being in a particularly strong position because of his security views to make an agreement.

The problem on the other side, I think, is Mahmoud Abbas really doesn't represent the entire Palestinian people. We know that Gaza is controlled by Hamas which opposes the negotiations and is in the position if it wants to sabotage them, if it decides to renew its attacks on Southern Israeli with violence and rocket attacks.

And Abbas is not clearly in charge even of the West Bank. He had to postpone elections because of fears that Fatah would win the election. A very few people I know in Israeli really have much faith that he has the power to make an agreement even if he were inclined to do so. And what we have seen for the last year-and-a-half is Abbas trying to do everything possible to avoid any negotiations. And even before they started he was threatening to walk out.

So I think there's a serious doubt as to whether Abbas really has the – either the will or the power to do it. I think Netanyahu definitely has the power to do it and if he finds a willing partner this week who is willing to accept living beside a Jewish state I think there is a possibility for an agreement. But the one-year time frame that's been set up seems not very reasonable given the history of the past negotiations.

MS. APPELBAUM: A questioner from Missouri asks about your analysis of Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey takes over the presidency of the United Nations Security Council tomorrow and the question is, "Are relations with Israel likely to be repaired or do you see Turkey moving closer and closer to Iran?"

DR. BARD: Well, Turkish relations are not my specialty. I can only say what I think most commentators have noted which is that there has been a definite drift in Turkey towards Iran. There's been more of a drift toward greater Islamization within Turkey. It seems that Turks have obviously been fairly hostile publicly towards Israel in the last year or so.

And it's a very serious concern because the relationship between Israeli and Turkey has been one of the key pillars of Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East for many, many years. And a dramatic shift by Turkey away from support for Israel and toward Iran could have some very serious implications not only for Israel but for U.S. policy which also relies heavily on Turkey for supporting much of our military operations there.

So I think it's still too early to tell how far the Turks are going but they've definitely been going in the wrong direction from the perspective of both Israel and the United States.

MS. APPELBAUM: One issue that is likely to come up during negotiations is the Palestinian refugee issue. And Adele Northrup from Atlanta, Georgia asks, "How do we educate the public to understand that Palestinians only remain in refugee camps today because Arab countries like Jordan and Lebanon refuse to grant them citizenship or absorb them?"

DR. BARD: Well, certainly a lot of attention has been given to the fact that the Palestinian refugees have been kept in camps and prevented from being resettled for now more than 60 years. That in places like Lebanon they've been denied most of the basic rights allowed to other Lebanese citizens, that they aren't allowed to be citizens in many places.

Jordan was the only country other than Israel to grant them citizenship and even Jordan recently began to revoke some of the Palestinian citizenship. The issue still is very important for the Palestinians and Mahmoud Abbas, I think, is somebody who has made clear that this is a key issue for him.

Other Palestinian leaders have recognized and acknowledged the fact that there's no way that any Israeli government is going to acknowledge a, quote, unquote, "right of return" for Palestinian refugees. It's a consensus issues from right to left in Israel that's totally unacceptable. And there was even a recent story, I believe, that was in one of the English publications where they found that most Palestinian refugees don't really want to go to Israel or have any misconceptions about returning to homes that don't exist anymore.

And I think the U.S. policy has been since at least the Clinton years that the Palestinian refugees should be settled in a future state of Palestine.

MS. APPELBAUM: Seymour Ross from Florida, and many others, want to know if you think the Obama administration is serious when it says military action against Iran is on the table as sanctions and diplomacy fail to stop the nuclear program.

DR. BARD: Well, Iran is the toughest issue there is today. And I don't think there are any easy answers to it. I think the record is pretty clear that sanctions have not worked. I don't believe they can work. The Iranians were announcing today new advancements in enrichment.

We see them getting closer and closer for most of the, at least published, intelligence estimates to getting the bomb so the sanctions clearly are not working. So what do you if you don't use sanctions? Well, military option is one that I think everyone recognizes is very

troubling, that it's not clear that a military response will solve the problem and even if you do attack there are a lot of consequences some of which are difficult, if not impossible, to predict.

It could lead to a lot of very negative consequences for the United States, Israel and other parties in the Middle East. So the decision to go to war would be a very difficult one but it may be the only way of stopping Iran. Now, as far as whether the Obama administration is sincere about it, if they're smart they are not going to tell anybody what they plan to do.

And the suspicions, I think, or the reason for questioning whether they are really committed to doing whatever is necessary to stop an Iranian nuclear bomb is some of the statements made last summer by Secretary of State Clinton which suggested that the United States might be prepared to live with a nuclear Iran and just provide a security umbrella to the countries in the region.

They've talked a little bit tougher since then but, as I say, I think it's a very difficult decision with really very extreme consequences. So I don't know that they are ruling it in or out. The fact that they are even talking about it now when they didn't in the past I think at least shows that they are a lot more serious than they may have been a year ago.

MS. APPELBAUM: Back to the book, we had a bunch of people ask specifically about how organized the Arab lobby really is and how you would compare its effectiveness against AIPAC. Do you think American Jewish influence is fading over time?

DR. BARD: Well, I think if you look at the influence of pro-Israel lobby it's always been very circumscribed, as well, that we have seen the pro-Israel lobby have some influence some of the time over some things. If you read my first book, "The Water's Edge and Beyond," I talk more specifically about what influence the lobby has had and it really is fairly restricted to economic aid, some military aid. On some of the big issues of war and peace it's much less influential.

I don't see any evidence that it's gotten less powerful over the years. I think it remains very influential because most Americans, as I said, believe that it's in the U.S. interest to support a democratic country that shares our values and interests. Now, the Arab lobby doesn't necessarily share all the same values and interests, certainly the Saudis don't.

The lobby is not particularly well-organized; it often operates in a more ad-hoc way. And some elements are more influential than others. I think the domestic Arab component, the Arab American organizations and Muslim American organizations have had very little influence. Certainly in Congress they've gotten much greater access over recent years to policymakers. Now they are regularly invited to the White House, regularly consulted on issues. That wasn't the case probably 20 or so years ago. But in terms of actually influencing a specific policy, there's very little evidence of it and partly that has to do with the fact that so much of their lobbying is negative.

That is, rather than lobbying to get more support for the peace process or more support for Palestinians, most of their focus seems to be on trying to cut aid to Israel, on trying to punish

Israel, condemn Israel – all things that are not popular. Now, the Saudis I think have been much more influential and they've over the years been able to get their way more often than not as you see from the \$100 billion in arms sales that we've made to them.

Other components of the lobby, again, like the Arabists have had mixed results. Now going back as far the partitioned debate, the Arabists in the State Department believed that it was going to severely damage our relations with the Saudis and the Arabs in general and threaten our oil interests if the United States supported the creation of Israel. And the president of the United States wasn't convinced by those arguments and supported Israel.

But, on the other hand, the Arabists did have some influence in, for example, imposing an arms embargo on the Jews which made it more difficult for them to win their war of independence. So there's a mixed bag and that's what I try to tell in the book: that it's not all powerful in terms of the Israeli lobby or all powerful in terms of the Arab lobby.

That they both exert influence at different times over different issues but my argument would be that in the end on balance the Israeli lobby is lobbying for relations with a country that shares our values and interests whereas the Arab lobby frequently does not.

MS. APPELBAUM: Conrad Winn of Ottawa wants to know about the influence of evangelical Christians as supporters of Israel. Do you think they will eventually eclipse the organized Jewish community as the bedrock of support for Israel in the United States?

DR. BARD: Well, there's no question that evangelical and other Christians who believe also in a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, some for political, strategic reasons and some for their own religious, theological reasons have become a growing influence especially in the last 10 or 15 years as groups like Christians United for Israel have become more prominent.

It's not clear how much influence they've had on specific policies. They certainly don't have the kind of access to this administration that they may have enjoyed in the Bush administration. But they are an important component of the Israeli lobby because Jews are, after all, only about 2 percent of the American population. And that 2 percent is not going to determine U.S. Middle East policy.

It's going to have to be, and always has been, a result of broader support of not only Christians but other Americans who see this as valuable. I'm not sure that they will eclipse American Jews in their interest for Israel but it's not really a competition. I think they are working largely together in order to secure and strengthen the existing relationship.

MS. APPELBAUM: Marvin Menzin of Massachusetts asks, "What can be done to counter anti-Israel activity on university campuses? And to what extent is it orchestrated by an organized Arab lobby or is it more a function of leftist hostility to Israel?"

DR. BARD: Well, the whole situation on the campus is a very long discussion. I would say that generally the campuses are not hostile to Israel. That the examples one hears tend to be

limited to a fairly small number of campuses, many of which are places that have been hotbeds of anti-Israel and general political activity for many years.

A place like Berkeley that's a very politically active campus, shouldn't be surprising that Israel would be an issue. And has been since I was there more than 20 years ago and was when other people I know were there before that.

I see the bigger problem on campus as what goes on inside the classroom: that we found that there's a very little taught about Israel; that what is taught often is badly taught; that there is a lot of propagandizing of Middle Eastern history and politics taught in Middle East studies departments across the country; and you have a whole generation of faculty in Middle East studies, especially, who have seen their role as being one to use their positions for political platforms rather than objective scholarship.

I think there's been a little bit of a counter to that in recent years as the field of Israel studies has grown. I think that is one of the best responses to the problem on campus is, rather than have bad scholarship, to bring in good scholarship, so by bringing the best Israeli scholars and training a new generation of people to teach about Israel I think is one of the best ways to ensure that college campuses will at least have an informed student body.

One of the problems in terms of the Arab lobby is it hasn't been so much a coordinated effort as really a consistent effort by people of a particular point of view in the case of Middle East studies professors, those who adopted Edward Said's view of the world and how to approach the Middle East and teach it.

And also an effort by the Saudis and some of the other Arab governments to invest in American universities in the hope that those investments will lead to teaching about the Middle East and Islam that's more consistent the Arab view of history and theology than it is maybe of objective scholarship.

MS. APPELBAUM: Before we wrap up, do you have any closing comments about any of the questions or anything else about your book?

DR. BARD: Well, I think it's just important that people go out and read the book, don't rely just on some of the comments. In some of the early reviews I've seen of the book people who admit they never read the book are already making broad generalizations about what the book says or what it means. And if you all take the time to read the book you will see that it's been heavily documented, relying largely on primary sources and reflects more than 20 years of research.

And I think you'll find a very nuanced analysis of U.S. Middle East policymaking and be surprised by the extent to which the Arab lobby not only exists but has had a often nefarious influence on U.S. Middle East policy. Thank you all for being part of the call and I hope you all go out and buy books.

MS. APPELBAUM: Thank you so much to our guest, Dr. Bard, for taking the time to join us. And thanks to all of our guests who participated in today's briefing. To purchase a copy of Dr. Bard's new book, please go to our website www.theisraelproject.org and look on the right side under "TIP highlights". Please click on the link for the conference call with Dr. Bard where you will then find a link to purchase "The Arab Lobby".

For more information about Israeli security threats please be sure to visit www.theisraelproject.org. As always if there is anything The Israel Project can do to help you get the facts and sources you need to cover Israel please do not hesitate to contact us.

I would also like to remind all of you about our conference call in about one hour at 1 p.m. Eastern time with Jonathan Peled, the spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C. He will be able to provide more information about the upcoming peace talks. Thank you again very much Dr. Bard.

DR. BARD: Thank you.

(END)