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Interview with Bruce Jentleson

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Summary:

Bruce Jentleson is a former US Department of State official. He served as a member of the US delegation to ACRS.

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Bruce Jentleson, United States**Oral history interview conducted by Miles Pomper on Zoom on October 20, 2020****Miles Pomper**

I read your article, but we'll probably trod a lot of the same ground, I'm afraid.

Bruce Jentleson

Hi, you know, it's been a while since I wrote those, and I'll tap my memories, the best I can, there may be some gaps. If any inconsistencies, ask me, and I'll try to clarify them.

Miles Pomper

Sure. Yeah, it's hard to imagine all these going back 30 years. I can barely remember last week, you know.

So we need to start with the, some of the sort of formalities. Can you give your full name?

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah. Bruce Jentleson.

Miles Pomper

Right. And what were the dates --kind of the from-to dates-- that you were involved in the ACRS process.

Bruce Jentleson

So I was formally in the State Department from sometime in the spring of '93 to late summer, early fall '94. And that was my Special Assistant Director of Policy Planning period. And one of my portfolios, you know, evolved to be ACRS. I was involved in the informal track twos for quite a number of years after that, but that was, you know, separate.

Miles Pomper

And your background is? What were you doing before you went to the State Department?

Bruce Jentleson

PhD from Cornell University, political science, international relations, was not a really specialist, per se, but did a fair amount of work in the Middle East was really more just broadly on foreign policy strategy. And at that time, I was on the faculty of the University of California Davis, where I'd gotten my tenure. And within Washington, we had created a Washington Center, a number of campuses and University of California system It started in 1990. So I was in Washington as director of the UC Davis piece of that, excuse me, and took a leave of absence from the university to do the government service.

Miles Pomper

Those guys are almost down the block for me right now, that new building.

Bruce Jentleson

Rhode Island Avenue one, yeah. We started offices around Dupont Circle, then we moved to 23rd and M, and I was involved in the planning, looking at all these different sites for the UC to build system, building. And then right around when it was ready to open, I got recruited to go to Duke and be head of their policy institute. So, I did a lot of the spade work, but was a visitor once it opened.

Yeah. Well, you know it's quite an achievement and not bad to be lured away to Duke.

Miles Pomper

So you started, were you there before the third plenary session or, do you remember the one in Washington, third plenary?

Bruce Jentleson

Third plenary ACRS or the whole?

Miles Pomper

Of ACRS? Yeah. It was May '93.

Bruce Jentleson

That was the third. No, I was just coming into the government then. I remember the one in Moscow, trying to think it was October '93, and Doha in May of '94. Those, I was at.

Miles Pomper

And was the Moscow meeting the first, besides the plenaries? Were you in other workshops or individual tracks before that, or was that your kind of first immersion?

Bruce Jentleson

I didn't go to any of the workshops. If I remember correctly, most of the Madrid multilaterals were run out of NEA. And ACRS was the run, one run out of PM with Gallucci, Bob Gallucci and Bob Einhorn. And so I was involved in the process, but I don't think I went to any of the in between working groups. Because I was having a bunch of other portfolios. I was, you know, working at policy planning as well.

Miles Pomper

Sure.

So what you know, you kind of came here and came in in the middle, in a sense the process was already kind of up and running. What was your sense, when you joined, about the prospects for it and how things were working and how the various delegations were participating and sort of up to speed on things?

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah, I mean, I continue to believe to this day that the bilateral peace process between Israelis and the Palestinians or, and the other Arab parties are necessary but not sufficient for stability in the Middle East. And whether it's for my own academic work on regimes, international security regimes and others, that you ultimately needed, like every other region, you know, whether it's the ASEAN Regional Forum or all of the East-West ones, that were there during the Cold War, not just the US. So if you really needed something like that to have stability, and so that was sort of my strategic intellectual strategy outlook, one of the reasons I wanted to get involved. And, you know, I liked the approach overall, where, you know, there are different roles. Oh, I was in the Cairo one too.

I remember Moscow, Cairo and Doha. I can't remember which were plenaries or which were what.

Miles Pomper

Moscow was plenary, I think those are all plenaries, but I think the Cairo was not.

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah, I mean, for example, in Cairo: We worked with a whole group, all the Arab parties, all the supporting countries. And then a core group, a rump group that we're meeting way up on top of the Cairo Hilton, we'd always, when Tahrir Square happened, it was like that was the hotel we were in, you know, years ago. And we would meet with I think, five or six, you know, the Egyptians and Nabil Fahmy, and Jordanians, Abdullah Toukan, and the Israelis, and then a couple of others, you know, that were there, and us and the Russians, and so you had the core group, you try to move things along. And then the larger group, actually that has a pretty good formula in terms of a negotiating strategy, and we kind of carried that through in Doha as well. Moscow, I don't recall, if we did that, or it was much more open ended. So I was a deep believer in the idea and the same time and things I wrote afterwards, you know, you always have to stay one step behind the bilaterals, right, and '93, '94, in the '95, bilaterals, we're moving forward.

And you could make progress there. And also, the strategy of starting with search and rescue, incidents at sea can fit what we went through in the Cold War in the late 196- 1969. This is what we and the Soviets did first is CBMs. You know, they're not intrusive. They're quiet. And so all of that made a lot of sense to me as a strategy. And so, you know, I, you know, I mean, you make your, you know, you make your bureaucrat decisions, there was really no room in the bilaterals. Those were largely, cocooned and certain people and Sam Lewis was my boss originally at policy planning, and I knew him before and, you know, and Dan Kurtzer and others. And so

anyway, it made sense for me to be involved in these both, because where my sort of strengths were and opportunities to have an impact on the process.

Miles Pomper

And you said, you weren't a sort of Middle East specialist, did you feel like you learned a lot about the sort of challenges and difficulties in the region, and particularly in this regard through this process?

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah, I mean, I'd written some on the Middle East, and I did some Middle East work, but it wasn't like I'd spent my graduate school years, you know, totally studying the region. My experience, and also when I was at State 2009-2011 as well in the Obama years, my experience is that you really, when you combine, you know, the specific expertise of regional country experts, be they FSOs or academics or intel people, with people that think about strategy and can bring to bear, for example, what are the lessons of creating, you know, regional security regimes and other regions and what fits and what doesn't fit that region, then you get a real good combination. And that was kind of, I mean, the best, the best examples I can think of - I think I wrote about this - was in May of '94, in Doha, when we were negotiating the ACRS DoP, Declaration of Principles, and we'd actually made a fair amount of progress and the Qataris really wanted something called the Doha Declaration, because they were trying to put their thumb in the face of the Saudis, you know, cause they long have, that much I knew about the Middle East. But we reached a point where there was a lot of bracketed text.

And, you know, there's an incentive, I think, that comes out of foreign service training, to, you know, try to have some sort of agreement. And I never put it this way in meetings, because I would have been written off. But I distinctly remembered, you know, studying the Detente period and the basic principles of relations that the US and Soviets signed in 1973, which very much was that-- it was supposed to be principles of relations and it was full of contradictions, which played out in the next couple of years in the Third World, Angola and elsewhere. It ultimately, was one of the key factors undermining Detente. And so I was sort of the view that no agreement at this point was better than a flawed agreement. We did believe at the time we'd keep going on it and you know, things change and it never got finished. So I would make an argument in our meetings about why it was better to talk about progress we made. And so that came from, you know, understanding strategy and security, you know, in a general way that I could inject along with people who, you know, would be telling us how we might move this country or that country closer to agreement. So that sort of, you know, integration synergy when it works. I think it's a nice combination in policymaking.

Miles Pomper

And you thought there was a, there was a pretty good mix of that in the US delegation?

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah, we had a good delegation, you know, Bob Gallucci, you know, had, you know, a lot of experience, also, you know, had done graduate work. I know, Bob Einhorn was a super arms control expert. I think most other people were more foreign service careers. And so some, you know, had different expertise. We had an ACDA representative, Mike Yaffe, who you may have talked to.

Miles Pomper

Yeah, I talked to Mike.

Bruce Jentleson

And Fred Axelgard was one of the NEA guys. A couple other people, Roger Cressey, a couple other people on the delegation. So yeah, I think we each had, you know, we've kind of brought different, you know, strengths to the table. And I think that was maybe one of the ones that helped me contribute when I might - you know, again, I knew a lot about the Middle East, but I hadn't been spending years reading cables and the like.

Miles Pomper

Sure. Well, you talked about sort of the declaration discussion. And I guess that

actually the Cairo meeting, now that I look over the chronology, was a conceptual basket workshop, as opposed to a plenary. And I guess that's where the declaration was being discussed.

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah.

Miles Pomper

You know, I guess you know that out of Moscow, there was a decision to split the conceptual basket from the operational basket. Why did that occur? And who initiated that?

Bruce Jentleson

I can't tell you who initiated that. I don't recall that. I don't know if you get to talk to Gallucci or Einhorn or others? If you talk to Eli Levite on the Israeli end, or?

Miles Pomper

We are, yeah.

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah, yeah. I mean, we went to grad school together. And we're close personal friends, we just did a zoom to catch up the other day. So we had our own indirect communication - because we were good friends and colleagues, that was helpful, outside of the room. And Nabil, of course, and I didn't know where Abdullah Toukan is these days, but I know where Nabil is. I think it was an effort to let things move forward. Like we had off the coast of Newfoundland, you know, naval exercises. The Canadians led on this, the Turks were trying to take the lead in some of the meetings on CBMs and CSBMs. So in some ways to get, you know, more going and frankly, do less plenary, I mean, plenaries just don't accomplish a lot. You know, they're fine for ratifying and some input, but, you know, they're just too big. And so it was, you know, it was more of a where can we move, you know, on parts, even though other parts are still being held out?

Miles Pomper

And when you kind of got into this conceptual basket, aspect you mentioned, this kind of core group of countries. Were those the ones that really were participating in that conceptual basket discussion?

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah. And part of it was to demonstrate that the Israeli-Arab line of tension was not the only line of tension from a regional security perspective in the region. And we had I can't remember which Gulf countries, I think it was the UAE in this group that would talk about there are other issues, we want this process to address, right. Other sources of insecurity and security concern, not just Israel, and, of course, it's 1993-94, you know, there are issues with Iran, and with Saddam, and, you know, with each other. And there was some tension to get out from under the wing of the Saudis. I mean, the Saudis were trying to, you know, sit on all of this. And it was an affirmation with some of the confidence, I think, that came out of the GCC work that had been done, of them to demonstrate that they were players too. And we had Saudis in the room. And I don't remember which other Gulf country, but we definitely had a Gulf country there. And sometimes they take us aside and say things, they would say they would want to say without the Saudis present. So that was what made it so interesting, you know, it was not just standard Arab-Israeli, that it was really dealing with a region like regions you know, Asia and we had, what you might think of in the think tank or the academic world as seminars where we had, you know, the Argentinian and Brazilian, you know, nuclear weapons free zone a presentation on that and on East-West and you know, say, well, that worked there, it doesn't work in the Middle East. True, but what lessons could you bring to bear? So it's a really rich process, I thought.

Miles Pomper

Could you talk a little bit more about what you're saying this what were the Saudis sitting on? I mean, it wasn't clear to me.

Bruce Jentleson

They didn't really want any progress on anything. Until the Palestinian issue was

resolved, number one. And number two, any forum that gave smaller Sunni monarchies space to be players they didn't like, right? Which has, you know, largely stayed true, right? I mean, 2017 expulsion of Qatar was, you know, or the Emiratis withdrawing on their own from Yemen? I mean, they that's the way they like the world and believe me, you know, I'm one of those who doesn't think that serves America's interests

Miles Pomper

And you also mentioned there was this interest in, you know, potentially dealing with the threat from countries like Iran, Iraq, a number of countries that weren't invited to the process, do you think that was a mistake?

Bruce Jentleson

My understanding is in Madrid, everybody was - some probably weren't invited - but I think that any of those who wanted to join the process, you know, maybe there would have been vetoes by various players, but I don't recall any effort of a country in my period. What was interesting about some of the track twos, particularly one that SIPRI ran around '97,8,9, was we actually met in Jordan with Iranians as well there. But you could do that on a track two without US government funding. So it was, you know, the post-Madrid, post-Gulf War, post-Cold War notion of, you know, getting beyond just the Arab-Israeli, but knowing that you have to stay one step behind. And so ACRS what we talked about over the years is, you know, on, oxygen or, because you didn't want to kill it, but when the Israeli-Palestinian process stalled, and then went backwards, you know, countries couldn't really move forward on these other issues.

Miles Pomper

On the Doha plenary, this was kind of, obviously, a pretty unusual meeting, particularly at that time, in terms of Israeli presence there. What was the most the mood like there? And do you think that was a helpful idea to have it in the region?

Bruce Jentleson

Oh, yeah, I definitely do. Again, I think it also reaffirmed the notion that we didn't have to deal just with the Saudis. And that other countries really mattered. David Ivry was head of the Israeli delegation then, and he had lots of meetings with various Arab parties up top of the hotel, you know, kinda like you do with the UN, and, you know, little bilaterals and stuff. And so that was very useful. I think. Security was very tight. Eli Levite and I tell this story that you know, as Americans and Israelis we had our own personal security guards. And at one point, I wanted to go into his room to talk to him. And security guards were trying to stop us from being in a room by ourselves. We did anyway. And I'd go down for a swim the Gulf in the morning, and my guy would follow me down, you know, so there were concerns about security. And I don't know that it got I think when we did the plenary statement, there was a little press coverage. I think we were all ready to leave by then. But it was relatively quiet. I can't remember if anything, made the papers back here or anything. But no, I actually thought it was a very good idea. And I'm not aware of any ways that backfired.

Miles Pomper

You mentioned not so much press coverage. I mean, was that an intentional aspect? Because you would assume that would it be? Like it wasn't much of public diplomacy campaign?

Bruce Jentleson

No, no, this is like Oslo, right. I always use the analogy of, you keep a plant in the greenhouse until you think it's really ready to deal with the elements. And no, absolutely not. The naval exercises off the coast of Newfoundland, I think, were basically unnoticed by the press when they did those. No, other than the notion that this process was ensconced in the Madrid declarations, there'd be periodic reports coming out, but not a heck of a lot.

And frankly, most of the media was just interested in what was going on with the Israelis and Jordanians and Palestinians, which was fine by us.

Miles Pomper

One more question on the Saudis. I'm sort of looking at the summary chronology that we have a little bit. In terms of the Saudis really kind of killing things in Doha, I guess with this declaration. Was that your sort of interpretation? They were the ones that

really stood in the way?

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah, but it was there. If the Palestinian process had gone forward, it was there to go back to with very specific bracketed text. And so they stopped any further use of it in the moment. But they didn't nullify it.

Miles Pomper

And I can't remember the date that you left the process, but I guess, the Israelis, Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in October '94. Were you still in?

Bruce Jentleson

I was out then.

I had the brief leave from the university, and I had to go back. And I was out by then, because I think the breakthrough of the treaty was July '94. And then there were various track twos. Steve Spiegel ran a bunch out of IGCC. Because I remember, we went to Jordan right after that treaty and got to go to Petra.

Miles Pomper

Beautiful, yeah.

Bruce Jentleson

That was I think '95. There was the SIPRI one. There were a bunch of others as well. And those I pretty much stayed involved in.

Miles Pomper

Well, you were clearly still following the process. What was your sense of what impact that treaty, the Israel-Jordan treaty had on the process?

Bruce Jentleson

You know, in the ACRS talks, Nabil Fahmy, who's a friend and a colleague and I have great respect for him. But the same kind of thing I was talking about with the Saudis and the Gulfies. And Nabil wanted to be the only one speaking for the Arab world. And Abdullah, very strong personality, you know, had his royal palace connections, Abdullah Toukan. And Abdullah was a voice in these small groups and others. And there's some things that Arab countries would go to Abdullah on. And that Abdullah would come to us on. So Jordan was a player partly as a function of the treaty, and probably as a function of being well represented by Abdullah and, and it kind of drove Nabil crazy. And I have great respect for Nabil. And we had, you know, when he was ambassador, I was working as senior foreign policy adviser to Vice President Gore's campaign, and Nabil hosted any number of dinners when he thought we were going to win, you know, and I stay in touch with him, but that's just you know, there's a nice way of saying that, but he really didn't want competition for voice on these strategic issues representing the Arab world, especially after what Egypt had gone through and his father had gone through on Camp David.

Miles Pomper

Do you think that, was that personal or national or both?

Bruce Jentleson

I, you know, they got along, we'd have these events together. And Cairo, they took us all out on a, you know, boat on the Nile for dinner, and whatever. Now it was more, it was more, you know, national, which country and I think that, you know, King Hussein at the time wanted to be, he was still trying to emerge from his mistakes during the Gulf War. And so it wasn't personalities, they actually managed it pretty well, because they both respected each other.

Miles Pomper

Then I guess the other big event before things kind of fell apart was the NPT Review Conference. What was your sense in terms of what effect that had particularly in the lead up to the conference?

Bruce Jentleson

Yeah, it was interesting. I again, I, you know, it was a little bit while I still in and then I was mostly on the outside. So two things, one, you know the Egyptians. You know, you know, the joke was, Egyptians are so fixated on the nuclear issue, they even wanted to talk about the nuclear family, you know. And that was their issue. And

again, some of it was Camp David and making peace with Israel, but showing they're going to be the lead tough country on, you know, the notion of Israeli nuclear weapons. The really interesting question was how to make the global process not get in the way of the possibility of progress at the regional level, you know, thinking about nuclear weapons free zones and stuff. And, again, by then ACRS was losing steam. But I think the US delegation on that tried to give enough there but not so much that it would say, well, you can't really do ACRS because you need to do the nuclear issue. And you can't do the nuclear issue because of what's happened in the NPT review conferences. And part of the, again, the political but also strategic argument, I remember this distinctly in the meetings in Cairo was, did nuclear have to come first?

Right. And, analytically not just defending the Israeli position was, you know, that's where CBMs came in. You know, I mean, again, in any situation, the problem with the role of nuclear weapons is when, you know, it's like, you know, the conventional imbalance we had in Europe, you know, in the Cold War. And so there was an argument there about, you know, you couldn't leave it for last. I think I addressed this in a couple of those articles. But the notion that you have to resolve the nuclear issue before anything else was not, it just wasn't viable, we wouldn't make progress that way. But that was the position the Egyptians took and, you know, that that was, I mean, they may have known differently, but that had to be their political position for their place, you know, in the Arab world.

Miles Pomper

Do you think that by that approach the talks were kind of condemned from the beginning?

Bruce Jentleson

Hard to say, because the variable that changed is the bilaterals. So I don't necessarily think so. I think if we didn't get to a big declaration that you had a signing ceremony on, and this or that, if you had continued with the with the process of CBMs, information sharing, which was really important on movement of troops and heavy equipment for concerns about surprise attack, you know, you could have had de facto a number of things in place that were working. And that, you know, you didn't necessarily even talk that much about, but would have been tangible proof that you could do these things on a regional semi multilateral basis. And if I had stayed involved, that would have been my sense. So yeah, we don't need to say we've achieved full ACRS agreement. You know, it's really hard to say. Imagine that, you know, the Israeli-Palestinian DoP completed in the five years that were originally defined by Oslo in 1998.

I think a lot of things could've happened, you know. And, you know, it's not to go to counterfactual history. But that, to me, is the crucial factor. Once that comes, you know, the SIPRI report, I think I mentioned this in our emails, I think remains. If the process would ever start, again, I would start with that report, the kind of recommendations we made in that report for what it would take to have a regional security regime. And it's almost 30 years later, so you'd have to update it. But I think we still thought those ideas were possible then. And the role of track twos sometimes would become glorified conferences, and some of them did, you know, they're in Greece in here, and that kind of stopped going just because, you know, it was just wasn't accomplishing anything. And it was hard, given other commitments. But, you know, the really interesting track twos would cook ideas. I actually did some of this for the Obama administration in 2015-16, on Syria, with Dan Kurtzer, and a couple of others. Your goal is to cook ideas and float trial balloons, so that when the window of opportunity opens up, you can pass them through, and that's kind of what I think was still going on in the 90s. I don't think anybody thought it was just a, academic or hypothetical exercise, there was still a sense that this could, this could matter.

Miles Pomper

So there wasn't, a sense of, they wouldn't be suspended for this kind of period, that they would be come back?

Bruce Jentleson

Suspended, but you kept thinking that, you know, maybe, up until Bill Clinton's, Camp David 2000, we kept thinking there might be opportunities to get more progress on

this, you know, they had the Wye Plantation agreement and all those things, and, you know, we get past obviously 9/11 and also the Second Intifada, and I think they still refer to ACRS as alive, but on, you know, an ICU, whatever the expression was.

Miles Pomper

So a few kind of retrospective questions and a few forward looking too. What would you say were the successes of the process and the shortcomings?

Bruce Jentleson

I think the successes were, you know, putting a regional framework strategy concept on conflicts that had typically been strictly seen in bilateral terms. Whether it was the bilateral terms of US against the Soviets or the Arab-Israeli. That was number one. Number two, I think you did start to build relationships. When the Israelis and the Jordanians signed their peace treaty, some of the key players in that had gotten to know each other through ACRS. And I think with the Gulfis, you know, the Middle East multilateral of water, I think it happened in Oman. You know, I think these relationships continued, secondly. And thirdly, you had militaries. In the naval exercises they actually kind of got to work together.

I don't know where these people are today, or... but it demonstrated, and they, sometimes, they'd have fun talking about, you know, their mutual frustrations with their own politicians, right? All those things, that were sort of some little bit of proof of concept. People say, well, proof of concept, you didn't get agreement. True. Over time, kind of carbon 14 dating fades, they become less valuable, and that, but that's not because they didn't have potential value. It's because they weren't followed up on and, you know, so I'm not going to say it was great or perfect, but I think those things are really important.

I mean when you study where progress is made and relationships, you know, between countries that have been adversaries, and when you look at us and China and things that happen after the Kissinger opening, they may not seem significant at the moment, but when you build on them, you say that the building couldn't have happened or been that much harder if it hadn't been for some of the, you know, foundation laying that happened before that. So all of those I think were important legacies. So I guess today, you know, could we use those in 2021? I think it may be a lot harder, it's 30 years later, some of the people are, you know, gone in a variety of ways or whatever. But again, that doesn't, you know, it doesn't take away from what was there. If the 2000s had been different, you know, I think those things were still had some potential.

Miles Pomper

Well, I mean, speaking of today, there's some changes now in the region for the better, at least in the last couple months, as well as other problems that weren't there as much during that time. Do you think there's an appetite today for some initiative like this? Would it make any sense?

Bruce Jentleson

Well, if today means the current administration, obviously not.

Miles Pomper

Right.

Bruce Jentleson

The Biden administration is gonna have a lot on its plate. I think there's some necessary preconditions. I do believe that like every other region in the world, you need a regional security structure and process, including on issues like environment, economic development and water. So, I do think ultimately, you need something that brings the countries together, and to the extent that these new, Israeli agreements with some of the Gulfis, is another building block. I think that's what the region needs. I also think, because it also gets away from the hub and spokes thing that oh, you know, America, you're gonna solve this for us. Which, it's not just burden sharing or politics, I think that's not how it works in any region. I read something recently about Asia in that respect. So I think there's gonna need to be a regional security process. Now, what its elements would be compared to what they were the 90s. You know, some would be as significant and others less so. But I think if you think in categories, you know, you're going to need CBMs and CSBMs. And you're going to figure out how

to have to deal with a nuclear weapons issue, ultimately. So I think it's necessary for the region. I think there's so many other things on the plate now that getting there is not imminent, but I think drawing lessons from it, I think, still is a worthy exercise. And it's important, and I could see, you know, I could see the possibilities in a new administration, depending on how the region goes wanting to give more thought to this.

Miles Pomper

Speaking to Mike Yaffe and Dennis Ross and others, and I guess there was a sense that, particularly if it is Biden administration, and we're back into something like the JCPOA, that, you know, these regional issues are pretty important vis a vis Iran, and that there might be some opportunity for some things there.

Bruce Jentleson

Actually, you know, it's my view, I was chairing one of Hillary's Middle East working groups in 2016. And, you know, it's my view that the JCPOA was fine. But you needed to have a two- or three-legged stool, not just a one legged stool. But even under the best of conditions and again, a lesson of the time, a nuclear arms control agreement, without progress on other issues, won't hold up. And so, you know, my thinking had been if you know, the election had come out differently, that, you know, we would start to work on some of those regional issues with Iran. And I believe there was a way to do that. So in that sense, you're right, and you know, and then if you adhere to the Iranian position on the nuclear issue going back to, you know, to the mid-2000s, has always been trying to call for a regional security process, right. And not just to get at the Israeli nuclear weapon, but that was part of their proposals with the EU-3 when they were dealing with them. And it's not a bad way to nest, some other issues in that, and I would let you know that, that could, you know, I think your points are good. And that could actually be the lever to get into this, rather than thinking about Iran over here and regional over here. But that a way of doing that, that I happen to think would be complicated, but absolutely crucial to security in the region.

Miles Pomper

Well, this is, you know, as I said, we've got your articles as well as this. But is there anything I didn't ask about that you think we should have covered?

Bruce Jentleson

Not necessarily I can't think of anything offhand. I think you'll probably get different views, you know, on some of the same questions you asked me, which is the nature of the exercise. But that really draws a lot of my own involvement and my own thinking on it.

Miles Pomper

Great. Well, again, I really appreciate your time.

Bruce Jentleson

Sure. Keep me posted on how the project goes.

[End of transcript]