A Courageous Presidential Decision

On May 14, 1948, under the stewardship of President Harry S. Truman, the United States became the first nation to recognize the State of Israel—just moments after sovereignty had been declared in Jerusalem. But it was hardly a foregone conclusion that America would welcome the creation of this new country. While acknowledging this as one of his proudest moments, Truman also admitted that no issue was more controversial or more complex than the problem of Israel. As the president told his closest advisers, these attempts to resolve the issue of a Jewish homeland had left him in a condition of political battle fatigue.

Based on never-before-used archival material, A Safe Haven is the most complete account to date of the events that led to this historic occasion. Allis and Ronald Radosh explore the national and global pressures bearing on Truman and the people—including the worldwide Jewish community, key White House advisers, the State Department, the British, the Arabs, and the representatives of the new United Nations—whose influence, on both sides, led to his decision.

Impeccably researched, brilliantly told, A Safe Haven is a suspenseful, moment-by-moment re-creation of this crossroads in U.S.-Israeli relations and Middle Eastern politics.

Winner of the 2009 Washington Institute for Near East Policy Book First Prize

A Safe Haven
Allis and Ronald Radosh (HarperCollins)
Prize Jury Commendation:
"To a past generation, Harry S Truman was the American hero in the story of the birth of Israel; in more recent times, some have pointed to his ambivalence and even allege the presence of a casual antisemitism. Ronald and Allis Radosh restore balance to the historical record in this splendidly written and exhaustively researched page-turner. Without smoothing over Truman's flaws, the Radoshes demonstrate how this accidental president became Israel's indispensable friend and benefactor at a crucial moment. A SAFE HAVEN should be read not only as history, but as a practical primer in presidential calculation and courage."

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