

Preface

The views outlined in this book are primarily those of a diplomat, not a scholar, after 35 years of intimate connection to the Middle East. The aim of this book is to reflect on what lessons may be drawn about the region, based on that experience, and to encourage understanding of the forces at work and the challenges ahead.

In an effort to convey the essence of core arguments, I have chosen at times to simplify some exceedingly complex issues. I am also guilty of generalising about subjects which display important local variation. Those readers who wish to engage more deeply in the issues canvassed here are encouraged to refer to the bibliography provided at the end of this book.

I have been obliged to maintain the confidentiality of discussions and other matters relating to my official duties. Individuals who have shared with me their insights during my periods in the Middle East as a diplomat and as a UN official have therefore remained anonymous.

Responsibility for all errors and shortcomings in this book rests with me alone.

