



Samuel Helfont

Visiting Fellow, HOOVER RESEARCH

Bio

BIO

Samuel Helfont is a Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution and an Associate Professor of Strategy and Policy in the Naval War College program at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. His research focuses on international history and politics in the Middle East, especially Iraq and the Iraq Wars. He is also interested in Israeli, maritime, and post-Cold War global history. He is the author of *The Iraq Wars: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, October 2025), *Iraq against the World: Saddam, America, and the Post-Cold War Order* (Oxford University Press, 2023), and *Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq* (Oxford University Press, 2018). He co-edited (with Lisa Blaydes) *Ba'thist Iraq through Archives: Reflections, Explorations, and Opportunities* (Stanford University Press, forthcoming 2026). Both *Compulsion in Religion* and *Iraq against the World* were translated into Arabic and released by leading Iraqi publishing houses. His work has also been published or is forthcoming in *Diplomatic History*, *the American Historical Review*, *The International History Review*, *Security Studies*, *The Middle East Journal*, *Texas National Security Review*, *Orbis*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The Washington Post*, *The New Republic*, *The American Interest*, and *War on the Rocks*, among other outlets.

Helfont holds a PhD in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University. Prior to moving to Monterey, he completed a three-year post-doctoral lectureship at the University of Pennsylvania. He has held affiliations with the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies at Stanford University and the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. He also served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Haverford College and was the recipient of the US Scholar Research Support Fellowship from the Hoover Library and Archives. In 2023, he received the Naval War College's research award, presented annually to the faculty member whose scholarship demonstrated the highest level of excellence over the past three years.

In addition to this academic background, Helfont served as an intelligence officer in the US Navy and Navy Reserve. An Iraq War veteran, he completed deployments both afloat and ashore in the Middle East. He also served on Middle Eastern and counterterrorism missions at the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the Office of Naval Intelligence, among other commands.