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Big Brother, Little Brother: US-Israeli Relations in the 21st Century

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor
of Arts (Hon).**

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May 30, 2013

Abstract

This dissertation is an examination of the way and means in which the governments and citizens of the United States of America and Israel interact with each other. It is centred on the argument that despite the strong political, cultural and economic ties between the two nations, the US provides an unbalanced amount of unilateral support to Israel which has detrimental effects for all parties involved; the United States, Israel, the Middle East region in general, and numerous members of the international community. To support this argument the thesis will examine a number of areas within the realm of the US-Israeli relationship, including: Economic and military aid provided to Israel on behalf of the US; Washington's diplomatic protection of Israel from international sanction; the role of the pro-Israel lobby in American politics and how it shapes public discourse on relations between the two countries; and the United States' role in the Israeli military occupation of Palestine. The conclusion of the thesis will serve to summarize the overall argument of the paper and offer possible amendments to the relationship for the betterment of all parties involved.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Conor Tobin for his invaluable assistance in preparing this dissertation. His patience, astuteness and tireless attention to detail is immensely appreciated.

I would to thank Dr. Míchéal Ó Fathartaigh for his guidance and support throughout my years at Dublin Business School. It has been a pleasure to have been one of his students.

My time spent under Dr. Paul Hollywood's tutelage was thoroughly enjoyable and has provided for an excellent learning experience at Dublin Business School.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my family members, living and deceased, in America and Ireland, with special consideration due to Margaret and Francis. You have provided me with a warm, loving home and the opportunity for a new life in Ireland. I am eternally grateful for your love and support.

This thesis is dedicated to all persons in the world who live with the daily indignity of having a foreign military occupy their homeland. Your strength and perseverance is an inspiration. Never give up.

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Chapter 1: Introduction—What is the US-Israeli Relationship?

The arena of international relations can be quite tumultuous, particularly during an economic recession such as the one the world currently faces. Indeed, the hour of the time is certainly not a prosperous one; ‘austerity’ seems to be the word of the decade and a near-certain environmental catastrophe is rapidly approaching. It is during these troublesome times in which we turn to our elected government officials to provide strength, courage and leadership. The ever-increasing globalization of the features of our daily lives have allowed for far more scrutiny and analysis of the relationships between governments than ever before, at a time when such examination is crucial. Despite the multitude opportunities to adequately appraise the foreign policy of their government, many citizens of the United States of America are participating less and less in civil society; a trend which can and does have adverse effects not only for Americans themselves, but for the populations of those countries where American foreign policy has sufficient influence.¹ There is little doubt that the United States maintains a global hegemony in the three ‘pillars’ of the human experience; politics, economics and culture. It is for this very reason why both the citizens of the US and the international community at large must be cognizant as to how the American government interacts with the governments of the rest of the world. With few exceptions, the US generally maintains friendly and positive overall relations with the global community, but one country in particular has held immense favour in the eyes of America and its politicians, particularly in the twenty-first century; Israel. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS) report for Congress on US-Israeli relations, “Since 1948, the United States and Israel have developed a close friendship based on democratic values, religious affinities, and

¹ Robert D. Putnam, ‘Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital’, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6, No.1 (January, 1995), pp 65-78.

security interests.”² Bilateral relations between the US and Israel are vast; the connections amongst governmental institutions and civil society run strong between the two nations and have done so following the formation of the Israeli state. Both countries share deep social and cultural associations, they participate in security dialogues and joint military planning exercises, bilateral science and technology development programs, as well as cultural and educational services. The US and Israel also maintain a healthy economic relationship and the United States is in fact, Israel’s largest single trading partner.³ Because of such strong ties, the US annually provides a prodigious amount of financial aid to Israel in the form of economic assistance and military subsidies. In the fiscal year of 2012, the US provided Israel with \$3.1 billion to reflect the “unshakable commitment of the United States to Israel’s security.”⁴

It is exorbitant figures like these, along with many other facets of the US-Israeli relationship which are quite contentious amongst both critics and supporters. In addition to economic and military aid, the Government in Washington DC provides Israel with an unprecedented amount of diplomatic support and protection. From the years 1972 until 2006, the US vetoed forty-two resolutions of the United Nations Security Council which had denounced Israel. This amounts to more vetoes than the combined total of all other vetoes cast by the remaining Security Council members over the same period. It also amounted to more than half of all US vetoes cast during these years.⁵ Diplomatic support to such an extent is quite controversial, mostly due to the fact that a large number of the UN Assembly resolutions and Security Council sanctions aimed at Israel are in lieu of their aggressive behaviour in both foreign and domestic policies towards neighbouring countries, as well as

² Jeremy M. Sharp, ‘U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel’, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, April 11, 2013, *Federation of American Scientists*, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>, accessed May 1, 2013.

³ ‘U.S. Relations with Israel: Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Fact Sheet’, November 2012, *Department of State*, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3581.htm>, accessed January 14, 2013.

⁴ ‘U.S. Relations with Israel: Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Fact Sheet’, November 2012.

⁵ John Mearsheimer & Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York, 2007) p. 40.

the Occupied Territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Supporters of the current US-Israeli relationship would argue that such enormous support towards Israel is necessary due to the hostile geographic area in which Israel is located. Indeed, Israel is faced with common rocket attacks from 'terrorist' cell groups and has neighbour nation-states (particularly Iran) who openly support such activities. Former-Senator (D-NY) and former-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, while speaking to a chapter of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in New York, said that, "Israel is a beacon of what's right in a neighbourhood overshadowed by the wrongs of radicalism, extremism, despotism and terrorism."⁶ While the threat of violence Israel faces on a daily basis is all quite real, many critics of Washington's enormous amount of financial, military and diplomatic support claim that such aid only perpetuates unrest towards Israel and such resources could be better appropriated for conciliatory purposes. One thing, however, is certain; the United States, with very few exceptions, has shown a lopsided amount of unwavering support for the State of Israel. The unconditional support with which the US provides Israel is most certainly detrimental to not only America's interests, but to Israel's interests and to the overall stability of the Middle East region, as well as the global community. This largesse on behalf of the US towards Israel fuels anti-Americanism throughout the Arab world; further increasing the risk of international terrorism and inhibiting Washington's ability to deal with other potential issues in the region. It also discourages Arab leaders from cooperating openly with the US and seriously inhibits diplomatic security.⁷

The United States has also been a key player in the protracted Israel-Palestinian peace process; a hotly debated situation which to this day remains unresolved. Washington's failure to place any meaningful pressure on Israel to end its military occupation of Palestine has further perpetuated dissent and animosity in not only the Middle East, but in the global

⁶ Remarks by Hillary Clinton to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), February 1, 2007, quoted in Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 4.

⁷ Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 8.

political spectrum as well. The way in which the US-Israeli relationship operates on this issue in its current form is not in accordance with the high standard of democracy for which the citizens of both nations and the Palestinian population deserve. It has reached a point where politicians in the highest levels of the US government are unwilling to publicly criticize Israel's policies, even when many Israeli citizens and other members of the global community have been quite disapproving of the Israeli government's actions.

This passiveness on behalf of the US government is primarily due to political pressure from one of the most important features of the US-Israeli relationship; a group known as the Israel lobby. The Israel lobby is a loose term for the individuals and organizations who actively attempt to promote favourable US foreign policy legislation which would directly benefit the State of Israel. The power and influence of the Israel lobby in Washington cannot be understated; indeed the famed Harvard law professor and pro-Israel supporter Alan Dershowitz wrote that his generation of Jews "became part of what is perhaps the most effective lobbying and fundraising effort in the history of democracy."⁸ Publicly addressing the US-Israeli relationship and the Israel lobby's role in the partnership has been extremely difficult. This is perhaps due to the lobby itself; many of its organizations and most ardent supporters are quick to challenge those who are critical of the lobby's influence or the current nature of Washington's relationship with Israel. There are a number of nations who today still refuse to recognize Israel as a legitimate state and, with the memories of the Holocaust and a legacy of world-wide anti-Semitism still fresh in the minds of many Jews, the questioning or criticism of the Israeli government's policies may appear to some pro-Israel supporters as an equivalent of questioning the legitimacy of Israel's right to exist.⁹ It is imperative however, that the nature of US-Israeli relations in the twenty-first century be examined objectively; sensitive issues such as the role America plays in enabling the dire situation in Palestine is

⁸ Alan Dershowitz, *Chutzpah* (Boston, 1991), p. 16.

⁹ Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 11.

difficult to discuss. Sensitive issues deserve more scrutiny, not less. These affairs are pertinent for the American public, the Israeli public, and for the populations of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it is a matter of life and death. From the evidence available it is clear that the US-Israel relationship in its current form is detrimental, not beneficial, to all parties involved.

Chapter 2: A Historical Overview of US-Israeli Relations

The State of Israel was officially founded on May 14, 1948. The idea of its creation, its foundation as a state and sustenance as a nation has been marred in violence. It is certainly a testimony to the resilience of the Jewish people that they have been able to prosper in the aftermath of a nightmare such as the Nazi Holocaust and in the continuous face of threats from its neighbouring countries. Following World War II and in lieu of the Holocaust, international pressure mounted on Great Britain to make good on their intentions contained in the 'Balfour Declaration' of 1917, which stated that, "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object."¹⁰ The establishment of a Zionist state was quite contentious, as many Arabs living in the Palestine Mandate had taken exception to such a proposal. However, the British determined that the Palestine issue was unmanageable and ceded control of the territory over to the United Nations, who in turn decided with Resolution 181 to partition the territory into two states; one Jewish and one Arab, with sovereignty over the contested city of Jerusalem given to the UN.¹¹ The Jewish community in Palestine had for some time prior to the UN recommendation begun establishing political, social and economic institutions in preparation for the creation of a Zionist state and on May 15, 1948, a day after the British mandate over Palestine had ended, the United States officially recognized the State of Israel.¹²

¹⁰ 'The Balfour Declaration', November 2, 1917, *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20balfour%20declaration.aspx>; accessed May 1, 2013.

¹¹ United Nations General Assembly Resolution #181, November 27, 1947, *United Nations*, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/038/88/IMG/NR003888.pdf?OpenElement>; accessed December 7, 2012.

¹² 'Creation of the State of Israel', *Anti-Defamation League Israel Record Archive*, <http://archive.adl.org/israel/record/creation.asp>, accessed February 11, 2013.

Initial US sponsorship of Israel did not come easy, however. The Department of State, although it did support Resolution 181, recommended that the UN establish a trusteeship which would place limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine, and divide the area into Jewish and Arab provinces, but not independent states.¹³ This was due a concern about the increasing possibility of Soviet influence in the Arab world at the time and the effect it would have on the United States' ability to access essential oil reserves from Arab producers. Many Arab nations did not support the partition of Palestine, as it was perceived to be too favourable towards the Jewish population. The State Department thought it imperative to maintain friendly relations with Arab oil producers; full support of the US towards the creation of an Israeli state would certainly hinder such an affinity. Amidst the war clouds brewing amongst Palestinian Arabs and Palestinian Jews and despite the recommendation of the State Department to take a more even-handed approach, President Harry S. Truman decided to fully support Resolution 181 and officially recognize the newly formed State of Israel.¹⁴

The Rapid Evolution of US-Israeli Relations in the Twentieth Century

Despite Truman's initial support for the foundation of the Israeli state, both his and the subsequent Eisenhower administrations were aware of the fact that too much support for Israel would be detrimental to US-Arab relations and provide an opportunity for the Soviet Union to achieve significant influence in the Middle East. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Israel were quite frosty throughout the 1950s; they were certainly nowhere near as friendly and US support was not as unquestioning as it is today. Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion lobbied heavily for his state to establish closer ties with Washington during this time period but to little avail; US economic aid was minimal and military

¹³ UN General Assembly Resolution #181, November 27, 1947.

¹⁴ 'Creation of Israel, 1948', *Department of State, Office of the Historian*, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/CreationIsrael>; accessed April 10, 2013.

assistance was virtually non-existent.¹⁵ The Eisenhower administration, which had entered office in 1953, simply did not want close relations with Israel.¹⁶ In fact, a number of diplomatic disputes arose between the United States and Israel throughout the 1950s. An incident in 1953 provided one such instance, when Israel began its National Water Carrier project. This project diverted water from the Jordan River and had quite a detrimental impact on a number of Palestinian farms and mills, as well as land in Syria. When Israel ignored a UN Security Council resolution calling for a halt to the water diversion, the United States stepped in and threatened to withhold all economic support to Israel while the project continued. Additionally, it threatened to end aid channelled to Israel by the Foreign Operations Administration and insisted on tying the aid with Israel's behaviour.¹⁷

Another such instance occurred when Israel refused to withdraw from the territory it had seized from Egypt in the Suez War of 1956. In response to this stance, US President Dwight Eisenhower threatened to block all public and private aid to Israel. David Ben-Gurion quickly retracted his stance on the conquered territory and agreed to relinquish the territorial gains, but not until after an aggressive Israeli support campaign was launched in the US which led to Eisenhower losing much congressional support and forcing him to make a public speech justifying his decision to withhold aid unless a compromise was reached.¹⁸

The 1960s however was the period of a new era in US-Israeli relations, one which saw the first major commitment on behalf of the United States towards Israel's security. Senior Fellow for the Council of Foreign Relations Warren Bass writes that the Kennedy administration "constitutes the pivotal presidency in US-Israeli relations, the hinge that swung decisively away from the chilly association of the 1950s and toward the full-bloom

¹⁵ Zach Levey, 'Israel's Quest for a Security Guarantee From the United States', 1954-1956, *British Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 22, no. 1 / 2 (1995), p. 43.

¹⁶ Levey, 'Israel's Quest for a Security Guarantee From the United States', p. 43

¹⁷ Jeffery Sosland, *Cooperating Rivals: The Riparian Politics of the Jordan River Basin*, (New York, 2007) p. 70.

¹⁸ Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 25.

alliance we know today.”¹⁹ In fact, John F. Kennedy himself told Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir in 1962 that the US “has a special relationship with Israel in the Middle East really comparable only to that which it has with Britain over a wide range of world affairs...I think it is quite clear that in case of an invasion, the United States would come to the support of Israel. We have that capacity and it is growing.”²⁰ Kennedy followed this assessment by authorizing the first major sale of US weaponry to Israel in the form of HAWK anti-aircraft missiles in 1962.²¹ The sale of these missiles held extra significance due to the fact that maintaining such an anti-aircraft defence system cemented Israel’s military dependence on the United States; Israeli soldiers required extensive training within the US and also relied on the American military for spare parts to upkeep their newly obtained hardware.²²

The HAWK missile sale and other military transactions between the United States and Israel during the Kennedy administration essentially paved the road for how subsequent administrations would treat Israel. US aid to Israel averaged \$63 million annually from the years 1949 to 1965, in which 95% of such aid was earmarked for development assistance and food. From the years 1966 through 1970, the amount of aid provided to Israel nearly doubled, averaging \$102 million annually; this included an increase in military loans accounting for nearly half of the overall sum. From 1971 through 2005, US aid to Israel has averaged over \$2 billion annually.²³ With the exception of the 1950s; each decade following the formation of the Israeli state has seen a progression in the amount of economic aid and military assistance provided to Israel on behalf of the United States. Not only has the monetary amount of support drastically increased, but it has done so in light of Israel pursuing a

¹⁹ Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy’s Middle East and the Making of the US-Israel Alliance* (New York, 2003), p. 3.

²⁰ Remarks by John F. Kennedy to Golda Meir, December 1962, quoted in Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 25.

²¹ Mitchell G. Bard, *The Water’s Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits to Domestic Influence on United States Middle East Policy* (New Brunswick, 1991) p. 190.

²² Bard, *The Water’s Edge and Beyond*, p. 190.

²³ Clyde R. Mark, ‘Israel: US Foreign Assistance’, CRS Issue Brief for Congress, April 26, 2005, *Federation of American Scientists*, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IB85066.pdf>, accessed March 12, 2013.

number of aggressive foreign and domestic policies which are contrary to the official stance of the United States. The US government in the modern day does not condone Israel's colonization of the Occupied Territories, but it has done very little to publicly pressure the Israeli government to amend their unpopular policies; and it certainly has not threatened to withhold any substantial amount of the enormous assistance payments it so generously provides.

To look back upon the rapidity with which US-Israeli relations progressed during the twentieth century is quite astonishing. The United States has taken akin to Israel as if it was the fifty-first state of the union. It is quite natural for independent nations, with similar cultures, values, and norms to develop close societal relationships. But one would be hard pressed to find a situation in modern history that mimics the way in which US-Israeli relations has evolved. The affair has gotten so big, so fast, that it has become difficult to define its limits.

Chapter 3: Economic Aid, Military Subsidies and Diplomatic Protection

Israel, since its foundation as a modern state in 1948, has been the largest cumulative recipient of US foreign assistance in the post-war era. To date (as of April 2013), Israel has received \$118 billion of bilateral aid from the US in current, non-inflation-adjusted dollars.²⁴

The majority of this aid has been provided in the form of military assistance, but there have been instances in the past in which significant economic assistance was also provided. Jeremy Sharp, a specialist in Middle Eastern affairs, reports in a brief for Congress on behalf of the Congressional Research Service, that:

For many years, US economic aid helped subsidize a lackluster Israeli economy, but since the rapid expansion of Israel's high-tech sector in the 1990s (partially sparked by US-Israeli scientific cooperation), Israel has been considered a fully industrialized nation. Consequently, Israel and the United States agreed to gradually phase out economic grant aid to Israel. In FY2008, Israel stopped receiving bilateral Economic Support Fund (ESF) grants. It had been a large-scale recipient of grant ESF assistance since 1971.²⁵

As mentioned in the introduction, the official figure given by the US State Department is that Israel receives \$3.1 billion annually in bilateral assistance, but the actual sum of the annual payments, as well as the total overall amount provided over the years is in reality considerably higher.²⁶ This is due to the more amicable circumstances in which Israel receives its aid from the US as compared to other countries. One such form of these favourable terms is that repayment of military debts between the two countries is quite often forgone. Clyde Mark of the Congressional Research Service states that:

²⁴ Sharp, 'U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel'

²⁵ Sharp, 'U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel', p. 3.

²⁶ 'U.S. Relations with Israel: Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Fact Sheet', November 2012.

The US government has waived repayment of aid to Israel that was originally categorized as loans . . . Israel preferred that the aid be in the form of loans, rather than grants, to avoid having a US military contingent in Israel to oversee a grant program. Since 1974, some or all of US military aid to Israel has been in the form of loans for which repayment is waived. Technically, the assistance is called loans, but as a practical matter, the military aid is a grant.²⁷

Israel receives other forms of exclusive treatment in its aid packages not only by means of how and when it obtains such assistance, but also where it is permitted to spend the money.

Sharp also notes that:

Strong congressional support for Israel has resulted in Israel receiving benefits not available to any other countries; for example, Israel can use some US military assistance for both research and development in the United States and for military purchases from Israeli manufactures. In addition, US assistance earmarked for Israel is generally delivered in the first 30 days of the fiscal year, while most other recipients normally receive aid in instalments. In addition to receiving US State Department-administered foreign assistance, Israel also receives funds from annual defence appropriations bills for rocket and missile defence programs.²⁸

Providing Israel with a massive lump sum at the beginning of each fiscal year is certainly not in the best interests of the United States or its taxpaying public; such a policy requires the American government to borrow the money up front resulting in the accumulation of debt based on the interest of the borrowings. The overall cost to the American tax payer in order to provide Israel with its aid at the beginning of each fiscal year is estimated to be between \$50 million and \$60 million annually.²⁹ In this scenario, the US taxpayer's loss is clearly the Israeli taxpayer's gain; Israel is able to invest the unused portion of this funding and gain

²⁷ Mark, 'Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance', p .6.

²⁸ Sharp, 'U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel'.

²⁹ Mark, 'Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance', p. 8.

interest on the money until it is needed. Israel typically invests this money in US Treasury bonds, an investment which the US government is in turn obligated to pay interest on.³⁰

Other benefits include the use of Cash Flow Financing in the transfer of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds; this allows for Israel to have much greater flexibility for when it needs to appropriate money to pay for multi-year purchases from the US military. The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) has determined in a report on auditing and financial management that the use Cash Flow Financing when paying for FMF purchases “permits a country to order more defense goods and services than it normally could because less money must be reserved when a contract is signed.”³¹ Economic Support Funds (ESF) transfers on behalf of the United States go directly to the Israeli government; for most other countries, the US designates this funding for specific projects where the money is to be spent. This does not happen with Israel and as a result, there is no way to account for how American ESF money is spent by the Israeli government. In addition to these perks, Israel is able to offset some of the cost on its FMF purchases by having US military contractors purchase components or materials from Israeli firms. Israel is also allowed to purchase weaponry from privately owned military supply companies, whereas most other countries buying arms from the US must purchase them from the Department of Defense. There have also been instances where the Israeli military has been able to use FMF funds to conduct research and development projects within their own country, as well as using such funds to purchase military equipment from privately owned Israeli military contractors.³²

It is obvious that the US government is quite generous in its loans and grants to Israel, but it is not just the government who contributes to Israel’s financial well-being. A large amount of private donations and other such economic support comes from American citizens,

³⁰ Mark, ‘Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance’, p. 8.

³¹ Auditing and Financial Management, ‘Military Sales’ Cash Flow Financing’, NSIAD-94-102R, February 8, 1994, *US Government Accountability Office*, <http://www.gao.gov/products/NSIAD-94-102R>; accessed December 14, 2012.

³² Mark, ‘Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance’, pp 8-9.

approximately \$2 billion per year; half of which is direct payment and the other half of which is through the purchase of Israeli Government Bonds.³³ The US government does however support such ‘philanthropy’, as Congress has tax-empted the purchase of Israeli State bonds as well as private donations to many of Israel’s charities. Private donations to charities in most other countries are not tax exemptible.³⁴

Private contributions to Israel from American organisations and other individuals are not always for charitable purposes, however. Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres disclosed the fact that a number of American Jews had helped finance Israel’s clandestine nuclear program during the 1950s and 1960s.³⁵ More recently in 2005, it was revealed that the World Zionist Organisation (WZO), an international body representing those of Zionist political aspiration, was participating in a multitude of illegal activities, particularly using its received donations (much of which comes from American Jewish organisations and pro-Israel supporters) to organize the creation of unauthorized settlements in the Occupied Territories.³⁶ A report issued by Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy (IRMEP) further confirmed this and noted that:

At least US \$60 billion has been spent financing illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza...the Israeli government has systematically violated its own laws by financing settlements from foreign donations, the official state budget and secret military accounts . . . Opaque and fungible assets freed up by massive yearly US foreign aid to Israel are pouring into settlement development and infrastructure building designed to partition key Palestinian territories and annex others to the State of Israel.³⁷

³³ Mark, ‘Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance’.

³⁴ Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 29.

³⁵ Shimon Peres, *Battling For Peace: A Memoir* (New York, 1995), p. 119.

³⁶ Nathaniel Popper, ‘Jewish Officials Profess Shock Over Report on Zionist Body’, *Forward*, March 18, 2005, <http://forward.com/articles/3098/jewish-officials-profess-shock-over-report-on-zion/>; accessed February 22, 2013.

³⁷ ‘US Tax-Exempt Contributions to Israel: Donations, Illegal Settlements, and Terror Attacks Against the US’, Middle East Foreign Policy Research Note, October 5, 2005, *Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy (IRMEP)*, <http://www.irmep.org/pdf/tec.pdf>; accessed May 1, 2013.

Israeli charities operate beyond the reach of US auditors, so determining the final destination for support that is initially deemed to be charitable can be quite a difficult task. Other organizations that have been identified as tax-exempt donors to illegal settlement activity include the Christian Friends of Israel, the American Friends of the College of Judea and Samaria, and the One Israel Fund, Inc. These organisations have collectively contributed millions of dollars to finance illegal activity in the Occupied Territories.³⁸

Despite the various forms of economic assistance the US provides to Israel, the bulk of such aid is in the form of military support. Indeed, since 1975, the United States has been committed to maintaining Israel's security and military dominance in the Middle East. According to the Israel-United States Memorandum of Understanding in 1975:

The United States Government will make every effort to be fully responsive, within the limits of its resources and Congressional authorization and appropriation, on an ongoing and long-term basis, to Israel's military equipment and other defense requirements...The United States is resolved to continue to maintain Israel's defensive strength through the supply of advanced types of equipment, such as the F-16 aircraft.³⁹

The commitment detailed in this memorandum to supply Israel with advance weapons systems and military equipment in the long-term proved to be quite accurate.

Israel has been involved in numerous military confrontations with its neighbouring countries since the foundation of the Israeli state; this has involved skirmishes and wars with Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and an ongoing struggle against paramilitary groups within the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is official policy of the Obama Administration that the United States must help maintain Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME) over the neighbouring militaries in the Middle East, in the event that another

³⁸ 'US Tax-Exempt Contributions to Israel'.

³⁹ 'The Israel-United States Memorandum of Understanding', September 1, 1975, *Jewish Virtual Library*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/mou1975.html>; accessed January 5, 2013.

confrontation may arise. According to the Naval Vessel Transfer Authority Act in 2012, QME is defined as:

The ability to counter and defeat any credible military threat from any individual state or possible coalition of states or from non-state actors, while sustaining minimal damages and casualties, through the use of superior military means, possessed in sufficient quantity, including weapons, command, control, communication, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities that in their technical characteristics are superior in capability to those of such other individual or possible coalition of states or non-state actors.⁴⁰

This policy has been reflected in more recent legislature which has passed through the American Congress, most notably the ‘United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act’ (P.L. 112-150); an act which reiterates the Washington’s stance to “help the Government of Israel preserve its qualitative military edge amid rapid and uncertain regional political transformation” by seeking to “enhance the capabilities of the Governments of the United States and Israel to address emerging common threats, increase security cooperation, and expand joint military exercises.”⁴¹ The provisions which help sustain Israel’s QME in the Middle East have included the subsidization of a number of multi-tiered, high-tech anti-missile weapons defense systems, including; the ‘Iron Dome’, ‘David’s Sling’, ‘Arrow’ and ‘Arrow II’, the High Altitude Missile Defense System (also known as ‘Arrow III’), as well as a sophisticated radar system known as the AN/TPY-2 X-Band, or simply, ‘X-Band Radar’.⁴² Jeremy Sharp of the Congressional Research Service states that “US military aid has helped

⁴⁰ ‘Naval Vessel Transfer Authority’, *Public Law 110-429*, October 15, 2012, *US Government Printing Office*, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ429/pdf/PLAW-110publ429.pdf>; accessed March 3, 2013.

⁴¹ ‘United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012’, *Public Law 112-150*, July 27, 2012, *US Government Printing Office*, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ150/pdf/PLAW-112publ150.pdf>; accessed March 7, 2013.

⁴² Sharp, ‘U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel’, pp 8-12.

transform Israel's armed forces into one of the most technologically sophisticated militaries in the world."⁴³

One of the more contentious issues of Middle Eastern politics in more recent times is the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The United States invaded Iraq in 2003 under the premise that Saddam Hussein had been stockpiling weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a number of countries in the region currently have nuclear capabilities (Israel, Pakistan and India) and other countries, namely Iran, are attempting to acquire such technology. There is no question that due to the enormity of extremist violence which occurs in the region, nuclear weapons should have no place in the Middle East or South Asian areas. The United States has successfully pressured numerous nation-states to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, but has failed to do so with Israel; to this day, Israel still has not signed the NPT nor made a commitment to refrain from producing nuclear and other WMD.⁴⁴ Dr. Avner Cohen, Senior Fellow at the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland, writes that "Although Israel has not acknowledged possessing NW [nuclear weapons] and has declared that it 'will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East', the existence of the Israeli bomb has been the world's worst kept secret since about 1970", also noting that "To this day, the Israeli government has issued no statement on biological arms control, and it has neither signed nor ratified the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention."⁴⁵ Israel's defiance of the international consensus in regards to nuclear weapons has potentially devastating consequences for the security of the Middle East and indeed the rest of the world. This defiance, combined with Israel's overtly aggressive tendencies towards its neighbours, encourages, not deters, other nations in the region to pursue WMD. General Lee Butler, former commander in chief of the US Strategic Command (STRATCOM), notes

⁴³ Sharp, 'U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel', p. 3.

⁴⁴ 'Status of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons', *United Nations*, <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/npt>; accessed May 5, 2013.

⁴⁵ Avner Cohen, 'Israel and Chemical/Biological Weapons: History, Deterrence, and Arms Control', *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (Fall/Winter, 2001), p. 27.

that Israel is a “perfect illustration of the short-sightedness that surrounds this issue of whether or not nations should acquire nuclear capability . . . it is dangerous in the extreme that in the cauldron of animosities that we call the Middle East, one nation has armed itself, ostensibly, with stockpiles of nuclear weapons, perhaps numbering in the hundreds, and that that inspires other nations to do so”, also noting that “I cannot imagine any regional quarrel or conflict that is or will be made easier to resolve by the presence or the further introduction of nuclear weapons.”⁴⁶ The United States has over the course of many decades, subsidized the military of a country whom not only pursues aggressive, expansionist foreign and domestic policies with its neighbours, but also refuses to cooperate with the international consensus and agree to legislation regarding the disposal of nuclear weapons. The implications from this behaviour are quite clear; The US indirectly encourages other nations in the Middle East to pursue nuclear weapons programs through its apathy towards Israel’s weapons capabilities. This is most certainly not an expressed, official stance or policy of the United States, but it is, in reality, a ‘fact on the ground’.

It is no secret that the United States favours Israel within the realm of international diplomatic relations. The US is arguably the most influential permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and in holding such a position, Washington has used its clout to provide an unprecedented amount of diplomatic support and protection to the State of Israel. This holds true more so now in the twentieth century than in decades past, as the gravity of Israel’s treatment towards the populations in the Occupied Territories becomes more known throughout the international community. Stephen Lendman, writing on behalf of the Centre for Research on Globalization, states that Israel’s longstanding policy in regards to

⁴⁶ General Lee Butler interview with National Press Club Newsmakers, quoted in Hans Kristensen, ‘Nuclear Futures: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and US Nuclear Strategy’, March 1998, *The Nuclear Information Project*, <http://www.nukestrat.com/pubs/nfuture2.pdf>; accessed January 12, 2012.

Palestine “reflects slow-motion genocide.”⁴⁷ In spite of such descriptions of Israeli policy being commonplace and generally accepted throughout academic community, the United States has on numerous instances during the past decade contradicted its own policy in regards to Israel’s actions in the Occupied Territories, and provided diplomatic protection through the UN. Avi Shlaim, Emeritus Professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford, states that America is indeed subservient to Israel because of the way in which the US government politically isolates and contradicts itself by defending Israel’s policies. He notes that:

In February 2011 the UN Security Council voted on a resolution condemning Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank. Fourteen members voted in favour and only the US voted against. Now the official US position is that the settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace. So the veto of this resolution was tantamount to a vote against the Americans’ own policy.⁴⁸

Another example of Washington’s duplicitous behaviour occurred in September 2011 when the Palestinian Authority made its bid for enhanced status in the United Nations. The United States has publicly supported the creation of a Palestinian state, and indeed both former President George W. Bush and current president Barack Obama have both publicly expressed their personal desires for Palestinian self-determination; however, when the Palestinian Authority made its bid for upgraded status, the US joined Israel in threatening dire consequences if the Palestinians proceeded any further.⁴⁹ In fact, the United States had vowed

⁴⁷ Stephen Lendman, ‘Israel’s Genocidal War on Palestine’, November 30, 2012, *Centre for Research on Globalization*, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/israels-genocidal-war-on-palestine/5313587>; accessed 13 March, 2013.

⁴⁸ Avi Shlaim, ‘V is for Veto’, in ‘The A-Z of Israel’, *The New Statesman*, January 17, 2013, sent to the author by Professor Shlaim.

⁴⁹ Shlaim, ‘V is For Veto’.

to veto any application, and subsequently prohibiting any chance of Palestine obtaining full membership in the UN.⁵⁰

The United States government has taken this contradictory stance even in General Assembly resolutions, which are nonbinding and mostly symbolic. An example of this occurred in late 2004, during which the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 59/124, a piece of legislation which “*Demands* [emphasis in original] that Israel, the occupying power, cease all practices and actions which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people, respect human rights law and comply with its obligations”, also condemning the “killing of Palestinian civilians and the widespread demolition of homes by Israel.”⁵¹ This resolution passed by a vote of 149-7; Australia, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru and Palau being the five countries that joined the US and Israel in opposing the resolution.⁵²

Washington has also stifled the attempts of an international body known as the ‘Quartet’ (The US, UN, EU and Russia) to proceed with diplomatic negotiations regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Quartet issued what is known as its ‘road-map’ to establishing a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel. Unfortunately, due to the Bush administration’s appeasement of the Israeli government, the road-map did not lead to any tangible solution.⁵³ In fact, former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations Mortimer Zuckerman openly dismissed the strategy of the Quartet, claiming that it was a “road map to nowhere.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Kevin Flower, ‘What Does Palestinian Statehood Bid Mean?’, September 26, 2001, *CNN*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/09/20/world/meast/palestinian-statehood-bid-explainer/index.html>; accessed January 25, 2013.

⁵¹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the UN on the Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, ‘Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem’, Fifty-Ninth Session, Agenda Item 76, January 25, 2005, *United Nations*, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/59/124&Lang=E; accessed March 13, 2013.

⁵² Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 41.

⁵³ Shlaim, ‘V is for Veto’.

⁵⁴ Mortimer Zuckerman quoted in Ori Nir ‘US Groups Seek to Cast Peace ‘Map’ as a Threat’, *Forward*, May 2, 2003, <http://forward.com/articles/8712/us-groups-seek-to-cast-peace-map-as-a-threat/>; accessed March 16, 2013.

It is quite apparent that the United States, at the cost of its own diplomatic credibility and reputation, has gone to considerable lengths to protect and isolate Israel from any type of international sanction. Strong cultural and economic ties have existed between the two nations, and there should be some level of regard to acknowledge the prosperous relationship that has developed as a result. However, the United States are acting in blatant contradiction of the principles which it demands all of its citizens abide by; fair and honest democracy. The US is using its financial and military muscle, as well as its omnipotent diplomatic power in the form of a Security Council veto, to allow the government of Israel to pursue policies which are unsatisfactory to the international consensus. Every time the United States vetoes an overwhelming majority of the UN in condemning Israeli policy, it is undermining the credibility of that institution and further enabling a most unsavoury form of modern imperialism to exist in the world today. There are many identifiable reasons for why the US provides such security, but there exists an entity that maintains an enormous influence in American political affairs; the pro-Israel lobby. The sway which the Israel lobby holds over many US politicians is the driving force behind American foreign policy towards Israel and the Middle East region in general.

Chapter 4: The Pro-Israel Lobby

It should first be noted that there is nothing illegal or conspiratorial about the pro-Israel lobby in US politics. There are countless instances throughout modern history of unfounded accusations against those of the Jewish faith or pro-Zionist/pro-Israel tendencies that they indeed wish to ‘control’ or manipulate the worlds’ governments for a more sinister purpose.⁵⁵ There is no basis or place for such arguments in any type of astute disquisition; those of a pro-Israel political stock participate in American politics by the same standard which all other interest groups do. J. J. Goldberg, the editor-at-large for the Jewish newspaper *Forward*, summarizes the nature of the Israel lobby in US political life: “It seems as though we’re forced to choose between Jews holding vast and pernicious control or Jewish influence being non-existent. Somewhere in the middle is a reality that none wants to discuss, which is that there is a Jewish community made up of a group of organizations and public figures that’s part of the political rough-and-tumble. There’s nothing wrong with playing the game like everybody else.”⁵⁶

The term “Israel lobby” is a common phrase within public discourse. Renowned professors of political science and international relations John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, define in their book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, the Israel lobby as a “convenient shorthand term for the loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape US foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction.”⁵⁷ The Israel lobby is a general interest group amongst hundreds of other interest groups all vying for political attention and approbation from America’s elected representatives; the general term however

⁵⁵ See, for example, Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London, 1992), p. 620. Other examples include Henry Ford, *The International Jew* (Detroit, 1920), and the notorious anti-Semitic forgery from Sergius Nilus, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Honolulu, 2003).

⁵⁶ J. J. Goldberg quoted in Samuel Freedman, ‘Don’t Blame the Jews for This War’, *USA Today*, April 2, 2003, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2003-04-02-freedman_x.htm; accessed April 14, 2013.

⁵⁷ Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p 112.

can be misleading, as it includes individuals and organizations who do not participate in formal lobbying activity. Because there is a vast amount of activities and services provided for the benefit of Israel across such a broad spectrum of American society, it would more accurate to characterise the lobby as a pro-Israel 'movement' or 'community'.⁵⁸ However the connotation is used, the Israel lobby is separated from its counterparts in other interest groups due to the sheer effectiveness in which it operates; there can be no doubt that Israel receives incomparable treatment amongst all other countries with active lobbies in US politics. This can be partly attributed to the unshakable faith and commitment that many American Jews have towards their ethnic homeland of Israel. Historian and political strategist Steven T. Rosenthal states that "there has been no other country whose citizens have been as committed to the success of another country as American Jews have been to Israel."⁵⁹ It is not solely Jews, however, that comprise of the Israel lobby; a number of Gentile political commentators and public figures are decidedly pro-Israel, and a contingent of people known as 'Christian Zionists' are quite active in fundraising and other methods of maintaining US support for Israel. Reverend Dr. Donald Wagner, who is the executive director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at North Park University, defines Christian Zionism as "a movement within Protestant fundamentalism that understands the modern state of the country-region Israel as the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy and thus deserving of political, financial, and religious support."⁶⁰ There is no small amount of Christian Zionists, either; it is estimated that these views are shared by 20-25 million people.⁶¹ Overall, Jews and Gentiles both have proven quite capable of creating and maintaining enormous US support for the State of Israel.

⁵⁸ Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p 112.

⁵⁹ Steven Rosenthal, 'Long Distance Nationalism: American Jews, Zionism, and Israel', in *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism*, edited by Dana Evan Kaplan (New York, 2005) p. 209, quoted in Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 115.

⁶⁰ Rev. Dr. Donald Wagner, 'Defining Christian Zionism', 2007, *Challenging Christian Zionism*, <http://www.christianzionism.org/article/wagner02.asp>; accessed May 4, 2013.

⁶¹ Wagner, 'Defining Christian Zionism'.

There are numerous civic organizations working in American society to directly benefit Israel and strengthen US-Israeli ties. Perhaps the largest and most well-known pro-Israel organization is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The AIPAC is self-described as “America’s leading pro-Israel lobby” and “works with Democrats, Republicans, and Independents to enact public policy that enhances the US-Israel relationship . . . AIPAC urges all members of Congress to support Israel through foreign aid, government partnerships, joint anti-terrorism efforts and the promotion of a negotiated two-state solution—a Jewish state of Israel and a demilitarized Palestinian state.”⁶² It has been quite active on Capitol Hill in the past, and remains so to this day. The AIPAC has lobbied for numerous bills which have recently passed through Congress, including: H.R. 5856 (Department of Defense Appropriations Act 2013), H.R. 850 (Nuclear Iran Prevention Act 2013), H.R. 938 (United States-Israel Strategic Partner Act 2013) and H.R. 933 (Scientific Appropriations Act 2013).⁶³ To say that the AIPAC holds considerable ‘influence’ over many members of Congress would be an understatement. A number of journalists have reported on the prominence which the AIPAC asserts over members of the US government. Michael Massing once reported that a member of the congressional staff expressed to him that “We can count on well over half the House [Of Representatives]—250 to 300 members—to do reflexively whatever AIPAC wants.”⁶⁴ Jeffery Goldberg wrote in an article for the *New Yorker* that he had shared dinner with former AIPAC official Steve Rosen, and at one point during the meal, Rosen slipped a napkin in front of Goldberg and stated that “You see this napkin? In twenty-four hours, we could have the signatures of seventy senators on this napkin.”⁶⁵

⁶² ‘Mission Statement’, *The American Israel Public Affairs Committee*, <http://www.aipac.org/en/about/our-mission>; accessed on November 10, 2012.

⁶³ ‘Lobbying Spending Database-American Israel Public Affairs Committee, 2013’, *Center for Responsive Politics*, <http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientbills.php?id=D000046963&year=2013>; accessed on November 10, 2012.

⁶⁴ Michael Massing, ‘The Storm Over the Israel Lobby’, *New York Review of Books*, June 8, 2006, quoted in Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 10.

⁶⁵ Jeffery Goldberg, ‘Real Insiders: A pro-Israel Lobby and an F.B.I. sting’, *The New Yorker*, July 4, 2005.

The AIPAC does not make direct campaign contributions to potential US politicians, but it most certainly does have a significant influence on which candidates receive money. According to the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP), in 2008, “pro-Israel entities spent \$3,235,486 on lobbying”, of which the “AIPAC accounted for nearly \$2.5 million of that amount.”⁶⁶ The AIPAC is able to manipulate the flow of political money by posting on its website which way members of congress voted on legislation pertaining to issues that are considered important within the organization. It also produces a periodical known as the *AIPAC Insider*, a publication which handicaps close political races. Such information is routinely viewed by thousands upon thousands of potential political donors; this combined with the fact that between the years of 2000 and 2004, the 50 members of the AIPAC board donated an average of \$72,000 each to campaigns and political action committees, provides the safe assumption that the AIPAC has considerable sway over the lawmakers of the United States.⁶⁷ As the CRP’s Steven Weiss stated: “If you are a candidate and you get the pro-Israel label from AIPAC, the money will start coming in from contributors all over the country.”⁶⁸

Other prominent and influential organizations within the Israel lobby include, but are certainly not limited to: the American Jewish Congress, the Zionist Organization of America, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, Americans for a Safe Israel, American Friends of the Likud, the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, Mercaz-USA and Hadassah.⁶⁹ There also exists a governing body for many of America’s pro-Israel groups which is known as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The Conference of Presidents represents fifty-two national Jewish agencies and describes itself as “the voice of organized American Jewry” which works to forge

⁶⁶Michelle Minkoff, ‘Influence and Lobbying: Pro-Israel: Background’, December 2009, *Center For Responsive Politics*, <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/background.php?cycle=2008&ind=Q05>; accessed April 21, 2013.

⁶⁷ Glenn Frankel, ‘A Beautiful Friendship?’, *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2006.

⁶⁸ Steven Weiss quoted in Kelley Vlahos, ‘Pro-Israel Lobby a Force to Be Reckoned With’, *Fox News*, May 28, 2002, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,53785,00.html>; accessed on March 27, 2013.

⁶⁹ Mearsheimer & Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 116.

“diverse groups into a unified force for Israel’s well-being” and also acting as “the central forum for key American, Israeli and other world leaders to address critical issues of concern to the American Jewish community.”⁷⁰

Despite the significance and seemingly colossal status of American Jewish organizations in US political discourse, there is however a paradoxical element to the continued prosperity of such groups. Organizations such as the AIPAC, ZOA and the American Jewish Congress, which were originally created to protect and aid Israel, are now dependant on the strength of the State of Israel and its governmental policies to ensure the continuation of the groups themselves. Chaim Waxman, the Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Jewish Studies at Rutgers University, argues that “Many American Jewish organizations now need Israel to legitimate their own existence. Although these organizations may have been established for the purpose of enhancing and strengthening Israel, today Israel is vital for their continued viability. This is another manifestation of the classical process of organizational goal displacement, wherein the original goal for which an organization was created is displaced, once the organization comes into existence, with the goal of maintaining the organization itself.”⁷¹ By tacitly supporting and working to further cement Israel’s more unsavoury policies, the lobby in effect affirms its own survivability and, in order to maintain such a high position within society, the lobby reflexively combats all elements which threaten its continuity.

The Israel lobby and the numerous organizations which form its core have exhibited a remarkable influence in regards to which candidates do and do not receive certain government positions. The lobby is notorious for eliminating its perceived enemies within the political discourse of society; particularly those who are publicly critical of Israel or its relationship with the United States. A prime example of this would be in 2009, when Charles

⁷⁰ ‘Who Are We?’, *Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations*, <http://www.conferenceofpresidents.org/content.asp?id=52>; accessed December 13, 2012.

⁷¹ Chaim Waxman, *All in the Family: American Jewish Attachments to Israel* (New York, 1992).

W. Freeman Jr. was pressured into removing himself from consideration for a top intelligence position in the US government. In an article entitled “Israel Stance Was Undoing of Nominee for Intelligence Post”, the *New York Times* quotes Freeman himself as saying he was victim of a concerted campaign by the “Israel lobby” and that “Israel is driving itself toward a cliff, and it is irresponsible not to question Israeli policy and to decide what is best for the American people.”⁷² Political pressure against Freeman came from a number of sources; former AIPAC official Steven J. Rosen started the ruckus when he made an internet blog post criticising the potential nominee. The Zionist Organization of America sent out an ‘action alert’ memo which urged all members of Congress to investigate Freeman’s professional conduct and a number of prominent, pro-Israel US lawmakers, including Senator Charles Schumer and Representative Steve Israel made telephone calls to the White House to express their displeasure over the possibility of Freeman’s appointment.⁷³

The lobby is also capable of keeping their ‘enemies’ out of office by providing generous sums of money to the political campaigns of the opponents of such people. In 2002, Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), lost her seat to a relatively unknown candidate named Denise Majette, due to Majette receiving far greater campaign funding from numerous pro-Israel political action committees (PACs). McKinney was disliked amongst many pro-Israel voters and political donors because of her views towards Israel (which were deemed somewhat hostile). She lost an additional election campaign in 2006 due to strikingly similar circumstances; Hank Johnson, her opponent in the 2006 race, received vastly superior funding from several pro-Israel PACs (five of which had also contributed to Denise Majette’s campaign in 2002); at one point in the election race, Johnson had taken in over \$128,000 in

⁷² Mark Mazetti & Helene Cooper, ‘Israel Stance Was Undoing of Nominee for Intelligence Post’, *The New York Times*, March 11, 2009, p. A1.

⁷³ Mazetti & Cooper, ‘Israel Stance Was Undoing of Nominee for Intelligence Post’.

campaign contributions, a total which was more than triple the amount that McKinney had received.⁷⁴

Certain elements within the Israel lobby are quite active not only in monitoring its perceived enemies, but also in attempts to damage the reputations of those who are unlucky enough to fall out of favour. In Gregory Slabodkin's article for the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, journalist Robert Friedman is quoted in describing how in the past, a number of American Jewish organizations would conduct such activity. He states:

Investigators—sometimes overzealous Jewish college students, sometimes sources with access to US intelligence agencies—were used to ferret out critics of Israel, Jew or gentile, wherever they might be. At ADL [Anti-Defamation League] and AIPAC, files were opened on journalists, politicians, scholars, and community activists. Their speeches and writings were monitored, as were, in some cases, their other professional activities. And they were often smeared with charges of anti-Semitism or with the pernicious label of self-hating Jew. The intention was to stifle debate on the Middle East within the Jewish community, the media and academia; for fear that criticism of any kind would weaken the Jewish State.⁷⁵

When one of the prime instigators of such dubious activity, George Kennan, stepped down from his post as executive director of the AIPAC in December 1974, the task of monitoring Israel's 'enemies' was transferred to the department of research and information at the AIPAC, where it would continue to function for decades to come.⁷⁶

The reach of the Israel lobby within American political life is well documented, even at the highest positions of government. Most recently, there was intense speculation regarding whether or not the AIPAC, other American Jewish organizations and pro-Israel US

⁷⁴ Jonathan Allen, 'McKinney Opponent Rakes In Pro-Israel Cash', *The Hill*, August 9, 2006, *Information Clearing House*, <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article14478.htm>; accessed May 2, 2013.

⁷⁵ Robert Friedman quoted in Gregory Slabodkin, 'The AIPAC Politics of Smear: The Secret Section in Israel's US Lobby That Stifles American Debate', *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, July 1992, <http://www.wrmea.org/wrmea-archives/141-washington-report-archives-1988-1993/july-1992/10030-the-secret-section-in-israels-us-lobby-that-stifles-american-debate.html>; accessed on May 7, 2013.

⁷⁶ Friedman quoted in Slabodkin, 'The AIPAC Politics of Smear'.

politicians would oppose Chuck Hagel; President Obama's nominee for the vacant Secretary of Defense position.⁷⁷ Although not entirely due to Hagel's previous opposition to what he once called the 'Jewish lobby' it came as no surprise that his nomination (which was ultimately upheld), was filibustered and delayed by Republicans in the Senate; the first time such an event had ever occurred to a nomination for the position of Secretary of Defense.⁷⁸ Oklahoma Senator and ardent supporter of Israel Jim Inhofe, who led the filibuster charge against Hagel, has been quoted as saying, "The anti-Israel history of Chuck Hagel is real. We can't have someone at the Pentagon who has made these kind of statements."⁷⁹

The overbearing influence on US political discourse from organizations such as the AIPAC and other prominent individuals in the Israel lobby disrupts the flow of democracy in American society; it perpetuates a system where money has become the most important deciding factor for elections and where one can be branded as an anti-Semite for simply disagreeing with the policies of the Israeli government and its supporters. In respect to the Christian Zionist movement, biblical prophecy, which is by no means concrete and is quite often subject to interpretation, is hardly an ideal basis for the formation of public policy; one of the United States' most celebrated founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, recognized this sentiment and wrote about it; suggesting that society should attempt to build "a wall of separation between Church and State."⁸⁰ As much as Israel deserves the support and protection of the United States, as should all of Washington's friends and allies, the ways and means in which the pro-Israel lobby attempt to bolster such support are disadvantageous for the betterment of both Israeli and American society overall. The Israel lobby has seen to it

⁷⁷ Phillip Weiss, 'Hagel looms – Will AIPAC Dare to Take Him On?' *Mondoweiss*, January 6, 2013, <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/01/hagel-looms-aipac.html>; accessed May 14, 2013.

⁷⁸ 'US In Jeopardy? Republicans Block Hagel's Appointment as Defense Sec', *RT News*, February 15, 2013, <http://rt.com/usa/republicans-block-hagel-defense-287/>; accessed February 16, 2013.

⁷⁹ Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe quoted in Michael Cohen, 'Chuck Hagel's Confirmation and the Orthodoxy of US Debate on Israel', *The Guardian*, February 14, 2012.

⁸⁰ 'Thomas Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists', January 1, 1802, *Library of Congress*, <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>; accessed March 8, 2013.

that a status quo exists in the US-Israel relationship; one that is highlighted by the US's toleration of an utterly deplorable situation in the Occupied Territories.

Chapter 5: The US Role in the Israeli Military Occupation of Palestine

The Israeli military occupation of modern day Palestine (the territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip) began in the year 1967, as a result of the territories Israel conquered in the Six-Day War. In fact, the upcoming date of June 5, 2013 will mark the forty-sixth anniversary of Israel's victory in that war, and thus dually marking the anniversary of the beginning of the longest currently active military occupation in the world.⁸¹ There are other examples of peoples who cannot claim they belong to an independent state. The Kurds in Turkey, the Basque situation in Spain and France and the Chinese occupation of Tibet have all left certain populations without a preferred recognized state to call their own. Noam Sheizaf, Chief Executive Officer of +972, a web-based magazine devoted to covering the Israel-Palestine conflict, distinguishes between these examples and the current situation in the Middle East:

In all of those cases, the “occupying” country annexed the territory at hand and turned the people living in it—sometimes against their will—into its citizens. Israel never did that. It let the army run the occupied territory . . . Between one-quarter and one-half of the population under Israeli does not enjoy the most basic of civil rights or any political representation within the regime that controls it. Israel is a decent democracy for its Jewish citizens. For Palestinians, it's a brutal dictatorship.⁸²

Undoubtedly, the most regrettable feature of US foreign policy in the last fifty years has been its failure in negotiating a peace settlement between Israel and Palestine. Virtually every US administration in the post Six-Day War era has supported the creation of a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, but none have been able to achieve it. When Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th US President in 2009, a new sense of hope was felt amongst the international community; this was the opportunity for the first ever African American

⁸¹ Noam Sheizaf, ‘No End in Sight: Occupation Marks 45th Anniversary’, *+972 Magazine*, June 5, 2012, <http://972mag.com/no-end-in-sight-occupation-marks-45th-anniversary/47544/>; accessed May 10, 2013.

⁸² Sheizaf, ‘No End in Sight’.

Reports on Human Rights Practices 2001, a yearly publication issued on behalf of the US Department of State which details human rights violations in other countries, members of the Israeli security apparatus (presumably the Israel Defense Forces—IDF) have participated in using “excessive force in contravention of their own rules of engagement.”⁸⁶ Excessive force which contradicts Israeli rules of engagement can be more accurately translated as *offensive* military operations; a clear confutation of the ways in means in which US supplied arms are to be used.

Prominent voices in the international community have spoken out against Israel’s use of US arms in the Occupied Territories. Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, once stated that:

I feel obliged to call your attention to disturbing patterns in the treatment of civilians and humanitarian relief workers by the Israeli Defense Forces . . . Judging by the means and methods employed by the IDF—F16 fighter-bombers, helicopter and naval gunships, missiles and bombs of heavy tonnage—the fighting has come to resemble all-out conventional warfare. In the process, hundreds of innocent non-combatant civilians, men, women and children—have been injured or killed, and many buildings and homes have been damaged or destroyed. Tanks have been deployed in densely populated refugee camps and in towns and villages; and heavy explosives have been dropped mere meters from schools where thousands of children were in attendance.⁸⁷

It has not only been guns, bombs, tanks and helicopters which the United States has provided Israel to brutally subject the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Chomsky notes that during the ‘Al-Aqsa Intifada’, otherwise known as the Second Palestinian Intifada, a period of heightened violence between Israel and Palestine which took place in the early 2000s, “The army’s [IDF]

⁸⁶ Lorne Craner, ‘2001 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices’, March 4, 2002, *US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor*, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/8147.htm>; accessed March 3, 2013.

⁸⁷ Statement made by Kofi Annan on the use of US weapons by the IDF, Quoted in William Hartung & Frida Berrigan, ‘US Arms Transfers and Security Assistance to Israel: An Arms Trade Resource Center Fact Sheet’, May 6, 2002, *World Policy Institute*, <http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/israel050602.html>; accessed January 24, 2013.

force of huge, US-provided bulldozers was also called into action to destroy dwellings, fields, olive groves, and forests with utter abandon.”⁸⁸ The use of bulldozers to enact death and destruction conjure painful reminders of the despairing story of Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old peace activist from Washington State, who was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer in 2003. Corrie was taking part in a nonviolent, direct action protest to protect the home of a Palestinian family from demolition.⁸⁹

Each passing day is an opportunity for the US government to overcome the pressure of the status quo and place meaningful pressure on the Israeli government to cease its colonization of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Washington’s intransigence on this issue is weakening its diplomatic credibility amongst the populations in Palestine as well as perpetuating anti-American sentiment in the region. Dalia Hatuqa, writing for *Foreign Policy*, states that during Barack Obama’s March 2013 visit to the Middle East, his trip was viewed with “a mixture of apathy, skepticism, and outright hostility” in the West Bank, and that, “In Ramallah, the de facto administrative capital of the West Bank, posters of the American president were doused with black paint prior to his arrival. In Bethlehem, some of the US flags hung the night before he visited the Church of Nativity were burned.”⁹⁰ During that visit, Barack Obama held a joint press-conference with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in which he said, “The Palestinian people deserve an end to occupation and the daily indignities that come with it . . . Like people everywhere, Palestinians deserve a future of hope . . . Put simply, Palestinians deserve a state of their own.”⁹¹ If President Obama has any

⁸⁸ Noam Chomsky, ‘Cauldron of Animosities’, in *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance* (London, 2004), p. 181.

⁸⁹ ‘Biography’, *Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice*, <http://rachelcorriefoundation.org/rachel/>; accessed May 15, 2013.

⁹⁰ Dalia Hatuqa, ‘Obama’s Empty Words’, April 8, 2013, *Foreign Policy*, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/08/obama_s_empty_words?wp_login_redirect=0; accessed May 3, 2013.

⁹¹ Remarks by President Obama at a press conference in Ramallah, West Bank, March 21, 2013, in *Haaretz*, ‘Full Text of President Obama’s Speech in Ramallah’, March 22, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/obama-visits-israel/full-text-of-president-obama-s-speech-in-ramallah-1.511206>; accessed May 17, 2013.

intent behind those words, he must take deeper consideration into America's role in perpetuating those indignities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Israel has been an invaluable friend and ally of the United States for many years and certainly deserves special consideration for doing so. It is irrational to assume that all of America's friends and allies should be treated equally; economic and cultural ties will always set a level of precedence in how and which nations interact with each other. The safety and security of Israel has in the past and will always be a high priority of United States foreign policy; and rightfully so. But as the evidence has shown, the partnership in its current form is eroding the fabric of democracy which inherently binds the two nations together.

The current national debt of the United States of America is in excess of \$16 trillion, and it is constantly increasing by the thousands, every second, of every day; quite a grim prospect.⁹² Estimates for the future are quite bleak as well; the Congressional Budget Office reports in its *Budget and Economic Outlook: Fiscal Years 2013 to 2023*, that “deficits are projected to increase in the coming decade, however, because of the pressures of an aging population, rising health care costs, an expansion of federal subsidies for health insurance, and growing interest payments on federal debt. As a result, federal debt held by the public is projected to remain historically high relative to the size of the economy for the next decade.”⁹³ It would be quite irresponsible of the US government to continue to provide Israel with over \$3 billion annually with the prospect of additional debt, from numerous areas, in the near future. Israel is not a poor nation that is dependent on US subsidy, either. According to the United Nations' Human Development Index (HDI), a forum which measures the life expectancy rates, education levels and income indices of a country and places them into tiers based on their prosperity, Israel ranks as the 16th most developed country amongst 187

⁹² 'US Debt Clock', <http://www.usdebtclock.org/>; accessed May 27, 2013.

⁹³ 'The Budget and Economic Outlook: Fiscal Years 2013 to 2023', February 5, 2013, *Congressional Budget Office*, <http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43907>; accessed May 19, 2013.

nations world-wide.⁹⁴ The \$3 billion benchmark figure (which in reality is much higher as the evidence has shown) is an outrageous sum to be providing annually to the 16th most developed country in the world, regardless of the affinities between the two governments. A significant portion of the annual \$3 billion provided to Israel could be much better spent on programs and other matters requiring immediate attention in American society; namely health care and Social Security. The past thirteen years alone have also seen numerous environmental disasters take place; multiple hurricanes, tsunamis, massive oil spills, volcanic eruptions, destructive tornados and nuclear meltdowns have affected the lives of countless people around the globe. It would perhaps be the most naïve line of thinking imaginable to assume that there will not be *many* additional environmental catastrophes in the near future. Money (or the lack of it) is clearly one of the most important issues in American society today; it would be most prudent of the US government to use a substantial portion of the economic aid and military assistance it provides to Israel to invest in a more comprehensive disaster relief fund. There is a multitude of areas where such resources could be better appropriated.

With the exception of the outbreak of an unknown epidemic disease, there are essentially two forces in the modern world which have the power to irreparably damage humankind as we know it: nuclear weapons and environmental catastrophe. The fact that Israel has not admitted to possessing WMD capability is an egregious act which is detrimental to the safety of the international community. Israel in effect, has maintained a position of lying by omission for well over forty years on this issue. An internal memo from the Lyndon Johnson administration highlights how “the Israelis [the national government] feels they could develop a nuclear device but would feel correct in claiming they had not

⁹⁴ ‘International Human Development Indicators: Country Profile: Israel’, *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ISR.html>; accessed March 14, 2013.

‘introduced’ it so long as they had neither tested it nor made its existence public.”⁹⁵ The continuity of the human race is too serious a subject for the Israeli government to skate around, acting with the tacit diplomatic support of the United States.

The Israel lobby has proven itself to be a formidable player in American politics. Although there is nothing overtly illegal in how it influences elections and public policy, there is no doubt that the lobby holds an unequal amount of leverage in political discourse as compared to other interest groups. Certain actors and organizations within the Israel lobby have shown the ability to manipulate members of Congress to provide an unbalanced amount of support to the lobby’s cause. This is detrimental to the American standard of democracy; one group in society should not have such ascendancy over its peers. There must be measures initiated to check the growing power of interest groups within US politics.

Leo Tolstoy once wrote, “The most difficult subjects can be explained to the most slow-witted man if he has not formed any idea of them already; but the simplest thing cannot be made clear to the most intelligent man if he is firmly persuaded that he knows, already, without a shadow of a doubt, what is laid before him.”⁹⁶ The US-Israeli relationship needs to be re-examined by those who are involved with it; both private citizens and public officials alike. Their stubbornness is perpetuating destitute situations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; the Palestinian people simply deserve better. It is difficult to accept that in the twenty-first century, with the knowledge and tangible resources at the world’s disposal that situations such as the one in Palestine still exist today. As a leader in the global promotion of democratic values and ideals, the United States should use its position to demand an improvement in Israeli governmental policy pertaining to the Occupied Territories. The US must reduce its amount of diplomatic protection and military and economic support in the

⁹⁵ Information Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, December 12, 1968, Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-68, Volume XX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967-68* (Washington DC, 2001), Document 349.

⁹⁶ Leo Tolstoy quoted in Michael Lewis, *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine* (New York, 2010), introduction page.

event that Israel fails to make progress in this regard. If we are to have any future prospect for peace in the Middle East region, Tolstoy's timeless words must be heeded.

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