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US foreign policy in the Middle East: What drives it,
and how it impacts developments in the region.

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Abstract

This research attempts to examine US foreign policy in the Middle East, especially in Palestine. The issue is examined through three different approaches in order to try and understand why the United States has become so supportive of Israel. The first approach is that of the Israel lobby, and which revolves around the argument put forth by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. Two things were of interest to them regarding this issue; the first is the evolution and progression of the lobby, and the shift in US foreign policy to only supporting Israel. In the 1950s and 1960s, when US imperial foreign policy was first being formulated, there were different viewpoints regarding the Middle East. There were groups like the Arabists, for example, who filled the ranks of the US administration and who identified with the countries that they worked in and who also tended to be anti-Zionist. The change in these views, alongside the consolidation of power that became focused on one theme only is what interested Mearsheimer and Walt; the change from diversity and having different centers of power to having this monopoly over policy making in Israel by the Zionist lobby to the point where there is no more debate about who the United States should support – even the Arabists have disappeared

and were even written about as a historical relic. The second element of interest to Mearsheimer and Walt is more an issue of international relations: due to the influence of the lobby, America tends to act, from a realist perspective, against its own interests in the Middle East and against its own values. This irrational behavior is even more curious to them; why would a nation go against its rational interests? This was the theoretical framework that Mearsheimer and Walt were trying to apply to this case: a nation could work against its interests when there is a special interest group –usually an ethnic one– that is disproportionately powerful especially in specific dossiers, and which sways policy.

For others it is all about interests and oil, and this brings us to the second approach; the Marxist notion of imperialist hegemony. For Chomsky, the main problematic is to see how Israel becomes a microcosm of something larger; there is this imperial expansionist American policy at the global level that is mirrored regionally by Israel. There is a dynamic created between the United States and Israel that Chomsky is trying to explain which is that these two elements resemble or tend to be drawn together, and because the very nature of the logic of power, when Israel acts in an expansionist manner in the

Middle East and opts for that instead of coexistence with the Arabs (a choice they made a long time ago), they then find themselves more isolated from the Arab region and more attached to US power, both as a refuge and a source of help and aid as well as a representative of the region.

What I found from my research is that neither one of the two abovementioned approaches fully explains the relationship between the two countries, nor do they explain the impact it had on the people. This brings us to the third approach, which involves those focusing on the sociology of knowledge, such as Uri Avnery and others, who are academics and who tend to see how the Arab-Israeli conflict is treated in academic circles, and since they tend to belong to the cultural and linguistic camp, they attempt to see how culture absorbs these notions and propagates them. For some, the issue is about the production of knowledge on the question of the Middle East and Palestine and Israel in America that interests them the most, that is where you see how power works to create a notion of American interests, for example, that assimilates that of Israel. This approach attempts to understand how power works to produce knowledge that hides the histories of Palestinians and other victims – the same way as it does in America

with colonial victims in order to make settler colonialism into this kind of noble quest. To them, the game is more about how the production of knowledge creates culture, how power works and effects this production of knowledge that ends up creating these affinities, creating the other, and creating parties that would identify with Israel and the United States, thus creating the ‘other’ that tends to be seen as the barbarian... etc. –as in the Palestinians. For them, this would be the real problematic.

All the different theories of international relations have been put forth in order to explain how international relations are shaped. As we study US influence in the Middle East, we begin to realize that a lot of this knowledge is “contextual” and “utilitarian”, in the sense that it was formulated from the viewpoint of power, i.e. how to best serve the interests of the state; opposing theories (such as that of Chomsky) tend to express a critical, anti-imperialist culture within this same Western society.

However, if we examine these policies in their local, social context (i.e. in the Middle East) and see how US policies engender new facts on the ground, effect the lives of ordinary people, and engender

resistance and unexpected outcomes, then we are faced with a new outlook that challenges a lot of presumptions of theories of international relations, where “local” reactions and resistance are seen as mere “externalities” to the main theory.

Since we are not in an American society and are not part of an academic structure that discusses and rationalizes the interests of the American government, nor are we representing the opposition to internal hegemony in the US political scene, then we find ourselves faced with a major challenge: how do we locate agency within these complicated, transnational processes? From the viewpoint of the Palestinian society, it does not really matter whether these policies were borne out of imperial arrogance or a Zionist takeover of US Middle East policy, what matters to people in Palestine is how these policies are affecting their reality, daily lives, their hopes, and their future.

This research stresses the complexity of the US-Israeli relationship, which further enforces the notion that the United States should not in any way be involved in the Arab-Israeli / Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For Palestine, what matters now is to bring agency back to the local

society, to assist the Palestinians in looking toward more natural allies whom they share common grounds with. It is now important to look towards people who have also suffered occupation and the wrath of imperial hegemony: Mexicans, Native Americans, South Africans, Haitians, and many others may pose an important lesson for Palestinians from which they can learn from, in order to mobilize the people, and inspire the power of people over the power of politics.

ملخص

تحاول هذه الدراسة ان تبحث سياسة امريكا الخارجية في الشرق الاوسط، و بالاحص في فلسطين. يتمحور البحث حول ثلاثة محاور اساسية لفهم العلاقة الحميمة بين اسرائيل و امريكا، و لفهم اسباب دعم امريكا المطلق لاسرائيل.

يدور المحور الاول حول موضوع اللوبي الصهيوني، و الذي يرتكز حول النقاش المقدم من قبل جون ميرشيمر و ستيفن والت، و الذين قاموا بالبحث في هذا المجال لسببين رئيسيين: الاول هو التطور و التقدم الملحوظ في تأثير اللوبي، و التغيير في العلاقات الخارجية الامريكية الى دعم مطلق لاسرائيل. في الخمسينات و الستينات، عندما ابتدأت السياسة الخارجية الامريكية الامبريالية بالتكون، كان هناك جهات نظر مختلفة بخصوص موضوع الشرق الاوسط، وجد بعض المجموعات كالمستعربين على سبيل المثال، الذين ملئوا صفوف الادارة الامريكية و الذين تعاطفوا مع الدول التي عملوا بها و الذين كانوا معادين للصهيونية. التحول الجذري في هذه الآراء، بالاضافة الى توطيد السلطة و التي اصبحت مرتكزة على موضوع واحد هو احدى اسباب انجذاب ميرشيمر و والت الى هذا الموضوع: التغيير الجذري من حالة تعدد الآراء و وجود اكثر من مركز موحد للسلطة الى وجود احتكار في صنع السياسات تجاه اسرائيل من قبل اللوبي الصهيوني. هذه الحالة قد وصلت الى حد بحيث لم يعد هناك اي جدال و نقاش حول الطرف الذي يجب أن يتلقى الدعم الامريكي – حتى فيما يتعلق بالمستعربين فقد اختلفوا من صفوف السياسة والبيروقراطية الى حد ان البعض قد كتب عنهم كبقايا تاريخية. العنصر الثاني يتعلق ب العلاقات الدولية ونظرياتها: نتيجة للتأثير الملحوظ للوبي، تتصرف امريكا، من وجهة النظر الواقعية، ضد مصالحها و قيمها في الشرق الاوسط. وقد وجد ميرشمر و والت غرابية في هذا التصرف غير المنطقي: لماذا تعمل اي دولة بشكل معاكس لمصالحها؟ و هذا هو الاطار النظري الذي حاول من خلاله كل من ميرشيمر و والت ان يتناولوا هذه القضية: بإمكان اي دولة ان تتصرف ضد مصالحها ان وجدت مجموعات مصالح خاصة – و غالباً تكون مجموعات عرقية-دينية-اثنية تملك سلطة على نحو غير متناسب مع حجمها، و خاصة في ملفات محددة تهتم هذه المجموعات وبامكانها أن تمارس ضمنها تأثيراً محسوساً، بل وان تحدد اتجاه السياسات المعتمدة.

بالنسبة للبعض الآخر، يتمحور هذا الموضوع حول النفط و المصالح، و من هنا نصل الى المحور الثاني: الفكرة الماركسية عن الهيمنة الامبريالية. بالنسبة لنعوم تشومسكي مثلاً، تتمحور الاشكالية الرئيسية حول كيفية تحول اسرائيل الى صورة مصغرة عن بنية اكبر: هناك السياسة الامريكية الامبريالية و التوسعية على الصعيد العالمي و التي تنعكس اقليمياً من قبل اسرائيل. هناك دينامية بين امريكا و اسرائيل و هي التي يحاول شومسكي ان يفهمها و يدرسها، و هي تحاجج بان هناك تشابه بين هؤلاء العنصرين و الذين غالباً ما يعملون سوية. وان هذه الحال هي نتيجة لطبيعة منطوق القوة، عندما تتصرف اسرائيل بطريقة توسعية في الشرق الاوسط، مفضلة ذلك على التعايش مع العرب (و هذا قرار تبنته منذ زمن طويل)، تجد اسرائيل نفسها منفصلة عن محيطها العربي و اكثر ارتباطاً بالقوة الامريكية كملجأ و كمصدر للمساعدات و تصبح اسرائيل، فعلياً، ممثلاً لها في المنطقة.

ما استنتجناه من هذا البحث هو ان أياً من المحورين المقدمين اعلاه لا يوضحان مدى العلاقة بين امريكا و اسرائيل، و لا يوضحا ايضاً تأثير هذه العلاقة على الشعوب. و من هنا نصل الى المحور الثالث و الذي يتمركز حول المعرفة من منطلق علم الاجتماع، و التي تركز على اكاديميين مثل اوري افيري و غيرهم، و الذين يحاولوا ان يفهموا كيفية التعامل مع الصراع العربي/الاسرائيلي في الدوائر الاكاديمية. و لأنهم يجيئون من خلفية الدراسات الثقافية و اللغوية، فهم يحاولون فهم كيفية امتصاص الثقافة لهذه القضايا، و من ثم نشرها. بالنسبة للبعض، يتمحور هذا الموضوع حول كيفية انتاج المعرفة في ميادين الشرق الاوسط و فلسطين و اسرائيل في امريكا، فهنا بإمكاننا ان نلاحظ كيف تعمل القوة على خلق مفهوم للمصالح الامريكية، على سبيل المثال، يستوعب و يتمثل مع المصالح الاسرائيلية. يحاول هذا المحور فهم كيفية استخدام القوة في انتاج المعرفة التي تخفي التاريخ الفلسطيني و تاريخ الضحايا الآخرين، و يتم ذلك بطريقة مماثلة لحالة الاستعمار الوروبي لاميركا الشمالية، حيث نشأت ثقافة استيطانية كاملة تقدم الاستعمار الاستيطاني كمسعى "حضاري" نبيل. في هذا المحور، يتساءل البعض كيف يتم خلق الثقافة من خلال انتاج المعرفة و كيف تسعى القوة لتؤثر في عملية خلق هذه المعرفة و التي بالنهاية تخلق تقاربات و تخلق "الأخر" و تخلق مجموعات تتعاطف مع امريكا و اسرائيل، و من الناحية الأخرى، يتم ترسيم و تحديد "الأخر"، الذي يتم تصنيفه كبربري أو معاد للحضارة و الحداثة، مثلما هي الحال مع الفلسطينيين.

لقد تم استخدام مختلف نظريات العلاقات الدولية من اجل تفسير كيفية تشكيل السياسات الدولية. عندما نبحت في التأثير الأمريكي في الشرق الاوسط، نجد ان معظم المعرفة المتواجده في هذا المجال هي سياقية و نفعية: مثلاً، تكون قد وضعت من منطلق القوة (كيف من الممكن ان نخدم مصالح الدولة في افضل طريقة، على سبيل المثال); اما بالنسبة للنظريات المعارضة (مثل نظرية شومسكي) فبالعادة نجد انهم يعبروا عن ثقافة نقدية و مناهضة للامبريالية تمثل معارضة موجودة داخل المجتمع الغربي ذاته وتعيش في سياقه السياسي.

لكننا اذا قمنا بالبحث في هذه السياسات في سياقها الاجتماعي و المحلي (في الشرق الاوسط على سبيل المثال) و اذا نظرنا الى كيفية تأثير السياسات الامريكية في توليد حقائق جديدة و تأثيرها على حياة الشعوب و توليد مقاومة و نتائج غير متوقعة، فنجد انفسنا امام نظرة جديدة تتحدى الكثير من افتراضات نظريات العلاقات الدولية، حيث يتم النظر الى ردود الفعل المحلية و المقاومة كعوامل خارجية للنظرية الرئيسية.

بما اننا لا نتواجد بالمجتمع الامريكي، و بما اننا ليس جزءا من الهيكل الاكاديمي الذي يناقش و يرشد مصالح الحكومة الامريكية، و بما اننا لا نمثل المعارضة للهيمنة الداخلية في المشهد الامريكي السياسي، فنجد انفسنا مواجهين بتحدٍ كبير: كيف نحدد الفعل (Agency) ضمن هذه العمليات المعقدة و العابرة للبلدان؟ من وجهة نظر المجتمع الفلسطيني، فانه لا هام ان نتجت هذه السياسات من هيمنة امبريالية او بسبب خطف السياسات الامريكية في الشرق الاوسط من قبل اللوبي الاسرائيلي، ما يهم الشعب الفلسطيني هو تأثير هذه السياسات على واقعهم و حياتهم اليومية و آمالهم و مستقبلهم.

يتمحور هذا البحث حول التعقيدات التي تكتنف العلاقات الاميركية-الاسرائيلية، وهي دليلٌ اخر على أنه لا يجب للولايات المتحدة أن تكون طرفاً في النزاع -العربي الاسرائيلي بأي شكل من الأشكال. أما في فلسطين، فمن الأساسي أن نعيد توطين الفعل (Agency) في المجتمع المحلي. على الفلسطينيين أن يتطلعوا صوب حلفاء طبيعيين يتشاركون معهم في التجربة والمعاناة والمصالح. من المهم أن ننظر الى تجارب الشعوب الأخرى التي عانت أيضاً من الاحتلال ومن الهيمنة الامبريالية: المكسيكيون، الاميركيون الاصليون، الجنوب افريقيين، الهايتيين، وشعوب أخرى كثيرة يمكنها أن تقدم للفلسطينيين دروساً ليتعلموا منها ويفهموا كيف يتم تحريك الشعوب، حتى تصير قوة الشعب فوق منطق القوة.

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In international politics, especially in the context of Israeli-U.S. relations, the metaphor of the dog and the tail is often used to try to understand, or rather misunderstand, the relations between the two countries. The notion of the tail and the dog often contextualizes the means by which Israel manipulates the US, or how the US and Israel work together as two parts of a single body to achieve ulterior motives that serve or harm them both.

Understanding ulterior motives necessitates the breakdown of histories and relations. Understanding the influence of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) on US foreign policy is relatively easy, but understanding the reasons for why the US has allowed itself to be manipulated in this regard is more obscure.

The ongoing debate about US foreign policy in the Middle East is constantly restructured and restated in accordance with the forces and ideologies that work to shape it. As I will show in this research, three explanatory frameworks have been recently competing to interpret the basis and motives of US policy in the Middle East, and especially in terms of the particular affinity that US policy affords toward Israel and its interests. Firstly, we find a growing American literature explaining US policy as the reflection of the influence of the

domestic pro-Israel lobby in the United States. Secondly, the Marxist camp focuses on the imperial character of American policy and interests. In current literature, these two paradigms seem to be disconnected and posed in an oppositional framing of the two arguments. This is not only unhelpful, but often leads to the two arguments dismissing one another. Nevertheless, these two paradigms can be combined to allow for both factors (the argument of the lobby and that of imperialism) to have their individual role and or account of influence.

Lastly, a historical/cultural argument links US foreign policy in the Middle East to the historical experience of America and the perceived parallels between its founding values and experience on the one hand, and those of the Zionist state on the other. This argument will delve into the notion of settler colonialism, which exists in that a group of a population, usually European and white, would leave their original homeland and move somewhere else to build a new community that is democratic and that spreads progress and civilization or religion, but the contradiction lays in that this new settler society is built upon the deprivation of whoever locals existed before it exists due to this initial moment of colonization. This third

and last paradigm is less explored than the previous two paradigms, nonetheless, it can be complementary to the first two paradigms in a manner that will provide us with a much more nuanced, as well as a more comprehensive picture to better understand American-Israeli relations, which, in turn, can also help the Palestinian people in formulating future strategies for liberation outside the paradigm of US mediation. This is also more important now in light of the current changes in the region after the flaring of the Arab revolutions, and the positions of both US and Israeli governments toward these changes.

Three approaches:

1. The Lobby

In order to completely grasp and understand the powers and influence of the Israel lobby, it is first important to mark the paths of interest groups in the US in general.

With the end of World War II came a rise in a group of organizations known as interest groups, which rallied to influence specific public policies. What distinguishes this type of group from other organizations is the importance of membership. Interest groups

seek to convince individuals to become a member of their group, in order to actively influence public policy as they attempt to protect their own activities. Interest groups can be assembled for the production and distribution of a product, but can also rally to promote a particular cause.

Beginning in the early 1970s and continuing into the post-Cold War era, the U.S. foreign policy-making system has been transformed from the relatively closed and presidential dominated system of the early cold war into a more open, contentious, and pluralistic system. In this transformation the President still remains the most powerful actor, but he is now forced to engage with an active Congress, supervise a complex executive bureaucracy, and constantly respond to the entirety of pressures and notions that are generated by the press, the public, and several think tanks. Although interest groups existed before this time, they nonetheless became much more influential in this period, and have been distinguished as a major source of pressure on the President.

“During this period, there also has been a sharp increase in the number of interest groups actively seeking to influence U.S. foreign policy. These interest groups have mobilized to represent a diverse array of business, labor, ethnic, human rights, environmental, and other organizations. Thus, on most issues, the contemporary foreign policy-making system has become more similar to its domestic policy-making counterpart, with multiple interest groups using multiple channels to try to influence policy choices.”¹

Each interest group became prominent as a result of a government policy, or a particular socioeconomic change or movement taking place within the United States. But the fact remains that the United States recognizes these interest groups through various statements and resolutions that call for the right of citizens to petition their government and to form political associations. Interest groups engage in the decision-making process through a series of stages that

¹ Thomas Ambrosio, *Ethnic identity groups and U.S. foreign policy* (Conneticut: Praeger Publishers, 2002).

are based upon their level of communication, which accumulates into several channels that enable the process of influence to take place:

“Interest groups have no formal policy-making authority, and must rely on these people within the government who do have such authority to translate their policy preference into decisional outputs.”²

Such channels of communication are embodied in the strategies and techniques of each individual interest group, which I will elaborate on later in this research.

What distinguishes any interest group is mainly its lack of any formal policy-making authority. Interest groups attempt only to sway decision-makers towards their own preferences and objectives concerning a specific policy, which must be perceived as crucial by the decision-makers first, before any attempt is aimed at intervention.

The behavior of interest groups depends on a variety of factors; the first is the level of activity exercised by a group, the second is the policy objectives of the group, the third is the timing that is adopted by the group in executing their activities, and the fourth is the strategies and techniques developed and maintained by the group.

² Robert Trice, “Foreign policy interest groups, mass public opinion and the Arab-Israeli dispute”. *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No.2 (Jun. 1978) JSTOR

Generally, interest groups affect policy by means of direct and indirect influences:

“Indirect influence is exerted when a group encourages members, affiliates, and other publics to engage in political activities themselves. Direct influence occurs when a group communicates with legislators and administrators through letters, by appearing before legislative committees and other fact-finding agencies, by personal visits to legislators and administrators, and the like.”³

Such strategies manifest the different techniques adopted by an interest group in order to pursue its objectives. The largest focus of any interest group tends towards public opinion, mass media, and the overall international political environment, which go hand in hand with the connections the lobby has gained among government officials, and the amount of money that suffices for a successful influence on a certain policy.

³ Richard W. Gable. “Interest Groups as Policy Shapers”. American academy of political science (sept. 1958)
(In Robert Trice. “Foreign policy interest groups, mass public opinion and the Arab-Israeli dispute”. The Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 31, No.2 (Jun. 1978) JSTOR)

A climactic juncture regarding the Israeli lobby was the publication of the 2006 paper by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt on the Jewish Lobby, which appeared in the London Review of Books and managed to stir a wide range of debates involving key players in the world of politics. Later, in their book, Mearsheimer and Walt argued that the Israel lobby is the most influential factor for US foreign policy above all others; Israel is, in fact, the tail that wags the dog, the authors' claimed. Broadly speaking, their argument exposes and critiques the three major pillars often used to explain U.S.- Israel relations: Firstly, interests; as in commonly shared interests in the Middle East between the US and Israel. Second comes the notion of moral affiliation, i.e. the moral obligation to support Israel in light of the tragic history of the Jewish people in Europe. A long argument follows through on whether this support is always synonymous with US interests. Thirdly we find the theme of political affiliation, with Israel allegedly being "the sole democracy in the Middle East" and the US seeking to spread democracy in the region. Mearsheimer and Walt argue that, although Israel may be democratic towards its Jewish citizens, it is not so towards the Palestinian Arab citizens who face

discrimination, restrictions, and the violation of their political and human rights in many aspects of their lives.

Since AIPAC was born out of Zionism, it is important to note the development of Zionist thought as it trickled into the American community.

“The Zionist quest began in 1896, when Theodor Herzl published his classic political manifesto, *The Jewish State*.”⁴

Herzl proposed the creation of a Jewish Statehood as a solution to the problem of anti-Semitism concerning Jews in Europe and elsewhere. He proposed that “Jews would escape their minority status and would be free to develop and progress like the great nations of Europe.”⁵

According to some sources, the first successful lobby action concerned an established law in Switzerland, which forbade Jewish settlement there. Jewish lobbying applied on Washington resulted with the creation of exceptions for Americans. Another breach was achieved in 1885, when Austria refused to accept a Jewish lady as

⁴ Aaron Berman, *Nazism, The Jews, and American Zionism: 1933-1948* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 15.

⁵ *Ibid*, quoted from Hayim Greenberg's essay: Bankrupt; found in Marie Syrkin: Hayim Greenberg Anthology

‘receivable in court’; Jewish lobbying in Washington eventually lead to the recognition of Jews in court, and the adoption of the Jewish family name Rothschilds, which later became known as Austria’s leading Jewish family.

During the early 1920s, The American public was gravely opposed to a large influx of immigrants into the country:

“Nazi anti-Semitism and the frantic search of German Jewish refugees for a new home did not force many Americans to change their attitudes about immigration. Throughout the thirties, public opinion polls revealed, a majority of Americans opposed opening the country’s doors to Jewish refugees.”⁶

It is interesting to look at the original plans of Zionism, and the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine; there is no mention of Palestine being a historic and biblical home for Jews, and in no way are there any disclaimers against Arabs living there.

Zionism began to expand in the United States in the 1920s. Zionist activities emerged in the United States during a time of isolation:

⁶ Ibid, p.22

“American postwar isolationism became an ideal instrument in the hands of the new, powerful alliance between the Washington politicians and the Zionist lobby. The vacuum created by the absence of American foreign policy was eagerly filled with a spate of resolutions supporting the ever-increasing Zionist appetite.”⁷

One of the American Zionists’ first attempts to alter American policy concerned U.S. immigration policies, as the traditional policy of open immigration was halted when Congress enacted restrictive quota systems in 1921 and 1924. Legislation stipulated that no more than 153,774 immigrants could enter the United States annually. The quota system allowed 25,957 Germans to immigrate to the country every year.”⁸ This attempt was seen as a success, as American Jewry slowly developed upon a series of migrations, gradually alluding to a centralized and prosperous Jewish Community in the United States. Such early lobbying provided them with high positions among the U.S. government:

⁷ Alfred M. Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection II: What Price Peace?* (New Jersey: North American, 1978), 32.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21 quoted from U.S. Department of Labor, Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration – 1932 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932)

“Stephen Wise, an early and ardent supporter of the New Deal, played a critical role in informing Roosevelt about the refugee tragedy and in 1938 became a member of the newly created President’s Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. In spite of their concern and good intentions, however, neither Wise nor any other Zionist or Jewish leader in the United States mounted an aggressive campaign aimed at breaching the American quota system, which insured that most Jewish refugees would never be able to reach America.”⁹

The involvement of Jews in American life lead to their occupation of certain high positions within society, but their active role in the voting process lent them direct involvement and participation within U.S. politics:

“As for the Jewish community as a whole, a White House practice established by President Truman in 1947 has been to create what is known in Jewish

⁹ Alfred M. Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection II: What Price Peace?* (New Jersey: North American, 1978), 22 quote from Melvin I. Urofsky, *A Voice that Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen Wise* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982)

circles as the “portfolio”. Whoever holds the Jewish portfolio serves as a direct liaison between the President and US Jewish leaders.”¹⁰

Through this “portfolio” the Jewish lobbyists are able to maintain even a closer relationship with the President, and hence a more prominent connection with which to exercise their influence on US policies.

While sorting through a variety of resources in search of information on the Jewish lobby, several factors played into the division of Jewish organizations within the United States, which created an amalgamation of Jewish organizations, some who were against Zionism, and the larger majority of these organizations, being strictly pro-Israeli. Despite this opposition in the foundational concepts of these organizations, nonetheless they were all united through Israel as their main cause. In such a development, the pro-Israel groups, the most powerful of which is AIPAC, targets mainly members of congress, while bearing in mind the excessive power of the executive. But the lobby remains at ease since it receives cooperation from other Jewish organizations that run under the

¹⁰ Odeh Abu Rudeneh, “The Jewish Factor in US Politics”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*: Vol. 1, No. 4, P. 92 JSTOR

“umbrella” name “Presidents Conference”, who work solely on the pursuit of Israeli interests within the executive, as well as the “organization of more than 30 Jewish groups on virtually all foreign policy issues.”¹¹

While attempting to acquire the most accurate information on the lobby, personal narratives and autobiographies stood among the most significant resources available. I.L. Kenen, founder of AIPAC, discusses his involvement in the Jewish cause in his book "All my causes." Kenen highlights the exceptional advancement that was granted to the lobby. Kenen's former positions as a newspaperman, political writer, editor, and publisher of Republican newspapers in the U.S. provided him with the media connections necessary to distribute any message across the nation. Kenen's connections, for example, allowed for an extremely large attendance of media personnel, including “Reuters, the AP, and correspondents for The Washington Post, The Nation, The Christian Science Monitor, The New York Times and The Herald Tribune”¹² at Ben Gurion’s crucial speech which, as a result of its wide spread throughout the media, became the

¹¹ Robert Trice, *Interest groups and the foreign policy process: U.S. policy in the Middle East* (Ohio: Sage publications, 1976), 37.

¹² I. L. Kenen, *All My Causes* (Washington DC: Near East Research, 1985) 35.

building block towards the creation of Israel.

Kenen is most responsible for creating the connections that lent the lobby a great majority of its success. Kenen worked closely with Ben Gurion, whom Kenen asserts as the reason for his first trip to Israel in 1946. Kenen narrates several instances where he lobbied intensely with individual congressmen in order to receive their approval on a certain objective. It is extremely interesting that Kenen decided to move to live permanently in Washington following the break of the Suez crisis. Kenen explains that the moment he heard of newsflash of the impending attack, he immediately called Louis Lipsky, then the chairman of the American Zionist Council, and asserted his fear that "we were headed for a long Arab-Israeli conflict, and that I must finally move to Washington."¹³ While observing the chronology of Kenen's activities, it is apparent that his move to Washington came directly after his encounter with Hubert Humphrey that lent him greater leverage with congressmen as he allowed for the denouncement of pro-Arab congressman Flanders, which I go into detail later on in this section.

¹³ Ibid p. 60

The most important component that yields the use of the Holocaust is the notion of anti-Semitism. The Jewish lobby and other Zionist activists within American Jewry implemented an exaggerated hesitance on part of US officials with regards to any decision that disagrees with Israel. This hesitation arrived from the growing fear of being accused of anti-Semitism. This is important to bear in mind as it plays a major role in the success of the lobby that is still taking place today. Anti-Semitism served as a tool for preventing decision-makers from making diplomatic decisions that focus on the national interest of the State. This notion has become a major factor that is taken into consideration during the decision making process, hence introducing grave manipulations on the already established U.S. policies that foster national interest. These effects are evident in AIPAC policy statements, and other statements issued by congressmen that reflect their sentiments towards Israel. Although the Holocaust brought disaster among Jewish families throughout the world, it nonetheless stimulated American Jews to utilize their positions within the American society towards a solution to the suffrage of Jews all over the world, which ultimately depended on establishing a Jewish homeland. Alongside this incentive, American Jews found the means

to create a sentimental empathy among Americans. The media was utilized, and the American public was won over with tears. This empathy was silently maintained until someone disagrees with Israel or supports a policy that is not in Israel's favor, at this point the created empathy will allow for accusations of Anti-Semitism on part of the lobby, which will be easily carried since the American public has already shown its approval.

The First legalized breach taken by American Jewish leaders was made early in 1939, against the United States quota walls, which ended in failure. But “Their inability to change significantly American immigration policy concerned American Zionists, but did not depress them. They were convinced that many German Jewish refugees would be able to find a permanent and prosperous home in Palestine.”¹⁴

The establishment of the MacDonald White paper of 1939 brought rage and riots among Jews in Palestine, as it reevaluated the establishment of the Jewish state by U.S. officials. The MacDonald White paper brought fear among the Jewish American community, as a decrease in U.S. support may cripple the developments and

¹⁴Alfred M. Lilienthal, *The Zionist Connection II: What Price Peace?* (New Jersey: North American, 1978), 23.

conditions necessary for the establishment of Israel. Such actions went hand in hand with the growing hostilities of Nazi Germany against European Jews, and hence accelerating the desire to insinuate a drive for American Jewry.

American Jews rallied to express their views on the suffrage of European Jews. The beginning of hostilities towards Jews in Germany marked the beginning of Jewish American lobbying within the United States.

The Holocaust represented a crucial moment in the life of the Jewish lobby, as they became aware of the urgent need to persuade the U.S. government to rescue the Jews from the hands of Hitler. This urgency was embedded in several other factors, such as the 1939 British Malcolm McDonald White Paper, which brought great fear to the minds of Zionists fighting for a free Jewish State. The paper asserted that for the next five years, Jewish immigration to Palestine would be limited to 75,000 people. Consequently, Jewish people in Israel and the US rallied against it with the issuing of the 1942 Baltimore Platform, which arose out of an American Zionist conglomeration in New York, where Ben Gurion gave a speech urging

"that the gates of Palestine be opened, that the Jewish Agency be vested with the control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for the up building of the country, and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world."¹⁵ The Jewish refusal to submit to British domination lead to "501 delegates gathered in what came to be known as the American Jewish Conference in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on Sunday, August 29, 1943."¹⁶ Kenen was appointed by the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs as the Conference press officer, which lent him direct authority over any press to be released.

But President Roosevelt stood in opposition to the Baltimore platform, as Kenen concluded that due to his status as a navy man; he "feared a strong Zionist plank and an increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine would endanger the essential flow of oil to American industry."¹⁷

Roosevelt's opposition spurred an intense reaction on part of Jewish lobbyists, who concluded that an abandonment of the

¹⁵ I. L. Kenen, *All My Causes* (Washington DC: Near East Research, 1985), 39.

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 41

conference would "play into the hands of the anti-Zionist American Jewish Committee."¹⁸ But the leaders of Pro-Israel organizations such as the Labor Zionists and the Jewish Agency agreed to pursue their quest. In opposition to these organizations were other Jewish groups who spoke frequently to Roosevelt on the issue of Palestine. Stephen Wise was a consistent visitor in the President's office, and through the reports he issued back to the Zionist Council, the pro-Israeli groups realized the need to intervene. Subsequently, Keren led the intervention when he contacted the editors of *The New Republic*, and *The Nation*, releasing an editorial that began with: "We will not go underground with the hopes of the Jewish people."¹⁹ In response to these organized and planned strategies, the White House issued a statement in conjunction with the British government, declaring that the "two governments favor post-war planning and that, in the case of Palestine, extreme claims are to be avoided and the final settlement will come as a result only of agreement between the Arabs and the Jews."²⁰ The debates between the opposing Jewish organizations continued, but in the end they were all able to convene in a

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 42

²⁰ Ibid

conference, where a majority of votes lent them unity over Ben Gurion's Baltimore platform, showing once again how any opposition among Jewish groups was gradually resolved through a furthering of the cause of Israel as a Jewish homeland.

Israel was notably one of the smallest states to gain sovereignty by the United Nations, yet she does not engage in foreign policy affairs the way a small state would. As Israel is surrounded by the Arab world, diplomatic activities are rare and intense; she chose to pursue her interests on a larger level:

“Since the hostility of the states in the area precluded diplomatic interchange on a regional level, Israel pursued its objectives outside the region, attempting to enlist great-power support for the furtherance of its interests.”²¹ Israel seeks mainly to maintain its territory, obtain foreign aid towards its economic development and prosperity, and prevent large influxes of Arabs into the country.

The birth of Israel marked an extremely significant historic record in the Middle East and elsewhere. Western powers held great hesitation at first, since recognizing Israel meant a complete neglect

²¹ Ernest Stock, *Israel on the Road to Sinai*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967),4.

and opposition to the Arab refugees and attitudes in the region. Nonetheless, the composition of Israel never failed to gain the necessary recognition by other states. Ben Gurion discusses the change that faced Israel when he wrote:

“Israel always faced an array of forces in two spheres: in the small sphere of our own area ... and the large sphere, which comprises the entire globe ... if we existed only in the first sphere, and had no contact with the wider one, or if the wide sphere did not interfere in the affairs of the small one, then the military factor alone would be decisive ... But there were two reasons why Israel could not ignore the wider sphere:

“It contains the great majority of the Jewish people, from which we draw manpower, material and cultural resources, and moral and political support; the forces at work in the wider sphere will not lightly accept all the decisions secured by the Israel forces, if these decisions are in opposition to their true or imagined interests.”²²

²² David Ben-Gurion. Israel's Security and Her international position before and after the Sinai Campaign. Israel Government Year Book 5720 (1959 – 1960) p. 57

The creation of a Jewish homeland symbolized the key element for Zionist and Jewish lobbying even before the state was established and ratified; it had already become the main cause for the majority of Jews around the globe. The Jewish lobby now had a definitive cause; a fundamental focal point with which to begin its pursuit from.

Confusion arises around the actual origins of AIPAC. Some sources suggest that the name change occurred in 1954, others point to 1959. Some suggest that the name change from the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs (AZCPA) to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) occurred after AIPAC separated itself from the American Zionist Council in order to attain untaxed funding, while other sources contribute the name change to the harshness and conceptualization of the word “Zionist”.

“With Israel’s encouragement, the American Zionist Council, which played a major role in building support for the nascent Jewish state, initiated a project in 1951 to lobby Congress for American aid to resettle Jewish refugees in Israel. It became quickly apparent that the lobbying necessary to win

support for Israel could not be sustained by the AZC, constrained by its non-profit status from engaging in substantial lobbying.”²³

There is much obscurity around the origins of AIPAC, which may also be attributed to the absence of any relations between Israel and the United States at the time. Following this period was an exhausting campaign between Jewish activists around the globe, especially American Jews, who successfully utilized their strategies and connections to gain enough supporters and sympathy for their cause, and consequently a Jewish State was attained and secured.

“The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) was originally initiated in 1951 as a lobbying committee on behalf of the American Zionist Council. In 1954, the AZC terminated its connection with the activity “because its leaders did not want to use tax-exempt funds for lobbying.”²⁴

²³Lawrence Rubin, “American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Eds. Micheal Berenbaum Vol. 2 Detroit Macmillan Reference. USA (2007): 50-52

²⁴Nancy Jo Nelson, “The Zionist Organizational Structure”. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Autumn, 1980): 80-93

A great deal of the available sources vary in their explanation of the name change to AIPAC, although the name change took place during the 1950s, at that time some of the activities recorded in history tended to refer back to the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs, the Jewish lobbyists as a general category, or to I. L. Kenen, and other prominent Jewish Americans working within the U.S. government.

AIPAC clearly associates itself with the Zionist cause. This is quite evident in the issue briefings and publications that it has administered over the course of the years. Initially, AIPAC was a small interest group known as The American Zionist Council's Emergency Committee on Zionist Affairs. This committee evolved into AIPAC in 1956, and provided critical lobbying on behalf of U.S. recognition of Israel in 1948.

“In 1954, the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs was established as a separate lobbying organization. In 1959, recognizing that many pro-Zionists supported its work, the organization changed its name to the American Israel Public

Affairs Committee and expanded its leadership base to include national and local representatives from other organizations.”²⁵

Nonetheless, Si Kenen was the first advocate that lead AIPAC to success. Kenen adopted many tactics that enabled an effective pursuit of the organizations goals and interests.

“Kenen insisted that effective advocacy on Israel’s behalf needed to be focused on the Congress and must, in all respects, remain bipartisan.”²⁶

AIPAC constitutes the most essential core of what is known as the “Israel Lobby.” Several factors combine in order to produce the most effective lobbying, which AIPAC has been largely popular for.

“American Jews number about six million and form about 3 per cent of the population, but because they are highly active politically they form an estimated 4 percent of actual voters.”²⁷

The significance of the Jewish vote was born after the settling of American Zionism into the whole of the American Jewish community;

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Russell Warren Howe and Sarah Hays Trott, *The Power Peddlers* (New York: Doubleday & company, 1977), 283.

“For almost all American Jews, Zionism became an integral part of Jewish identity.”²⁸

From the transition of American Zionism into American Jewry, and hence the Jewish Lobby one may locate a variety of connections that reflect the means by which these factions evolved and finally amounted to a strong web, at the core of which is the Jewish Lobby. One of the key activists through which we can trace the lobby’s development and growth is the already mentioned Isaiah Leo Kenen, also known as I.L. Kenen, or Si Kenen.

“Almost all my life has been committed to the cause of Israel’s restoration and survival, a fortunate coincidence between occupation and commitment. I inherited legacies from both my father, a life-long Zionist, and my mother, a pioneer trade unionist. I spent many years as a journalist crusading for causes. All prepared me for the tasks of the last 40 years.”²⁹

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Isiah L. Kenen, *All My Causes: An 80-year life span in many lands and for many causes, some we won and some we lost but we never gave up* (Washington: Near East Research, 1985), 5.

Si Kenen acquired his very first job on the same day that he finished his final college examinations. He worked for the Toronto Star beginning in 1925, after which he delved into the world of journalists and newspapers. In the 1930s, Kenen took part in several activities surrounding the American Newspaper Guild in Cleveland, his hometown, and later became head of the Cleveland News. As Kenen's thoughts and interests developed, he was constantly surrounded by a family that was dedicated to Zionism. Kenen writes about his father's early involvement in the World Zionist Congress: "My father attended early meetings of the World Zionist Congress. He knew Herzl and other Zionist leaders."³⁰ Kenen's family moved to Toronto in 1911, where his father established the first Bnai Zion club. His family was very much involved in Zionist and Jewish activities, and hence, Kenen adopted this dedication as well.

During his work as the political writer of the Cleveland News, Kenen encountered several Republican candidates, whose campaigns were enriched through the newspaper. Such a job greatly engaged Kenen into the American political arena, and in 1932, he was involved in the crucial U.S. elections of Hoover vs. Roosevelt.

³⁰ Isiah L. Kenen, *All My Causes: An 80-year life span in many lands and for many causes, some we won and some we lost but we never gave up* (Washington: Near East Research, 1985), 2.

Kenen describes his various encounters with congressmen and “Israel’s other Senate friends” in a way that reflects their extremely personal relationship. Kenen writes of instances when he was confronted with one pro-Arab congressman, such as Senator Ralph E. Flanders of Vermont, whom on June 3, 1957, described Israel’s acceptance of Jewish settlers into the state as “unjust to the Arabs and a threat to a peaceful settlement.”³¹ In response to this, Kenen sought out his Senate friends, who were floor leaders, Republican William F. Knowland and the Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson “to urge them to rise on the Senate floor in rebuttal.”³² At first Kenen was shot down, but in the end, he was urged to prepare a speech concerning the matter, which was then supported by pro-Israeli Senate members who denounced Flanders, at the top of which was Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, who delivered a speech that was more compelling than the one Kenen had written for him. These encounters further improved Kenen’s relationship with the Senate, which never ceased to grow.

In a depiction of the manner in which the lobby pursues its objectives, the element of money maintains an extremely important component throughout the entire process. Early Zionist and Jewish

³¹ Ibid, p. 59

³² Ibid.

lobbyists realized that no matter how strategic or intelligent they were, their financial status would ultimately determine the degree of their affectivity. Jewish activists utilized their strategies in order to accumulate a large and rich group of supporters to their cause, while bearing in mind the sympathy on part of the Holocaust, the connections with congress, and the large amount of funding the lobby receives in conjunction with the money it sends to Israel. All of these factors were already construed by earlier Zionists towards a production of profit for the Jewish cause. This important element was easily maintained and expanded to the point of a last resort: If the lobby could not convince U.S. officials to change a certain policy to protect Israel, then they would utilize their money in order to achieve their goals.

“The Lobby pursues two broad strategies. First, it wields its significant influence in Washington, pressuring both Congress and the executive branch. Whatever an individual lawmaker or policymaker’s own views may be, the Lobby tries to make supporting Israel the ‘smart’ choice. Second, it strives to ensure that public discourse portrays Israel

in a positive light, by repeating myths about its founding and by promoting its point of view in policy debates.”³³

One of the most prominent examples of the success of the Jewish lobby revolves around the 65 million dollar fund that the lobby, in conjunction with the Israeli government, won for Israel. Kenen maintained close relations with Ben Gurion at the time, and with his media resources and newspaper connections, he was able to bring about enough attention towards the issue, and hence win public opinion through mass media. The characteristic of money comes as a result in this particular initiative, but it nonetheless had to be available in accomplishing the other strategies that were necessary for success.

One of AIPAC's strategies conform to the mechanism whereby Israel is portrayed as either strong in terms of its military capabilities that may be aligned with the U.S. during an emergency, or as a small democracy that is surrounded by hostile Arab countries whose sole quest in life is to destroy Israel. AIPAC exercises such strategies to prohibit the sale of American weaponry to Arab countries they label as enemies of Israel.

³³John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “The Israel Lobby”, London Review of Books Vol. 28. No. 6 23 (March 2006): 7.

There is no balance in these allocations when implied within the general empirical knowledge of States, whereby each State acts in order to preserve the safety and security of its citizens, and thereby acquires a military or buys weapons. For example, in AIPAC's 1987 policy statement, one of its priorities included: "opposing U.S. sales of sophisticated weapons to Arab countries which consider themselves in a state of war with Israel or do not make peace with Israel."³⁴ Such a vague statement still manages to imply that Israel is trying to implement peace, but that its Arab neighbors are not. An intelligent mind would realize that a certain Arab state cannot simply "consider themselves in a state of war with Israel", and that such terminology was merely imposed to further the stance of Israel as a struggling democracy among chaotic, war-seeking Arab countries. Does knowledge of world politics not assert that countries may acquire the necessary weapons in order to protect themselves? How can one utilize such unreasonable language and still manage to publicize and gain the support of a whole other country? One other simple yet effective strategy involves AIPAC's silence over the aid Israel receives from the United States. AIPAC seeks to provide further aid to

³⁴ AIPAC., "AIPAC Policy Statement, 1987", *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16.4 (Summer 1987): 107-114.

Israel by prohibiting U.S. aid to other Arab countries, during which AIPAC never mentions the amount of aid that Israel is already showered with annually. This is an important technique, as any breach of this silence will work against these objectives, since any revelation of numbers or figures will automatically prove that Israel receives the most possible aid from the United States.

While writing about AIPAC, it is important to note that it has, and continues until today, to base its arguments on historical and biblical assertions of Israel and the rights of the Jews as a chosen people, many of which have been refuted in recent years and are no longer used as a basis for any justification. One important demonstration of the power of the Israeli lobby as well as its tactics in asserting and promoting an exclusively positive image of Israel is the case of Joan Peters. Born in 1938, Peters worked as a CBS news producer and later became well known for her book titled "From Time Immemorial", which was published in 1984 and which discusses the origin of the Arab Jewish conflict in Palestine. Peters argues that a large part of the Arabs in Palestine were not descendants of long-term residents of Palestine at the time of the formation of the state of Israel, but had instead arrived in waves of immigration that began in the 19th century.

Peters asserts that the Palestinians only arrived into Palestine after a large Jewish population already living there had established and built up the country. Furthermore, Peters asserts a number of grave claims regarding Palestinians that fled Palestine in 1948, while either relying on borrowed references or other references that are evidently unreliable, and that have been refuted by a number of writers who criticized her book and provided clear evidence overruling her claims. In an article by Paul Blair that was published in *Capitalism Magazine*, Blair highlights one of the manners by which Peters wrongfully used data regarding Palestinian refugees; Peters asserts that in 1948, Palestinians fled at the instruction of their leaders, even though, as Blair writes, Yitzhak Rabin writes in his diaries –part of which were published in a *New York Times* report- that he personally ordered the expulsion of some 50,000 Arabs living in Lod and Ramleh. Furthermore, Peters still attempts to prove her point, and she does so by relying on a study conducted by the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut, where she cites: “According to a research report by the Arab-sponsored Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut, however, ‘the majority’ of the Arab refugees in 1948 were not expelled, and ‘68%’

left without seeing an Israeli soldier”³⁵. Yet, the surprising fact discovered was that this study was in fact discussing the Arabs who fled in 1967 and not in 1948, in addition to that, the study relied on a small sample size of merely 37 refugees, as Blair notes: “Leave aside the fact that the study’s conclusions were based on a sample size of 37 refugees. The study itself concerns the refugees of the 1967 war, as is obvious from its title, and inspection of the relevant passage shows that it does indeed refer to the 1967 Arab refugees, not those of 1948”³⁶.

At the time of the publication of Peter’s book, Finkelstein was still a graduate student at Princeton, yet as he read the book his eagerness to investigate its trustworthiness, alongside his interest in Zionism, drove him to take a summer off and research more into the allegations proposed by Peters. Eventually, this led him to write a rebuttal, describing how the book written by Peters was plagiarized and included data that was intentionally misrepresented. In response to this rebuttal, the American journalistic establishment that had been talking about the book automatically refrained from talking about it

³⁵ Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (Chicago: JKAP Publications, 1984), 13.

³⁶ Paul Blair, “From Time Immemorial – Peter’s book From Time Immemorial lacks objectivity”, *Capitalism Magazine*, (April 20, 2002), <http://capitalismmagazine.com/2002/04/from-time-immemorial-peters-book-from-time-immemorial-lacks-objectivity-part-6-of-6/>

and refused to publish this rebuttal. This action both denotes the ideological trend in America to always justify any Israeli argument even through lies and forged historical narratives that are no longer utilized and are a feud in the academic sense. On the other hand, the incident with Joan Peters reveals the social power of the Israeli lobby in more than one sense. At the time of the publication of the book, American magazines that had lauded the book and constantly published articles related to it did not publish the condemnation written in response to it by Finkelstein, even the New York Review of Books that had initially published the initial review refused to publish the condemnation of the book, it was the London Review of Books that finally published it, which took place in England, away from America's controlling hand. If Finkelstein's findings had not been published in England, no one would have ever come about these findings, and Peters' book would continue to receive the same applauds and positive reviews that it did at the time of its publication. This is but one of many examples denoting both the social power of the Israeli lobby, as well as the ideological affinity (discussed later in this research), between Israel and the United States, that prohibits the US from publishing anything that destroys or displays a negative

image of Israel, no matter where the truth of the matter and the real facts reside.

Another method adopted by AIPAC is its determination to place the U.S. as a facilitator in the Middle East: "The U.S. role should be that of facilitator of direct negotiations"³⁷ Such an allocation directly neglects the basic norms of international relations and conflict resolution, since a facilitator may not be at all involved in the conflict, and can in no way hold any form of bias. AIPAC's statements reveal a sense blinded awareness: AIPAC may or may not realize the degree of irrationality it exerts in much of its publications, yet, the awareness of their power, along with their connections and money, allows them to publicize whatever they wish. Also, the fact that AIPAC's audience is already in favor of its proclamations allows them to further the extent of exaggeration in their writings. One additional factor is the weakness of Arab lobbyists, which leaves the already strong AIPAC with no competition at all. Kenen contributes this victory to the community of friends that the lobby has acquired among U.S. government officials: "We won our first \$65 million grant for Israel because we had a host of friends in the Senate ... and resourceful allies

³⁷ AIPAC, "AIPAC Policy Statement, 1987", *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16.4 (Summer 1987): 107-114.

in the House."³⁸ This victory marks a perfect manifestation of the strategies used by the lobby to pursue its objectives. The build up of "friends of Israel" among senate representatives is indicative of a long history of interrelated work on part of Kenen and republican candidates, and on the earlier Zionist implementations, which have created within many U.S. officials a sense of sentiment and apathy towards Israel. The initial proposed grant was \$150 million, which also marks yet another strategy with which the lobby pursues. The significantly large sum of money proposed was done so because of the awareness on part of the lobby that several negotiations on the amount of money will be asserted, and hence an initially large sum allows more room for negotiation, where the lobby may compromise during negotiations and still maintain a large victory. Ironically, on freedom of emigration AIPAC writes: "Freedom of emigration is a fundamental human right. We deplore all restrictions against free emigration of Jews from any country."³⁹ A sense of contradiction follows my observation of some key elements in AIPAC policy statements, for example, the strong endorsement of several human

³⁸ Isiah L. Kenen, *All My Causes: An 80-year life span in many lands and for many causes, some we won and some we lost but we never gave up* (Washington: Near East Research, 1985), 53.

³⁹ AIPAC., "AIPAC Policy Statement, 1987" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16.4 (Summer 1987): 107-114.

rights, and the importance of the implementation of such rights as emigration and safety. When AIPAC makes such a statement, it ceases to recognize or even acknowledge the extremely problematic situation of Palestinian refugees that came as a direct outcome to the creation of Israel, and hence their fundamental cause. It is a contradiction to uphold the necessity of human rights towards one population, while completely neglecting the other. Is it not possible to maintain peace and freedom for all?

How can AIPAC sensibly assert freedom of emigration as a fundamental human right, when it is their own influence in U.S. foreign policy that has led to thousands of homeless people around the world? Does AIPAC realize the possibility of a free Israel and Palestine? Or will power continue to blind AIPAC and those cooperating in this unsustainable arena?

The discourse promoted by AIPAC obscures the presence of pro-Zionist and Israeli groups and individuals in the United States. Furthermore, this can also obscure the historicization of the development of a stronger pro-Israeli lobby there, while it also does not explain how the US not only supported the creation of the state of Israel but also put pressure on other countries to vote at the UN for the

partition of Palestine and later for the recognition of the state of Israel. American-Israeli relations may not be simply analyzed through the lens of a powerful Israeli lobby that, as shown above, have maneuvered its way to effect key US officials, who worked side by side to formulate a specific US foreign policy that meets the demands and interests of them both. Looking at the larger picture of US interests, we move on to the second paradigm that will explore the imperialist intentions of the United States in its relations with Israel and many other countries around the world.

For Mearsheimer and Walt, America is not acting according to imperial interests by serving Israel, it is the work of a minority within America that has interests that differ from the interests of America as a whole. For Chomsky, as we shall see in the following chapter of this research, America is doing exactly that, even through its alliance with Israel, it is working in line with the normal imperial logic: it is not the Jewish influence, it is not the Israeli lobby, but it is US imperialism that is the engine for American actions.

2. Marxist/Imperialist approach

Another theory that runs in opposition to the one stated above represents a longstanding explanation of the US-Israel relationship, but which was recently reformulated by Noam Chomsky in response to the abovementioned paper. Chomsky argues that U.S. foreign policy is shaped by its imperialist economic interests. He responds to the Mearsheimer /Walt article by pin-pointing Israel as a mere tool, or excuse, for the achievement of this overarching goal. In fact, Chomsky does not believe that the Jewish lobby is of any significant importance in and of itself, but that it is utilized as an straw-man argument in order to gloss over and deny the U.S. imperialist nature. Furthermore, Chomsky argues that U.S. foreign policy shares the same notions of hegemony and global dominance.

Aside from the lobby, Chomsky asserts that other factors are important to examine in order to understand US foreign policy in the Middle East. In his official response to the Mearsheimer/Walt article, he notes that “the US-Israeli alliance was firmed up precisely when Israel performed a huge service to the US-Saudis-Energy corporations by smashing secular Arab nationalism, which threatened to divert

resources to domestic needs”⁴⁰. Chomsky adds that this came in tandem with the emergence of the lobby and when the intellectual and political classes in the US began their “love affair” with Israel, hence making it harder to distinguish between national interest and the effects of the Lobby. Chomsky maintains that US foreign policy is the same in the Middle East as it is in any other part of the world, where it seeks mainly to fulfill its own national interest.

In his numerous writings, Chomsky strongly asserts his belief in America’s “imperial grand strategy” to maintain its position as the sole superpower in the world. He notes that this strategy dates back to the early days of World War II when the US began to realize its new global stance. Even earlier on, the United States was already realizing its need to ensure its global presence, especially at the economic level, as Chomsky notes: “International conflicts have been exacerbated as the industrial world shifted toward an oil-based economy from World War I, and the incomparable petroleum resources of the Middle East were discovered. After World War II, a high priority of US policy was

⁴⁰ Noam Chomsky, “The Israel Lobby?” ZNET Communications (March 28, 2006), <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20060328.htm>

to ensure its control over a region of such great material wealth and strategic significance”⁴¹.

Chomsky strongly asserts that the key reason for early US involvement in the Middle East was oil. He also shows how the US has interfered profusely in the Middle East and other regions in order to prevent any regime or popular resistance seeking independence from interfering in its quest for oil. At a time when the US was seeking partners in the Middle East, Israel displayed a military competence that impressed US officials, hence suggesting Israel as a means “to gain strategic advantage in the Middle East”⁴². Chomsky believes that the strong relationship between the US and Israel is a product of the US’s larger strategy to control the world. He does not believe that it is due to the power exerted by the lobby. Chomsky firmly believes that it is the oil reserves in the Middle East, and not the lobby, that controls US foreign policy in the region.

In his writings, Chomsky displays how the relationship between the US and the Middle East region revolves primarily around its oil reserves, which, as long as they remain full, will continue to serve as

⁴¹Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 161.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 163.

an indispensable element to US imperialist plans. Furthermore, Chomsky maintains that Israel also has imperialist/expansionist plans of its own: “Israel had a fateful choice: it could accept peace and integration into the region or insist on confrontation, hence inevitable dependency on the US. It chose the latter course, not on grounds of security but because of a commitment to expansion”⁴³. Here, the issue is not of dependence or independence, but rather about the unification of both American and Israeli efforts into a single logic. With regards to Israel, instead of trying to chart its own expansionist project, it affiliated itself with the American camp in a variety of different ways, since the only alternative would be to coexist with the Arabs, to change their perception of the Arabs into an equal and to someone who has rights in the land they live in, someone who is acknowledged as a people, eventually risking losing the battles with them, and losing their identification of themselves as against Arabs. This was the alternative, hence, Israel chose to side itself with the international imperial logic of power, casting itself as a dependent as well as a servant for this cause.

⁴³ Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 166.

In order to understand the developments in American power, it is important to look at both sides of the story. The US can be seen in terms of the myth through which it sees itself as product of the American revolution and not of imperialism; as the savior of nations, the holder of religious and political institutions, and the savior of nobility and morals. On the other hand, the US can be seen as a colonial power in the making; this can be grasped throughout its long history of intervention and policy making, and is, according to Chomsky and others, the correct path to be followed in order to fully understand this growing phenomenon of US imperial strategies. Chomsky believes that it is not through morals and ideals that we can come to understand the US quest for power, but through its capitalistic framework and its needs.

In his book “Hegemony or Survival”, Chomsky discusses what he terms an “era of enlightenment” during which the US began to realize its position within the international system, hence announcing itself as the sole superpower that must assist the world. The fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of the US as a sole superpower, alongside its technological growth gave the US optimism to change the world. During this time, the US began to cling to idealistic notions of morals

and ethics, claiming itself as the sole agent responsible for bringing peace, democracy, and human rights to the world. The US saw itself as bringing “enlightenment” to the world, and accordingly began to invest hundreds of millions of dollars as aid to various countries. Chomsky dedicates an entire chapter to this purpose in order to show how this “noble phase” is but another form of colonialism; seeing themselves as better and more advantageous than other nations, and hence asserting themselves as the saviors of the world. The importance here lays in the fact that this new “era of enlightenment” is but an obscuration to the facts on the ground; as reality shows that the US is not in fact supporting human rights throughout the world, instead, it is funding various groups that are themselves guilty of obstructing human rights; this notion of enlightenment can only be seen as true or valid once the facts are disregarded; lying becomes necessary to uphold this alleged “noble phase”.

This form of colonial mindset began to develop earlier on during the inter-war period in the 1940s, although it had not yet fully materialized due to the balance of power at the time. Nonetheless, US presidents continued to assert that the US is at an advantageous position, as President William Howard Taft noted: “the day is not far

distant [when] the whole hemisphere will be ours in fact as, by virtue of our superiority of race, it already is ours morally”⁴⁴. At the time, the US did not yet deem it necessary to intervene in world affairs, except for places where it held influence, as the Monroe Doctrine asserted. During the inter-war period, the US began to invest more time and effort in Latin America. US presidents regarded those in Latin America as “naughty children” that must be handled with an “authoritative hand”, and who must be assisted with discipline. This notion slowly began to grow, as the US began to seek this same strategy to increase its influence throughout the world. What is interesting is that the people targeted by the US administration and labeled as either “savage” or “children” were the same people belonging to the countries that US corporations were beginning to take over. This clearly proves that the US intends to increase its influence in the world not for moral ideals, but for its corporate and capitalist interests. These notions can be termed under the concept of colonial guardianship, a coin that has often been played by US governments throughout the years.

⁴⁴ President Taft cited in Jenny Pearce, *Under the Eagle* (South End, 1982), p.17, quoted in: Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 64.

The same case applied to Haiti, a country suffering US imperialism since 1915. Similarly, the US intended first to invade the country to protect human rights and restore democracy, the first action of which included the overthrow of the Haitian President, and then the activation of American warships in Haitian waters. But the main motive remains clear; American interest in expanding its economic and political dominance. Haiti was seen as part of the larger Caribbean plan for US investment and trade. In “assisting” the Haitian people to achieve human rights, the US facilitated the rise of dictatorship Duvalier to power, through which it continued to exert its power over the country, and intervene more directly whenever necessary. This new path to power adopted by the US seems to always include the appointment of puppet presidents to facilitate the economic flow of US corporations into the country, and to transform these countries into backyard factories for the American empire. Ironically, aid to Haiti also increased, but since it only targeted US and Elite Haitian corporations, the so-called “American Plan” left the country with an increased number of unemployment and extreme poverty⁴⁵.

⁴⁵Helen Scott, “Haiti Under Siege – 200 years of imperialism”, *International Socialist Review*, (May-June 2004).

Countries like those in Latin America were deceived by America's concept of "the philosophy of the New Nationalism", thinking it was an honest plan designed to bring about a broader distribution of wealth and aimed at raising the standard of living of the masses, countries like Mexico sternly believed that this would be the key to their economic nationalism, believing that the first beneficiaries of any economic investments should be the people of that country. The US thought otherwise, and to ensure that US investors would be the first beneficiaries, the US enacted the "Economic Charter for the Americas", which aimed at fully eliminating economic nationalism "in all its forms"⁴⁶. The contradiction is that although the US sought to eliminate economic nationalism in other countries, it remained an important character of the US economy. These are but a few examples of the manner by which US imperialism in this era has manifested itself in various countries, while simultaneously hiding its ulterior motives with notions of democracy, human rights, and false hopes to vulnerable people.

⁴⁶David Green, *The Containment of Latin America* (Quadrangle, 1971), quoted in: Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 66.

The discourse of history can shed light on the progression of colonialism over the years. US imperialism today is largely inherited from European colonizers. After WWI, British control over the Arab region became displayed under an “Arab façade”, a term posed by Chomsky to explain the situation of British colonialism in the region, through which Britain would hold complete power over the region, while on the ground, subordinate governments lurked. Chomsky clarifies: “The idea is to have independent states, but always weak governments that rely on the imperial power for their survival. And they can rip off the population if they like, that’s fine. But they have to be a façade, behind which the real power rules. That’s standard imperialism”⁴⁷. The idea is to create a “regime” that will adhere to the needs of the British government, but at the same time, seem as though it is a legitimate and elected government that the citizens will trust and abide by. The same concept is held today by the US government, who has and continues to administer regimes throughout different third world countries, and through which it channels and satisfies its needs. Through examining the different tactics adopted by the United States, one can conclude that these initiatives to “bring democracy” to third

⁴⁷ International Socialist Review, Conversation with Noam Chomsky: telling the truth about imperialism. Issue 32, November-December 2003.

world countries are but a cover in America's quest to seek its own interests; to gain more resources available in these countries, and to expand in its global hegemonic power. This was especially evident during the rise of fascism during the interwar period, since although it brought some concern to American policymakers, it was "generally regarded rather favorably by the US and British governments, the business world, and a good deal of elite opinion"⁴⁸. Even though fascism brought no democracy, a concept held at the forefront of America's quest to protect the third world, it nonetheless was key in facilitating Western economic penetration into the country, while also eliminating many of the labor movements and leftist parties, who created an element of fear to Western governments. Ironically, when faced with a decision between supporting a fascist regime takeover in Italy (Mussolini) and a socialist regime (Giolitti), the US government opted to support the former. Furthermore, we find that the State Department goes as far as convincing themselves that this fascist regime has been "impressive" in its attempts to improve the conditions of the people and the masses in the country. US Ambassador to Italy William Philips went as far as stating that this fascist regime

⁴⁸Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 67.

represents “a true democracy in as much as the welfare of the people is their principle objective”⁴⁹. In reality, we find that such statements do not hold true; although Mussolini received widespread support from the right wing in Italy, he was despised by the left wing, who eventually led to his death in 1945. The same kind of support continued over the years, as the US continued to either find governments it could benefit from to serve its own interests, or intervene in countries to establish new “façade” governments that would serve these interests. The experience of the US with different countries clearly shows how its interests are always at the forefront of any actions it adopts. In Iraq, we clearly see how the US shifts from supporting Saddam Hussein with billions of dollars during the Iran-Iraq war, where it supplied Iraq with weaponry, military intelligence and training. American support to Iraq came after the Iranian revolution, it was not in any way related to an American desire to assist the country, but rather to provide it with the necessary arms to destroy Iran, a country that posed a threat to US interests in the region. Following in line with US interests, the US shifted in its stance toward Saddam Hussein, and, after stating that he held weapons of mass

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 68.

destruction, the US launched war on the country, eliminating Saddam, who now became viewed as a dangerous and oppressive dictator, and invading the country, in order to secure its oil reserves.

In each of these examples, we find US claims running in opposition to its actions, as in the case of Iraq, the American government claimed to want to bring freedom and democracy to the Iraqi people, when in reality it was solely attempting to gain control over the oil reserves in Iraq, as well as deploy itself in a more permanent way in the Middle East. These stances of bringing “enlightenment” to third world countries have continued, and with each new incident, US imperialist intentions are becoming clearer to the world.

One of the major reasons for US involvement in the Middle East is oil. It is important here to note that, as Chomsky asserts, even if the US had all the energy reserves it requires within the United States, it would still seek out other oil reserves around the world, in order to ensure that no other country would gain control over them. This is part of the US imperialist strategy to remain the sole superpower in the world. Chomsky notes: “One of the ways the U.S. keeps control over Europe and Japan is by having a stranglehold on their energy supply.

Therefore, if there was a solar energy or shale breakthrough, giving the U.S. its own energy supply completely independent of Middle East oil, we still would want to ensure control over that region as long as Middle East oil remained cheap and accessible”⁵⁰. Furthermore, the US has sought to prevent bilateral agreements between oil producing companies and Europe, in fear that European countries may come to compete against the US. The US does not simply wish to ensure its own energy reserves; it seeks to maintain control over the energy reserves that other countries depend on. Since the Second World War, US foreign policy in the Middle East has been extremely consistent, especially with regards to the oil reserves there. In 1945, the State Department noted that the oil reserves in the Middle East region constitute "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history."⁵¹ Such statements and policies aim to ensure that Middle Eastern oil, especially the largest ones such as those located in Saudi Arabia, are under American control. This was partly achieved by various agreements and

⁵⁰ Interview with Noam Chomsky, *Oil Imperialism and the US-Israel Relationship*, Leviathan 1:1-3, Spring, 1977, p. 6-9.

⁵¹ U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States*. 1945, viii, 45, cited in Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The limits of power*, Harper & Row, 1972, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the development of U.S. policy at the time. In: Interview with Noam Chomsky, *Oil Imperialism and the US-Israel Relationship*, Leviathan 1:1-3, Spring, 1977, p. 6-9.

institutions such as ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Company) in 1947. Such involvements in the Middle East mean an increasing amount of Americans on the ground in these countries, mainly working either with oil companies such as ARAMCO, or otherwise involved in military training. Furthermore, oil investments have also helped alleviate financial problems in the US, since companies like OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) have been increasingly investing in the West, where the US share has doubled to reach "44% in early 1970", such shares have alleviated US problems in balance of payments, and "help explain the dollar's strength" and "the recovery of the American stock market earlier this year."⁵² American dependence on oil reserves in the Middle East is not only limited to ensuring control over the oil reserves themselves, but also on the money invested by these countries into the US, which, as noted above, has been vital in saving the US market. One of the major countries with a stable relationship with the US is Saudi Arabia, whose investment in "U.S. Treasury Bonds is unofficially estimated at \$5 to \$10 billion, though it is a closely guarded secret"⁵³. Although oil

⁵² Leonard Silk, *The New York Times*, 7 Oct 1976. In: Interview with Noam Chomsky, Oil Imperialism and the US-Israel Relationship, Leviathan 1:1-3, Spring, 1977, p. 6-9.

⁵³ Don Oberdorfer, *Washington Post*, 12 Dec 1976. In: Interview with Noam Chomsky, Oil Imperialism and the US-Israel Relationship, Leviathan 1:1-3, Spring, 1977, p. 6-9.

companies play a major role in ensuring smooth relations with oil providing countries, since they are largely impacted by US foreign policy, they are but minor factors in the over-all interests of American capitalism. In some instances, as in Iran, the US government itself urged oil companies to help "provide to the friendly government of Iran substantial revenues on terms which will protect the interests of the Western World in the petroleum resources of the Middle East."⁵⁴ Such instances show how the US government views oil companies as tools and instruments for US foreign policy.

American imperialism has changed the face of imperialism, as Michael Ignatieff notes in an article for the New York Times Magazine: "America's empire is not like the empires of times past, built on colonies, conquests and the white man's burden.... The 21st century imperium is a new invention in the annals of political science, an empire lite, a global hegemony whose grace notes are free markets, human rights, and democracy, enforced by the most awesome military power the world has ever known."⁵⁵ Even the war on terrorism has become an exercise of imperialism. This new kind of imperialism is

⁵⁴ *Multinational Oil Corporations and U.S. Foreign Policy*, report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 2 Jan 1975 (henceforth MNOC). In: Interview with Noam Chomsky, *Oil Imperialism and the US-Israel Relationship*, Leviathan 1:1-3, Spring, 1977, p. 6-9.

⁵⁵ Ignatieff, Michael, "The Burden", New York Times Magazine, January 5, 2003.

no longer about the white man's burden, nor does it involve simple yet harsh extermination's of populations, it now involves different strategies through which imperialism is implemented behind different facades of governments or notions of assisting to bring about a better, more democratic world.

With the progression in the discourse of colonialism in the 19th century until today comes the progression in US relations with various countries. One important link to the colonial discourse in America is the American relationship with Israel; the growing bond which may be attributed to several factors (such as the moral affiliation discussed further on in this research), and can show how this linkage and commonality contributes to creating a common cause for Israel, the US, and the Israel lobby. These three players become focused on expansion, and, hence, imperialism. Whether through American expansion into the world, Israeli expansion into Palestine, the forces behind these figures join hands to increase in size, number, and influence, in order to promote their ideals, and expand their power over the world.

In the introduction to "From Haven to Conquest", Walid Khalidi writes about the paternalistic Israeli attitude promoted in Europe to support the Zionist cause: developing the land that the natives were too immature to exploit on their own, and hence assisting the natives who were otherwise unable to develop themselves; this idea corresponds to the US idea of American benevolent guardianship over the "children" in Latin America, and the need to bring "enlightenment" to these "naughty" children. This brings about one of the first similarities between Israel and the US; the moral justification of their superiority over other people, and of their desire to bring about civilization and development to other, less knowledgeable people.

This new era of US hegemony differs from any other. Although the United States replaced its European counterparts in the global system of rule, it is important to observe that it is currently ruling a global system where Europeans are no longer fighting one another. European countries realized that they cannot continue to slaughter one another, so now, the US enters as a new ruler in a place where "Western powers can still resort to violence against the weak and

defenseless, but not against one another”⁵⁶. The US now rules during a phase that Robert Jervis identifies as that of ‘democratic peace’, which can be seen as “some happy combination of liberal norms and institutions such as representative democracy and market economies”⁵⁷, this may be true in the sense that there is internal peace in Europe and North America, where borders and invasions have been permanently implanted on the ground, but this does not hold true for the rest of the world.

In the same camp stressing US Imperialism as an explanation of US-Israeli relations, we find the writings of Joseph Massad in response to the Walt/ Mearsheimer thesis. Massad adopts the same “Imperialism” framework as Chomsky, arguing that the notion of an “exceptional” influence being exerted by the Jewish Lobby to “deviate” US policies and schemes into belligerence and exploitation does not hold true once US policy is analyzed on the level of the wider, global, stage.

US policies in the Middle East are neither “exceptional” nor out of line with usual American Imperial practices, Massad argues. If the

⁵⁶Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 71.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

influence of the Jewish lobby were to be made the reason behind US actions in the Middle East, what would, then, explain American policy in various parts of the world that resemble and mirror the broad lines of US policy in the Middle East? Even in regions such as Latin America and Asia, where the Israel Lobby has ostensibly no vested interests, the US policy has been consistent since the end of the Second World War in opposing all nationalist regimes that attempted to independently exploit the resources of their countries and their foreign policies.

Massad views the “Israel Lobby” thesis as an attempt to divert blame for US policies in the Middle East by focusing on the great influence wielded by the pro-Israel groups in America – as if US policies in the Middle East would radically shift had this influence been absent. The Columbia Middle East Studies professor countered this notion with a rhetorical question: had the Israel lobby been absent from the Washington scene, why would the US allow Arabs more control over their resources and policies while it has consistently denied this right to all nationalist elites around the World? Such American practices have been a rigorous staple of US foreign policy, Massad notes, from

Mossaddagh's Iran, to Guatemala and Chile and Africa, and, today, Venezuela.

Both Massad and Chomsky argue that the pro-lobby argument seeks to shift the blame of imperialist policies in the Middle from the US government to Israel and the lobby.

With regards to Massad's reaction to Mearsheimer and Walt, it is more confrontational; he refutes the argument, whereas Chomsky provides a more conciliatory argument, noting that the lobby is a manifestation of this unique logic of power in Israel and America. The above two arguments provide different narratives for the course of the relationship of power between the United States and Israel, which may be further scrutinized by taking a deeper look into the ideological affinity between the two countries.

3. Ideological affinity (Settler Colonialism), in line with European colonial modernity

On the fringes of these two major camps, we find alternative explanations posed in yet another phenomenon. For instance, Uri Avnery and others focused on the cultural and affective links between the US and Israel as an explanation for the strength of the two countries' relationship.

Avnery advances a cultural explanation of the mutual affinity between the two countries, noting that the historical self-perception of the US and Israel carry deep resemblances, starting with the Biblical influences, the parallels between the Zionist project in Palestine and the White expansion in the American continent, and the idealized concept of a nation/haven for persecuted religions. These parallel national myths and cultural resemblances, according to Avnery, may explain the Israel-US alliance better than a cold calculation of interests. Avnery reflects on the arguments between Mearsheimer/Walt and Chomsky, and notes that both provide reasonable and sound arguments, but that the importance lies not in the arguments, but in the conclusions that could be drawn from them. Avnery takes the Iraq war as an example, stating first how it was the neo-conservatives in the US

who pushed for the war, most of whom were Jewish. He states that the Israel Lobby wanted this war, and used it to advance its own agenda. At the same time, Avnery discusses the US quest for oil, and how it sought out this war in order to dominate oil reserves in the region: “The lesson of the Iraq affair is that the American- Israeli connection is strongest when it seems that American interests and Israeli Interests are one (irrespective of whether that is really the case in the long run). The US uses Israel to dominate the Middle East, Israel uses the US to dominate Palestine”⁵⁸. Avnery agrees that the US-Israel relationship is of a unique kind, and that, aside from economic and imperial interests, the biblical, cultural, and moral affinity between the two countries is what ties them further to one another: “It is no accident that American (as well as British) fundamentalist Christians invented the Zionist idea well before Theodor Herzl hit upon it”⁵⁹. The idea that the kingdom of Israel will be reborn and that the Jewish people will return to it and that this will be the end of time comes much earlier than the Zionist political project. While the Zionist project was a political secular nationalistic one, this Christian fundamentalist belief constituted a religious/metaphysical parallel to the Zionist idea, and this further

⁵⁸ Uri Avnery, “who’s the dog? Who’s the tail?”, (April, 2006), Gush-shalom.org.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

deepened the connection between the two countries and peoples. The idea is that the United States is the new Zion, while Israel is a recreation of the old one. In today's Washington, even the evangelical lobby is as important as the Jewish lobby in promoting this idea; the ideology here is that the Jewish people must take control over all of the Holy Land in order to pave the way for the return of the second Christ. In this ideology and others, there is a similarity between the US and Israel in terms of their "national-religious stories", where "pioneers persecuted for their religion reached the shores of the Promised Land. They were forced to defend themselves against the "savage" natives, who were out to destroy them. They redeemed the land, made the desert bloom, created, with God's help, a flourishing, democratic and moral society"⁶⁰. The roots of the relationship between the United States and Israel is in some instances dated back to the early American times, where US Presidents, such as Woodrow Wilson, viewed the ancient Jewish nation as a model for American colonists: "the influence of the Hebrew Commonwealth was paramount in that it was not only the highest authority for the principle, "that rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God," but also

⁶⁰ Ibid.

because it was in itself a divine precedent for a pure democracy, as distinguished from monarchy, aristocracy or any other form of government”⁶¹. American leaders began to strongly affiliate themselves with the religion of Judaism as the faith of liberty, recalling different biblical stories of the Jewish people crossing the Red Sea and of Moses. The initial links between the two people begins to depart from a biblical religious aspect, and hence begins the American desire to establish a nation state for the Jewish people. With the growing prosecution of the Jewish people in Europe, came an eagerness to “return” the Jewish people to their homeland, which they were “expelled” from. This idea was further materialized by the World Zionist Congress, which established a plan to return the Jews to their homeland in six years⁶². Moreover, Avnery pinpoints the relationship between America and Israel in his article “AMERICA! AMERICA!”, where he attempted to clearly answer the question of why does the United States support Israel so strongly; as he embarks on many possibilities, he notes the following:

⁶¹Mitchell Bard, “Roots of the US-Israel Relationship”, Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org , (accessed April 29, 2012.)

⁶² Ibid.

“I believe that the reason is more profound: the identification of the Zionist enterprise with the foundations of America. The Puritans who founded American society believed in the Bible, knew Hebrew, bore Biblical names, saw themselves as the “New Israel”, called their country the “New Canaan”, justified the annihilation of the Natives with the Biblical injunction against Amalek. The Zionist “pioneers” resemble the white settlers in America, the bad Palestinians are a new version of the “Bad Injuns”⁶³.

Other arguments exist on this issue such as that of Steven Salaita –Holy Land in Transit- where he assimilates between Israel and the US in terms of using the rhetoric of religion, analyzed through the framework of settler colonialism, a framework that had faded in its use in the academic scene for decades. As Peter Gran argues in the preface of Salaita’s book, *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan*, the paradigm was used in the past by the likes of Maxime Rodinson in the 1950s and 1960s to speak of Israel. Yet, in

⁶³ Uri Avnery, “AMERICA! AMERICA!, or: The Height of Chutzpah”, *Gush Shalom*, 12 May 2001, www.gush-shalom.org. (accessed April 12, 2012).

the last two decades the concept of settler colonialism as an analytical framework has gained credence in the academic scene and is now being used again to analyze policies of certain states, as well as a tool for comparison. The notion of the settler colonial paradigm exists in that a group of a population, usually European and white, would leave their original homeland and move somewhere else to build a new community that is democratic and that spreads progress and civilization or religion, but the contradiction lays in that this new settler society is built upon the deprivation of whoever locals existed before it exists due to this initial moment of colonization. Peter Gran tells us that, until 1967, Israel did to a large extent experience this kind of settler colonial mentality, defending its existence on Palestinian land, continually justifying the creation of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian tragedy, either by denying it, or by using all these similarities between the American early colonial discourse and the Israeli Zionist arguments for colonizing Palestine. This, however, does not mean that these similarities between the Israeli and the American experience no longer exists or no longer affects the relationship between America and Israel simply because the classical settler colonial model is no longer there. “Financial and philosophical

American support for Israel remains integral to Israel's survival and has long been criticized as imperialist by opponents of the Israeli occupation. Yet these criticisms rarely interrogate the covenantal relationship these nations share, which tacitly pervades the American consciousness because of the United States' own grounding in Holy Land pathos⁶⁴. This relationship continues, not in the same crude, prehistoric, or very openly religious manner as existed before, but, as Salaita explains, through all these deeply imbued discursive mechanisms that remain in the American and the Israeli mentality in the way they view themselves and the people around them, including the indigenous peoples, it exists in the history and the tradition built over several years of cooperation and alliance, and it exists also among the religious groups that still use the language that is inspired from the religious texts and discourses that originally founded the settler colonial experience in America and Israel. Furthermore, this relationship still exists in popular culture. Salaita attempts to bring further clarity to the issue by comparing the Native Americans to the Palestinians. In both instances, Salaita focuses on discussing the religious tone adopted by foreign settlers in these lands. Salaita draws

⁶⁴Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 15.

further on the writings of Keith Whitlam and Hilton Obenzinger, who explored the mentality of the Holy Land of the American frontier in “American Palestine”. In accordance with the narratives of Western civilization, Europeans set out to claim new lands, and claim those in these lands as “economic dependents under the sovereignty of God”, which, as Salaita explains, affects the Indigenous societies in three ways: first, the silencing of their histories “in place of Western metanarratives of progress and liberation”, second, lands are seized “under the alleged authority of God”, and third, “the discourse of conquest is ultimately incorporated into all aspects of the colonizer’s popular and intellectual institutions, becoming normalized and perceived as natural over time”⁶⁵. Salaita notes that the linkage of Indigenous struggles is inevitable: “Contemporary scholars and activists have the task of rethinking today’s dynamic forms of colonialism in a world where globalization has become the dominant economic axiom. A fertile area of contestation can be found in Indigenous scholarship and in the literature of national liberation movements”⁶⁶. Through discussing the struggles of Native Americans

⁶⁵ Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 23.

⁶⁶ Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 31.

and Palestinians, Salaita, in addition to other authors mentioned in his book, stress on the key components of identity and land, to which both Native Americans and Palestinians considered to be one of the major facets of their struggles; “the assertion of national identity is not only fundamental to intellectual production, but also a cultural valorization running counter to the systematic erasure of Indigeneity in the modern imagination”⁶⁷. On the indigenous connection to land, Salaita writes: “Natives and Palestinian discourses, however, clearly show that land is a central component of identity, spirituality, and philosophy. While Natives and Palestinians usually describe sovereignty and self-determination as key features that define their work, these concepts are bankrupt without an autonomous land base on which to survive and flourish”⁶⁸. Furthermore, Salaita displays the different writings of both Native Americans and Palestinians regarding their similarities, as well as their understanding of their own identities and nationalisms. While reflecting on writers such as Silko, Warrior, Ashrawi, and Said, Salaita writes: “Natives and Palestinians are pulled between a commonsensical understanding of nationalism’s dangers, on the one hand, and deep cultural impulses that stress national liberation, on the

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 33.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 38.

other”⁶⁹. Such negotiations have no space within the context of postcolonial theory; hence, Salaita opts for the need for new perspectives that are based on tangible realities. The Zionists also discuss this comparison but utilize it in a negative way, stating the comparisons, and then noting that, since it is a similar situation, how then, would it make sense to return land to the Palestinians; should America be returned to the Native Americans? A rhetorical question exemplifying their steadfast notion that the natives have no rights in America, and the same applies to Palestinians. Through the comparison of Native Americans and Palestinians, US support to Israel is further clarified: “American rhetoric in support of Israel is therefore a discourse to which Americans are accustomed. Patriotic socialization requires the erasure of Indigenous rights; Israelis thus enjoy American patronage with a history that can be traced to the appearance in North America of the first Europeans. These historical realities are incisive in understanding American acceptance of Israeli brutality; calculated misinformation and monetary support for settlements succeed because they are tainted by racist suppositions immediately familiar to Americans as the natural course of events.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 33.

The covenant brought by settlers into both lands constantly crosses the Atlantic”⁷⁰. With the passage of time, exodus narratives continue to be swapped from ancient fables into a “competitive arena wherein force is required to legitimize the validity of the settler society by elevating its narratives to the status of national history”⁷¹. During this process, indigenous claims to land are constantly delegitimized, and slowly swept into the background, sometimes becoming labeled as fables themselves.

After 1967, Israel tried to establish itself, like all old colonial societies, as a normal country, not to remain forever as a contested space. The occupied Palestinian territories became the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the rest of the land is no longer Palestine, but is now considered Israel; the land of the Jews that is no longer contested or discussed or debated, even in international law today. What were the original founding elements of resemblance between the American settler colonial experience and the Israeli settler colonial experience according to the original settler colonial model? One cannot ignore all the biblical parallels that were used by American settlers comparing

⁷⁰ Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 29.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 38.

their experience to that of the original chosen people; the biblical Jews' entrance into Palestine, in addition to the naming of American towns after old biblical names, especially the ones founded early on; an issue that Salaita discusses in detail. Salaita notes that there are more than twenty towns in the United States named Canaan or New Canaan, as well as many towns named Palestine, located in Illinois, Texas, and West Virginia. He writes: "an important irony can be found here. In the Near East, the lands of Canaan and Palestine –in biblical times and in 1948- were eradicated in place of something new, only to reappear in the United States in place of something already there". Salaita relates this town naming to the initial Judeo-Christian involvement during the second-wave settlers to America, he adds: "it was perhaps inevitable that some newly established towns would adopt monikers conjuring the Holy Land, indicating that this pristine land of milk and honey was ripe for religious and material settlement"⁷². The literary notion of the Jews advancing into the promised land of milk and honey that was promised to them by God was paralleled with the notion of exterminating and removing the people who existed in this land, as it was not an empty land, but that

⁷² Ibid, p. 13.

the divine promise was associated with the obligation and the permission to remove the native people. Even in the biblical narrative, the notion of the locals as a background that can be eliminated in favor of this manifest destiny already exists. This is a major issue that Americans and Israelis identify with, how both of their histories were forged through eliminating the locals. Obenzinger and Whitlam discuss the issue of the “Holy Land mania”, which Obenzinger traces to the early nineteenth century, and which finds its links in both early American colonial discourse, and in the early development of Zionism. “The source of settler and, later, national identity has remained identical on both continents”. Furthermore, early developments of both Zionism and Americanism follow similar patterns in the manner by which identification was constructed, as noted in the following excerpt from *American Palestine*: “Certainly, Zionist ideological formation, as a secular movement, initially appeared to move against traditional notions of Jewish uniqueness in a desire to establish a ‘normal’ national life. I would argue, however, that the covenantal relationship is in fact at play even in such a seemingly inverted dynamic inscribed by early secular Zionists, just as

it is also at play with Anglo-American colonial development, despite its great hybridity”⁷³.

The elements of the settler colonial discourse can be summarized into three main pillars: the religious one, linking the two nations with biblical roots and comparisons, the argument of civilization, in that these ‘superior’ people have the responsibility to spread civilization to the rest of the ‘savage’ world, and the notion of “chosen-ness”, under which the people view themselves as superior to all others.

Under the umbrella of the notion of the chosen people comes the American idea of Manifest Destiny, which focuses on making yourself a subject above all others, so that your own destiny somehow supersedes all others, your religious myth is more important than theirs, and is actually more important than their very own existence. This notion of Manifest Destiny was the destiny of whites to civilize the world and civilize America: working the land and exploiting all the potential that exists there. This may be seen as some sort of Hegelian movement in history, something that was unstoppable, so

⁷³ Hilton and Obenzinger, *American Palestine* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 27. Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 23.

that the place of the natives themselves does not exist anymore, as if you cannot avoid what happened to them, and many people write history this way. The term originated in the nineteenth century, and was based on the American belief that they were destined to expand across the continent. The term was used to justify the war with Mexico in the 1840s, and which combined the idea of expansionism with other notions such as American exceptionalism and romantic nationalism. The ideology of the expansion toward the West; until 1870, white Americans lived in only a small part of what is now the United States, natives still owned three quarters of America, then came the American expansion, the founding of the American nation, the West ward push is what created America today; the period during which most Indians were dispossessed and slaughtered, and the period during which most Indian wars took place. The ideological, quasi-religious, nationalistic discourse that covered all these acts was this notion of Manifest Destiny. This concept originated to guise the expansionist origins of the United States, which was brought forth through expanding notions of the need to bring liberty, justice, and democracy to the world, ensuring that the United States is the ultimate 'agent of liberty', and will continue to expand until 'liberty' has

reached across the entire world, as the US President noted: “we have lit a fire as well- a fire in the minds of men. It warms those who feel its power, it burns those who fight its progress, and one day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world”⁷⁴. The idea not only relates to bringing ‘liberty’ to the world, but also that only through this liberty will America’s security be ensured: “only when the light of freedom’s untamed fire illuminates the world’s darkest corner will America’s own safety and prosperity be assured”⁷⁵. Looking at the era of Manifest Destiny and the era of Zionist expansion in Palestine, one finds a number of parallelisms in terms of “chosen-ness”, in terms of civilizing the land, in terms of the nationalist/religious myth, and in terms of the way the natives were relegated to a secondary background. All these parallels can be noted under the approach of the classical notion of settler colonialism. On the notion of Manifest Destiny in Palestine, Salaita writes: “the issue of Manifest Destiny in Palestine warrants interrogation, because the notion that one people’s scriptural prophecies override the rights of another people’s very existence is, in fact, the theological framework

⁷⁴ Andrew Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: the End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008), 75.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

of New World conquest. The covenantal aspect of settler colonialism has bound Natives and Palestinians to the same class of resistance despite the great difference in their cultures”⁷⁶.

Although the post-1967 case in Israel no longer follows the classical discourse of settler colonialism (although the settlements’ expansion is a central core of settler colonialism), it is still possible to find many elements in the American discourse on Israel that is inspired from this classical notion; the long-time American material and political support for Israel as the only civilized outpost in the Middle East; pioneer language still exists when discussing Israel, it is probably the only place in the world where the notion of exclusive religious identity is discussed as a moral issue, and this is primarily because it is a state for the Jews, if it were a state for the Shi’a for example, it would not have received the same support as it does, nor would it have been seen as a legitimate political objective. Salaita speaks of these distinctions and how they express themselves on the literary level, not only in terms of the experience of the colonialist colonizers, but also in terms of the similarities of the experiences of the indigenous peoples who were subjected to these mechanisms of colonialism. Salaita speaks of how

⁷⁶ Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 44-45.

the indigenous people represent themselves and not how the colonists represent them or themselves. Salaita speaks of the people who were subjected to this same sort of religious pioneer discourse, and how they reacted.

Americans are more apt to justify Israel's view of the Palestinians in light of its own self-perception, the same way the Americans dealt with the Native Americans. Today, the Israel lobby and many other proponents of Israel return to these old biblical notions in order to further stress the close relationship between the two countries, almost to remind the United States of the comparison it once made in the past to the biblical Jews. There is a clear intention aimed at the American audience when retrieving common grounds between America and Israel, furthermore, they speak exactly what Americans themselves want to hear. To the religious Americans they speak with a religious tongue, bringing them to visit the holy land, to the secular Americans they speak with a secular tongue, arguing for Israel as the only democracy and civilized nation in the Middle East to which America has shared interests, and to the Jews they speak Jewish. Understanding this relationship on all its levels is primary to understanding the outcome of this relationship, and its ulterior motives for colonization,

as Salaita notes: “the ethnocentric, not national characteristics of the United States and Israel are nearly identical; their deep camaraderie is not merely strategic, nor is it accidental. Understanding the interplay between these governments on all levels will create possibilities to identify and implicate the narratives underscoring neoliberalism, the West’s latest form of colonialism”⁷⁷.

Other parallels can be found such as the notion of the “Jewish Cowboys” and “Arab Indians”, developed by Amos Kenan, former columnist for the Israeli daily Ha’aretz. Kenan believes that these characterizations accurately reflect the dynamics at play in Zionism, whether or not they had any philosophical basis outside American history. Kenan asserts that although Zionism’s discursive substructure may be rooted in a biblical basis, “the realities it encountered in Palestine converted it to a form of dogma whereby the Palestinians were transformed conceptually into the Indians from across the ocean. Once the Jewish cowboys actually began their ethnic cleansing, the

⁷⁷ Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 46.

Palestinians were transformed into the physical remnants of Indian memory”⁷⁸.

Another major author on this topic is Mahmoud Mamdani, who, in his book, *Good Muslim Bad Muslim*, writes about the ideological compassion between US and Israel in terms of imperialism. The main contribution or import of Mamdani is the cultural and linguistic explanation of the affinity between America and Israel, as opposed to the materialist economic one of Chomsky and the realist political one of Walt and Mearsheimer, he uses violence as the material with which to explain this cultural phenomenon.

One important notion discussed by Mamdani in his book is the addendum to the concept of Manifest Destiny. Whereas Walt and Mearsheimer provide an extremely realist notion of relations between the United States and Israel, and as in the realist school of thought, the only issues that get factored into the equation are interests, power, relative balances of power, and rationality, in the sense of whether rational decisions are being made or not. A large aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the practices of both Israel and America on the

⁷⁸ Amos Kenan, “A Dream Betrayed”, *The Nation*, 4 May 1998, 16. In: Steven Salaita, *Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 58.

ground become excised from the narrative of thinkers such as Mearsheimer and Walt due to the perspective from which they view the world, which is that of power, violence, and war; even war is only factored in as an element of power. On the other hand, if we are talking about the international society and national societies and culture, these are, in civilizational terms, issues that are more alive than simple numbers or other issues on the minds of policy makers; how do you justify genocide, how do you narrate a history that involves ethnic cleansing; such issues interact with other elements in history just as much as interests and decisions of policy makers do. Here, Mamdani discusses the historical and rational justification of violence verses what is considered to be uncivilized and irrational violence, and discusses how civilization in history seemed to be on the side of rational violence, while they intentionally abhorred, condemned, and failed to understand the unjustified violence, asserting it as something that cannot be dealt with or negotiated with; the same discourse prevailed more recently in history after the events of 9/11 with regards to terrorism. Mamdani offers an interesting contribution on the notion of violence which is also embedded in Israeli relations toward the Palestinians and the American relationship

with Native Americans and then with the colonized and semi-colonized nations around the world; notions that are entirely absent from the arguments of Measrsheimer and Walt. Mamdani focuses on the idea of how Western centric discourses and notions of history have created these different categorizations of violence, which justify and legitimate some forms of violence while delegitimizing others, all decided by the manner in which they are explained. Hence, according to Mamdani, the narrative for the advancement of the progress of Manifest Destiny that was described above creates forms of violence that are viewed as benign, good, and necessary, or even when regretful, as with regards to the American genocide of Natives; it was seen as a rational, justified, and necessary violence that was inevitable and that was part of a movement of history, and that cannot be eliminated from history. Mamdani also discusses the different arguments proposed in America when people discuss the issue of Native Americans; oftentimes people ask: “What do you want? Do you want us to undo history? Give them back the land?” questions presented in a context as if the evolution of history occurred in a perfect way and cannot be modified or retraced in any different manner, making it impossible to imagine an alternative history where

these injustices did not occur; these injustices no longer become considered as a form of violence, but are now seen as part of the march of history, the Hegelian notion of history that goes in a certain direction. The same goes for the Israeli idea of civilizing the native Palestinians and enforcing a violence that is necessary to secure their own state. At the same time, the same acts of violence, killing, and murder that is committed by the colonized, or any kind of violence that does not fit in this Western centric narrative of progress is described and relegated to a different category where it becomes seen as either a product of metaphysical notions such as evil, or a result of moral depravity, such as Nazism.

While Mearsheimer and Walt somehow miss this entire range of social phenomena relating to imperialism and to the meeting of power, Chomsky asserts a notion where imperialism is stressed, where the notion of exploitation is stressed, even violence is stressed, but that is also always explained in more or less rationalistic, material terms: interests, economy, world system, how the economic system forces countries to prepare a suitable political environment for the model of capitalist accumulation, etc. While Mamdani locates these notions of violence and imperialism more in the discursive, linguistic, and

cultural level, through investigating both how this notion of culture exists in the first place, so that we define ourselves in terms of and within this culture; always fictive and varying and changing cultural boundaries, east, west, civilized, uncivilized, etc., he also explains how violence and methods of exploitation are couched in a cultural and linguistic context. Mamdani examines such notions to show how the civilized and developed world justifies past imperialism and oppression through discourses such as that of Manifest Destiny and the rationalization of violence. Furthermore, Mamdani investigates the creation of the notion of “us” and “them” in a cultural sense, which is the basis of the American-Israeli affinity; creating a larger “us” verses “them”. Most of his book discusses this cultural process where the “other” is created and becomes a separate entity, in this sense, he interrogates the notion of how the West came to be created and how it progressed and changed over time, and how it now came to refer to anyone who is Western, even those living in the east, as in Israel, and those who are democratic and industrialized are now considered to be part of the West. Furthermore, US policy creates a commonality between different groups that it views as a “threat” to its own security in order to further promote this notion of the “other”, as Andrew

Bacevich notes: “Treating Nazism, communism, and Islamism as essentially interchangeable, while ignoring their fundamental and irreconcilable differences, testifies to the enduring value of using (or devising) some sort of diabolical “other” as a reference point when selling policy”⁷⁹.

Thus, this camp provides us with an alternative perspective to approach the question of the Israel Lobby; instead of focusing exclusively on an analysis of political and economic interests and on hegemonic agendas, authors such as Kenan, Salaita, and Mamdani highlight the cultural and discursive facets of political phenomena. More specifically, these authors alert us to the fact that political life is not merely the reflection of a rational calculation of interests; instead, political actions are couched within a discursive frame as part of a dialectic relationship: even “pursuing interests” implies a discursive creation of the notion of the “national interest”, which is thought up and expressed in cultural terms. It is impossible to imagine a formulation of the “national interest” that is not embedded in a cultural discourse as well as a specific definition of “rationality” and “the good”. Likewise, culture cannot be seen in isolation from these

⁷⁹Andrew Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: the End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008), 77.

political phenomena, which, in turn, induce reactions, commentary, and responses to new challenges on the part of society.

Conclusion

The expose displayed in this research presents the process of Israeli-US relations, which, like many other phenomena, can be seen in a very legitimate way and from different facets; it can be seen as an issue of international relations, it can be seen as a social phenomenon with ramifications that effect a large group of people across the globe, it can be seen as a question of power, it can be seen as an economic issue, and it can also been seen through its integration into larger issues at play. The reason behind the existence of so many different ways of interpreting the Israeli influence and US-Israeli relations is due to the fact that each of these camps has been constructing the notion of US-Israeli relations in a different symbolic space, or a different perspective; basically shaping the issue in terms of how they view the world. As many observers of the debate between Measheimer/Walt and Chomsky/Massad and others have pointed out, interestingly, not all of the theories and interpretations made about American-Israeli relations are mutually exclusive; they do not always contradict each other, and they do not always presume that the other explanation is invalid, in fact, the matter of the issue is that they simply work on different levels; which is a further enforcement to the

notion that these differences mostly originate from the manner by which the question is conceived. Why does this happen? Why do we tackle one topic and end up with different constructions and interpretations of the same question and issue? A very valid explanation with regards to the arguments presented in this research is that they made choices; choices on how to view the world, how to construct international relations, and how to conceive of social life. This can be done for many reasons, but, with regards to the arguments presented in this research, we can say that this choice was political; they may have to do with politics as we know it, relating to people's ideological affiliations, but also with disciplinary politics: are these theories being examined from a political science background, or sociology, or international relations, which effects how you view the world. It may be political in terms of the research that is being requested at the moment or that is most popular, it may be the result of theoretical and philosophical differences on how one thinks of power and how it works. Each one of these perspectives or choices highlights certain aspects, but also hides others. One relevant example is that of John Mearsheimer, who, unlike Chomsky and Massad and others, never alludes to the notions of imperialism and power; in fact, these

notions are glossed over and labeled under the notion of American national interest. Unlike Chomsky and Massad, who continually argue about how this idea of American national interest is affecting the world, for Mearsheimer, it is a presumed notion that serves as a dependent variable in his research, in which he looks at how this notion of American national interest is affected by the Israeli lobby, hence, it is taken for granted as a notion we wish to serve and maximize. This may probably be the type of critique that Massad was trying to display when addressing Mearsheimer; the underlying fact that these scholars in fact agree with the imperialist paradigm in which American-Israeli relations are situated, but they want to serve this paradigm in a different manner.

How does one interpret US-Israeli relations? The conclusion that can be acquired by this research is that any interpretation of this relation requires a political choice, and because it is part of a troublesome topic that is rife with political choices that we are constantly making, whether one is formulating a research agenda or choosing a path of study, and since each of the choices one wishes to make in order to arrive at an ultimate conclusion is political, one must attempt to understand which elements are being highlighted in this process, and

which are being hidden and marginalized; one must be aware of this issue while making choices.

As social scientists, it is important to attempt to understand why each camp made the choices that they made, and then, we must assess and decide which argument is more valid than the other, since in this field, many explanations can be correct, but with deeper analysis and investigation, we may find that some of these explanations can be more correct than others. This problem arises with regards to this specific topic, since when you apply the criteria for validity, one may find that many of the arguments put forth are equally valid. Due to the fact that this topic is both a heated and troublesome one, and for the purpose of this research, it is important not to pick and choose which argument is more valid than the other, but instead to look at how these arguments can be seen in a larger context that can effect the situation in the Arab World, and especially in Palestine.

The above three arguments must not necessarily be viewed in contradiction to one another, although there is a difference in the narrative utilized in each one. All three scenarios continue to result in the same American support for Israeli policies, but each argument

provides a different narrative; a different explanation and a different solution. If the Israeli lobby is the “tail that wags the dog”, then it is enough to defeat pro-Israeli power in Washington DC to achieve change in American policy. If it is imperialism, then one must defeat America or the American imperialist logic itself, because even if all of the Jewish population disappeared from the face of the earth, the United States will continue to support Israel, or, if not Israel, as Massad argues, it will support any other system or order that rejects concepts of Arab nationalism and the liberation of Palestine and the independence of these national countries.

What is the common cause that fuels the engines of American Israeli relations? Many answers can provide yet another starting point to understanding this intricate and complex relationship. Power could be one issue, cultural affinity could be another, even other arguments can factor into the answer, such as the writings of Mamdani, through which we can see that the Israelis and Americans in fact think of themselves as one people, as part of one civilizational sphere, sharing an ideological perspective of the world, they see themselves as facing an entire world of barbarians that disagree with everything they believe in. The notion of power can even be further argued, as they do

not always see themselves as the powerful people; America sees itself as this shining city on the hill that is surrounded by evil, Israel sees itself as besieged by far larger enemies. The matter of perspective must always be kept in mind when trying to acquire an answer to this issue. Sometimes we may put on the spectacles of Mearsheimer and Walt to look at the relationship, and then we may turn to another perspective. This is not an either/or situation; one can be looking at the same thing from different perspectives. Even if no one clear answer exists, it is still important to understand the different answers provided, in order to understand the larger picture of how the American-Israeli relationship has, and continues to impact the Arab world, especially Palestine.

Each approach lacks something that the other two can complement. Together, they can better explain how and why US-Israeli relations are getting stronger and to the disadvantage of the Palestinians. The fact of the matter is that, no matter which perspective we view the topic from, the United States and Israel hold a special relationship that is intertwined through different factors. The Israel lobby, US imperialism, and the ideological affinity between the two countries have created a well-linked American-Israeli team that will not allow

anything to stand in its face. What does this mean for Palestine? In light of this special relationship, Palestinians must begin to adopt a new approach to their conflict by thinking outside of negotiations, outside of US/European mediation, and must bring back the question of Palestine to its Arab context; Palestinian refugees, Israeli wars of aggression, illegal settlements, and, most importantly, to bring back their focus on the natural allies of people with common interests and experiences in this Western modern global structure. The anti-imperialist approach to the Palestine question must return, and with it, Palestinians must link themselves to all forces and groups opposed to the American led Western global hegemony. Palestinians must allocate the common threads between the different peoples and communities that share their thirst for freedom and equality, and that have in the past, or still are until today, suffering the burdens of oppression and injustice. Mexicans, South Africans, Haitians, Native Americans, and other people in the South, as well as those in opposition to Western imperialism in the North may all pose an important link through which Palestinians can learn from. Furthermore, the new born Arab Spring can serve as an even more important lesson, especially since it serves as a large scale incident

that is occurring and inevitably impacting all countries in the region, including Palestine, where people, more than leaders and governments, matter.

In order to arrive at a clear and well-rounded conclusion to this research, a coherent interpretation of US-Israeli relations must take into account the social aspect of these relations. More importantly, it must acknowledge the victims of the outcome of these relations, the victims of the policies implemented as a result of these relations, since these victims themselves are the cohorts that are calling for a change in world politics.

I argue for an understanding of US-Israeli relations that links political decisions to their social ramifications, which includes the perspective of the victims, not simply because of moral reasons, or for the sake of illuminating a different area of research, but because the victims of these power relations are not passive; when policies and acts are made as a result of these relations, these victims tend to react. These reactions also feed back into the imperial policy and the kind of challenges it faces –as the case has been throughout the history of imperialism. One of the lacunas in the analysis of Mearsheimer and

Walt (and, to a lesser extent, Chomsky) was that their exclusive focus on foreign policy processes obfuscates the challenges that the American system has continually faced due to the resistance of society (at home and abroad). US policymakers are not capable of shaping the world (or their own government) without limitations. The Vietnam War, the Iraq War, and the Palestinian dossier are clear examples of an imperial power whose ambitions were curbed due to the emergence of a social resistance that was not predicted by the policymakers.

To understand these relations one must view them in their historical evolution and how they effect social processes whether in America or in the Middle East, in order to see how these reactions feed back into the political process and decision making, as well as the conceptualization of US-Israeli relations. This especially applies to the Arab Spring, since these types of American-Israeli collusions and this current international setting was, and still is, a battlefield; part of the battlefield of the Arab Spring relating to how such revolutions will be presented and who will govern and manage the countries in which they occur, how will the history of this era be written, etc. America is evidently strongly engaged in these revolutions.

The US position and its contradictions were seen at full display in the case of Tunisia. After decades of strong relations with the repressive Tunisian regime, complete with deep military and security ties⁸⁰, the White House quickly turned against its old ally Ben Ali, but only after ascertaining that the Tunisian Revolution had succeeded in eroding his regime. In the post-911 period, Ben Ali became a key American ally in the context of the US-led Global War on Terrorism; the Tunisian President was able to gain the favor of the George W. Bush administration by taking a public stance in support of the US position on “terrorism”⁸¹. Along with the French and European diplomacies, the US had – for years – heaped praise upon Ben Ali’s regime and its alleged socio-economic “achievements”, often mentioning Tunisia as a model to be emulated in the region – a view that also spread into US and European academic circles⁸². Once the revolution broke out, the United States abstained from directing any criticism toward the Ben Ali regime or taking a position in support of the Tunisian protesters, expressing, instead, neutral statements of “concern” amid calls for

⁸⁰ Al Tahir al-Aswad, “The pillars of Tunisian-American relations”, The Africa Center for Studies and Political Research, (December 8, 2007), <http://ifriqiyah.com/cms/content/view/510/1>

⁸¹ Khamis Ben Breik, “The United States aids Tunisia in combating terrorism”, al Jazeera net, (June 1, 2010), www.aljazeera.net/nr/exeres/144c312d-2760-4390-b244-168f4d14a362.htm (In Arabic)

⁸² For an example, see: Georgie Anne Geyer, “Tunisia: a country that works”, *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Autumn 1998)

“calm”.⁸³ American criticism due to the excessive use of force only began once the revolution began to spread, and Ben Ali’s fall appeared imminent; eventually, it was only after Ben Ali’s flight from the country, on January 14, 2011, that the US President made a statement welcoming the revolution and supporting democracy in Tunisia (while also volunteering advice and guidance to the Tunisians during the transitional phase).⁸⁴

The Arab Spring is clear proof that these victims are not passive, and is further proof of how political action and political reaction and resistance can emanate from unexpected places. A brief review of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and US-Israeli relations shows that such incidents have always happened: Israel wanted to defeat Gamal Abdel Nasser; it did, but then it was met with Palestinian resistance and the PLO, it then assumes that it simply needs to defeat the PLO, prompting an invasion of Beirut in order to uproot the PLO, resulting in a process of occupation that produced its current fearsome enemy: Hezbollah – an enemy they did not anticipate or predict; back in 1982.

⁸³ See the following statement by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, three days before the fall of Ben Ali:

Al-Arabiya net, “Clinton: the protests of Tunisia are a mix between politics and the economy, and we are not a side”, January 11, 2011, www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/01/11/133074.html (in Arabic)

⁸⁴ Al Jazeera net, “Obama praises the courage of the Tunisian people”, January 15, 2011, www.aljazeera.net/nr/exeres/d0e6a7f8-eb8b-43ac-b41e-4717e44e0bde.htm (in Arabic)

If Hezbollah was also to be defeated, Israel will likely be met with a new – perhaps more radical - reaction. The Arab Spring is part of this dynamic. Today, the matter is no longer solely about the advancement of policies; today, there is resistance to these policies, resistance to the acts that have left individuals and societies in bitter conditions and standards of living; these individuals are no longer passive, but are taking to the streets in protest of these conditions, they are calling for a change in the regimes that have been implanted as a result of US policies – policies that were inevitably shaped in light of US-Israeli relations.

What we find in the end is that these three approaches talk to each other without often stating so directly. It is possible to use these three approaches to complement one another, even if one is not ideologically driven, in order to bring back the picture to why Israel and the United States have such a close relationship.

This, in turn, should lead Palestinians to take matters in their own hands, especially with regards to the ongoing conflict with Israel. The US should no longer be seen as a mediator nor should it be in any way involved in the Palestinian-Israeli / Arab-Israeli conflicts, but agency must be brought back to local society, and to the people themselves,

who are the agents of change. The ongoing changes in the Arab region, alongside steadfastness in a return to mobilizing the people can allow more voice for the people. Palestinians must look to the people rather than regimes; they must look South and East and forget about the governments in the North and West. One final push is required in order to mobilize, gather, and promote the power of the people over the power of politics.

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