

Abstract

This study is dedicated to identifying the elements of continuity and discontinuity of American foreign policy towards Palestine from Nixon to Clinton.

The importance of this research is derived from the fact that it explores the American-Palestinian relations through a very long period of time through which many major international changes occurred as well as internal changes within the Palestinian and American fronts. Moreover, the long time period covered in this research gives a clear idea about to which extent these variables dominate American behavior towards Palestine.

This study is divided into three chapters other than the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is dedicated to giving a general overview of American foreign policy from a theoretical point of view. The second part is dedicated to examining American foreign policy towards the Middle East. The third and last part gives a historic overview of American foreign policy towards Palestine prior to the Nixon era to pinpoint the historical background that established this relationship.

The second chapter explores American foreign policy towards Palestine from the Nixon era to George Bush senior. The chapter is divided according to the presidential periods as a mean to identify the elements of continuity and discontinuity in the American approach towards Palestine for each president.

The third chapter is dedicated to the Clinton tenure going through all the agreements signed between Palestinians and Israelis in order to highlight the main elements that controlled the relationship during that era.

The conclusion presents the constant variables in American foreign policy towards Palestine as well as giving some recommendations to improving the Palestinian-American relationship exploring other options Palestinians must tackle to improve their negotiation status and international performance. These conclusions could be summarized as follows:

- 1- American behavior towards Palestine is governed by the special American-Israeli relationship.
- 2- The U.S. tends to adopt the Israeli interpretation on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict neglecting the Palestinian perspective as well as refusing that the root of the conflict is the establishment of the Israeli state on the Palestinian land.
- 3- The U.S. supports Israel in creating facts on the ground that would jeopardize the outcome of any future peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis through buying time in negotiations for the benefit of Israel.
- 4- The U.S. tends to achieve political gains on behalf of Israel through exerting pressure on Palestinians to recognize the state of Israel and its right to exist and then to adhere to Israeli demands through negotiations regardless of Palestinian interests.

- 5- The U.S. tends to overturn Palestinian achievements within the United Nations through liquidating Palestinian rights and lawful political aspirations. The U.S. generally manipulates legal terms to undermine Palestinian rights and it isolates itself from International consensus.
- 6- The U.S. intervenes in the conflict to ensure the containment of the conflict so it would not develop into regional unrest.
- 7- Palestinians should no longer perceive the U.S. as a reliable broker of peace as it would not serve their interests.
- 8- The E.U. should be encouraged by Palestinians to be more involved in the conflict to counterbalance the American monopoly over it.
- 9- Palestinians should not give up on American public. A public relations company should be hired to work on improving Palestinian image within American society and Palestinian and Arab Americans should be mobilized to create a pressure group to counter the influence of pro-Israel groups.
- 10- Working on the Arab front should be a target to Palestinians. Arabs should be approached to convince Arabs to give up the unilateral track of the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

- 11- Finally, Palestinians should work on reforming and improving their institution's performance to be able to improve their international performance and to gain international trust.