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US Foreign Policy Towards Palestinian-Israeli Conflict From 2001 to 2018

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Dedication

“To all the difficult moments that made me strong”

I dedicate this humble work:

To the candles of my life, my parents, the words are not enough to express
my love and gratitude .

To the light of my heart, my soulmate, sister Manal.

To the light of my eyes ,my brother Taher, my sisters Douaa and Hanane .

To my best and dearest friend Marwa .

To my wonderful friend Radja whom I shared her all hard and happy moments
during our master study and to all my friends, especially Hanane and Olaya.

To all who have even a small piece of love to me.

To PALESTINE

GUESSEIR Hana

Dedication

I thank Allah for giving me the strength and patience to accomplish this work.

I would like to dedicate this humble work to the most wonderful people
beside me:

To the light of my eyes: My mother for her love, support and care.

To the light of my life: My father for his help, encouragement and tenderness.

To my lovely sisters: Maroua and Rahma.

To my gentle brothers: Nasro, Hicham, Aissa, Belgacem and Houssam.

To all the members of my family for their assistance and love.

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I Love You All.

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict in the mid 20th century, the strategies of U.S. foreign policy towards the conflict varied from one period to another and from one president to another. This study attempts to clarify the factors that made U.S foreign policy and casts light on the most important conflict spots. Also it aims at investigating the political strategies and practices of the Bush, Obama and Trump's administration, from 2001 to 2018 and their impact on the conflict. The method adopted to achieve this purpose is a descriptive-analytical method, where the study intends to describe the historical events of the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict and to analyze the impact of the political strategies and practices adopted by the three administrations. The results obtained from the study demonstrate that the U.S. foreign policy political strategies and practices of three administration are completely biased to “Israel” and all the initiatives put forward by them do not give the Palestinian people the most basic rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state.

Keywords:

Political Practices, Political Strategies, The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, Three administrations ,U.S. Foreign Policy.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABM: Anti-Ballistic Missile

AIPAC: The American Israel Public Affairs Committee

CIA: The Central Intelligence Agency

DOD: The Department of Defense

EQB: Ezzeddeen al-Qassam Brigade

EU: European Union

IDF : Israel Defense Forces

JCS: The Joint Chiefs of Staff

LHY : Lohamei Herut Israel , Fighters for the Freedom of Israel or Stern Gang .

NSC: The National Security Council

OSD: Office of the Secretary of Defense

PA : The Palestinian Authority

PIJ: The Palestinian Islamic Jihad

PLC: The Palestinian Legislative Council

PLO: The Palestinian Liberation Organization

UN: United Nation

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

URSS : Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

U.S.: United States

U.S.A : United States of America

WWI: World War One

WWII: World War Two

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General Introduction

General Introduction

The emergence of the Palestinian issue in the political and historical sense coincided with the entry of the United States of America into the international political arena as the protector of the global capitalist camp, as well as its adoption of the artificial "Israel state" in 1948, with the determination of American vital interests in the Middle East, all these have largely determined the political practice pursued by successive United States administrations towards the region. Therefore, the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict became a fundamental part of the United States foreign policy, based on its interests: extending United States influence in the Middle East, neutralizing the Arab environment from the Palestinian issue, and ensuring the existence and superiority of “Israel” state. Thus, America has been able to impose itself as a mediator in the peace process of the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict over the past two decades. In our dissertation we will focus on the United States policy towards the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict under the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations, from 2001 to 2018.

Through the succession of administrations, the United States has long imposed itself as a mediator in the peace process towards the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict, which is one of its most prominent foreign policy towards the conflict. However, the last three United States administration’s foreign policy has a great affect on this conflict.

This study aims at investigating the United States political strategies and practices of the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations from 2001 to 2018 and their impact on the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict.

In order to uncover the aspects of the study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What is the impact of United States foreign policy under the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
2. What are the factors that shape the United States foreign towards the Palestinian- “Israeli” conflict??
3. What are the most important spots of the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict?

In order to answer the above questions of the study, we can propose some hypotheses:

1. The impact of United States foreign policy under the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict might be to serve the American and Israeli’s interests.
2. The factors influencing the making of United States foreign policy can be governmental and non-governmental.
3. Tracing the history of the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict by chronological order of events may come across many wars and events ,which might be the most important spots of the conflict.

The study track United States foreign policy strategies and practices and their impact on the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict, particularly during the Bush, Obama and Trump's administration. Moreover, the results of this study will add to the researcher and teacher a new knowledge of the policy pursued by America towards conflict.

The method adopted to conduct this research is a descriptive-analytical method. the study intends to describe the factors that make United States foreign policy and the historical events of the Palestinian – “Israeli” conflict, then to analyze the impact of the political strategies and practice adopted by the three administrations towards the conflict.

In an attempt to collect and analyze data, we based on reading books, articles, reports and analyzing the strategies and political practice .

Since the Palestinian question is an important issue for us as Algerians and Arabs, we must provide objective data and information on the issue. However, during our research, we have faced difficulties in finding references in order to write objectively and without bias to “Israel”.

The study is divided into three chapters. All of them are mainly theoretical in nature, but the third chapter includes a small practical part. In the first chapter entitled the Making of United States Foreign Policy, we discuss the definition of the United States foreign policy from different point of view. Then, we deal with the factors that shape the United States Foreign policy, the governmental and non-governmental factors. While the second chapter entitled the Palestinian–“Israeli” Conflict. it provides a brief history of the conflict, in addition, it contains the most important spots of the conflict, including wars and events. Finally, the third chapter entitled The Impact of American Foreign Policy on the Palestinian–“Israeli” Conflict From 2001 to 2018 deals with the United States-Israel close relationship as well as the United States interests in the conflict. Moreover, the chapter attempts to shed light on the strategies and political practices pursued by Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations , where we make a small analytical for each administration in a conclusion.

Chapter One : The Making of U.S. Foreign Policy

Introduction

U.S. foreign policy is a set of tactics and strategies to shape the United States foreign policy when it deals and interacts with other countries to achieve specific goals and purposes. In addition, America's foreign policy is made through factors. This chapter will focus on them: the first factor includes branches, agencies, and organizations, especially their functions and activities. The second one contains the mass media, public opinion, and interest groups.

1. Notions and Basics of U.S. Foreign Policy

The definition of U.S. foreign policy varied from one author to another. Below there are some different definitions.

1.1. Definition of Foreign Policy

Peu (2013) broke down the concept of foreign policy into two parts: the policy is a set of decisions and actions made by an organization to realize certain goals. While foreign reveals those territorially sovereign that exist beyond boundaries of the state. Thus, when he combined the two words he stated that " foreign policy is considered to be a set of guidelines to choices being made about people, places and things beyond the boundaries of the state " (p. 101).

In a simple definition, Petrič (2013) stated that "foreign policy is an activity of the state with which it fulfills its aims and interests within the international arena" (p.1). So this definition illustrates that foreign policy is an activity intended to accomplish the interests or goals of the state.

Furthermore, Rosati and Scott (2011) defined foreign policy as "the scope of involvement abroad and the collection of goals, strategies, and instruments that are selected by governmental policymakers" (p. 4). In other words, the field of contribution abroad and gathering different goals and strategies that are selected by policymakers.

Moreover, according to McKeever and Davies (2006) foreign policy covers many different fields of policy and decisions such as defense and national security; overseas trade and commerce; global stability and conflict; the values and rules which control relations between states. The tools to implement foreign policy are economics, diplomacy and military actions, where specific means are followed to achieve foreign policy goals. Although there are numerous goals of foreign policy which can be subsumed under three headings: defense, economic prosperity, and ideology.

In addition, Petrič (2013) pointed out that " the foreign policy of state depends on its geopolitical position, its power, its internal organization, and stability, on public opinion, on pressure groups and their interests; it depends also on its internal political situation " (p.4). From the latter definition, it can be said that the internal sources of any state shape its foreign policy.

Concisely, all those definitions illustrate that foreign policy is a set of guidelines and decisions made by the state to achieve its goals and interests that affect another state beyond the boundaries.

1.2. Definition of U.S. Foreign Policy

According to Allison and Zelikow, not only the President who makes decisions but the Congress, the military, the media, the state department, and the public as well. It is a kind of bargaining process. Therefore every participant makes foreign policy in particular issues using suitable power and skills to fulfill its goals (as cited in Cavalli, 2013).

2. Factors that Make U.S. Foreign Policy

The United States Foreign policy is made up of two main factors that can influence American foreign political decisions.

2.1. Governmental Factors

The making U.S. foreign policy based on governmental factors that contain branches, agencies, and organizations.

2.1.1. The Role of President

In the light of the article two of the constitution McCormick (2010) mentioned that the President is given the absolute power to be Chief executive, Commander-in-Chief, and Chief diplomat. With this kind of power the President has the constitutional guardianship to dominate foreign policy.

Grimmett (1999) illustrated that the President can shape U.S. foreign policy by following six ways :

2.1.1.1. Response to Foreign Event

The events that happen in foreign countries as well as the foreign government often challenge American interests. The President as spokesman and head of the foreign services, the armed forces, the intelligence services, and the bureaucracy, he usually responds to these events and start to make foreign policy decisions. Congress commonly supports the President, but sometimes seeks a change in policy.

In this context, Grimmett illustrated by an example of Falkland Island Crisis, Congress supported President Regan in the Falkland Island crisis between Argentina and the united kingdom. After Argentina rejected one of the U.S. peace overtures, Alexander Haig as secretary of state declared that the U.S. would supply backing for British operations and prohibit arms sales to Argentina. Both houses of Congress passed a resolution supporting U.S. action siding with the United Kingdom.

2.1.1.2. Administration Proposal for Legislation

Occasionally the President wants to start a foreign policy program that needs legislation or appropriations. Firstly, he has to propose it to Congress. Then the Congress will legislate it because in such situation the congressional approval is fundamental. Thus, Congress may play an active role in the development of the legislation, adjusting the Administration bill or developing completely new legislation.

2.1.1.3. Negotiation of International Agreements

Through international agreements, the power of negotiation grants the President a dominant role in shaping foreign policy, but the President must take into account the view of Congress because the latter often has to agree on the agreements. Congress affects the agreements by drawing up legislative instructions and opinions on international agreements, and attaching other conditions when approving an agreement.

2.1.1.4. Policy Statements

The President can establish the U.S. foreign policy either through unilateral statements or joint statements made with other governments. Occasionally unilateral statements are broad descriptions of American goals. For example, on 5th April 1991, President Bush declared that the United States would join international efforts to airdrop relief supplies to Kurdish refugees along the Iraqi-Turkish border.

On the other side, joint statements – policy statements made with other countries – are not legally obligated international agreements, but they obliged the President to follow a particular way of work. The author Grimmet clarified it by historical example, the leaders of seven nations including united states issued a joint statement in summit conference in Tokyo, at the conclusion of this summit on 5th May 1986, they pledge to fight terrorism through specified economic and diplomatic actions. Sometimes Congress may support the

policy declared by the President trying to change it or find a way to participate in the further development of the policy.

2.1.1.5. Policy Implementation

Even when Congress set up a foreign policy through legislation, the executive branch continues to form policy because it applies various provisions of the law. This is evident in the arms sales policy. Although Congress sets the standards for arms sales to foreign countries through the Arms Export Control Act, the executive makes daily decisions about whether to sell weapons to particular countries or not.

2.1.1.6. Independent Action

The President sometimes makes sudden foreign policy action without discussing it with Congress. So, later Congress faced the problem of supporting the action or being charged with reducing the President 's influence in front of the world. Commonly the Congress supports the President , but it sometimes tries to repeal the policy or pass legislation to prevent the President from similar actions in the future.

2.1.2. Role of Congress

Depending on the article one of the constitution, McCormick (2010) pointed out that the Congress plays significant foreign policy power, because it has the right to appropriate funds for execution of any laws, to provide the national defense and to declare war as well as it has the responsibility to regulate international commerce.

Grimmett (1999), illustrated that Congress can make U.S foreign policy through six ways:

2.1.2.1. Resolutions and Policy Statements

Every year, members of Congress make a large number of resolutions that explain the sense of the House, the Senate or Congress on foreign policy. Although many of these resolutions are adopted, many observers doubt the effectiveness of these senses of the House, Senate, or Congress resolutions because the executive branch is responsible for the performance of foreign affairs and the members of Congress express the policy of just one single branch of the government.

Despite Congress plays less significant role than the President because Congress does not execute policy statements, their different resolutions provide a vehicle for support and advice the President . The author clarified that by the following example " After the U.S. military intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965, for example, the House passed H. Res. 560 supporting the President in any action he deemed necessary to prevent Communist subversive aggression in the Western Hemisphere "(p.14).

2.1.2.2. Legislative Directives

Congress starts a foreign policy by following two ways: First, by using legislation in order to determine a new program, plan objectives and guidelines, and direct the executive branch to conduct specific activities. Second, by allocating appropriations to be used in a specific way, the President must assent legislation unless it is passed over a President ial veto. Thus, the executive branch carries out the legislation.

2.1.2.3. Legislative Pressure

“Sometimes Congress pressures the executive branch into a new direction in foreign policy by threatening to pass legislation, even though the legislation is not enacted, or by continuing to exhort a policy through many means”(p.16). In other words, Congress can weak the decisions of the President by pressuring him to pass legislation.

2.1.2.4. Legislative Restrictions

Congress was more explicit in its foreign policy role when it enacted prohibited legislation or other restrictions on the President's freedom to act in foreign affairs. These measures were often amendments to legislation authorizing or allocating funds that were unlikely to be used by the President. The use of funding restrictions by Congress considered as a classic example of "power of the purse" under the Constitution. As an example "In 1992, Congress prohibited the testing of any nuclear weapon until July 1, 1993, and permitted using funds for nuclear tests after that time only in accord with strict guidelines and conditions"(p.18).

2.1.2.5. Informal Advice

To make foreign policy, members of Congress advise the executive branch in informal contacts, this advice can be given in meetings held between the President and members where no formal decisions making is contemplated. However, the President may ask for general reactions to prospective policy initiatives.

2.1.2.6. Oversight of Policy

Congress makes Foreign policy through regular oversight of executive branch implementation of foreign policy. This includes such a mechanism as hearings and investigations. "The Senate foreign relations and house international relations committees oversee the department of state and other foreign affairs agencies; the armed services committees oversee the defense department; the intelligence committees oversee the central intelligence agency "(p.20).

To sum up, the President and Congress play an important role in making U.S foreign policy, the two branches cannot be separated from each other in making decisions.

2.1.3. National Security Council

The National Security Council (NSC) was formed by the National Security Act of 1947, the aim of (NSC) is to "advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security" (Wittkopf, Jones, & Kegley, 2008, p.340). The NSC consists of 1. The President, 2. The Vice President, 3. The Secretary of State, 4. The Secretary of Defense, 5. The Secretaries and Under Secretaries of other executive departments and of the military departments. Most of the NSC adviser members are experts in foreign policy (Hossain, 2009).

Although the decisions of the President are completely advisory and he can use the NSC as he wants, over time the NSC became the most important mechanism for tackling problems that all Presidents face such as: overcoming with crises, making resolutions, coordinating actions, identifying affairs, and ensuring agency compliance with desires of the President (Wittkopf et al., 2008).

In addition to Wittkopf, Destler (1977) pointed out that there are three ways in which the council has influenced the advice of the President: It has worked as a forum to suggest an advice to the senior officials in order to revise foreign policy issues for the President, it has worked as a focal point for formal policy planning and decision-making, and it has worked as an umbrella for establishing a Presidential foreign policy staff.

Moreover, Daalder and Destler (as cited in Best, 2009) stated that in a recent assessment, two informed observers counted the activities in which the adviser and staff should be responsible:

- Staffing the President's daily foreign policy activity: his communications with foreign leaders and the preparation and conduct of his trips overseas;

- Managing the process of making decisions on major foreign and national security issues;
- Driving the policymaking process to make real choices, in a timely manner;
- Overseeing the full implementation of the decision the President has made (p.30)

Through the multiple activities and responsibilities of the NSC, it becomes the most important formal mechanism for tackling the different affairs of the U.S. foreign policy. Thus, the NSC plays substantial role in making U.S. foreign policy.

2.1.4. The Central Intelligence Agency

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is the most eminent member of the intelligence community as well as it is considered as an independent agency within it. It was created by the National Security Act of 1947, because of the interest in the quality of intelligence analysis available to policymakers (Wittkopf et al., 2008).

The CIA devotes their efforts to gather and analyze the information for many reasons, as to know different capabilities of U.S adversaries; monitor political, economic, military developments all over the world which can affect on the U.S. interest; and warning from any inimical actions against the country from any quarter. In addition, the CIA seeks to determine and respond to policymakers requirements for information and analysis (Gates, 1987).

In order to make foreign policy the CIA is charged with four responsibilities

The CIA was assigned responsibilities for (1) advising the National Security Council (NSC) on intelligence matters relating to national security; (2) making recommendations to the NSC for coordinating the intelligence

activities of the various federal executive departments and agencies; (3) correlating and evaluating intelligence and providing for its dissemination; and (4) carrying out such additional services, functions, and duties relating to national security intelligence as the NSC might direct. (Wittkopf et al., 2008, p.398)

Consequently, because of its substantial activities and functions, the CIA has a great role in making U.S foreign policy.

2.1.5. The Department of State

The Department of State was established in 1789, it was considered as one of the main important executive branch organizations which concerned in the making of U.S. foreign policy. Throughout American history, the State Department was responsible for the management of U.S. foreign policy. But, since the rise of the Cold War, the containment strategy, and the efforts of the President to conduct foreign policy, the influence of the State Department declined. Therewith, the department of the state remains a significant bureaucratic institution that contributes in making foreign policy (Rosati & Scott, 2011).

The Department of State has a set of functions and activities that include: representing the United States throughout the world by its embassies and consulates; negotiating treaties with other countries; working on knowing more about other countries as well as the developments in international politics; and providing the President with policy recommendations (McKeever & Davies, 2006).

Although the State Department has a small number of supreme political appointees, it has thousands of real bureaucrats workers whom they can spend their whole working life in the department. For that reason, the State Department can be the most trustworthy

source of information upon the outside world of the United States (McKeever & Davies, 2006). Therefore, the Department of State remains one of the most effective executive branches in making U.S. foreign policy.

2.1.6. The Department of Defense

According to McKeever and Davies (2006) the Department of Defense (DOD) is called also "the Pentagon", because of its shape of the building, where it plays a great role in the foreign policy-making process. One of its active tasks is to ensure that the U.S. is militarily able to defend the nation and its interests. Two important goals that the Department of Defense set up to be achieved: aim at spreading the unity and coordination among the armed forces, and to support the modern administrative structure needed to keep expanded peacetime military (Jenda, Berry, & Goldman, 2008). Although the Pentagon may be viewed as an executive policy only, it actually contributes significantly to policy formulation. There are three sectors of the DOD that can formulate foreign policy: the secretary of defense; the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS); and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) (McCormick, 2010).

Besides the State Department, the Pentagon, and the National Security Council which are the most influential bodies in making U.S. Foreign policy and they help the President to make foreign policy decisions, there are other administrations can affect the U.S. foreign policy such as: the Department of Treasury, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, the Department of Commerce and the Departments of Agriculture (McKeever & Davies, 2006).

2.2. Non-governmental Factors

Besides the governmental factors, the non-governmental factors play a fundamental role in shaping U.S. foreign policy.

2.2.1. Public Opinion

In the beginning, we have to define what is meant by the public opinion. According to (Jenda, Berry, Goldman &Hula, 2012) Public opinion is the mass views of the inhabitant on a given issue or question. One of the most means used in collecting public views is opinion polling, that encompasses interviewing a random sample of the inhabitant in order to assess public opinion as a whole.

There are two perspectives about public opinion and its effect on foreign policy. The first perspective sees that the public is inattentive and uninterested about the foreign affairs of their country. As a result of such perspective, the public opinion participates less in making foreign policy as well as it plays no role in its formulation. The second perspective sees that despite the public who is not fully informed on foreign policy, it will be more organized, harmonic and consistent over time. As a consequence of this perspective, the public can play an important role in making foreign policy, particularly over the long haul (McCormick, 2010).

As an example of the first perspective, many studies have shown that the American public is ill informed and unaware of foreign affairs of the United States . For instance “44 per cent did not know that the United States and the Soviet Union were allies during the Second World War, with 28 per cent believing the two had been at war with each other”. Kegley and Wittkopf (as cited in McKeever and Davies, 2006, p.339). The example of the second perspective, after September 11, “the public’s interest in news about U.S. relations with other countries jumped to 61 percent, about the same level of interest in local community news and national news, whereas interest in news about other countries rose to 42 percent” (McCormick, 2010, p.553).So, in the first case, the public opinion will be not effective in making U.S. foreign policy in contrast to the second case .

Finally, because of the tremendous developments in the media either printed or in electronic, the American public has become more interested in foreign policy affairs (Mangi, 1995). Markel, the philosopher journalist, who held the post of Sunday editor of the New York Times during the 1940s, (as cited in Mangi, 1995) wrote: " Public opinion, whether it be controlled, as in Russia, or uncontrolled, as in the United States, plays so important a role in foreign policy that it must be treated as a matter of the first importance" (P.48). Thus, public opinion can affect on foreign policy affairs.

2.2.2. Mass Media

The mass media has a wide impact on the foreign policy process as well as shapes its tone, style, and emphasis of U.S. policy outputs in different ways. This effect is due to two reasons. First, because the officials know how much the media plays an important role in policymaking. Second, the media's injection of biases into the policy process (O'Heffernan, 1991).

The majority of Americans obtain their information about different affairs either national or international from the multiple media such as the major newspapers, television stations and radio available in their communities. The elite public follows the media's coverage of the news to supplement their information not only through headlines, television, and newspaper but also through the internet. In both cases the media's coverage can affect the information that Americans have about the world (Rosati & Scott, 2011).

McCormick (2010) stated that what the media decides to portray will have a major impact on the direction of U.S. foreign policy. Therefore, they can exert an independent influence on foreign policy-making. For instance, between 1992 and 1996, President Bush and Clinton did not understand that the war in Bosnia menaced American interests enough to send US ground troops, but with the non-stop of media's coverage of the humanitarian

suffering, they were forced to deal with the conflict (Strobel, 2000). " Global real-time television, the Internet, and other recent technological advances have clearly affected how top foreign policy-makers do their job" (Strobel, 2000, p.37). So, the various types of media have a great effect in making foreign policy.

2.2.3. Interest Group

The interest group works as a mediator connecting people to government, and lobbyists work for them. These groups attempt to impact the public policies in their favor by making demands to the government. The prominent difference between the interest group and political parties is that they do not look for elective office. interest group have individual members, and also it can be single entities and join associations (Anonymous, 2012).

2.2.3.1. Israel Lobby

Mearsheimer & Walt (2007) defined the Israel lobby as “ a convenient shorthand term for the loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction” (p.112). Moreover, American law defines the lobby as an individual or an organization whose function is to influence the passing or defeat of legislation. Although the lobby influence is usually linked to local issues, it has a great impact on U.S. foreign policy, affecting on it by exerting pressure on individual politicians, and political parties (Kopanski & Saleh, 2009).

2.2.3.2. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee

One of the most well-known and powerful Israel lobby organization is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee(AIPAC), it was established on 2nd January 1963 By Isaiah L.Si Kenen. The members of AIPAC include Democrats, Republicans and independents that support pro-Israel policies to the Congress and the executive branch of

US. Moreover, the AIPAC's main purpose is to lobby the Congress of U.S. and meets its members regularly by holding events where they can exchange its views (International Business Publication, 2018).

2.2.3.3. The Influence of Israel Lobby on U.S. Foreign Policy

The Israeli lobby influences the formation of U.S. foreign policy on a large scale in areas where Israel's interests lie, through the adoption of several ways, including pressure on elected representatives, participating in the election campaign, voting in the elections, trying to manipulate the media and think tanks, and academic circles to form public opinion (Kopanski & Saleh, 2009).

So, the pro-Israel lobby is made up of different organizations and individuals, especially the Jewish groups that support and care about the "Israel" government, and all those organizations such as AIPAC tries hard to impact U.S foreign policy and to guide it to its directions and interests.

Conclusion

The factors influencing U.S. foreign policy making are divided into two. First, the governmental factors include the executive and the legislative branches that are considered as the main power of the policymaking, the two branches cannot be separated from each other in making decisions i.e the President always needs the approval of Congress in order to pass any political decision. So, the President and Congress play an important role in making US foreign policy. Besides, there are different departments and agencies that can influence foreign policy making by their different activities, including the National Security Council, The Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense. Second, the non-governmental factors contain public opinion and media which have great role in making foreign policy decisions, media is a useful tool used

by the US government to form a public opinion to serve its interests. In addition, the Israel lobby, including AIPAC is considered as the most powerful organization that influence the US foreign policymaking.

Chapter Two : The Palestinian – Israeli Conflict

Introduction

The Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict refers to the historical and political dispute from 1897 till present. It is part of the Arab -“Israeli” conflict in the Middle East and one of the longest in the world. Moreover, the conflict is fundamentally related to the emergence of Zionism and Jewish immigration to Palestine. “Israel” illegally seized the Palestinian territories through several stages. This chapter will provide a brief history of Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict and most important spots of it. Moreover, we will shed light on how the Gaza Strip suffers from the "Israeli" occupation through their wars and blockade. Finally, we will provide the most important events that shook the Palestinian territories in 2018.

1. A Brief History of the Palestinian-“Israeli” Conflict

The Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict began to appear in the early 20th century, with the birth of large nationalist movements among the Arabs as well as among the Jews, both look up to realize sovereignty for their people. The disagreement between those two forces and the upgrowth of Palestinian nationalism in the 1920s ultimately led to the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict in 1947. Later on, the Palestinian –“Israeli” conflict extended into the Arab-“Israeli” conflict (Alejandro, 2015).

During WWI Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner, gave a pledge to Husayn ibn `Ali , the governor of Mecca and Medina and the patriarch of the Hashemite family, that if the Arabs supported the British in their war by an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, which was allied with Germany against Britain and France, the British government would help to establish an independent Arab state. After the Arab revolt succeeded, Britain took control of a large part of the Ottomans area (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014).

In 1917, Lord Arthur Balfour declared that the British government would support the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine under a declaration called

"Balfour declaration". After the war, Britain and France requested the new League of Nations to give them semi-colonial authority over the Ottoman lands. So, France gained a mandate over Syria. On the other side, Britain gained a mandate over Palestine, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jordan. Consequently, the reaction about the mandate was unsatisfying either for the Arabs or for the Palestinians. The Arabs were outraged because the British government failed to keep up with its promise to establish an independent Arabs state. On the other side, with the rising of Jewish immigration and establishing the settlements in Palestine, many Palestinian Arabs including political figures, farmers, and journalists opposed this situation because of their fear of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. In addition, the British Mandate was opposed by the Palestinian Arabs for two reasons. First, it thwarted their ambitions for self-rule . Second, it menaced their position in the state because of massive Jewish immigration (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014).

In the early 1930s, the Palestinians started to prepare a revolution with the help of many nationalist Arab strugglers, the most well-known strugglers were Sheikh Izaddin al Qassam from Syria, where he founded the Black Hand Group in preparation for the Arab Revolution in 1936. The Palestinian Revolt witnessed a general Arab strike and general boycott which would lead later to bloody revolt against the British and the Jews. In early 1937, the British defeated many Arab groups and expelled some Arab leaders. The revolution led to the establishment of the Peel Commission towards partitioning of Palestine, where the Palestinian Arabs rejected these recommendations but Jewish leaders, Chaim Weizmann, and David Ben-Gurion accepted them (Alejandro, 2015).

After the end of WWII, the British Mandate withdrew from the Palestinian territories for several reasons: Britain's exhaustion of the war, large immigration of Jews to the region, rising tensions in the region, and growing interest of the two great powers, U.S.A and USSR in the area as well as their pressure to respond to their interests. After

the British withdrawal, the UN took over the mandate through the establishment of the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine formed by 11 neutral nations (Alejandro, 2015).

The General Assembly of the United Nations On 29th November 1947, suggested a plan to partition Palestine known as Resolution 181. The resolution stated to partition Palestine into an Arab state, a Jewish state and the City of Jerusalem. This resolution was not accepted by the Palestinians and Arab countries because most of the population in Palestine was Arab. Then, on 14th May 1948 in Tel Aviv, the “Israel” state was declared (Alejandro, 2015).

2. The Most Important Spots of the Palestinian-“Israeli” Conflict

After the recognition of “Israel” as a state by the U.S, Palestinian-“ Israeli” conflict passed through many stations and spots:

2.1. The 1948 War Al-Nakba

The 1948 war occurred between the Arabs, Palestinians, and “Israel”, after the recognition of “Israel” as an independent state. The war is also known as Al-Nakba because of its catastrophic results such as the seizure of Palestinian territories and the refugees issue .

The 1948 war can be divided into two phases. The first phase began after the resolution of 181 (the partition plan) in November 1947, which were opposed by the Palestinians and instantly progressing into a war in Palestine. The second phase began immediately after the declaration of “Israel” state by David Ben-Gurion, head of the provisional government with the U.S. President Harry Truman's de facto recognition of the state in mid-May 1948, where the Arab armies invaded “Israel”(Bassiouni & Ben Ami, 2009).

Just before hours of the day 15th May 1948, at the eastern side of the Allenby Bridge, King Abdullah of Trans- Jordan fired his pistol into the air to indicate that his army will control the West Bank. Then, on 15th may 1948 armies from different Arab countries like Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and some of volunteer countries such as Saudi Arabia and Libya entered Palestine to support Palestinian forces as well as League's Arab Liberation Army. On the same day, the UN Secretary-General was informed by the Arab League of Arab States that their goals were to establish the 'United State of Palestine' rather than the implementation of the partition plan, also they stated that it is important to save Arab property (Bickerton, 2009).

The Arab Palestinian–“Israeli” war ended in 1949 with the signing of truce agreements. After the war, Palestine divided into three parts, Jordan took control over East Jerusalem and the West Bank. On the other side, Egypt gained the Gaza Strip. Moreover, “Israel” occupied over 77 % of Palestine territories. Thus, the UN partition plan never established the Palestinian Arab state (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014). The results of the Arab Palestinian–“Israeli” war 1948-9 remains till now, the war caused many problems including more than half of Palestinians survive homelessly; many of Palestinians are refugees and most of them are forbidden from returning; the future of the disputed territories; and the sharing of water resources (Bickerton, 2009).

2.2. The Palestinian Refugees

As a result of the 1948 war (Al Nakba), more than 700,000 Palestinian became refugees. There are different opinions about the reason behind their refuge. Firstly, the Palestinian's view stated that the Palestinians expelled because of a Zionist plan to clear the land from the Palestinians. Secondly, Israel's view claimed that Arab leaders' orders were the main reason for the refugees. Thirdly, one of the “Israeli” military intelligence documents pointed out that at least 75 percent of the refugees were displaced because of

aggressive Zionist military actions (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014). The most well-known savagery Massacre in 1948 was the Deir Yasin ,where nearly about 256 Palestinians were martyred including men, women, and children by the LHY (Lohamei Herut Israel, Fighters for the Freedom of Israel or Stern Gang). Moreover, there are extra aggressive and repressive policies actions taken by the Jewish forces to create a terror climate to oblige the Palestinians to resort into other countries (Bassiouni & Ben Ami, 2009). Since 1948, the Palestinians refuged to neighboring countries including Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon. Socio-economic conditions of the camps varied depending on the steward country as well as urban and rural areas. Some Palestinians refugees lived in registered camps, while others lived in unregistered ones (Amiri, 2016).

Moreover, at the end of the 1948 war, “Israel” legislated different laws to prohibit the Palestinians refugees from returning home including the Law of Return (1950), the Absentees' Property Law (1950) and the Land Acquisition Law (1953). Depending on those laws, “Israel” legalized the confiscation of Arab land and property (Bassiouni & Ben Ami, 2009).

When “Israel” seized the rest of the Palestinian territories in the 1967 war, the second largest number of Palestinians took refuge to neighboring countries ,where about 325,000 Palestinians from the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem were displaced to Jordan while the others were displaced to Egypt and Syria (Zakaria, 2010). Although Jordan absorbed large number of Palestinian refugees, in 1970 Jordan government feared of increased political power and autonomy in refugee camps which led to open fighting between Palestinian Fedayeen and Jordanian forces. The fighting resulted in killing 3,000 to 15,000 Palestinians refugees. This event is known as "Black September " by Palestinians (Bassiouni & Ben Ami, 2009).

Although the UN resolution 194 declared that the Palestinians refugees have the right to return home, the “Israeli” government refused to deal with this issue, justifying that their return may threaten the “Israeli” existence. The Palestinians including politicians insisted that the refugees should get reparations for their lost land and they should return to it as soon as possible (Zakaria, 2010).

2.3. The 1967 War

The 1967 war called Al-Naksa (The Setback) by the Palestinians. It lasted six days , resulting in the “Israeli” occupation of the rest Palestinian territories.

On 5th June 1967, “Israeli” forces led by Yitzhak Rabin, Army Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) along with Generals Ezer Weizman and Haim Bar-Lev, launched an onslaught against Egypt and Jordan. Just hours after the offensive, “Israeli” forces destroyed 416 Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian aircraft. Some countries such as Algeria, Sudan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia solidarized with Arab countries by declaring war on “Israel”. Moreover, some of these countries including Egypt, Syria, and Iraq finished their diplomatic relations with the United States and Great Britain. On 6th June, Israelis attacked American ship which name Liberty, who explained that they were wrong , believing it was Soviet aggression. On the same day, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a resolution calling for an instantaneous cease-fire. On 7th June, “Israel” seized the West Bank which was controlled by Jordanians since 1948, also General Uzi Narkiss led “Israeli” forces to penetrate East Jerusalem. On the Egyptian side, the “Israeli” closed the Suez Canal. The next day, the UN Security Council again requested for an instantaneous cease-fire. After that, “Israel” occupied the Syrian Golan region, and on 10th June, Syria accepted a cease-fire (Hay, 2013). The war ended with a great victory of “Israel”, it destroyed the armed forces of Syria, Jordan, and Egypt and took over the

future of the West Bank, the East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Desert, also it gained great support of the Western public opinion (Fraser, 2004).

Before the Naksa, the Arab states supported the Palestinians to defend their identity, but immediately after the 1967 war, the Palestinian national movement tried to change this situation. In 1969, after Yasser Arafat became chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) – A paramilitary political organization was established by the Arab League in 1964 to represent Palestinians in international forums – he decided to separate the Palestinian national struggle from other Arab states, also he adopted the idea of national identity with resistance (Baukhol, 2015).



Figure 2.1: Palestine loss of land from 1947 to present (Cottle, 2017)

Source: http://aidc.org.za/south-african-israeli-apartheid/?fbclid=IwAR34HgctDclqun_yeO0bDKxctxBOST68Qxh05zxvhRYP3jmsKIBXss0vqW4

Figure 1 illustrates the “Israeli” occupation of Palestine through several stages. Since the Partition Plan in 1947, Palestine was divided into two states, the Arab state, and

a Jewish state. Then, after the 1967 war, Israel occupied the rest of Palestinian territories. At present, “Israeli” settlements have expanded to occupy most of Palestine.

2.4. The Camp David Accords

In September 1978, U.S. President Jimmy Carter invited Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Camp David in order to find a solution for the Middle East crisis. The agreement consists of two accords: a framework for peace between Egypt and “Israel”, and a framework for resolution of the Palestinian question. The first accord signed in 1979, which “Israel” agreed to return Sinai to Egypt. The second accord provided self-rule for Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank, install a local administration for an interim period of five years and the final status of the territories would be negotiated at a later date. The Palestinians rejected the agreement because it did not allow them to establish an independent state. Therefore, the Camp David agreements were implemented only for the Egyptian-“Israeli” part (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014).

2.5. The First Intifada

The birth of Intifada started on 9th December 1987 with the incident that happened in Gaza's Jabalia refugee camp, when “Israeli driver struck the workers' car as they returned home from work. This incident led thousands of Palestinians to protest against the occupation in refugee camps, cities, towns, and the smallest hamlets. Many Palestinians including men, women and even children participated in the Intifada, they used stones and rocks, hurling them at Israeli soldiers and border guards, also they used anything such as oil drums, boulders, old bikes and rubbish skips to build barriers on the Israeli soldiers. The Intifada took the form of civil disobedience and mass rebellion. Thus, the Palestinians closed their shops, stayed away from work and they wrote on the walls condemning the 'Zionist'. The objective of this intifada was to end the occupation (Milton-Edwards & Farrell, 2010).

According to Arafat's advisor Mamdouh Noufal, the causes of the First Intifada are fourfold: 1) the poverty the Palestinians had been living under throughout 1948-87; 2) the feelings of humiliation arising from the conditions of living under occupation; 3) the loss of belief in the idea that they would be saved by Palestinian armed resistance from abroad; and 4) the feeling that their cause had been abandoned by the Arab states at the Arab Leaders' Summit in Amman in October 1987, when the leaders focused on threats from Iran and did not address the Palestinian struggle. (Nasrallah, 2013, p.56)

The intensification of the Intifada led to the brutality of Israeli soldiers and leaders, who killed thousands of Palestinians, mostly children and women, destroyed homes, cut off electricity and water, and built high fences around refugee camps (Pappé, 2006). The Intifada has brought international interest to the Palestinian question. Therefore, the United States and Europe have made efforts to find a solution, leading to the establishment of the Madrid Conference in 1991 and then to the Oslo Accords in 1993 that ended the first Intifada (Nasrallah, 2013).

2.6. The Madrid Conference

Madrid conference held on 30th October 1991, which aimed at building peace in the Middle East region. The transformation in the geopolitical situations in the world was the main reason to facilitate this conference which included: Firstly, the end of the Cold War resulted in the Soviet power decline which led to lowering the aid on the Arab states. Secondly, The Gulf War in 1990/1991 prompted the United States to propose the Middle East peace conference. Thirdly, the decline in wealth of the PLO, whose support for Iraq during the Gulf conflict, has sharply reduced Arab political and financial support. The Madrid Conference sought to start negotiations involving Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestinians, and "Israel" under the auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union.

“Israel's” government rejected the direct discussion with the PLO because they considered it as terrorist organization tries to destroy the Jewish state. So, the Palestinian delegates participated as members of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian team. UN Security Council 242 and 338 resolution ‘land for peace’ was the basic principle to resolve the conflict, “Israel” would hand over the Arab territories, it has captured in exchange for a comprehensive peace settlement in the region and recognition of its right to exist (Youngs, 2001).

After the Madrid conference, bilateral negotiations were held on 3rd November, the bilateral track started with three distinct sets of negotiations between “Israel” on one side, and Syria, Lebanon and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on the other one. Then, in May 1992 multilateral negotiations were started, they aimed at building confidence and improving regional cooperation by focusing on five common issues involving: the environment, water resources, refugees, economic development and arms control, without Syria's participation (Youngs, 2001). Although no agreement was reached, this conference was seen as an important symbolic step to find a solution to the conflict

2.7. The Oslo Accords

After several secret meetings between PLO officials and Israeli deputy foreign minister, in the late August 1993, an agreement reached on the Declaration of Principles which considered as peace accord between PLO and “Israel”. The Declaration of Principles involved two sections: Firstly, the agreement on mutual recognition. Secondly, setting a timetable for negotiations. On 13th September 1993, the Oslo Accords were signed at a White House ceremony attended by PLO representative Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres with Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev as witnesses. In a historic gesture the two men Arafat and Rabin shook hands in the presence of U.S. President Bill Clinton who commented "A peace of the brave is within our reach" (Bickerton, 2009). The Oslo Accords comprised many agreements, starting with

the 1993 Declaration of Principles and Oslo II in 1995 that tackling the issue of the West Bank and Gaza. Then, the last agreement was the Wye River Memorandum in 1998 (Golan, 2013). Most prominent promises of the Oslo agreement were: the ending of “Israeli” rule over the West Bank and Gaza; signing the parties an agreement stipulating the withdrawal of “Israel” military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho; Palestinian Authority would take over health, education, tourism social, welfare and direct taxation sectors; and the negotiation on the final status, including settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem that would start within five years (Bickerton, 2009).

The results of the Oslo Accords were very shameful because they recognized neither the Palestinians as a state nor their right of self-determination as well as did not discuss the fundamental issues involving settlements, Jerusalem issue, and Palestinian refugees (Bickerton, 2009). Furthermore, the results of Accords led the Palestinians to lose confidence in their negotiators and political leaders. Consequently, the popularity of Islamist groups such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Ezzeddeen al-Qassam Brigade (EQB) increased and gained support from the Palestinian society (Baukhol, 2015). Hamas is an Islamic Resistance Movement, which was formed in 1987, by Ahmed Yassin. The Movement calls for establishing an independent Islamic Palestinian state instead of “Israel” and it refuses all agreements made between the PLO and “Israel”. Ezzeddeen al-Qassam Brigade is a military wing of Hamas which was established in the 1990s. It conducted many attacks against “Israel” since its establishment. Moreover, Palestinian Islamic Jihad was established during the 1970s in Gaza Strip by militant Palestinian to create an independent Islamic state. It rejects to participate in the Palestinian Authority's political process (Casey-Maslen, 2014).

2.8. Camp David Summit

For tackling the final status issues, U.S. president Bill Clinton invited President Arafat and Prime Minister Barak to hold a summit in Camp David in July 2000. Barak put some limitations in this summit involving: East Jerusalem should remain under “Israeli” control; “Israel” is not responsible for creating the refugee problem; “Israel” would annex settlements in the West Bank; and “Israel” would maintain its borders as after 1967. On the other side, depending on UN Security Council resolution 242 and the Oslo Declaration of Principles, the Palestinians called for an Israeli totally withdrawal from West Bank and Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem as well as recognition of an independent state in those areas (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014).

Although Barak offered withdrawal from the West Bank, the lack of agreement between the parties on the refugees' problem and East Jerusalem issue as well as the Israeli's and American's abusive conditionalities led to failure reaching a peace agreement. Two months after the summit failure, the second Palestinian uprising broke out (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014).

2.9. The Second (al-Aqsa)Intifada

After the collapse of Camp David, the Palestinians returned to the resistance for many reasons, including the anger of Palestinians from their Authority because of the spread corruptions in its ranks, the increasing of building settlement, Israel's attempt to Judaize Jerusalem, and the fatigue of the Palestinians from the negotiation outcomes. The al-Aqsa Intifada exactly started on 28th September 2000, when Ariel Sharon, leader of the Likud Party, visited al-Aqsa Mosque in a provocative way. al-Aqsa Intifada continued to 2005 which resulted in killing of 4,242 Palestinians, including 270 women and 793 children while the number of wounded reached 46,068 and the number of Palestinians detainees reached 9,200 (Saleh, 2017).

Hamas was known for its active role during the Intifada. It carried out operations which terrified the “Israeli's” security, including 135 self-immolation operations that carried out by Hamas, the PIJ, and EQB, leading to the killing of 1,513 Israelis and injuring 3,380. The number of AL-Qassam Brigades dead was reached 604 during the Intifada including important leaders of Hamas such as Jamal Salim and Jamal Mansur on 31st July 2001, Isma'il Abu Shanab on 21st August 2003, and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin on 22nd March 2004 (Saleh, 2017) .

After Arafat's death in November 2004, Mahmoud Abbas was elected in January 2005, as the new president of Palestine. Abbas considered the armed Intifada as more damaging to the Palestinians than the Israelis, for that reason, he called for ending it and he also called for opening new peace negotiations. Abbas indicates that the Palestinians could not achieve an independent state without negotiating with “Israel” through U.S. mediator. Then, the end of the intifada was declared by Mahmoud Abbas in 2005 (Milton-Edwards, 2009).

3. The “Israeli” Wars on Gaza

Over the past eleven years, the Zionist entity has fought three wars on Gaza Strip, which it has an area of 360 square kilometers.

3.1. Gaza War 2008-09

The Gaza war is known as the battle of al-furqan by Hamas and Operation Cast Lead by “Israel”. It was a military operation launched by the Israeli army on Gaza Strip between 2008- 09.

As a reaction to the rocket fire by Palestinian militants after the expiration of a six-month ceasefire on December 19, “Israel” launched a military operation against militant Hamas in Gaza Strip on 27th December 2008, through attacking Hamas's weapons caches

and military installations. On 3rd January 2009, “Israel” started a ground attack on Gaza by sending tanks and thousands of troops over the northern border of Gaza to disrupt Palestinian rocket launching sites. Despite the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1860 on 8th January, which provided for a cease-fire, the conflict continued until 17th January. On the same day, “Israel” announced its withdrawal and cease-fire, followed by Hamas the next day (Zanoti et al., 2009).

Israel's three-week military offensive in Gaza Strip resulted: 1,440 Palestinians were killed; the number of injuries reached 5,380; displaced an unknown number of Palestinians. On the "Israeli" side, 4 Israeli civilians were killed and about 183 were injured by fired Hamas militants in Gaza; and 9 Israeli soldiers were killed and approximately 340 were injured (Zanoti et al., 2009).

3.2. Gaza War 2012

On 14th November 2012, after Hamas fired rockets at the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) as a response for the killing of Ahmed al-Jaabari, the commander of Hamas' Gaza military wing, IDF launched Operation Pillar of Cloud on Gaza Strip. The Israelis claimed that the reasons behind their attack were due to an attack by Gaza militants on “Israeli” military patrol vehicle and their launching more than one hundred rockets at “Israel”, while the Palestinians blamed the “Israeli” government for increasing violence and Israeli attacks on Gaza civilians days before the operation. Also, the Palestinians justified that the reason for their rocket attacks on “Israel” was because of the blockade on Gaza strip, and occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem (Casey-Maslen, 2014).

During the operation, “Israel” attacked approximately 1,500 sites in Gaza strip including weapon stores, governmental institutions, and rocket launch-pads. On the other side, in an operation known as *hijarat sijil*, al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad launched rocket attacks on Israeli cities, firing 1,456 rockets into “Israel”. After days of

negotiation between Egypt and U.S, a ceasefire was announced on 21st November between Hamas and “Israel”. The results of the war were as follows: 133 Palestinians were killed, including 79 combatants and 53 civilians, while the number of wounded reached 840. For Israelis, 6 were killed and 240 wounded (Casey-Maslen, 2014).

3.3. Gaza War 2014

After several incidents including Brother's keeper Operation (kidnapping of three Israeli settlers on 12th June 2014, whom “Israel” claimed that Hamas was the only responsible for the incident) as well as kidnapping and murder the Palestinian child Mohammed Abu Khudair by Israelis on 2nd July 2014, there was mutual shelling between Hamas and “Israel”. Hamas launched thirty-one rockets and two mortar between 15 and 28th June, while “Israel” responded with airstrikes on 29th June. From 1st to 6th June Hamas increased its rockets attacks, launching 169 rockets and mortar from Gaza. On 4th July, Hamas has received a warning from “Israel” that if rocket attacks continue, it would be followed by a huge military offensive. On 5th July, Osama Hamdan, a Hamas official, proclaimed that Hamas would not stop its rockets without eliminating the blockade on Gaza. On 8th July 2014, Operation Protective Edge officially began with mutual air strikes (Bellal, 2015).

On 16th July, after “Israel” rejected a ten-year armistice by Hamas and Islamic Jihad conditional on the release of prisoners and the lifting of the blockade on Gaza Strip, “Israel” launched a ground attack to destroy the tunnels crossing the Gaza-“Israeli” border while Hamas responded with many air raids at “Israel”. On 5th August, Egyptian-brokered cease-fire was declared, but it infringement on 19th August when Hamas fired twenty-nine rockets at “Israel” as a response on its airstrikes that killed nine Palestinians in Gaza. The following days, “Israel” killed three Hamas leaders while Hamas launched 1,000 rockets

and mortar at “Israel”.The two parties agreed on a new ceasefire on 26th August (Bellal, 2015).

As a result of 'Operation Protective Edge', Israel fired 4,760 air strikes in Gaza, while 3,488 rockets were launched into “Israel” from Gaza. The operation resulted: over 2,100 Palestinian were killed, including 1500 civilian, 538 children; left 108,000 Palestinian homeless; 520,000 Palestinians were displaced, and 96,000 houses were completely destroyed. On the other side, Palestinian attacks resulted in, killing 74 Israelis including 6 civilians and between 5,000 - 8.000 Israeli citizens temporarily were fled their homes (Bellal, 2015).

3.4. The Blockade of Gaza

2017 was the tenth year of the blockade on Gaza Strip by “Israel”. The blockade was imposed by “Israel” on Gaza Strip following the success of Hamas in the Palestinian elections in 2006 and the conflict between Fatah – the largest PLO’s group – and Hamas which led to their division in 2007. Then, after refusing Hamas to recognize “Israel” and respect all previous agreements between “Israel” and the Palestine Authority (PA) as well as its takeover of Gaza, “Israel” tightened the blockade on Gaza in the mid- 2007 through its control of all border crossings by land, air, and sea. Israel's control of Gaza characterized by preventing the export of Gaza goods to the outside world and restricting the exit and the entry of people except for emergency illnesses and prominent businessmen. On the other side, Egypt participated in an indirect way in the blockade through its prevention of all regular movement of goods at Rafah crossing and the limitation of people movement. In mid-2017 the PA in the West Bank imposed sanctions to force Hamas to reach a reconciliation agreement (Ferrer, 2018).

The consequences of the blockade and the sanctions imposed by Fatah and “Israel” on Gaza were catastrophic. As reported in November 2017, public services and the

infrastructure were in a critical situation: more than 95 percent of the water in Gaza was polluted ; electricity deficit reached 63% ; the unemployment in Gaza reached 44% ; make a number of schools, hospitals and businesses work part-time ; the PA reduced the salaries of about 50,000 servants in Gaza; more than 6,000 employees are forced to retire early; and President Abbas imposed additional restrictions on the medical border crossings for Gazans (Ferrer, 2018).

4. The Most Important Events that Shook Palestinian Territories in 2018

Despite the absence of a direct and full-scale war between Palestinians and Zionist occupation in 2018, Palestinians have lived deadly violence year and illegal settlement expansion as well as home demolition by “Israel”. During 2018, approximately 289 Palestinians were killed including 56 children, while thousands of others were wounded. In addition, as a report by the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s Centre for Studies and Documentation stated that at least 538 housing units were destroyed in West Bank which resulted in 1,300 Palestinians lost their homes (Aljazeera, 2018).

4.1. The Assassination of Ahmed Jarrar

Ahmed Jarrar (a member of the Hamas resistance) was assassinated on 6th February 2018. After a month-long chase by “Israeli” forces for an accusation of murdering a Jewish settler in Nablus, Ahmed Jarar was killed at the age of 22 in an exchange of fire from his hideout in the village of Yamun. His corpse was taken by “Israel” troops, who have a policy of confiscation corpses –a practice convicted by international law. The chase of Ahmed Jarrar resulted in destroying three homes belonging to the Jarrar family and killed two Palestinians, one of them was Jarrar's cousin Ahmad Ismail Jarrar (Aljazeera, 2018).

4.2. Gaza's Great March of Return Protests

On Friday, 30th March 2018, Palestinians held a weekly demonstration in the eastern Gaza Strip called 'Great March of Return protests', in which Palestinian demonstrators demanded for the refugees right to return home under UN Resolution 194 in addition to end “Israeli” blockade. As health officials in Gaza reported that at least 220 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces while the number of wounded reached more than 18,000 in this demonstration (Aljazeera, 2018).

Conclusion

Following the declaration of the establishment of “Israel” State, Palestinians have engaged in an ongoing conflict against “Israel”, beginning with 1948 war which declared by the Arabs states against “Israel” to establish an independent Palestine state and to save Arab property. The war resulted in the occupation of 77% of the Palestinian territories. Then, “Israel” launched an attack against Arabs state in 1967 which led later to destroy the Arab armed forces and occupied the rest Palestinian territories. Thus, the two wars (1948 and 1967) resulted in the creation of refugees problem, when a huge number of Palestinians refuged to neighboring countries. Over time, the conflict led to the first Intifada in 1987– Palestinian uprising against “Israeli” occupation—that aimed at ending the occupation. After the first intifada, many efforts were made by the United States to find a solution, that could lead to the establishment of the Madrid conference in 1991 and the Oslo Accords in 1993, the latter ended the First Intifada. After that, the delay of the implementation of Oslo Accords agreements and the collapse of Camp David summit led to sparking the second Intifada in 2000. Throughout the last eleven years, “Israel” has fought three wars on Gaza Strip (war 2008-09, war 2012 and war 2014) as well as it has imposed a blockade on Gaza Strip since Hamas won the elections in 2006. Finally, The year 2018 witnessed bloody events for the Palestinian people such the assassination of Ahmed Jarrar and Gaza's great march of return protests.

**Chapter Three: The Impact of
American Policy on the Palestinian-
Israeli Conflict From 2001 to 2018**

Introduction

The strategy of U.S. foreign policy that pursued by American leaders towards the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict varies from one period to another and from one president to another, where it is based on a range of interests. In this chapter, we will discuss the US relationship with “Israel” and its main national interests in the conflict. Then we will focus on the most important strategies and behaviors adopted by the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations from 2001 to 2018 and their impact on the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict.

1. The US – “Israel” Close Relation

Following Harry Truman’s decision against the advice of the State Department, the United States was the first country to recognize “Israel” as an independent state. Since that “Israel” has gained political support from the United States and the relationship between them became stronger than it was (Gideon, 2013). Like all alliances, the relationship between “Israel” and the United States is a subject to change depending on grand interests. The reasons beyond American support for “Israel” refer to (1) “Israel's” military power and its credibility as a regional partner (2) “Israel's” hostility to the Arab countries, which have been Soviet ally and who still pose a menace to oil supplies, (3) “Israel's” political success makes it a desirable American partner (Sheffer, 1997).

Oftentimes the U.S. Foreign policy towards the Middle East, particularly Palestine has been influenced by “Israel”. There are three main reasons that explained the continuity of “Israeli” influence: First, the USA public opinion about “Israel”, who believe that after the Jewish population suffering in Europe during WWII from genocide, they merited to have a state and the Americans should protect them. Second, the significance of “Israel” geostrategic especially during the Cold War, “Israel” was considered a significant strategic ally of the United States, especially since the Soviet Union supported the neighboring countries of Palestine. Third, the “Israeli” lobby, the Jewish electorate and their influence,

the “Israeli” lobby affect U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East in general and Palestine in particular by influencing U.S. policymakers and the lobby role to shape the American public opinion closer to pro-Israeli views (Karakoulaki, 2013).

1.1. The Military Aid to “Israel”

Throughout the history of American military aid to “Israel”, three important stages can be distinct. The First stage was when the U.S. accepted to sell weapons to “Israel” for the first time. The second stage was when the U.S. supplied military loans to “Israel”. The third stage, under the umbrella of American foreign aid to “Israel”, the U.S. supplies military grants. Moreover, American gave other concrete types of aid, including economic assistance and loan guarantees. Examples of some military aid to “Israel” throughout the history: In 1968, the Johnson administration formally accepted to provide “Israel” with 50 F-4 Phantom aircraft. Then, During 1972-73, “Israel” obtained additional tanks, artillery tubes, missiles, and electronic equipment from the U.S. In addition, in the 1990s the U.S. supplied “Israel” with Harpoon anti-ship missiles and Joint Direct Ammunition Bombs for the “Israel” Air Force. Moreover, In August 2007, the Bush Administration accepted to increase U.S. military aid to “Israel” to an average of \$3 billion per year over the following decade. Furthermore, In 2008, “Israel” started the production of Arrow III, a top tier system designed to intercept advanced missiles with nuclear-tipped warheads, and the US accepted to co-fund it (Gideon, 2013).

2. US National Interests in the Conflict

The United States has many national interests that have made it involved in the complex conflict between Palestine and “Israel”, where it has played the role of "honest broker" and "best friend of “Israel””. The fundamental interests of the US in this conflict are: access to Arab energy reserves, oil, and Israel's security (Ousdal, 2013). In the same

context Telhami (2004) stated that peace between the Israelis and the Arabs, including the Palestinians, is an interest of the US because the struggle " between Israel and the Arabs makes it difficult to manage the dual American objectives in the region: maintaining the flow of oil to the West at reasonable prices and supporting the security and well-being of the state of Israel" (p.55).

Miller argues that there is no American president can disregard the domestic policy in regards to the conflict. Also, each politician will make great efforts in order not to provoke the "Israeli" lobby (as cited in Ousdal, 2013). There is another type of interest related to the conflict and it is found in the domestic political system in the US, during the election time, the US focuses on the most political issues that favour "Israel" and its interest to gain the political support domestically(Ousdal, 2013).

The United States has adopted a peaceful resolution of the conflict, which considered it as the most appropriate solution to preserve US interests. The peace process between Palestine and "Israel" was expressed to some extent by all American administrations. Commitment to "Israel" is a key interest in the region as a strategic asset, though in the early decades of the conflict, commitment to "Israel" was sometimes a conflicting issue for the United States because of its interest in maintaining good relations with the Arab states (Ousdal, 2013).

3. The Impact of American Foreign Policy on the Palestinian–"Israeli" Conflict (From 2001to 2018)

The American foreign policy towards the Palestinian–"Israeli" Conflict changed from one administration to another. We will focus on three administrations, George W. Bush, Barak Obama, and Donald Trump.

3.1.The First Bush Administration

The Bush's administration witnessed various tactics and behaviors towards the conflict through different stages.

3.1.1. From the Inauguration to 9/11 Attacks

After George W. Bush took office in January 2001, he decided not to pursue Clinton's activist policy towards the Arab-“Israeli” conflict, particularly Palestine for many reasons. Firstly, Bush noted the relatively meager results that Clinton had achieved in comparison to his great efforts .So, Bush chose not to pursue the same way. Secondly, Bush's unwillingness to risk his political capital, so he wanted to save it through political initiatives such as tax cuts and an ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) program. Therefore, Bush's administration during the first eight months of his assumption of authority was far away from the Palestinian – “Israeli” conflict, this is evident when Dennis Ross - the US special mediator in the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict- resigned in January 2001 and has not been replaced. Nevertheless, distancing Bush's administration from the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict does not mean the administration had distanced itself from “Israel”. Conversely, Bush soon developed a close relationship with “Israeli” Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who was invited to visit the White House in mid-March 2001 (Freedman, 2012).

During his visit, Colin Powell – the new American secretary of state – gave a significant speech where he supported the pro-Israeli AIPAC lobbying organization. In his speech, he clarified Israel’s position that the opening of peace talks should be the end of violence as well as he assured that the U.S would help a peace agreement but not impose it (Freedman, 2012). Colin Powell proclaimed: “the US stands ready to assist, not insist. Peace arrived at voluntarily by the partners themselves is likely to prove more robust [...] then a peace widely viewed as developed by others, or worse yet, imposed.” (Freedman, 2012, p.38)

In a meeting a few days later, Bush again reassured Sharon that the US would facilitate the peace process. On the other side, Sharon has insisted Bush not to invite Arafat to the White House until he publicly demands an end to the violence, a request agreed by about three hundred members of Congress, also they requested Bush to close the PLO's office in Washington (Freedman, 2012).

Moreover, according to Freedman (2012) this period witnessed the proposal of a peace process ,this came following the publication of the Mitchell Report in May. The report included numbers of recommendation for ending the Palestinian –“Israeli” conflict. The parties did not abide by the proposed recommendations of the peace process. Thus , after the Bush administration witnessed failure to revive the Palestinian-“Israeli” peace process, it concluded that its original policy of stopping the conflict was the right policy. Until 9/11 the Bush administration has distanced itself from the conflict, but all that would change after 9/11. So, “from his inauguration until 9/11, George W. Bush was generally supportive of Israel while distancing his administration from the Arab-Israeli conflict”(p.37).

3.1.2. From 9/11 to June 2002

A turning point for the Bush administration was after al Qaeda attacks on 11th September 2001,where approximately 3000 people were killed. Bush commenced war against the Taliban in Afghanistan by his disgraceful words to the leaders of the world when he stated that they would now either be "with us or against us". 9/11 attacks affected all of U.S. foreign policy, including its policy towards Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict. Immediately after attacks, the Bush administration discussed different strategies including Colin L. Powell strategy who argued it was necessary to find a solution to the Palestinian-

Israeli conflict, which considered the main cause of terrorism as well as he wanted to gain Arab and Muslim partners to fight terrorism (Quandt, 2005).

On 10th November 2001, President George W. Bush delivered a speech at the United Nations proposing a two-state solution that supported the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state alongside with “Israel” (Mohamad, 2007). Bush said: “We are working for the day when two states—Israel and Palestine— live peacefully together within secure and recognized boundaries.” (Freedman, 2012, p.39). The Palestinian Authority welcomed the proposal despite Bush's critical for it, and he called for the ouster of Arafat and the election of a new leader (Mohamad, 2007).

On 24th June 2002, President Bush delivered his significant speech, where he identified procedures that must be considered in order to achieve the two-states vision within three years. He proclaimed:

[...] when the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the United States of America [will] support the creation of a Palestinian state whose borders and certain aspects of sovereignty will be provisional until resolved as part of a final settlement in the Middle East [...] Israel also has a large stake in the success of a democratic Palestine. Permanent occupation threatens Israel’s identity and democracy [...] So I challenge Israel to take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state [...] Ultimately, Israelis and Palestinians must address the core issues that divide them if there is to be a real peace, resolving all claims and ending the conflict between them. (Mohamad, 2007,p.106)

Moreover, in the same speech, he urged the Palestinian people to elect new leaders. he stated:

I call on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror. I call upon them to build a practicing democracy, based on tolerance and liberty. If the Palestinian people actively pursue these goals, America and the world will actively support their efforts. If the Palestinian people meet these goals, they will be able to reach an agreement with Israel and Egypt and Jordan on security and other arrangements for independence. (Freedman, 2012, p.43-44)

Bush linked building Palestinian democracy and freedom with electing new leaders .

3.1.3. The Road Map to Peace

On 30th April 2003, after Sharon's re-election in January, the Quartet comprised of the UN, EU, US, and Russia unveiled the Road Map formula to support the two-states plan for resolving the “Israeli”-Palestinian conflict. Bush supported the Quartet Road Map formula, where his vision of two states and the Road Map formula is based on agreements formulated at the Madrid Conference in 1991 and the Oslo Accords (Mohamad, 2007). The Road Map formula composed of three phases. The first phase included the end of violence between the two parties of the conflict, building Palestinian institutions, repair of PA, and freezing the activity of “Israeli” settlements. The second phase dealt with the establishment of a Palestinian state and the creation of constitution by 2003. The third phase identified the negotiations over a permanent status agreement, including the borders, refugees and international recognition of both states (Čurdová, 2017).

Although the Road Map was a new turning point in US policy in the region, it failed to exert US pressure on “Israel” to withdraw its troops from the occupied Palestinian territories. The failure of the Road Map was due to a lack of detail on final status issues such as the future of Jerusalem, the refugees, and the settlements (Mohamad, 2007).

3.2. The Second Bush Administration

The second Bush administration witnessed a repeat of the failure of the peace process, which called for resolving the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict. It also witnessed the administration's indignant reactions to some events that showed the contradiction in its principles.

3.2.1. Arafat Dies and Hamas Wins Election

After Arafat's death on 11th November 2004, and Bush's re-election victory, there have been several changes regarding US policy in the Middle East. First, replacing Colin Powell with Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State, who has made US policy more coherent. Second, the US plan for the democratization of the Palestinian Authority appears to have been achieved through democratic elections in the PA, where Mahmoud Abbas was elected with 60 percent of the votes, what made Abbas a favorite candidate for the United States was his systematic condemnation of terrorism as hostile to Palestinian interests (Freedman, 2012). Abbas made some changes, including elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to establish more democracy. At the time Hamas was an organized movement and many Palestinians were tired of corruption by Fateh, which was a part of PLO. So, Hamas won 74 out of 132 seats in January 2006 (Ousdal, 2013).

Mohamad (2007) pointed out that Hamas's victory formed a resentful reaction by the Bush administration, this reaction led to deviation from the democratic measures that it continued to defend. Also, he stated: "Bush's promotion of democracy in the Palestinian territories contradicted his rejection of the outcomes of the Palestinian electoral choices" (p.112). So, the Bush Administration's policy towards Hamas clarifies an essential continuity to the legacy of the US – the US repeated the same mistakes during the 1991 Algerian elections when it supported the European countries against the Islamists who won

the elections . The US has justified its opposition to Hamas that the Islamists are "anti-democratic in orientation" (Mohamad, 2007).

Moreover, Mohamad (2007) mentioned that Hamas's victory entailed the pressure of pro-Israel lobbyists and many local politicians on the bush administration, which led it to boycott the new PA government as well as considering Hamas as a terrorist organization. In addition, Congress drafted new legislation that would tighten restrictions on US contacts and aid' with the new Hamas government. Also, the administration sent Secretary Rice to the area in order to discourage Arab states from supplying the Hamas government with the aid, only if it meets the US and Israeli demands “ Bush’s insistence that Hamas accept these conditions ‘or suffer a cut off’ of aid to the Palestinians, which is reflective of the strength of pro-Israeli lobbyists” (Mohamad, 2007,p.113).

Finally, the majority of the American politicians considered that the main reason behind Hamas's success was due to the failure of the old guard of the PA. But in fact, several reasons such as the continuation of Israel’s military occupation, the generation of violence and, extremism, and the failure of the Road Map formula have been a powerful contributors, all these reasons were ignored by US policymakers (Mohamad, 2007).

3.2.2. The Annapolis Conference

The end of 2007 was the last attempt by the Bush administration to revive the Palestinian-“Israeli” peace process. This attempt occurred on 27th November 2007 in Annapolis, when Bush held an international conference in the presence of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. Both parties reached a "joint understanding" in which they agreed to start bilateral negotiations. This joint understanding requires the parties commit to continue implementing the Road Map for a two-states solution until a peace treaty is concluded by the end of 2008. The United States

has pledged to monitor both parties during their implementation of the Road Map peace plan . Despite the Palestinians and the Israelis agreed on a joint statement about the future negotiations, the permanent status and progress were not fulfilled. So, the last attempt to revive the peace process was failed (Migdalovitz, 2007).

To sum up, we can say that Bush's policy has often been bias to “Israel”, and all his projects do not give the Palestinians their most basic rights. Except some of his speeches, which shows that he wants to find a solution to the Palestinian issue, Bush's policy has been amazingly supportive of the “Israeli” government and all the policies he has taken were in line with Israel's interests. In the same context, Quandt (2005) said: "It was as if Bush was telling Sharon that the United States would back him however he chose to deal with the Palestinians"(p.408).

Bush's speech in 2002 and his emphasis on a two-states solution includes impossible conditions to establish a Palestinian state, such as demanding reform of the Palestinian Authority and its institutions and changing leadership, including Yasser Arafat. So, the American vision agreed with “Israeli” interests, as well as reflected the influence the Israel lobby in the US administration. Furthermore, the failure to implement the Road Map considered as a violation of the Bush administration's promises to Palestine. Malley stated: "The failure of the plans to provide details concerning the final status issues, including the future of Jerusalem, the refugees, the settlements and a border” (as cited in Mohamad, 2015, p.80).So, all the Palestinians rights were ignored by Bush administration .

Hamas's victory election 2006 illustrated the contradiction of Bush administration which always supported the exercising of democracy. Herzog claimed that after the Hamas victory, the Bush administration contributed to the destabilization of the Palestinian Authority .He said, “the Bush Administration has contributed, after Hamas's electoral

victory, into destabilizing the PA and in penalizing the Palestinians for choosing leaders that were not acceptable for the U.S. and Israel” (as cited in Mohamad, 2015, p.86).

Finally, the US administration was unable to pressure Prime Minister Olmert to implement the Annapolis conference. On the contrary, “Israel” launched aggression attacks against Gaza in 2008-09.

3.3. The First Obama Administration

Obama's election as President of the United States in 2009, received a global enthusiasm including Arab and Islamic countries because his campaign was under the banner of change. When Obama took office, he promised to follow a new approach to U.S. foreign policy different from previous administrations and pledged to look at Middle East issues, including the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict. (Kurtzer, Lasensky, Quandt, Spiegel & Telhami, 2013).

3.3.1. The Cairo Speech

President Barack Obama delivered an important speech on 4th June 2009, in Cairo, Egypt on U.S. policy towards Muslims world and the Middle East, also the Palestinian issue was strongly present in his speech. The speech was preceded by strong indications that aimed at easing tensions between the United States and the Muslim world within eight years of the Bush administration . In his speech, Obama clarified his vision for a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, expressing his desire to establish an independent Palestinian state living alongside “Israel” as well as expressing his ambition to end the occupation (Shabaneh, 2015). Obama said :

[...] the only resolution is for the aspirations of both sides to be met through two states, where Israelis and Palestinians each live in peace and security. That is in Israel's interest, Palestine's interest, America's interest, and the world's interest. That

is why I intend to personally pursue this outcome with all the patience that the task requires. The obligations that the parties have agreed to under the Road Map are clear. For peace to come, it is time for them – and all of us – to live up to our responsibilities [...] ("Text: Obama's Speech in Cairo", 2009, para.34-35)

Furthermore, Obama opposition's to "Israel" building settlements was clear. He followed his speech by declaring a policy to request that all "Israel" settlements activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem should freeze (Editors, 2012). Obama stated: "The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop" ("Text: Obama's Speech in Cairo", 2009, para.38). However, Obama has taken no legal, economic or political measures to make "Israel" change its behavior towards Palestine territories, as the previous administration did when they used the money as leverage to force "Israel" to change its behavior on the settlements (Shabaneh, 2015).

3.3.2. The Settlement Moratorium

In 2009, the Obama administration sought to revive the peace process between the conflicting parties by asking "Israel" moratorium settlement activity in the Palestinian territories. For the first time "Israel" rejected Obama's demand. Then, in November 2009, the situation changed when Netanyahu agreed on a temporary moratorium to settlement activity for 10 months in the West Bank. However, in March 2010 during the US Vice President Joe Biden's visit, the "Israeli" Interior Ministry announced approval for the construction of 1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem. Biden claimed that the move undermines the trust required between them and "Israel", this caused the rising of tension in the U.S.-"Israeli" relationship. In July 2010, Netanyahu contacted Obama to convince

him that “Israel” was serious about achieving peace, where Obama accepted his commitment. Then, Obama sent invitations to the conflicting parties calling them for peace negotiations. The invitation was accepted by the two parties (Ousdal, 2013). However, during the negotiation Abbas and Netanyahu did not accept the conditions of each other, the Palestinians’ right of return and the recognition of “Israel” as a Jewish state. When the settlement moratorium expired, Abbas pulls out of negotiations. So, the direct peace talks came to a halt (Editors, 2012).

3.3.3. The UN Recognition and The USA’s Stance

Obama's speeches appear that they are usually determined to find a solution to the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict, they also appear that they will not give in to “Israel's” demands and wishes. Yet, despite Obama's support and his seemingly positive messages, the USA's stance did not change from its predecessors. Obama opposed Mahmoud Abbas when he decided to demand that the United Nations recognize Palestine, also he tried to persuade him not to seek recognition, which became more clear when the US vetoed the Palestinian bid in the Security Council. Obama justified his opposition that the peace talks between the two parties are the best solution to solve the conflict. Furthermore, immediately after UNESCO's recognition of Palestine, Congress declared that they would stop funding the organization (Karakoulaki, 2013).

By September 2012, Palestine decided to submit an appeal to the General Assembly of the United Nations to upgrade in status from “observer entity” to “non - member observer state”. On 27th November, the appeal was officially announced, and will be put to a vote in the General Assembly on 29th November (International Business Publication, 2017). Where 138 member states voted in favor, 9 including the United States and Israel voted against, and 41 abstained members, the PA was given a “non - member observer”. So, The United States again refused to recognize the State of Palestine as a non-member

observer state, once again justifying that the peace talks are the most appropriate solution (Karakoulaki, 2013).

The Obama administration's stance about the UN recognition of Palestine was affected by the U S election period. The pre-election period played an important role in the president decisions because the majority of the American Jewish populations centered in States that ordinarily determined the electoral results. Therefore, the USA's stance was in line with Israeli interests (Karakoulaki, 2013).

3.4. The Second Obama Administration

Obama's second term has not achieved success in the peace process between Palestine and “Israel”. Some argue that Obama wanted to withdraw or perhaps realize the limits of the United States in dealing with the conflict. In July 2013, new talks began with US mediators to discuss key issues and the main aim of the talks was to reach a two-states peace agreement. As a principle of the deal to enter into new peace negotiations, “Israel” released Palestinian prisoners, which infuriating Israelis. During the announcement of the release of Palestinian prisoners, it was also announced that some 1,200 new settlements would be approved for building, this has angered the Palestinians and has been seen as trying to sabotage the new peace efforts. So, like other peace negotiations, even the latter did not succeed in achieving peace between the two parties (Ousdal, 2012) .

We may come to a conclusion that during his term, President Obama offered nothing more than to give “Israel” more time to impose the bitter reality on the Palestinian territory. Therefore, the United States is an ally to the “Israeli” occupation against the Palestinian people. Obama's speech in Cairo at first glance seems to change what the previous administrations could not change , but reality has shown the opposite. Obama has made no effort to implement his promises and he resorts to rhetoric instead of finding a

solution to the conflict. The contrast between Obama's speeches and the implementation of his strategies has been noticed by American national security advisors: Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, they said, "He makes dramatic speeches," but "it never translated into a process in which good ideas become strategies"(as cited in Shabaneh, 2015, p.3).

Moreover, the Obama administration has failed to pressure "Israel" to stop building settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, instead the Obama administration has surrendered to Israel's demand. In the same context, Shabaneh (2015) said: "The Obama administration was unable to stand behind its own policy commitments on the question of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem"(p.2).

Finally, when the Palestinians take serious steps through the Security Council, America uses the right of rejection, this became obvious when the US vetoed the Palestinian bid in the Security Council. So, Obama's policy on the Palestinian-"Israeli" conflict has assured that the US position is firm towards "Israel" as the strongest ally of the United States.

3.5. The Trump Administration

Instantly after the inauguration President Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States in January 2017, "Israel" announced the construction of at least 6,000 settlements in the Palestinian territories, where "Israel" has taken the controversial Trump language towards the Islamic and Arab world as a green light for their decision (Ahmad, Balogun, Mohamed & Salleh, 2017).

Upon 50 days in office, Trump insisted that it was time for a peace deal between Palestine and Israel to achieve the peace they deserve. In addition, he noted, that the US will not oblige any solution on both conflicting parties, nor can one side impose an

agreement on the other. In mid-February 2017, during a meeting with “Israeli” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, Trump supported a one- or two-states solution to resolve the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict. Trump said: "I'm looking at two-state and one-state and I like the one that both parties like" he continued expressing his impression "I'm very happy with the one that both parties like. I can live with either one" (Ahmad, Balogun, Mohamed & Salleh, 2017, p.1715).

3.5.1. The Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s Capital

On December 6, 2017 by twitter text U.S. President Donald Trump announced:

I have determined that it is time to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. I am also directing the State Department to begin preparation to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem[...] At my direction, the United States finally and officially recognized Jerusalem as the true capital of Israel. Today we follow through on this recognition and open our embassy in the historic and sacred land of Jerusalem. (Balfour, 2019, p.329)

Trump's official recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of “Israel” revealed indifference to Arab and Islamic reactions, both governmental and popular. Trump angered most Arab and Islamic peoples in Palestine, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and most other Arab countries as well as Turkey and Pakistan (Hamdi, 2018). According to Elgindy (2017) Trump's decision of recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, as a prelude to transfer the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, could mean the end of US efforts to reach a peace deal between the Palestinians and Israelis. Moreover, Trump's recognition overturns the policy of the previous US administrations as well as undermines the international standards on which the peace process is based for decades. The Palestinian leadership

convicted this act, which it stated that the United States effectively is excluded from acting as a peace broker.

On 14 May 2018, Trump announced the opening of the new embassy of the US in Jerusalem. After his announcement, many countries even US allies including Germany, Italy, Britain, and France criticized trump's announcement (Aswar, 2018).

To sum up, we conclude that Trump's policy once again confirmed the United States' bias to "Israel". Since his coming to power, more settlements have been built on Palestinian territories. In addition, his declaration to support a one- or two-states solution to resolve the conflict and his seeking to the peace process in a meeting with Netanyahu, quickly dissolved and destroyed by his reckless decision known as the "deal of the century" in which he declared that Jerusalem is capital of "Israel". This resolution aims at eliminating the peace process and also to completely eliminate the Palestinian issue. In the same context Hamdi (2018) said : "the deal of the century, aims at the complete elimination of the Palestinian cause and the declaration of "Israel's" control over all the Islamic sacred sites in the West Bank in return for the declaration of a contiguous Palestinian state" (p.168).

Conclusion

To conclude, the Bush, Obama, and Trump's administration dealt with the Palestinian issue from the viewpoint of its managing rather than finding a solution, where we find all the peace process put forward by them do not give the Palestinians their right to self-determination. In addition, in all cases, the administrations aim at achieving US interests primarily, which is clearly crystallized by the absolute bias to "Israel" in the administrations' policies towards the conflict.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The United States foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict varied through its successive administrations to achieve its interests. However, the last three United States administration's foreign policy has a great impact on this conflict. This study aimed to investigate the US political strategies and practices of the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations from 2001 to 2018 and their impact on the conflict. To conduct this research a descriptive-analytical method is adopted. So, Since our dissertation discussed the U.S. foreign policy towards the conflict between 2001 and 2018, we chose to tackle the factors that shaped America's foreign policy, which was divided into two parts, governmental and non-governmental factors. Then, we dealt with the most important spots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. After that, we discussed how U.S. foreign policy affected the conflict by highlighting three specific U.S. administrations (Bush, Obama, and Trump) as well as we looked for the results of their strategies and political practices.

The factors that shape foreign policy making in America are divided into two. Governmental factors containing the executive and the legislative branches that are considered the main powers of policymaking, it also contains the different departments and agencies, including the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense. Through the multiple activity and responsibility of each one, they contribute significantly to making U.S. foreign policy. On the other side, non-governmental factors have a fundamental role in shaping U.S. foreign policy, we find that the most powerful factor, which is in relation with the policy-making is the Israel lobby that works to lobby the U.S. foreign policy in favor of its goals and interests. The other non-governmental factors are public opinion and media which have a valuable role in influencing foreign political decisions. So, we conclude that governmental factors in company with non-governmental ones participate in shaping U.S. foreign policy.

The history of the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict is full of decisive events and spots. The 1948 war was the first crucial spots in the history of the conflict. After the declaration of “Israel” State in 1948, the Arabs immediately declared war against “Israel” to establish an independent Palestinian state that ended with the occupation of most the Palestinian territories. The following spot was the 1967 war, where “Israel” occupied the rest of Palestinian territories , both wars resulted in creating the refugees issue. Furthermore, the failure of the peace processes, including the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Accords and Camp David, which led to outbreaks of uprisings such as the first and second Intifada that were the most important spots throughout the conflict. In addition , the Palestinian – “Israeli” conflict witnessed three wars on Gaza strip as well as the imposition of a blockade on it.

On the light of the discussion of the Bush, Obama, and Trump's administration and the impact of their political strategies and practices towards the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict, we may come to a conclusion that the three US administrations dealt with the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict from the standpoint of its managing rather than finding a solution, where all initiatives put forward by the three administrations are different in shape but similar in the content as well as they do not give the Palestinian people the most basic rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state. Therefore, all U.S. political strategies and practices are completely biased to “Israel”. So, the three US administrations policy are supportive of the “Israeli” government and all their policies are in line with America and Israel's interests.

Finally, we hope that we have succeeded in shedding light on even a small part of the political strategies and practices adopted by Bush, Obama and Trump's administration and its impact on the Palestinian-“Israeli” conflict. We also hope that our study will be fruitful in the scientific research field.

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الملخص

منذ بداية الاستعمار في منتصف القرن العشرين ، اختلفت إستراتيجيات السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه الصراع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي من فترة إلى أخرى ومن رئيس إلى آخر. هذه الدراسة حاولت توضيح العوامل المساهمة في صنع السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية كما ركزت على اهم محطات الصراع . ومن أهم أهداف هذه الدراسة هو دراسة الاستراتيجيات والممارسات السياسية للإدارات الثلاثة ومدى تأثيرها على الصراع . وللوصول إلى أهداف الدراسة استعملنا المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لوصف الاحداث التاريخية وتحليل الاستراتيجيات المتبعة من قبل الادارات وتأثيرها . ومن النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة ان الاستراتيجيات والممارسات السياسية للإدارات الثلاثة تتمثل في الانحياز الكامل لإسرائيل كما ان كل المبادرات التي طرحت من قبلهم لا تعطي الشعب الفلسطيني أبسط حقوقه في تقرير مصيره وإقامة دولته المستقلة.

الكلمات المفتاحية الاستراتيجيات والممارسات السياسية ، الصراع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي ، الإدارات الثلاثة ، السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية .