

## *U.S. Mediation Efforts in the Middle East: A Moral Religious Basis or a Set of Underlying Forces?*

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### ABSTRACT

This paper gives insight into United States foreign policy in the context of international relations in recent decades when the country embraced the role of the world hegemon. It tackles the issue of the U.S. use of the religious justification in the course of its mediation efforts in the Middle East. To this end, U.S. diplomatic efforts as a peace broker in the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict has been chosen as a case in point. More specifically, the study examines the extent to which the shared imperial culture and the claimed religious exceptionality of both American and Jewish races have shaped the U.S. bias to and extraordinary generosity with the Jewish, as opposed to calculations of national interests.

This work is, then, intended to offer a framework of understanding and to reconstruct American diplomacy vis-à-vis the undoubtedly most heated Middle Eastern question in world politics nowadays. In addition to analysing major issues and vicissitudes, the present study has critical moves between the geopolitical and the cultural discerning the ideational and ideological seeds of American foreign policy. In other words, the work merges the geopolitical aspect of America's "Special Relationship" with Israel with the cultural one, as the latter is the platform on which the former has been built. It traces the cultural history shaping American visions of the "Holy Land" and the necessity for Israel. We thereof capture the ideological join formed by claims of American and Zionist national uniqueness and their production of exceptional races and subjects. The paper, however, comes to a close with the conclusion that the shared imperial culture and the claimed exceptionality of both American and Jewish races play a marginal role only in explaining Washington DC's backing to and phenomenal generosity with the Jewish. The real underlying forces behind, rather, are an intermingling of both the Jewish lobby's tremendous role in directing American politics merged with U.S. hegemonic security needs and national interest considerations—both requiring a necessity for Israel.

Some primary tools have been used in this work to achieve the aim above, all of which are intertwined. The first one represents the U.S. media, for it makes clear the latter's policy twists that go hand in hand with the executive's decisions vis-à-vis this question. The second tool is the theoretical basis of the first one. More precisely, it is Antonio Gramsci's hegemony theory. The third tool is Robert Cox's theory, which is an extended version of the Gramscian hegemony theory.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper gives insight into United States foreign policy in the context of international relations in recent decades when the country embraced the role of the world hegemon. It tackles the issue of the U.S. use of the religious justification in the course of its mediation efforts in the Middle East. To this end, U.S. diplomatic efforts as a peace broker in the Palestinian/ Israeli

conflict has been chosen as a case in point. More specifically, the study examines the extent to which the shared imperial culture and the claimed religious exceptionality of both American and Jewish races have shaped the U.S. bias to and extraordinary generosity with the Jewish, as opposed to calculations of national interests.

This work is, then, intended to offer a framework of understanding and to reconstruct American diplomacy vis-à-vis the undoubtedly most heated Middle Eastern question in world politics nowadays. In addition to analysing major issues and vicissitudes, the present study will have critical moves between the geopolitical and the cultural discerning the ideational and ideological seeds of American foreign policy. In other words, the work will merge the geopolitical aspect of America's "Special Relationship" with Israel with the cultural one, as the latter is the platform on which the former has been built. It will trace the cultural history shaping American visions of the "Holy Land" and the necessity for Israel. We will capture the ideological join formed by claims of American and Zionist national uniqueness and their production of exceptional races and subjects.

Given the need for a clearly-stated purpose, the research questions of the study are of paramount importance. Accordingly, three major questions have been formulated. First, amidst the multitude of complex and important regional issues facing the world hegemon nowadays, why does the U.S. stand committed and determined to keep a close eye on a faraway Middle Eastern question such as that of Palestine? Second, who stands behind U.S. unwavering support for Israel? And, third, what are the clinching religious as well as cultural platforms on which present American/Israeli "Special Relationship" stands?

In this work, we suggest a couple of hypotheses. First, the "Palestinian question" is important not only to Palestinians, Israelis, and their Arab state neighbours, but to many other countries in the region and around the world—uppermost the United States—for a variety of religious, cultural, and political reasons. Second, the U.S. diplomatic foreign policy pursued vis-à-vis national interest considerations have solely motivated the Palestinian question. The latter has its own geostrategic, economic as well as cultural implications.

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### **IMPLICATIONS OF GRAMSCIAN AND COXIAN THEORIES ON U.S. HEGEMONY**

A key argument of this section is that the development of American hegemony generally, and the sudden boost that has taken place following the Soviet Union's dissolution can best be understood by placing recent events in a theoretical framework. In clearer terms, this section assumes that the key concepts of Gramsci's and Cox's political analysis can help in deciphering the endlessly changing international relations climate with emphasis on the U.S. hegemonic role in it.

#### *National Hegemony in Antonio Gramsci's Theory*

The Gramscian concept of power is similar to that defined by Machiavelli. The latter, who describes power as a centaur that is half man, half beast, sees power as half coercion, half consent. In other words, making use of much power does not necessarily signify one's power. If people refuse to accept your power, "it is all for naught."<sup>1</sup> Gramsci argues that, in regards to society, coercion will always be dormant and made use of in peripheral cases only. Rather, it is the consent that empowers the upper class.

The cultural hegemony that the upper classes hold is commonly sufficient to make their power over the people of the nation legitimate by means of acceptance. The upper classes reinforce this power through civil society embodied in the educational institutions, churches, and media, among others. They all together constitute the "historic bloc."<sup>2</sup> More precisely, the latter refers to "the structure of the society, the economic base of the society, the cultural flows that are current and the political system that exists within it."<sup>3</sup> This constituent of hegemony is of prime importance to the present study for in this and the subsequent sections it will be demonstrated that the media—in our case the U.S. media—are at U.S. government's disposal as a propagandist tool in pursuit of power and influence.

Furthermore, social institutions do not only strive to produce and reproduce the upper class's values and ideals, but they make use of another tool as well. In what Gramsci names

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<sup>1</sup> Jesper Rytter Sørensen, "Cambodian Institutions in Change – A Study in Hegemonic Influence" (Master Dissertation, Aalborg University Press, 2010), [http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/en/studentthesis/cambodian-institutions-in-change\(124e95d1-4ed4-43dc-a82e-eb4804980220\).html](http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/en/studentthesis/cambodian-institutions-in-change(124e95d1-4ed4-43dc-a82e-eb4804980220).html).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Transformismo, critics are incorporated into the hegemonic institutions' structure.<sup>4</sup> Those critics usually belong to opposing organisations or parties. The act of making them melt into the hegemonic system neutralises their revolutionary potential. The aim behind this mechanism is to make both the resilience and longevity of the hegemony certain. Essentially, the integration of the outside opponents into the hegemonic structure nullifies their revolutionary potential as they are permitted to subsume some of their ideals into the hegemonic structure in a more compliant fashion.<sup>5</sup>

In his notable article entitled *Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method*, Robert Cox examines Gramsci's notion of hegemony and gives some insights on its application in the field of international relations.

### **ROBERT COX AND INTERNATIONAL HEGEMONY**

Robert Cox's main aim is to elevate Antonio Gramsci's theory to the international level. To this end, he takes Gramsci's concept of hegemony for granted while simply stating that hegemony on the international sphere is the prevailing system at the time. The prime difference between Gramsci and Cox is as such that where Gramsci maintains that national institutions are the guardians of hegemonic ideals, Cox asserts that international institutions are the ones that perform this operation on an international level.<sup>6</sup>

Cox argues that in the international sphere, the most powerful states maintain the status-quo through the imposition of hegemonic systems to benefit themselves. He contends that the hegemonic ideals are placed in a continuum and are transferred from the core countries—those that are strongest and have already adopted the hegemonic ideals—to the periphery, the developing countries that have to adopt these ideals. Therefore, Robert Cox utilises the Gramscian term “passive revolution” to describe the process. For Cox, passive revolution is fundamentally where “periphery countries gradually adapt to the economic, social and political conditions of core countries or in some cases have them thrust upon them.”<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the establishment of an international hegemony is heavily reliant on the existence of a powerful state capable of having a global reach, enabling her to create a set of international institutions. The latter, on their part, must be sufficiently powerful to impose the hegemony of the core countries upon the periphery states. Thus, Cox asserts that “the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Cox, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 135.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 129.

international hegemony is effectively the international expression of the national hegemony of the core states.”<sup>8</sup>

As specified earlier, Cox predominantly focuses on a system of international organisations and identifies five features of the organisation: “The institutions embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders. They are themselves the product of a hegemonic world order. They ideologically legitimise the norms of the world order. They also co-opt the elite of the peripheral countries. And finally, they absorb counter-hegemonic ideas.”<sup>9</sup>

The international organisation can be founded either at the initiative of core countries or at least with their consent. As part of a hierarchical relationship, the core state will then assure the peripheral states’ consent. Then semi-peripheral countries will be consulted first and more peripheral countries second.<sup>10</sup> An informal structure reflects the different levels of real political and economic power. The formal procedures for decisions are usually based on these informal power structures.

In practice, this theory has an implication in the real world. According to Babones and Alvarez-Rivadulla, the current core countries include: Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Japan, and France, to mention only a few, with the U.S. at the forefront. Semi-periphery countries include Turkey, South Africa, Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil, among many others. The list of periphery countries encompasses most of the African countries along with Pakistan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and so on.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the economic and political system that has sprung out of this globalised system is known as the Bretton Woods system and contains such institutions as the U.N. system, the I.M.F., and the World Bank. America’s role is remarkable in all these institutions. It, for instance, commands a veto vote in the I.M.F.<sup>12</sup>

Of relevance to the present paper is the United States’ tight-knit relation with the U.N. Throughout the history of American hegemony, it has utilised the United Nations as a tool to contain counter-hegemonic ideas. A set of global governance rules that serve U.S. interests

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Salvatore J. Babones and MJ. Alvarez-Rivadulla, “Standardized Income Inequality Data for Use in Cross-National Research,” *Sociological Inquiry* 77, no.1 (February 2007): 14.

<sup>12</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Three Instances of Hegemony in the History of the Capitalist World Economy,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* XXIV, no. 1-2 (January- April 1983): 102.

have been made use of within the U.N. to strengthen U.S. post-Cold War hegemony. This is only to infer that the current hegemonic system of international institutions continues to be dominated by American ideals and values. In this regard, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of International Organisation Affairs Esther Brimmer declares: “U.S. engagement at the United Nations is an essential means of achieving our foreign policy goals and advancing our values. It is an important forum for burden-sharing in tough financial times. And it clearly benefits Americans.”<sup>13</sup>

This reality will be confirmed in the subsequent sections. The second section illuminates the conceptual and empirical backgrounds of the Arab/Israeli conflict in order to make clear, in the next section, key events, and facts in regard to American partial aid to Israelis, showing that it was obviously in U.S. interest. On the contrary, U.S. negligible aid to Palestinians was primarily under U.N. auspices, for some unstated reasons. The last section delves into the real causes lying behind the U.S. unwavering support for Israel, making use of the media.

### **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE ARAB/ISRAELI CONFLICT**

This section sets forth both the historical and cultural backgrounds of the Arab/Israeli conflict. The aim is to unravel the origins of the U.S. unwavering support for Israel. It commences by highlighting significant events that formed the conflict’s origin. It also sheds light on two intertwined dimensions, namely history and culture, focusing on the latter. It then discusses the ideational and ideological seeds of American foreign policy, discerning the link between the Puritan line of thought and American exceptionalism. This section comes to a close by elucidating how the U.S. imperial culture has contributed to early Zionists’ sense of exceptionality. This belief, as will be shown, has contributed to their racism towards their ‘backward’ Palestinian counterparts.

#### ***Origins and Dimensions of the Arab-Israeli Conflict***

The Arab-Israeli conflict is the product of an intermingling of two intertwined, inseparable dimensions, namely history, and culture. While history provides the historical data required to comprehend the origins and dimensions of the conflict at hand fully, existential theories would delve into the abstract nature of this struggle for existence.

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<sup>13</sup> Esther Brimmer, “How Engagement at the United Nations Benefits the United States,” U.S. Department of State, last modified September 1, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rm/2011/171889.htm>.

Historians argue that at the height of World War I, precisely in 1916, a series of secret talks were held between Britain and France. The outcome of which was the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which cut the Middle East into zones of influence. It was agreed that France would administer Lebanon and Syria, while Britain would supervise Iraq and Transjordan—today’s Jordan. Palestine, however, would become under dual control.

Meanwhile, Zionism—a movement to establish a home in Palestine for the world’s Jews—was on the rise. Its leader was Theodore Herzl.<sup>14</sup> The British were given formal control of Palestine in a 1922 mandate of the League of Nations. After that, waves of Jewish immigrants flooded into Palestine, resulting in an increased hostility between the Jews and Arabs. The British seemingly attempted to restrict Jewish immigration, only to be confronted with international support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In other words, as the Nazi Germans had the intention to eradicate European Jews, the world believed a Jewish homeland to be an urgent need.

Under such circumstances, the newly created United Nations suggested a plan to divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states in 1947. Jerusalem—a holy city for Muslims, Jews, and Christians—was given special international status as the plan recommended that it would fall under U.N. administration.<sup>15</sup> The following year, the British abandoned control of Palestine and quit. Soon after, on May 14, the State of Israel was proclaimed. The partition plan was refused by neighbouring Arab states, however, and their armies soon afterwards invaded their new neighbour. The resulting war is known as the October War. Cease-fires with Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon ensued, with fifty percent more territory taken by the fledgling state. Thenceforth, the Arab-Israeli conflict has continued to this day.

Simultaneously, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can be described from a cultural perspective as an existential conflict between two peoples—or two identity groups—each of which claims the same right for territory ownership and thereby political state. In such a conflict, the very existence of the other torments and threatens each group’s own existence. Additionally, “the other’s identity and its associated narrative challenge the group’s claims to ownership—at least to exclusive ownership—of the land and its resources.”<sup>16</sup> These dynamics have resulted in a hostile view of the conflict in regard to issues of territory, national identity

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<sup>14</sup> Herbert C. Kelman, “The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and its Vicissitudes,” *American Psychologist* (May-June 2007): 288.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.



and existence, wherefore the act of acknowledging the other's identity has been seen as a serious danger to one's own identity and existence. "Each side has espoused the view that only one can be a nation: Either we are a nation, or they are. They can acquire national identity and rights only at the expense of our identity and rights."<sup>17</sup>

Hence, in this conflict, each side has endeavoured to erode the other's identity as a national group, put the truthfulness of its links to the land into question, and raise doubts over the validity of its claims to national rights. Indeed, each has utilised negation techniques in its own national narrative.

The United States' foreign policy, we dare argue, has exacerbated the existential conflict between the two races by being institutionally biased to one race at the expense of the other. This is itself, we believe, due to the imperial culture inherited by Americans from their Puritan ancestors, constituting the ideational root of their nation's foreign policy vis-à-vis the conflict.

### ***The Institutional and Ideational Roots of American Foreign Policy***

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the newly formed nation of the United States of America commenced its expansionist movement. Since then up today, Americans have always regarded their expansionist journey as their God-given right. The assumption that America has been the elect nation drove Americans to trespass their borders. This belief has become a prime justification for expansion, in order to export the American model of civilisation abroad, to secure and preserve democracy all over the world, or rather to rule the whole world. In this respect, Senator Beveridge boasts, "...The power that rules the Pacific is, therefore, the power that rules the world. And...that power is and will forever be the American Republic."<sup>18</sup>

This American tendency is grounded in the beliefs and principles that characterised the early society formed in North America. Since the Puritans had been a striking force in the foundation of that hard-line society, their influence on the future American policies was quite prominent. It was they who laid down the American conception of an elect people, who were deemed to expand and rule everywhere. The Puritans' belief in being God's chosen people destined to fulfill God's divine mission fuelled their desire to depart from England, expanding to the New World. They crossed the Atlantic Ocean only to feed their aspiration of erecting a

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> George Brown Tindall and David.E. Shi, *America, A Narrative History* (New York: Longman, 2012), 368.



new Garden, a City that would be a perfect model. In this context, John Winthrop states: “We shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.... We shall be made a story and a byword through the world.”<sup>19</sup>

Puritanism is, in essence, a religious movement which sailed on English ships towards the New World early in the seventeenth century. Calvinism, the creed of Calvin, was the most puritanical Reformational movement. This latter is often summarised by the Five Points, which defined Calvinist orthodoxy. Among them, three points were strongly held by the Puritans.

First among which is the point of Predestination—also called Unconditional Election. In believing in this point, the Puritans claim that God has divided humanity into two very distinct groups. While the first is the elect encompassing all those whom God has espoused to have knowledge about Himself, the rest are all ignored and doomed to spend eternity in hell without any hope of mercy. In their view, this divine selection had been arranged before the universe was created, and hence before any humans existed. The ground utilised by God to select the lucky few is unknown; certainly not through any good works on the part of the individual.<sup>20</sup>

The second point is Irresistible Grace, also called the Effectual Call. It asserts that God’s call is sovereign; it is God’s eternal will to offer His grace to the elect. This grace will grant them the ability to trust Christ, to the end of being saved. Therefore, every human whom God has elected will be drawn to his right action for which God has called him, and thus will by no means resist this call. For that reason, the Puritans would expand for the sake of answering the call of God.<sup>21</sup>

The third and last Puritans’ strikingly held point is Perseverance of the Saints—used interchangeably with “Once Saved, Always Saved” belief. The latter maintains that everyone who has already been saved will eternally remain in that state. None are lost, and it is quite impossible for them to lose salvation.<sup>22</sup> These ideas were deeply ingrained in the Puritan mind, only to be transferred in a few decades’ time to their American grandchildren, who assigned them different terms.

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<sup>19</sup> John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity,” University of Virginia Library, 1630, <http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/Charity.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Tindall, *America, A Narrative History*, 372.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Along decades of tough struggles with the Anglican Church, the Puritans realised early in the seventeenth century that their model was not likely to see the light of the day in England. There, they could neither display their religious principles nor accept any power to restrict and repudiate them. As they believed they are God's elect people, they hence became steadfastly determined to seek out new lands where they could fulfill their dreams, avoid persecution and build a community of their own.

This, in fact, ushered in the first phase of Puritan expansion, for they believed that they could not resist the call of God.<sup>23</sup> In 1620, a Separatist Puritan congregation called the Pilgrims, set sail from Leiden, Holland for the New World, aboard the Mayflower ship. They were led by William Bradford, who held the conviction that America might be their Promised Land. Indeed, the Pilgrims associated themselves with the ancient Hebrews. They were firmly convinced that they were God's elect people heading towards the Promised Land. The Puritans who disembarked in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620 believed they were establishing the New Israel guided by God. A decade later, the second wave of Puritan ships, led by John Winthrop, docked in Boston. While their dreams were fading in England, they were on the rise for a new life on American soil.

Still unsatisfied, the Puritans did not only settle in the New World but expanded as well. Cracks started to manifest in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which forged new ways to resolve problems, for example, moving away and setting up colonies in new lands. They expanded to Rhode Island, New Haven, Connecticut, New Hampshire, among others. Such lands were possessed by the Indians who vainly confronted the Puritans. Large numbers of innocent Indian lives were lost as a result. The Puritans ruthlessly put the Natives to death because they believed in Predestination. Moreover, their belief in the Calvinistic doctrine of Irresistible Grace made them kill the Indians. Hence, they exterminated both the Pequot and the Wampanoag Indians.

These Puritan ideals and spirit had their echo in the newly formed American mind. At the wake of the nineteenth century, the notion of the U.S. providential mission to secure democracy and liberty was renewed in the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny. While the former assigned America the task of the Western Hemisphere's guardian, the latter revived the Puritans' strongly held point of Predestination. Both of them, indeed, served as torches that have been lightening the way for any expansionist movement.

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<sup>23</sup> Due to their belief in one of Calvin's points, Irresistible Grace.

As the Americans expanded, the inevitability of their growth was assumed to be a natural companion.<sup>24</sup> They felt that the country had been preordained by God to extend over the whole continent. The newspaper editor John L. O’Sullivan is the one who first attached this idea to the term Manifest Destiny. In 1845, he wrote of America’s “manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”<sup>25</sup>

In sum, the sense of Manifest Destiny and the belief that America will lead the world into an era of peace and security originated from the Puritan notion of a city set upon a hill. This imperial culture served as a justification for both the westward expansion during the second half of the nineteenth century, as well as the subsequent continental and overseas expansion. Part and parcel of the contemporary version of this imperial culture have been the representation of the ‘elect’ Israelis as opposed to the ‘backward’ Palestinians, giving Israelis the incentive that pushed them to hate and deny Palestinian identity indiscriminately.

### ***U.S. Imperial Culture and Israel/Palestine Racial Dichotomy***

These lines explore how representations of Israel/Palestine have become firmly lodged in contemporary United States imperial culture. From the figure of the “city upon a hill” onward, these representations engendered a variety of settler-colonial and messianic narratives.<sup>26</sup>

As a cultural critic, literary theorist and Palestinian activist Edward W. Said simply put it, “lurking near Palestine has always been the problem of representation.”<sup>27</sup> In his own late 1970s trilogy, *Orientalism*, *The Question of Palestine*, and *Covering Islam*, Said exhaustively expounded the procedures through which the West has represented and thereby created knowledge about the Orient in general and Arabs, Muslims, and Palestinians in particular.

For Said, Zionism and the broader Orientalist discourse of which it was part put into service a “blocking operation” whereby certain “experts” in the West frequently wrote for and about Palestinians in ways that impeded what Said called “their presence.” Indeed, Palestinians were depicted as subjects with respect to history, culture, affect, and political will. Therefore, making a Palestinian presence lucid in the face of such blockages also needed representation.

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<sup>24</sup> Jean Pouvelle, et al, *Repères de Civilisation: Grande Bretagne, Etats-Unis* (Paris: Ellipses Edition Marketing S.A., 2003), 142.

<sup>25</sup> John L. O’Sullivan, “Annexation,” *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17, no.1 (July-August 1845): 5, <http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/HIS/f01/HIS202-01/Documents/OSullivan.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Keith P. Feldman, *Racing the Question: Israel/Palestine and U.S. Imperial Culture* (U.S.A: Washington’s university, 2008), 2.

<sup>27</sup> Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1980), 39.

In spite of the fact that such forms of knowledge were deemed disqualified, naive, local, regional, insufficiently elaborated and hence in need of displacement by expertise and propriety—what French philosopher Michel Foucault once called “subjugated forms of knowledge”<sup>28</sup>—Edward Said has undertaken the mission by much of his public and scholarly work.

All American narratives about the Orient, stretching from the English Puritan John Winthrop on the deck of the *Arbella* in 1630 forward to California Governor Ronald Reagan’s own recasting of America as a “light unto nations” and a “city on a hill” in the 1970s, have been peppered with divine promises, biblical injunctions, and territories destined for settlement.<sup>29</sup> Both the U.S. and Israel are believed to exist outside history, holding divine commitments to the democratic values of freedom and liberty, “with morally righteous pioneering spirits and melting-pot immigrant cultures, with uniquely benevolent roles in a hostile world of barbarism, backwardness, and tyranny.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, these narratives have represented a common and ostensibly endless time of crisis for both nations. Their very “ways of life” have been regarded as menaced from “dangerous” racialised subjects, shifting over time and space between American Indians, African Americans, Filipinos, Arab Palestinians, Muslims, and terrorists.

Put differently, popular American representations of Palestine, Israel, and the Holy or Promised Land, have had an unshaken presence, starting with the foundational documents of the American mythos in John Winthrop’s 1630 sermon *A Modell for Christian Charity*. They gave rise to what is named an ideology of “destinarian exceptionalism,” which stands for founding the settlement and ‘civilising’ the North American continent in terms of “a unique Protestant covenant secured by a divinely inspired mission akin to, or as a mirror of, the biblical promise of the land of Canaan to the Jews.”<sup>31</sup> As westward continental expansion coincided with large-scale travel by American Protestant missionaries, tourists, U.S. consular agents, and Zionist and proto-Zionist settlers to Palestine, such visions were fuelled by the settlement of resembling remote territory, one that also operated along a covenantal narrative of an elect people, frontier lands, and hostile natives.

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<sup>28</sup> Michel Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 8.

<sup>29</sup> Feldman, *Racing the Question*, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 28.

Indeed, theories of racism's historical and transnational relation to empire were remarkably adhered to for the sake of thinking through and representing the linkages between the U.S. domestic scene and its connections to Israel/Palestine. For instance, thinkers like Horace Kallen, Nathan Glazer, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan theorised cultural pluralism through an "immigrant analogy" authorising Jewish and Zionist assimilation in the U.S., while denying the same right to African Americans and Palestinians in the process.<sup>32</sup>

To make these analogous images clearer, it is of paramount importance first to shed light on some Zionist thinkers' violent narrative—predominantly inspired by the American model—about Palestine's indigenous population. In early 2004, for instance, the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* published an ill-famed interview with well-known Israeli historian Benny Morris on the occasion of his new book release. In this interview, headlined "*Survival of the Fittest*," Morris remembered the cruel establishment of the Israeli state in the late 1940s, giving more details to justify a narrative of native dispossession, massacre, and rape that Morris and some of his colleagues in the Israeli academy had been assembling over the course of several decades: "The need to establish this state in this place overcame the injustice that was done to the Palestinians by uprooting them. Even the great American democracy could not have been created without the annihilation of the Indians. There are cases in which the overall, final good justifies harsh and cruel acts that are committed in the course of history."<sup>33</sup>

Morris' statements, as the above comment denotes, emphasise on justifying the military, tactical, and philosophical commitment of Israel's early founders to the "cleansing" of the space of Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. According to Morris, leaders like David Ben-Gurion committed a serious "historical mistake" for not terminating the Palestinian "cleansing" in 1948. "It was necessary," Morris plainly asserts, "to cleanse the hinterland and cleanse the border areas and cleanse the main roads. It was necessary to cleanse the villages from which our convoys and our settlements were fired on".<sup>34</sup> Since such practices were left incomplete in the past, a possible future cleansing "in five or ten years" would be made permissible by two indisputable facts: "a demographic reserve" of Arab Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank are a "time bomb" capable of crippling the state's Jewish national character; and "Islam and Arab culture" come from a "barbarian" world of tribalism and revenge, with "no moral inhibitions." While displacement is an adequate future

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 22.

for the region's Arabs, he adds, the present needs "healing the Palestinians.... Until the medicine is found, they have to be contained so that they will not succeed in murdering us". "There is a wild animal there," Morris states, "that has to be locked up in one way or another."<sup>35</sup>

Morris's comments embrace rhetoric anathema to the peace movement—to which he had pretended to adhere— were intentionally shaking and frustrating. They, in fact, unveil the deep-rooted colonial/racial structure of the Israeli state project, which was sustained by America. Morris' justification for present-day Palestinian "caging" and a future of ethnic cleansing gives credit to a narrative with profound historical antecedents that arise not only out of the canon of Zionist literature but draws on imaginative and symbolic histories coupling Israel/Palestine and the U.S. through figures of comparison and analogy as shown earlier.

In his turn, the founder of modern political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, explained the function of a Jewish land in Palestine as "the portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism." On his part, Chaim Weizmann, the prominent lobbyist on behalf of the Zionist project and Israel's first president, described in the 1930s the double-edged logic of imperial benevolence and absolute force. "We wish to spare the Arabs as much as we can of the sufferings which every backward race has gone through on the coming of another, more advanced nation." Yet, in his view, the Palestinians' resistance to settlement revealed "the old war of the desert against civilisation, but we will not be stopped."<sup>36</sup>

That a native population existed at all was itself a contested topic, based on the traditional Zionist slogan that Palestine was "a land without a people for a people without a land." Indeed, Zionism's effort to root the Jews in the 'Land of Israel' has always needed a companion: the uprooting of the native population. Whether utilising the settlers' messianic language of returning to the Promised Land, the pioneer rhetoric of redeeming the land, or the discredited jargon of 'Judaising' land, Zionists have been pushed to intimately attach their national identity to control over territory and the expulsion of non-Jews who claim equal rival ownership.<sup>37</sup>

Amidst all these hostile narratives to reinforce Israel's existence, the United States of America keeps performing its 'noble' role, namely assuring Israel's security and thereby survival. The means is to make the American public convinced of American/ Zionist

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan Cook, *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair* (Zed Books Ltd: London, 2008), 6.

exceptionalism, which itself makes representations of Palestine/ Israel deeply lodged in American imperial culture.

In July 2014, for instance, at the height of the most recent Israeli military assault upon Gaza, a major rally was held in New York City in defence of Israel. “United We Stand with Israel” attracted major figures in city, state, and national politics, the large majority progressive Democrats, who delivered ardent speeches supporting Israel’s right to self-defence and insisting on the sacredness of the “Special Relationship” coupling both the United States and Israel.<sup>38</sup>

One of the most resounding rhetorical allegations came from Brooklyn Congressman Hakeem Jeffries. “We know that Israel lives in a very tough neighbourhood,” Jeffries addressed the crowd, adding: “There are certain realities to that...because the only thing that neighbours respect in a tough neighbourhood is strength.” In his conclusion to the speech, Jeffries declared: “Israel is here to stay, and it will remain...Israel today, Israel tomorrow, Israel forever.”<sup>39</sup>

The last sentence of Jeffries’ speech echoes the famous exhortation of Alabama Governor George Wallace in the summer of 1963, thrown into the teeth of the U.S. civil rights movement’s struggle to end legal segregation: “In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.”<sup>40</sup>

Thanks in part to this echo, Jeffries’ speech brings forth a revealing snapshot of the much-disputed relationship between U.S. racial politics and the representation of Israel/Palestine in the U.S. context. Questions arise here over the forces and contexts leading a progressive African-American politician to parrot the rhetoric of one of the most openly racist figures of twentieth-century American history for the sake of promoting a military assault on an occupied and imprisoned population. On a larger scale, questions also arise over the circumstances by which the general public in the United States has come to consider issues related to Israel/Palestine as “local, not foreign policy, matters,”<sup>41</sup> as Edward Said put it in 2000.

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<sup>38</sup> Anthony C. Alessandrini, “Review of *A Shadow over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America*, Keith P. Feldman,” *SCTIW Review* (October 2015) : 1, <http://sctiw.org/sctiwreviewarchives/archives/773>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 2.



In sum, as one may perceive, this imperial culture is firmly lodged in both American and Jewish minds, for Winthrop's idea of destinarian exceptionalism had unwaveringly inspired early Zionist thinkers. Thus, the representation of the 'elect' Israelis, as opposed to the 'backward' Palestinians, has given Israelis the incentive that pushed them to hate and deny Palestinian identity indiscriminately. In the process of resolving this complex political and existential conflict between the two races, the U.S. has used the tool of diplomacy to accomplish its goals in the Middle East. Ironically, it has been guided by partisanship not by impartiality when dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Consequently, it has contributed to the stalling of the peace process instead of serving as a catalyst for continued dialogue.

### **U.S. PARTIAL AID TO ISRAELIS: KEY EVENTS AND FACTS**

In view of the research questions posed in the introduction, the third section examines the extent to which U. S. mediation efforts in the Middle East in recent decades have been 'impartial.' To this end, it will unravel U.S. foreign policy's covert aims in the Middle East, delving into the nature of the executive's hidden national interests-based agenda in the region. It will be followed by an analysis of key facts and events in the process of the U.S. attempt to resolve the Palestinian/Israeli question.

### ***U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Aims and Plans***

It is common for any country's foreign policy to aim at achieving, or to contribute to the achievement of national interests or national objectives. Unquestionably, U.S. foreign policy plays a prime role in influencing the course of events in the entire world. No region is more representative of this reality than the Middle East, a region of tremendous importance and constant change.

Early in the twentieth century, consecutive U.S. governments had identified their nation's interest in the Middle East with guaranteeing access to Middle Eastern oil along with subduing any daring regional hegemony. Since the foundation of Israel in 1948, "three objectives have been essentially constant, namely access to oil, the security of Israel, and making sure that the Middle East, as a region, is not dominated by a hostile power."<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the following paragraphs suggest an intermingling of geo-economics, geopolitical, and geostrategic aims.

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<sup>42</sup> Leon Hadar and Christopher Preble, *Cato Handbook for Policymakers: U.S. Policy in the Middle East* (U.S.A.: Cato Institute, 2008), 539.

The geo-economics aim is exemplified chiefly in the oil factor. In this study, it is argued that throughout history, control of oil has been the principal factor impinging U.S. interventions in the Middle East. This is because Gulf oil control both empowers the U.S. with the oil weapon and guarantees the international dominance of the dollar as the world unit of account. In a post-Cold War new geopolitical environment, the Western world strives now to deny Middle Eastern oil to Russia and China. The events of 9/11 have provided a political opportunity to merge all these agendas.

Similarly, the geopolitical factor has played a prime role in U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Indeed, the geopolitical logic of safeguarding U.S. credibility in the world implies American prevention of the rise of potential rival hegemonies in the region.<sup>43</sup> Hence, a serious warning has been sent to potential challengers like Saddam Hussein. The latter, who disobeyed Washington's guidelines, was harshly punished. In this respect, George Bush declared during the Gulf War: "And when we win—and we will—we will have caught a dangerous dictator and any tyrant tempted to follow in his footsteps that the U.S. has new credibility, and that what we say goes, and that there is no place for lawless aggression in the Persian Gulf and in this new world order that we seek to create."<sup>44</sup>

More importantly, America's aim in the Middle East is mainly geostrategic. De facto, Americans aim at serving the Jews' state by diverting attention from its occupation of Palestine and murder of Muslims there.<sup>45</sup> Both their endeavour to demolish Iraq, the strongest neighbouring Arab state, together with their eagerness to fragment all the states of the region such as Saudi Arabia and Sudan into small states, are the best proofs. These countries' disunion and weakness will ensure Israel's survival. As elucidated earlier in the previous section, this determination to secure Israel's survival has a religious basis. In short, the geopolitical, geo-economics and geostrategic logics are central to explaining the American aims behind their interest in Middle Eastern affairs and considering only one of them misses some important aspects.

Of significance to this study is the idea that Washington has attempted to achieve this complex set of goals predominantly via a set of informal security alliances—especially with

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>44</sup> G.H.W. Bush, "Remarks to community members at Fort Stewart, Georgia," The American Presidency Project, last modified February 1, 1991, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19269>.

<sup>45</sup> R. Sorabji and D. Rodin, *The Ethics of War: Shared Problems in Different Traditions* (UK: Oxford University, 2006), 90.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel. Americans have also performed the job of peace brokers between Palestinians and Israelis in the hope that a resolution of the conflict would decrease the sentiments of anti-Americanism and contain the region's radicalism.<sup>46</sup> It is worth mentioning, however, that both state and non-state actors work in concert for the sake of advancing their nation's national interests and objectives. What comes next would further confirm that focusing on and comparing U.S. aid to both Israelis and Palestinians.

### ***The U.S. Mediatorial Role: A Hatred Ender or a Partial Mediator?***

In recent decades, the United States has regarded foreign aid as a chief diplomatic tool in the search for solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict. During this period, "the U.S. has disbursed tens of billions of dollars to implement Arab-Israeli peace accords, to build public support in the region, and to facilitate ongoing negotiations."<sup>47</sup> However, American aid to both belligerents seemed inequitable and partial.

Israel has been supplied by the U.S., since the October War of 1973, with a level of support exceeding the amounts provided to any other country. Indeed, "it has been the largest annual recipient of direct U.S. economic and military assistance since 1976 and the largest total recipient since World War II. Total direct U.S. aid to Israel amounted to well over \$140 billion in 2003."<sup>48</sup> \$3 billion is the amount of money Israel receives in direct foreign aid each year, which constitutes one-fifth of America's foreign-aid budget. This would mean that each Israeli is provided with "a direct subsidy worth about \$500 per year."<sup>49</sup> What makes this largesse significant is that Israel has become a rich industrial country whose per capita income is equivalent to that of Spain or South Korea.

Washington, additionally, favours Israel with other special deals. While Israel gets its full appropriation at the beginning of each fiscal year leading it to benefit from extra interest, other aid recipients receive their assistance in quarterly instalments. More astonishing is when one realises that while most American military assistance receivers are required to spend all of

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<sup>46</sup> Hadar, *Cato Handbook for Policymakers*, 539.

<sup>47</sup> Scott Lasensky and Robert Grace, "Dollars and Diplomacy: Foreign Aid and the Palestinian Question," United States Institute of Peace, last modified August 10, 2006, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2006/08/dollars-and-diplomacy-foreign-aid-and-palestinian-question>.

<sup>48</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* XIII, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 31.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

it in America, Israel, contrary to others, can use up to 25 percent of its money to back its own defence industry.<sup>50</sup>

According to the Congressional Research Service's report, an agreement coupled both the Bush Administration and the Israeli government in 2007 about a 10-year, \$30 billion military aid package Fiscal Year 2009 to the Fiscal Year 2018. In 2012, for instance, "the U.S. began giving Israel \$3.1 billion a year—or an average of \$8.5 million a day—and promised to provide that amount every year through the Fiscal Year 2018." "During a March 2013 visit to Israel", moreover, "President Obama promised to continue to provide multi-year commitments of military aid to the Israeli government."<sup>51</sup>

Interestingly, on the other hand, the U.S. has provided Palestinians with only negligible modest amounts of "seed money."<sup>52</sup> According to the Congressional Research Service's report, Palestinians have never been assisted militarily by the U.S. government. "The Department of Defence Appropriations Act, 2015, which passed the House in June 2014, contained provisions that would prohibit funds made available by the act from being obligated to the Palestinian Authority or from being used to transfer weapons to the P.A."<sup>53</sup> Assistance to Palestinians is mostly designated for humanitarian purposes. Such assistance is only authorised once Congress has received evidence that they will be utilised for "non-lethal assistance."<sup>54</sup>

Congress, for instance, requested \$441 million in aid for Fiscal Year 2015. Furthermore, the U.S. Agency for International Development—USAID—has provided Palestinians with some indirect economic aid given to U.S.-based N.G.O.s working in Palestine. According to the Congressional Research Service report, "funds are allocated in this program for projects in sectors such as humanitarian assistance, economic development, democratic reform, improving water access and other infrastructure, health care, education, and vocational training."<sup>55</sup> It is worth noting that the program is subject to a vetting process and yearly audits.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp, "[U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel](https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf)," Federation of American Scientists, last modified February 26, 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Avi Shlaim, "The United States and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," in *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of World Order*, ed. Ken Booth and Tim Dunne (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 186.

<sup>53</sup> Jim Zanotti, "[U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians](file:///C:/Users/HP/Desktop/PC%20HP/Palestine/NEW%20U.S.%20AID%20TO%20PALESTINIANS.pdf)," December, 16, 2016, <file:///C:/Users/HP/Desktop/PC%20HP/Palestine/NEW%20U.S.%20AID%20TO%20PALESTINIANS.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Quite interesting also is the fact that this aid provided by the U.S. to the Palestinian people is usually done via the U.N., echoing Coxian hegemony theory. Two inferences surface here. First, the fact that the United Nations works as an intermediary between the U.S. and Palestinians shows that it is fully aware that the aid provided to Palestinians is minimal and marginal in comparison to that which Israel receives. It, nonetheless, keeps a silent mouth about this. Second, from the first inference, another fact is unravelled, which is the United States' use of the U.N. as a legal shield to its illegal deeds, as put forward by Robert Cox.

By and large, it can securely be said that the U.S. has been a partial broker between the two races. This is in part due, as elucidated in the previous section, to the imperial culture and the claimed exceptionality of both American and Jewish races. In practice, however, contrary to Palestinians, the U.S. incomparable generosity with Israel might be justifiable if the latter were of any vital strategic advantage or if there were irresistible moral case for continuous U.S. help. But neither rationale works. Therefore, seen objectively, Israel's past and present policy contains no moral basis for preferring it over the Palestinians, and it is to discussion and examination of the real underlying forces behind steadfast American support to Israel that this study now turns.

### ***Tacit Forces behind U.S. Unshakable Support to Israel***

The last section states the unstated regarding the real tacit forces behind U.S. determination to support and secure Israel. In the quest for these underlying forces, this section expounds the Jewish lobby, for whatever a foreign policy maker's own views, the lobby tries to make supporting Israel the "smart" political choice. Within the space of this section, we will illuminate the lobby's seeds of power as well as its tactics for success. Then, Israel's role as America's watchdog in the Middle East will be highlighted, discerning its various dimensions.

The U.S. national interest is undoubtedly the chief object of American foreign policymakers. In recent decades, however, its relationship with Israel became its main concern noticeably, as referred to earlier. The assemblage of unshakable U.S. backing to Israel and the consequent attempt to spread democracy throughout the region has enraged Arab and Islamic opinion and thereby threatened U.S. security.

This situation is unique in the history of American politics. Why has the United States adopted policies that imperilled its own security in order to advance the interests of another state? One might think that the ligament between the two countries is grounded on common interests or strong moral, cultural and religious bases.

As will be shown below, however, neither of those explanations is adequate. Instead, the U.S. policy's endeavour to protect Israel is due chiefly to the activities of the "Israel lobby," for "no lobby has managed to divert U.S. foreign policy as far from what the American national interest would otherwise suggest, while simultaneously convincing Americans that U.S. and Israeli interests are essentially identical."<sup>56</sup>

Main organisations that form the lobby, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee —AIPAC—and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organisations, are directed by hardliners who advocated the expansionist policies of Israel's Likud party, including the latter's disagreement with the Oslo peace process. The majority of U.S. Jewry, on the other hand, more favourably prefers making concessions to the Palestinians, and a few groups—such as Jewish Voice for Peace—heavily support such steps.<sup>57</sup>

AIPAC is the most prominent organisation. Members of Congress were asked by *Fortune* magazine in 1997 to name the most influential lobbies in Washington. "AIPAC was ranked second behind the American Association of Retired People—AARP—but ahead of heavyweight lobbies like the AFL-CIO and the National Rifle Association—N.R.A." In March 2005, findings of a *National Journal* study were homogeneous, for the study ranked AIPAC second in Washington's "muscle rankings."<sup>58</sup>

Besides, some Christian evangelicals including Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed, along with Tom DeLay and Dick Armey—former leaders in the House of Representatives—form important members of the lobby. These "Christian Zionists" consider Israel's rebirth as a religious inevitability and strongly advocate its expansionist plan. Moreover, the lobby is backed by neoconservative gentiles like "John Bolton, the late *Wall Street Journal* editor Robert Bartley, former Secretary of Education William Bennett, former U.N. Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick and columnist George Will."<sup>59</sup> In what comes next, the lobby's seeds of power will be outlined.

### ***The Lobby's Seeds of Power***

The Israel lobby's enormous effectiveness is the thing that makes it distinct. This effectiveness traces its roots back to a late nineteenth-century decision of U.S. Supreme Court that gave

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<sup>56</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, "The Israel Lobby," 29-87.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

corporations the same rights as individual American citizens. Those rights include the freedom of speech that is guaranteed by the first amendment to the American Constitution.

The unprecedented degree of corruption that was strongly present in American society in the late nineteenth century led the court to consider financial contributions to political candidates as expressions of political speech and, therefore, under the court's protection.<sup>60</sup> This decision gave way to well-financed "special interest" lobbies to practice legal bribery and has permitted them, thereby, to shape both the American foreign and domestic policies.

For this reason, the American author Mark Twain wrote in 1907 that "there was only one native criminal class in America—Congress." The humourist Will Rogers joked a decade later, "America has the best Congress money can buy."<sup>61</sup> The lobby's effectiveness and success are all the stunning when one realises the lobby represents no more than a third of America's six million Jews. Hence, the following lines expound its tactics for success.

### *Tactics for Success: The Media's Effect*

The lobby does not only have substantial leverage in Congress; it has compelling influence over the Executive Branch as well. This is attributed to the fact that Jewish-Americans organise large-scale campaign donations to candidates from both parties, although they form only 3 percent of the population. *The Washington Post* once estimated that "Democratic presidential candidates depend on Jewish supporters to supply as much as sixty percent of the money."<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, Jewish voters are concentrated in important states like California, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. This helps them influence electoral outcomes. Because their voice matter in elections, presidential candidates are cautious not to arouse hostility with Jewish voters.

Additionally, the lobby seeks to shape public perceptions about Israel and the Middle East. Accordingly, pro-Israel organisations strive to control the media, academia and think tanks, which are key institutions in moulding public opinion. This tactic in particular—named "the historic bloc"—has perfectly been elucidated by Antonio Gramsci in his theory expounded in this study's first section.

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<sup>60</sup> Jefferey Blankfort, "The Influence of Israel and its American Lobby over U.S. Middle East Policy Explained," Islamic Human Rights Commission, last modified July, 2, 2006, [http://www.ihr.org.uk/060702/papers/jeffrey\\_blankfort.pdf](http://www.ihr.org.uk/060702/papers/jeffrey_blankfort.pdf).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas B. Edsall and Alan Cooperman, "GOP Uses Remarks to Court Jews," *The Washington Post*, March 13, 2003, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/03/13/gop-uses-remarks-to-court-jews/74571902-fe63-4543-a972-a5d642546321/?utm\\_term=.b88bfa863794](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/03/13/gop-uses-remarks-to-court-jews/74571902-fe63-4543-a972-a5d642546321/?utm_term=.b88bfa863794).



The lobby's perception about Israel is, indeed, widely echoed in the mainstream media as a large majority of American commentators take a pro-Israel stance. "The debate among Middle East pundits," journalist Eric Alterman writes, "is dominated by people who cannot imagine criticising Israel." He names "sixty-one columnists and commentators who can be counted upon to support Israel reflexively and without qualification."<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, only five pundits overtly criticise Israeli policies or advocate pro-Arab stance. In this context, Edward Said had once declared that "America's last taboo," the "narrative that has no permission to appear," was the narrative of the Israeli abuse of Palestinians.<sup>64</sup>

Newspapers publish from time to time guest op-eds criticising Israeli behaviour. However, the pro-Israel stance is manifested in the leading newspapers' editorials. For instance, the former editor of the *Wall Street Journal* Robert Bartley once remarked: "Shamir, Sharon, Bibi—whatever those guys want is pretty much fine by me."<sup>65</sup> Editorial partiality is manifest as well in newspapers like *The New York Times* which rarely criticises Israeli policies.

A study conducted by the human rights organisation, *If Americans Knew (I.A.K.)*, led by Allison Weir, analysed the coverage of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict by the *San Francisco Chronicle (S.F.C.)*. This study, which was conducted for the period from September 29, 2000, to March 31, 2001, reveals very significant results. During the six-month study period, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on 111% of Israeli deaths and 38% of Palestinian deaths only in the headlines and/or the first paragraph of the 251 articles on the topic.<sup>66</sup> In clearer terms, Palestinian children were being killed at a far higher rate than Israeli children—27% of Palestinians killed were under the age of 18 who were exactly 93 children, while only 6% of Israelis killed were minors whose number was four children. Yet, *Chronicle* headlines and/or first paragraphs made mention of the killing of 5 Palestinian children only out of 93, while simultaneously reporting that 6 Israeli children had been killed as one Israeli teenager's death was reported three times.<sup>67</sup>

Media's news coverage is no exception to Israel's favourism. To discourage unfavourable reporting on Israel, the lobby makes letter-writing campaigns, protests, and

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<sup>63</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, "The Israel Lobby," 29-87.

<sup>64</sup> Alessandrini, "Review of A Shadow," 5.

<sup>65</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, "The Israel Lobby," 29-87.

<sup>66</sup> Kenneth E. Bauzon, "Media Bias and the Israel Lobby in the United States", Counter Currents, last modified August 10, 2017, <https://countercurrents.org/2017/08/10/media-bias-and-the-israel-lobby-in-the-united-states/>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

boycotts against news outlets that are believed to be anti-Israel. “A CNN executive once said that he sometimes gets 6,000 email messages in a single day complaining that a story is anti-Israel.”

Similarly, the pro-Israel Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America—CAMERA—organised demonstrations outside National Public Radio stations in 33 cities in May 2003. It attempted as well to persuade contributors to withdraw support from NPR until its coverage on the Middle East became more biased to Israel.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the pressure, the Jewish lobby exerts over American government by supporting Israel, the U.S. benefits from the geopolitical, geo-economics as well as geostrategic advantages of a watchdog, a guardian that secures American interest in the Middle East. In 1992, retired Israeli General Shlomo Gazit forthrightly described Israel’s precious service to imperialism in an article he wrote in the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahronot* simply asserting that: “Israel’s main task has not changed at all, and it remains of crucial importance. Its location at the centre of the Arab Muslim Middle East predestines Israel to be a devoted guardian of the existing regimes: to prevent or halt the processes of radicalisation and to block the expansion of fundamentalist religious zealotry.”<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, almost seven decades after *Ha’aretz* declared Israel, the West’s “watchdog,” Israel is still performing the same job. Albeit the names of its enemies have changed from “communism” and “Arab nationalism” to “Islamic fundamentalism,” the same dynamic holds. Israel remains the U.S. chief guarantor of “stability” in the Middle East, for maintaining stability means maintaining the region’s status quo. Preserving the status quo, in its turn, means maintaining repressive conditions, which can only be a catalyst for future wars.

### CONCLUSION

Undeniable is the fact that the Palestinian question is important not only to Palestinians, Israelis, and their Arab state neighbours, but to many other countries in the region and around the world—uppermost the United States—for a variety of religious, cultural, and political reasons. Acting as the mediator between Israel and the Arab world, the United States has long been an important player in the quest for peace in the Middle East. If peace is ever to be realised, however, the United States must live up to its stated role as an honest broker. To date, U.S. mediation has yielded less progress on the road to peace than anticipated.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

It has, therefore, been proved that so steadfast is U.S. loyalty to Israel, that former U.S. President George Bush, the father was labelled “anti-Israeli”<sup>70</sup> for delaying a \$10 billion loan guarantee to the Jewish state in order to pressure it into halting illegal settlements in the West Bank. And it is for this reason that amidst the multitude of complex and important regional issues facing the world hegemon nowadays, the U.S. stands committed and determined to keep a close eye on a faraway Middle Eastern question such as that of Palestine.

Simultaneously, the apparent ability of Israel, one of the world’s tiniest countries, to shape the Middle East policies of the world’s remaining superpower has been a source of perplexity and constant frustration on the part of those fighting for the rights of Palestinians and the peoples of the region as a whole. One may suggest that the U.S. shared imperial culture with Israel has inhibited the former’s effort to be an impartial mediator in the process of resolving the multi-faceted existential and political conflict between the two races.

Throughout the different sections of this study, however, it has been proved that the shared imperial culture and the exceptionality of both American and Jewish races play a marginal role only in explaining the U.S. bias to and extraordinary generosity with the Jewish. The real underlying forces behind, rather, are an intermingling of both the Jewish lobby’s tremendous role in directing American politics merged with U.S. hegemonic security needs and national interest considerations—both requiring a necessity for Israel.

The significance of the Jewish lobby to this study, therefore, emerged where it concerned moulding and shaping opinions in coherence with Israel’s best interest. In our work, we have outlined the factors that help explain why the American Congress, Executive as well as media offer few criticisms of Israeli policy, rarely raise doubts over Washington’s unconditional commitment to Israel, and hardly highlight the lobby’s heavy influence on American policies. The biased coverage to Israelis in comparison to the little coverage Palestinians receive reveals the extent to which the media are complicit with U.S. foreign policy decision-makers’ calculations in war aims and shifts. This would confirm the rightness of Gramsci’s hegemony theory.

Besides, the United Nations acceptance, indifference, and participation in the inequitable partial aid, provided by the U.S. to both Israelis and Palestinians in the process of its mediation efforts, reveals the extent to which Robert Cox was right in his hegemony theory.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

In short, as long as the United States maintains close relations with Israel, Arab public opinion will continue to be animated by deep concerns regarding U.S. double standards. Moreover, the more America continues to downplay illegitimate Israeli expansion in the West Bank and refuses to denounce Israeli brutality in the Occupied Territories, the more U.S. diplomatic role in the peace process will be suspect. Thereby, a thorough examination of it has been required, a task this study has, to some extent, attempted to delve into.

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