

# **Permanent Alliance:**

*A Case Study on the Impact of US-Israeli Relations on  
US-Iranian Relations*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyzes the development of a permanent alliance and its impact on other relationships in the system. Though an alliance serves to balance against a mutual security threat, the maintenance of an alliance has the potential to destabilize the system. The long-term commitment and continued joint strategic interests of two states will evolve into a permanent alliance. Despite the perceived benefits of the alliance, the smaller state will continuously entangle the dominant state in heightened levels of commitment against its own regional security threats until those threats become permanent adversaries of the dominant state. This paper illustrates these developments through U.S.-Israeli relations and its impact on U.S.-Iranians relations. This case can be expanded to other permanent alliances in the Middle East and beyond to better understand potential obstacles to regional stability.

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# 1 Introduction

The United States prided itself on “friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none.”<sup>1</sup> In line with Washington’s Farewell Address of 1796, U.S. policymakers sought to “steer clear of permanent alliance, with any part of the world.”<sup>2</sup> In this warning to future policymakers, he did not disavow the formation of alliances, but rather expressed a hesitation towards any long-standing ties to any particular nation. Through long-standing ties, a nation was prevented from being truly free and was, “in some degree a slave.” Looking back at the last two centuries of U.S. foreign policy, has the U.S. steered clear of permanent alliances?

As the U.S. sought a greater role in the international system, alliances produced influence over smaller states and cooperation among great powers. Through a growing system of alliances, the U.S. expanded its economic capabilities and produced stability within its sphere of influence. Out of two World Wars and into the Cold War, the U.S. dove into strategic alliances throughout the developing world and tightened its existing partnerships. In a competition for alliances, the U.S. committed to protect the interests of smaller states in an effort to combat the Soviet threat. As the Soviet Union diminished, new threats emerged that threatened the United States’ system of alliances. In the Middle East, the United States committed to a War on Terror and deepened its commitments to its regional allies. Today, the United States maintains alliances throughout the world. These alliances are permanent as long as the interests remain the same.

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<sup>1</sup> Jefferson, Thomas. “First Inaugural Address, Vol. 33: 17 February to 30 April 1801.” *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 2006. P. 148-152.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton, Alexander. “Draft Fragment of George Washington’s Farewell Address, c. August 1796.” *Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library*. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

This thesis seeks to analyze the development of permanent alliances. Alliances form to balance power in system.<sup>3</sup> Though the balance of power produces stability in the system, the maintenance of alliances causes the balance of power to fail.<sup>4</sup> Dominant states in the system will commit to smaller states in the system to preserve the alliances.<sup>5</sup> This commitment comes in the form of a “payoff” through an assessment of joint strategic interests. The long-term commitment will continue as long as the joint strategic interests remain.<sup>6</sup> This evolves the alliance into a “permanent” alliance.<sup>7</sup>

Permanent alliances will impact other states in the system. The smaller state will leverage the dominant state to heighten its commitment.<sup>8</sup> Perceiving high benefits from the alliance, the dominant state becomes entangled in backing up the small state in its foreign policy objectives. The dominant state will commit against other states in the system that are security threats to the smaller state.<sup>9</sup> The perpetual commitment against the other state produces permanent adversaries in the system. The state will remain a permanent adversary as long as it is identified as a security threat to the smaller state and as long as the permanent alliance remains.

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<sup>3</sup> Levy, Jack S. “Balances and Balancing: Concepts, Propositions and Research Design.” *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate*. Eds. John A. Vasquez and Colin Elman. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Pub. 2003; Dingman, Roger V. “Theories of, and Approaches to, Alliance Politics.” *Diplomacy: New Approaches in Theory, History, and Policy*. New York. Pub. 1979; Modelski, George. “The Study of Alliances: A Review.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 7, no. 4. Pub. 1963; Friedman, Julian R. *Alliance in International Politics*. Boston. Pub. 1970; Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Pub. 1948; Morgenthau, Hans J. “Alliances in Theory and Practice.” *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*. Baltimore, MD. Pub. 1959; Gulick, Edward V. *Europe’s Classical Balance of Power*. New York: Norton. Pub. 1955; Kaplan, Morton A. *Systems and Process in International Politics*. New York: John Wiley. Pub. 1957.

<sup>4</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 467-468. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>5</sup> Gaddis, John Lewis. “The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System.” *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4. Pub. 1986. P 132. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2538951](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538951).

<sup>6</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 463. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>7</sup> The term “permanent alliance” will be defined in the Theory section.

<sup>8</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 272.

<sup>9</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 467. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

This development is illustrated through the case of the United States relationship with Israel. By analyzing U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, this paper draws out U.S. objectives and interests in the region. This is followed by an analysis of U.S.-Israeli relations to examine the development of the permanent alliance and the increase in small state influence. To draw on the impact of the permanent alliance on other relationship in the system, this study analyzes the U.S-Iranian relationship from under the Shah until today. Embedded in both studies of U.S. relations is the relationship between Israel and Iran. As the Iranian regime became more hostile towards Israel and other regional allies, the U.S. stepped down attempts to normalize relations. By examining the change in relations, this thesis aims to demonstrate the impact of the U.S.-Israeli alliance on U.S.-Iranian relations.

## 2 Theory

### 2.1 Balance of Power

Alliance literature derives from the foundational assumption that “alliances are created to provide security against threats.”<sup>10</sup> Implicit to the assumption is that alliances are created to balance power in a system. Morgenthau argues that alliances are “a necessary function of the balance of power operating in a multiple state system.”<sup>11</sup> Guided by this framework, scholars analyze alliances within the context of the balance of power theory.<sup>12</sup>

The balance of power is the “actual state of affairs in which power is distributed among several nations with approximate equality.”<sup>13</sup> At the center of this theory is the idea that “power alone can limit power.”<sup>14</sup> This “balance” forms from great powers developing and mobilizing “military capabilities sufficient to constrain the most powerful among them.”<sup>15</sup> This “most

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<sup>10</sup> Walt, Stephen M. “The Alliance Literature.” *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987.

<sup>11</sup> Morgenthau, Hans J. “Alliances in Theory and Practice.” *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*. Baltimore, MD. Pub. 1959. P. 175.

<sup>12</sup> Levy, Jack S. “Balances and Balancing: Concepts, Propositions and Research Design.” *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate*. Eds. John A. Vasquez and Colin Elman. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Pub. 2003; Dingman, Roger V. “Theories of, and Approaches to, Alliance Politics.” *Diplomacy: New Approaches in Theory, History, and Policy*. New York. Pub. 1979; Modelski, George. “The Study of Alliances: A Review.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 7, no. 4. Pub. 1963; Friedman, Julian R. *Alliance in International Politics*. Boston. Pub. 1970; Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Pub. 1948; Morgenthau, Hans J. “Alliances in Theory and Practice.” *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*. Baltimore, MD. Pub. 1959; Gulick, Edward V. *Europe’s Classical Balance of Power*. New York: Norton. Pub. 1955; Kaplan, Morton A. *Systems and Process in International Politics*. New York: John Wiley. Pub. 1957.

<sup>13</sup> Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Pub. 1948. P. 179.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce, William Cabell. *John Randolph of Roanoke*. Vol. 11. New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons. Pub. 1922. P. 211.

<sup>15</sup> Brooks, Stephen G. and Wohlforth, William C. “Realism, Balance-of-Power Theory, and the Counterbalancing Constraint.” *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pub. 2008. P. 22. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7sxgh.7](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7sxgh.7)

powerful” state is traditionally defined as having “threats of hegemony over the system.”<sup>16</sup> These “threats of hegemony” include that of unipolarity—that is “a system with one extremely capable state”—that heightens survival insecurity in other states until alliances produce a “balance” in the system.<sup>17</sup> This state is typically described as commanding “an especially large share of the resources or capabilities states can use to achieve their ends.” This “unipolar” state possesses the highest capability in the context of resource endowment, economic capacity, military strength, population size, territory, and “competence” is organizations and institutions.<sup>18</sup>

States do not solely balance against “threats of hegemony” presented by the “most powerful” nation in the system. Walt extends the definition of the balance of power to include states outside of the traditional “great powers.” Moreover, Walt argues that the balance of power is not only against “power” in the system, but generally against a “threat”. Arguing for a “balance of threat theory”, Walt maintains that accounting for the perception of “threat” considers “aggregate power” in addition to “level of threat.” The “level of threat” accounts for offensive capabilities, aggressiveness of the state’s intentions, and geographic proximity.<sup>19</sup> For this case study, threat perception based on “geographic proximity” plays an indicative role in alliance formation and alliance sustainment.

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<sup>16</sup> Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson. “Hegemonic Threats and Great-Power Balancing in Europe, 1495-1999.” *Security Studies* 14. Pub. 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Ikenberry, John G. “Introduction: Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences.” *World Politics*. Vol. 61, Number 1. Cambridge University Press. Pub. Jan. 2009; Ikenberry, G. John. *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 2002; T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortman, eds., *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Pub. 2004; Waltz, Kenneth. “Structural Realism after the Cold War.” *International Security* 24. Pub. Summer 2000; Layne, Christopher. “The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will arise.” *International Security* 17. Pub. Spring 1993; Pape, Robert. “Soft Balancing against the United States.” *International Security* 30. Pub. 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. Mass.: Addison-Wesley. Pub. 1979. P. 131.

<sup>19</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 265.



## 2.2 Defining an Alliance

An alliance is “a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states.”<sup>20</sup> In broadly defining an “alliance”, Walt adds that the alliance “assumes some level of commitment and an exchange of benefits for both parties” with an implied “cost” from “severing” the relationship.<sup>21</sup> Within the balance of power theory, “a mutually perceived threat” leads to “common national security interests” in balancing against the threat.<sup>22</sup> The individual state interest to secure itself drives the state into a single or a plethora of alliances to balance against a power or threat in the system. In Robert Osgood’s formal treatment of alliances, he contends that an alliance is “a formal agreement that pledges states to cooperate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force, or to consider the use of force, in specified circumstances.”<sup>23</sup> Osgood’s definition implies that states are likely to resort to the “use of force” rather than the alliance deterring the states from aggression. Moreover, the definition requires a formal contractual treaty between the states. Similar to Osgood, Arnold Wolfers asserts that an alliance is “a promise of mutual military assistance.”<sup>24</sup> Adding to the definition, Glenn Snyder states that the “promise” provides “explicit mutual declaration of future intent.”<sup>25</sup> The open commitment to

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<sup>20</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 1

<sup>22</sup> Ward, Michael D. *Research Gaps in Alliance Dynamics*. Denver, CO: Monograph Series in World Affairs. Pub. 1982. P. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Osgood Robert. *Alliances and American Foreign Policy*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. Pub. 1986. P. 17

<sup>24</sup> Wolfers, Arnold. “Alliances.” *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Ed. David L. Sills. New York: Macmillan. Pub. 1968. P. 268.

<sup>25</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “Alliances, Balance, and Stability.” *International Organization*. Vol. 45, no. 1. Pub. 1991. P. 123. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2706698](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706698).

“assistance” enables alliances to deliver on their “promise” through military intervention, aid, rhetorical support, arms sales, covert operations, and a whole range of collaboration.

In the broadest terms, George Liska asserts that “alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something.”<sup>26</sup> Implicit to the definition is that states will exit the alliance when it is no longer “against” or “for” someone or something. That is, an alliance will serve a state as long as it produces positive outcomes and benefits towards its objectives. Edwin Fedder limits an alliance to a “set of states acting in concert at X time.” Fedder’s assertion contains the length of an alliance to length of the “concert” action taken to enhance the “military security” of the involved states.<sup>27</sup> Under this interpretation, an alliance cannot be “permanent” unless perpetual concerted action is necessary to maintain military security. In that form, the allocation of “military assistance” to deliver on the “promise” will continue as long as the security threat remains.<sup>28</sup> If there is a “long-term” security threat, then there is a long-term alliance.

Snyder analyzes both the traditional alliance definition and the “broader phenomenon of ‘alignment.’” Alignments are between the states that are expected to hold mutual interests based on “strength inequalities, conflicts and common interests among states, and past interaction.”<sup>29</sup> These states are not bound under a traditional contract, but instead have a record of positive relations and shared security interests. For the purpose of this paper, analyzing alliances as both formal and informal “alignment” arrangements permits important strategic relations to be considered under an identical lens. This definition allows close relations throughout the

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<sup>26</sup> Liska, George. *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. Baltimore, MD. Pub. 1962.

<sup>27</sup> Fedder, Edwin. “The Concepts of Alliance.” *International Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 1. March 1968. P. 68-69.

<sup>28</sup> Wolfers, Arnold. “Alliances.” *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Ed. David L. Sills. New York: Macmillan. Pub. 1968. P. 268.

<sup>29</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “Alliances, Balance, and Stability.” *International Organization*. Vol. 45, no. 1. Pub. 1991. P. 123. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2706698](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706698).

developing world to be categorized as alliances. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many newly independent states never formed contractual relations with dominant states in order to evade internal or external critique of foreign dependence.<sup>30</sup> Within the case study, the United States is not under a formal contractual treaty with Israel, but “no one would question the level of commitment between these two states.”<sup>31</sup> This paper will refer to an alliance as the definition offered by Walt: “a formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more sovereign states” that “assumes some level of commitment and an exchange of benefits for both parties” with an implied “cost” from “severing” the relationship.<sup>32</sup>

Accepting this definition, a “permanent” alliance refers to a long-standing “formal or informal arrangement for security cooperation” that sustains the highest “level of commitment” from “two or more sovereign states.” Both states will seek to preserve the alliance as long as the states continue to gain high benefits and to share joint strategic interests. This relationship will be exited if the converse is true. Thus, the definition does not presume the alliance will be indefinite, but rather highlights the length of the relationship and its probability of continuation in the future.

### *2.3 Failure of the Balance of Power*

The balance of power theory holds that alliances will form in order to avoid domination by a stronger state in the system.<sup>33</sup> A state will choose to “balance” against another state by

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<sup>30</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 12.

<sup>33</sup> Walt, Stephen M. “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power.” *International Security*, vol. 9, no. 4. Pub. 1985. P. 5. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/2538540](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538540);

“flock[ing] to the weaker side.”<sup>34</sup> By aligning with that which is perceived as “weaker” side, the state will come into the alliance as the dominant state and carry greater influence over the partnered state. In a bipolar system, such as that established during the Cold War era, states are faced with the choice of allying with two dominant states. For smaller states in the system, there is no opportunity to influence the other state by coming into the alliance as the dominant state. Under these conditions, the smaller state will align with the state that can produce a higher level of commitment. That is, the state will flock to the side that can likely commit to its national security. This type of alignment is difficult to categorize as “balancing” and can instead be interpreted as “bandwagoning.” States will bandwagon by allying with the strongest power. The stronger state “collects those on the sidelines” as it weakens the powers aligned against it.<sup>35</sup> Bandwagoning allows the dominant state to collect any state that calculates its highest chance of survival is through allying with the security threat. By choosing to bandwagon, the smaller state is susceptible to the dominant state exerting influence and infringing upon its sovereignty.<sup>36</sup>

In calculating whether to balance or bandwagon, the state will align based on what it perceives will produce the greatest reduction in its security threat. As stated previously, this calculation is based not only on the perception of aggregate power but also of the level of threat the state presents. The level of threat calculation is based on offensive capabilities, aggressiveness of the state’s intentions, and geographic proximity.<sup>37</sup> These factors account for population, technological advancement, military strength and size, industrial prowess, ability to project power, ability to threaten the territorial integrity of another state, and the perception of

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<sup>34</sup> Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. Mass: Addison-Wesley. Pub. 1979. P. 127.

<sup>35</sup> Thompson, W. Scott. “The Communist International System.” *Orbis*, Vol. 20, No. 4. Pub. Winter 1977. P. 843.

<sup>36</sup> Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. Mass: Addison-Wesley. Pub. 1979. P. 126.

<sup>37</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 265.

intent.<sup>38</sup> The state will use these factors not only to determine the capability of potential allies and adversaries, but also to factor in its individual capabilities. Depending on the calculation made by the deciding state, it will rationally act in its own self-interest to balance or bandwagon with the side that ranks the highest in cumulative capabilities. If the state rationally believes that balancing will equal if not outnumber the capabilities of the aggressor, then it is in the best interest of the state for self-preservation to join forces against the threat. However, if the state rationally believes that the aggressor has the capability to threaten its survival even after it balances against the threat, then it is in the best interest of the state to bandwagon. In Walt's analysis of whether balancing or bandwagoning is more prevalent, he finds that states will opt to balance more often than bandwagon. With the tendency to balance at a higher rate than to bandwagon, states are hypothetically more secure against a threatening variable in the system.<sup>39</sup>

Assuming that balancing is the more common inclination of a state, the balance of power will produce "approximate equality" in a system.<sup>40</sup> The equality from the alliances will reduce the probability of aggression and increase the likelihood of stability in the system.<sup>41</sup> The stability in alliances derives not only from the reduction in the probability of aggression, but also the credible protection against an attack backed by the joint capabilities of the ally and the state.<sup>42</sup> This stands as long as the balance of power is responsive to changes in power dynamics within the system. The balance of power is always shifting in the system because of the internal changes of individual states that requires an opposing shift by other states in the system.

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<sup>38</sup> Walt, Stephen M. "Explaining Alliance Formation." *The Origins of Alliance*. Cornell University Press, 1987. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6). P. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987.

<sup>40</sup> Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics Among Nations*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Pub. 1948. P. 179.

<sup>41</sup> Levy, Jack. "Alliance Formation and War Behavior." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25, no. 4. Pub. December 1981. P. 582.

<sup>42</sup> Snyder, Glenn. "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut." *Journal of International Affairs* 44. No. 1. Pub. Spring 1990. P. 110.

The balance of power fails when the shifts in “power” are not countered by a shift in alliances. If a state in a system increases its power, the other states in the system should react by rebalancing to account for the change in the distribution of power. When states remain in an alliance despite the unequal distribution of power, the system destabilizes.<sup>43</sup> As Miglietta contends, “permanent alliances” can “reduce the number of possible coalitions that could form against a potential aggressor,” and can “eliminate potential balancers within the international system.” Specifically, Miglietta asserts that “permanent alliances” can produce polarization in a system by eliminating the “balancers” necessary to put dominant states in check.<sup>44</sup> Without the “rebalance of power,” states threatening the system can continue to expand unchecked by other states and secured within their system of permanent alliances. Though the alliances may have initially formed to balance against another power, the longevity of the alliance imposes a cost on not solely the states within the alliance but also on all other states in the system. If the shift in power derives from within the alliance, the allied states will remain in the relationship because of the perceived benefits to its own security from the increase in the power of its ally. If the shift in power derives from outside of the alliance, the states will remain in the alliance and attempt to balance by seeking out other states. However, other states will remain allied to the strengthening state because of the perceived benefits from the increase in the power of its ally. This produces an inequality in a polarized system as long as the states remain in their previous alliances. The inequality can be limited by states building up their capabilities to counter the threat in the system. The buildup of capabilities by both sides can produce heightened instability in the

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<sup>43</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 467-468. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>44</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 10; Ole R. Holsti, Terrence P. Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances Comparative Studies*. New York: Wiley. Pub. 1973; Kaplan, Morton A. *Systems and Process in International Politics*. New York: John Wiley. Pub. 1957.

system.<sup>45</sup> The uneven power dynamic in the system creates internal insecurity among states. The alternative is for the states to abandon the standing alliances in the system and form new alliances to balance against the growing threat or power in the system.

## *2.4 Commitments in an Alliance*

When there is an uneven distribution of power, states should “rebalance” to stabilize the system. However, the “strengthening state” or dominant state will attempt to maintain these alliances to prevent states from balancing against itself. The dominant state will seek to preserve a “coalition”—implying a system of alliances consisting of more than two states—that is greater or equal to other “coalitions” in the system. In the bipolar system that existed during the Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviet Union committed “sufficient advantages” to smaller states in the formation of bilateral alliances to decrease the probability of smaller states aligning with the other dominant state.<sup>46</sup> As Snyder outlines, the dominant state offers a “payoff” to meet the interests of the smaller state in the alliance.<sup>47</sup> This “payoff” is generated in consideration of the joint strategic interests from the alliance including not only the balance of power, but also the defense of a close neighbor or the expansion of national security and influence. Snyder specifically outlines common interests that can arise from a shared ethnic, ideological, or

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<sup>45</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 461. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>46</sup> Gaddis, John Lewis. “The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System.” *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4. Pub. 1986. P 132. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2538951](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538951).

<sup>47</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 463. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

economic values.<sup>48</sup> The higher the joint strategic interests, the greater the likelihood of high levels of commitment in the alliance and the greater the probability of the alliance becoming “permanent”.

The “payoff” comes in the form of varying levels of commitment. To ensure that the smaller state is more secure in an alliance with the dominant state than it would be from rebalancing, the dominant state commits to the national security of the smaller state. As stated previously, the alliance holds “a promise of mutual military assistance.”<sup>49</sup> The military assistance aims to increase the national security of both states by strengthening the coalition. The commitment by the dominant state to the smaller state produces commitment ranging from aid, rhetorical support, arms sales, and covert operations to collaborate projects and training programs. The level of commitment is indicative of the strength of the alliance.<sup>50</sup> At the beginning, the level of commitment will be relatively low. That is, the commitment will be equal to the necessary “payoff” to prevent the smaller state from exiting the alliance.

The dominant state may attempt to “leverage” the smaller state through an increase in commitment beyond that of the necessary “payoff”.<sup>51</sup> The dominant state will seek to leverage the smaller state if it perceives it can obtain some additional benefit to its national interest. In a regional system, the dominant state may attempt to “leverage” to gain influence or achieve some other foreign policy objective through the smaller state.<sup>52</sup> In the early stages of an alliance, the dominant state can “leverage” with minimal additional commitment. This “leverage” produces

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<sup>48</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 464. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>49</sup> Wolfers, Arnold. “Alliances.” *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Ed. David L. Sills. New York: Macmillan. Pub. 1968. P. 268.

<sup>50</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 12.

<sup>51</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 272.

<sup>52</sup> Burns, William J. *Economic Aid and American Policy Toward Egypt, 1955-1981*. Albany: State University of New York Press. Pub 1985. P. 211-212.



high benefits for the dominant state in sustaining the alliance. Moreover, in this stage the smaller state is too weak to “leverage” the dominant state. As the alliance continues, the smaller state will increase in capability from the perpetual gains of the “payoff”. With heightened capability, the dominant state must commit additional support to “leverage” the smaller state. Overtime, as the alliance becomes “permanent” the smaller state is less influenceable and commitment only produces “limited leverage” for the dominant state.<sup>53</sup> The length of the alliance demonstrates a “strong commitment.” The “strong commitment and support will have the undesired effect of reducing one’s bargaining leverage over the ally” because the ally “knows he can count on being supported” by the dominant state. This certainty of support will make the smaller state “less influenceable.”<sup>54</sup> As the dominant state gains less from the alliance, the smaller state continues to enjoy increasing benefits.

## *2.5 Heightened Commitment and Small State Influence*

The commitment to the smaller state strengthens the alliance and the individual position of the ally. As long as both states benefit from heightened security within the alliance, the states will continue in the alliance. The longer the alliance holds, the greater the cumulative commitment from the dominant state to the smaller state. The allocation of aid and other forms of commitment will heighten the capability of the smaller state. Overtime, the smaller state will be comparatively more powerful than before. Within a regional system, the smaller state may comparatively heighten to middle power capabilities. This implies that the state has equal or

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<sup>53</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 272.

<sup>54</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 467. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

greater capabilities than other states in the system. Presumably, these other states are not aligned with the dominant power and are aligned with other states.

As the smaller state increases in capabilities, it decreases in its ability to be leveraged by the dominant state. In this regard, the commitment “has made [the ally] stronger but not more obedient.”<sup>55</sup> To gain limited leverage the smaller state, the payoff must be heightened. That is, the level of commitment will increase the stronger the smaller state becomes. This produces heightened commitment through an escalation of “assistance.” As long as the dominant state perceives that the alliance benefits its individual interests and objectives, it will continue to commit to the smaller state.

The longer the alliance endures, the more the smaller state will attempt to leverage the dominant state. The attempt by the smaller state to leverage the dominant state will be referred to as “small state influence.” The smaller state in the alliance will use the dominant state’s extensive security alliance system to “influence” the initiatives of the dominant state in favor of its individual domestic and foreign policy interests. This is usually observed through smaller states leveraging more aid. By influence, this means the ability of one state to get the other state in a relationship “to do something they would not otherwise do.”<sup>56</sup> For some scholars, this is referred to as power or control.<sup>57</sup> When examining the interests of a state, it is difficult to ascertain what the state would and would not do. This paper does not claim to know what the U.S. “would not otherwise do.” However, the case study attempts to identify the United States’

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<sup>55</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 272.

<sup>56</sup> Hart, Jeffrey. “Three Approaches to the Measurement of Power in International Relations,” *International Organizations*, Vol. 30, No. 2. Pub. Spring 1976. P. 291.

<sup>57</sup> Baldwin, David A. “Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends versus Old Tendencies.” *World Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 2. Pub. Jan. 1979. P. 161-194; Nye, Joseph F. *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pub. 2002.

action in concert with Israel in the context of U.S. foreign policy in the region and across the globe.

The smaller state will utilize the alliance security system and overall commitment of the dominant power to strengthen its nation as a “middle power” in its regional system. By influencing the dominant state, the smaller state in the long-standing alliance is able to leverage increased commitment by inflating the necessity for assistance and support. This inflation can occur by means of threatening to “rebalance” with another power in the system or by feigning a weaker position in the system to receive increased aid, commitment, or even intervention in a regional conflict on their behalf. Smaller states “have an obvious interest in voicing their doubts so as to persuade the [dominant power] to do more on their behalf.”<sup>58</sup> The dominant state will deliver if it perceives that the alliance still serves its national interests and objectives.<sup>59</sup> The size of the dominant state’s alliance system or “network” factors into the likelihood of influence. The larger the alliance system, the higher the probability of small state influence. With an extensive alliance system, it is more difficult to monitor and collect information to verify the level of threat. Applied to the United States’ alliance system, Keohane contends that “so long as the U.S. remains dedicated to policies of global involvement,” a smaller state can take advantage of the American alliance system and especially the allocation of aid for its own gains.<sup>60</sup> Many smaller states during the Cold War inflated the threat of the Soviet Union to their national security to stimulate increased commitment from the United States. Within the American alliance system

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<sup>58</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 282; Larson, “The Bandwagoning Metaphor”; Nye “Détente” *Making America’s Soviet Policy*. P. 242.

<sup>59</sup> Keohane, Robert O. “The Big Influence of Small Allies.” *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 167. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

<sup>60</sup> Keohane, Robert O. “The Big Influence of Small Allies.” *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 163. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

during the Cold War, “efforts to forge a global alliance against Moscow [made] it much easier for clients of the United States to exploit its assistance for their own reasons.”<sup>61</sup>

The higher the level of commitment, the more likely the ability of the smaller state to exert influence. As Keohane argues, the smaller state will continue to “leverage” the dominant state as long as the dominant state perceives the commitment to be in its interest. This can occur through formal bargaining, alternative diplomatic channels, and organized groups in the dominant state. Keohane also argues that these patterns of influence are reliant on the weaker state avoiding hostility toward the dominant state, advocating foreign policy that benefits the dominant state, developing close ties of “mutual dependence” with multiple arms of the dominant state’s government, and galvanizing support from groups residing in the dominant state. Utilizing diplomatic channels can be achieved through the military, intelligence, and other bureaus within the dominant state’s government.<sup>62</sup>

The higher the level of investment of the dominant state, the more likely the ability of the smaller state to exert influence. The probability of influence by a smaller state rises with the increase of “common interests” or “assets.”<sup>63</sup> These commonalities include bases, intelligence sharing, aid programs, developmental projects, training programs, and military strength dependability.<sup>64</sup> Keohane continues the application the United States by citing the “commonalities” that are critical to the CIA, AID, the Army, Navy, and the Air Force. If an alliance is assessed by the State Department as a high cost to the U.S., the aforementioned arms

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<sup>61</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 283.

<sup>62</sup> Keohane, Robert O. “The Big Influence of Small Allies.” *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 167. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

<sup>63</sup> Lake, David. *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in its Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1999. Print; Keohane, Robert O. “The Big Influence of Small Allies.” *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 165. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

<sup>64</sup> Keohane, Robert O. “The Big Influence of Small Allies.” *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 165. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

of the government can make the case for its continuation by inflating the smaller state's value to their operations. Based on this assumption, the probability that a smaller state will exert influence on a dominant state is heightened by the degree of military and economic involvement in the smaller state.<sup>65</sup> This argument can be applied to social involvement in an alliance. A "common interest" or "asset" can be an interest group residing in the smaller state. In the same form, a smaller state can exert influence on a dominant state using an interest group as a bargaining tool. The weaker state has the ability to inflate the security threat that the interest group within the country faces. By inflating the necessity for protection of the interest group, the state can gain increased military and economic aid. For the dominant state, the higher the percentage of the weaker state's population residing in their state plays a major role in dictating foreign policy towards that state. Moreover, the high presence of a specific ethnic or religious group can play the same role in swaying foreign policy towards other states. Keohane expands on this pattern of influence by prescribing it to "organized group support" residing in the dominant state. This influence relies on broad-based support from groups that align in foreign policy goals, ideological preferences, religious orientation, and/or ethnic background.<sup>66</sup> Other forms of influence explored by Keohane include "super-loyalty" of the smaller state to the dominant state. Additionally, the smaller state may attempt to receive commitment from an outside state to leverage increased commitment from the dominant state.

Influence by a smaller state on a dominant state is based on the level of military, economic, and social involvement of the dominant state in the affairs of the smaller state. The longer a state is involved in the affairs of another state, the higher the involvement through long-

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<sup>65</sup> Keohane, Robert O. "The Big Influence of Small Allies." *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 165. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

<sup>66</sup> Keohane, Robert O. "The Big Influence of Small Allies." *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 166. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

term investment and heightened entanglement.<sup>67</sup> The length of an alliance increases the probability of influence and bargaining from the smaller state because of the slow increase overtime of military, economic, and social engagement and collaboration. The length of the alliance will produce an increased commitment to the smaller state to protect the investment the dominant state has placed in the smaller state. Perceiving the benefits of protecting these investments as higher than the cost of maintaining the security relationship, the state will sustain contracts, programs, and aid to foster widened commitment. This increases the likelihood of an alliance remaining permanent. As Keohane notes, “American agencies become dependent on the small ally’s consent to their continued presence within its boundaries,” which necessitates increased commitment to sustain their accessibility to the country.<sup>68</sup>

## *2.6 Perpetual Commitment against an Ally’s Adversary*

The permanent alliance will produce small state influence. The dominant state will continue to increase the level of commitment to the smaller state as long as it obtains benefits within the alliance. As the smaller state perpetually receives heightened commitment from the dominant state, it will be emboldened to test the limits of the commitment to carry out its domestic and foreign policy objectives. As Walt emphasizes, smaller states will voice their doubts to “persuade” the dominant power “to do more on their behalf.”<sup>69</sup> The small state

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<sup>67</sup> Lake, David. *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in its Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1999. Print

<sup>68</sup> Keohane, Robert O. “The Big Influence of Small Allies.” *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 165. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

<sup>69</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 282; Larson, “The Bandwagoning Metaphor”; Nye “Détente” *Making America’s Soviet Policy*. P. 242.

influence will lead the dominant state to “do something [it] would not otherwise do” if it was acting on its own.<sup>70</sup>

This is heightened within a permanent alliance because the low probability that the dominant state will exit the relationship. The likelihood of exiting the relationship is decreased as the commitment increases. The entanglement through aid, assistance, collaborative programs, and shared intelligence makes the cost of exiting the alliance extremely high. The higher the cost, the less likely the state will exit the alliance in light of the benefits from sustaining the alliance. Hence, even if the actions of the smaller state place strains on the relationship, the alliance will continue to be maintained as long as the general trend in joint security interests remains the same.

Though the interest of the dominant state is served within the alliance, the longevity of the relationship can lead the dominant state to “overcommit” on behalf of its ally. That is, the dominant state may commit more than what is necessary without receiving the anticipated benefits.<sup>71</sup> Alternatively, overcommitment can occur when the dominant state commits to its ally at one point in time and unwittingly sets a precedent for future commitment in similar initiatives. Under this definition, when the dominant state heightens the level of commitment, it sets a standard level for commitment in the future. This can lead the dominant state commit against other states in the system on behalf of its ally and set a precedent for future action against that state so long as that state remains a threat. Sabrosky relates this to the U.S. involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>72</sup> This is observed throughout the case study as commitment without

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<sup>70</sup> Hart, Jeffrey. “Three Approaches to the Measurement of Power in International Relations,” *International Organizations*, Vol. 30, No. 2. Pub. Spring 1976. P. 291.

<sup>71</sup> Sabrosky, Alan Ned. “Alliances in U.S. Foreign Policy.” *Alliances in U.S. Foreign Policy: Issues in the Quest for Collective Defense*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Pub. 1988. P. 8.

<sup>72</sup> Sabrosky, Alan Ned. “Alliances in U.S. Foreign Policy.” *Alliances in U.S. Foreign Policy: Issues in the Quest for Collective Defense*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Pub. 1988. P. 8.

gaining concessions when the dominant state commits without gaining benefits towards its own objectives. This type of behavior plays out through entrapment.

In a permanent alliance the dominant state risks entrapment. This is in addition to the risk of abandonment, “de-alignment,” failure to follow through on specific commitments, or lack of follow through on contingencies where support was formerly anticipated.<sup>73</sup> These other risks are lowered within a permanent alliance, but the risk of entrapment remains relatively high.

Entrapment occurs when “one values the preservation of the alliance more than the cost of fighting for the ally’s interests.” Entrapment has the potential to drag a state, “into a conflict over an ally’s interests that one does not share, or shares only partially,” but the state values the preservation of the alliance more than the cost of the conflict. The risk of entrapment increases the higher the level of commitment to the alliance or the greater the reliance on the alliance.

These factors heighten entrapment because “the ally becomes intransigent in disputes with opponents because of his confidence in one’s support.”<sup>74</sup> The smaller state may become more offensive and aggressive to achieve its interests when it can rely on the backing of its permanent ally. This is more likely once the state has a stronger relative positioning within the regional system as a middle power or potential regional hegemon.

## *2.7 Permanent Adversary from a Permanent Alliance*

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<sup>73</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 466. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>74</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 467. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).



Snyder argues that a state with the highest level of commitment toward an alliance will support the ally in “specific conflict interactions with the adversary.”<sup>75</sup> The height of this commitment is military intervention on behalf of the smaller state. The dominant state will generate “full support in specific adversary conflict” on behalf of the smaller state.<sup>76</sup> The dominant state will act on behalf of the smaller state in an isolated conflict against another state or set of states to protect the smallest state from a national security threat. Though the smaller state may have become entangled in the incident, the dominant state is committed to protecting the ally from weakening its position. If the smaller state was to weaken in position, the dominant state would forfeit some of the benefits of the alliance. Therefore, though the dominant state may not be directly threatened by the state, the threat to its permanent ally is a threat to itself. If the security threat remains, the dominant state is likely to continue to commit on behalf of the smaller state to protect the alliance. The higher the level of commitment to an alliance, the greater “the degree of threat” of an opposing state of the smaller state to the dominant state.<sup>77</sup> The perpetual commitment against another state in the system on behalf of a “permanent” alliance will over time produce an adversary for the dominant state. Even though the dominant state’s objectives may not be against the state, the commitment from the alliance will place the two states on opposing sides. Consistently acting against the other state in the system, the dominant state will adopt policies against this state over time in favor of protecting the interests of its “permanent” alliance. This will remain true as long as the opposing state remains a security threat to the smaller state. That is, as long as the state is a threat to the permanent ally, the

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<sup>75</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 466. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>76</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 466. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

<sup>77</sup> Snyder, Glenn H. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics*. Vol. 36, no. 4. Pub. 1984. P 468. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/2010183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010183).

dominant state will continue to commit to working against the state. This produce a “permanent” adversary out of the “permanent” alliance.

This holds a high political cost for an individual state. Though the dominant state may have had an interest in forming and maintaining the alliance for its own security purposes, the longevity of the relationship can lead to heightened commitment without achieving actual benefits to its objectives. Despite this commitment benefiting the individual state by strengthening the alliance, it can also lead to repercussions for the dominant state’s relations throughout the system. The state may have joined the alliance to bring security to the system or a balance of power. In maintaining the alliance, the dominant state may have sought heightened security against other threats to itself, but in the process adopted additional opponent from its permanent ally. In its commitment to the permanent alliance, the dominant state contributes to the destabilization of the system.

## 3 Middle Eastern System

### *3.1 Defining the Middle Eastern System*

The Middle Eastern system in recent decades has been characterized by perpetual instability. Engulfed in civil wars, insurgencies, and proxy wars, the region has remained an area of interest for scholars seeking to analyze the persistent obstacles to stability. Understanding the dynamics of the system are critical to analyzing alliance formation in the region.

The region of study encompasses Iran to the East through Egypt to the West and the Arabian Peninsula to the South up to Turkey in the North. For the purpose of this study, this region is referred to as the “Middle East” as it was popularized by Alfred Thayer Mahan in 1901.<sup>78</sup> This area excludes Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, and Arab North Africa, which in more recent years have been critical to the study of the “Greater Middle East” also referenced as the “Middle East North Africa” or condensed to the “MENA”. Within this paper, Afghanistan is mentioned not for the purpose of its relevance as a state in the regional system, but rather for the significance of its history in understanding United States policy in the larger vicinity that led to subsequent foreign policy decisions impacting the region in question.

For the analysis of this region, the “Middle East” is viewed within political systems theory as the “Middle Eastern System.” For political systems theory, a general system is made up of a set of variables where every variable is interdependent on one or more of the other variables

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<sup>78</sup> Koppes, Clayton R. “Captain Mahan, General Gordon, and the Origins of the Term 'Middle East'.” *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1976, pp. 95–98. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/4282584](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4282584). PDF. P. 95

in the same system.<sup>79</sup> Within the Middle Eastern System, the variables are the states. These involved states include Egypt, Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the State of Palestine. The last variable, the State of Palestine, is included not as an undisputed nation-state in the system, but rather as a critical variable that “defined the debate about regional order,” in the system. Palestine as a variable within the Middle Eastern system is pivotal to understanding diplomatic relations and ensuing foreign policy initiatives.<sup>80</sup> Analyzing the Middle Eastern region as a “system” is an important platform for answering broader questions about state behavior in international relations.<sup>81</sup>

Characteristically, a single action or event in one portion of the system has a consequence or reactionary event in another portion of the regional system.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, states in the system have some implicit role in one or more transborder but local security externalities.<sup>83</sup> Within the context of systems theory, an externality is a cost or impact imposed on a nation-state not involved in the agency of an action. Moreover, if a local transborder conflict occurs, it will have a “downstream” effect on other nation-states involved in the regional system. This “negative externality” on those outside of the action is pivotal in characterizing which states or non-state actors are part of the system.<sup>84</sup> In the Middle Eastern system, events, such as the Arab-Israel War or the Gulf Wars, have the ability to engulf the whole region not solely due to geographic proximity but because of an interconnectedness among variables in the system. These events

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<sup>79</sup> Kaplan, Morton A. “Systems Theory and Political Science.” *Social Research*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1968, pp. 30–47. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/40969897](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40969897). PDF. P. 32.

<sup>80</sup> Barnett, Michael N. *Dialogues in Arab Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pub. 1960. P. 16.

<sup>81</sup> Fawcett, Louise and Hurrell, Andrew, eds. *Regionalism in World Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. Print.

<sup>82</sup> Jervis, Robert. *Systems Effects*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997. Print. P. 17-21.

<sup>83</sup> Lake, David. “Regional Security Complexes: A Systems Approach.” *Regional Orders*. P. 48-49

<sup>84</sup> Lake, David. “Regional Security Complexes: A Systems Approach.” *Regional Orders*. P. 50

help define the system as not solely a network of Arab states but also one of non-Arab states, such as Israel, Iran, and Turkey.<sup>85</sup>

### *3.2 Background on the Middle Eastern System*

The Middle Eastern system as it is known today was molded over centuries. As a passage for trade and a vibrant agricultural region, the Middle East was a breeding ground for religion, culture, language, economic growth, innovation, and power. As a region of “considerable strategic importance,” it has been subject to outside influence, interference, and control since its genesis.<sup>86</sup> At various points in time, the region of study had been possessed by a plethora of empires, insurgencies, and foreign powers. With the establishment of modern-day nation-states, great powers have attempted to gain influence and support in the region by forming alliances and coalitions. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the area of study was under the domain of the Ottoman Empire and the Qajar Empire. By the outbreak of the First World War, the two empires were in decline as the economic and imperial ambitions of its European counterparts were on the rise.

For the Qajar Empire, it had lost present-day Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the northern Caucasus region to Russia and was reduced to present-day Iran through the Turkmanchy Treaty and the Golestan Treaty.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, through a series of concessions to the British and Russians, Iranian leadership had conceded a significant amount of economic control to European

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<sup>85</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “Systemic Approaches to Middle East International Relations.” *International Studies Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1999, pp. 11–31. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3186364](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3186364). PDF. P. 11.

<sup>86</sup> Walt, Stephen M. “Why the Middle East?” *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6).

<sup>87</sup> Rashidvash, Vahid. “The Qajar Dynasty in Iran: The Most Important Occurrence Evented in the Qajars Monarchy.” *International Journal of Business and Social Science*. Pub. June 2012. P 182. [http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_3\\_No\\_12\\_Special\\_Issue\\_June\\_2012/18.pdf](http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_12_Special_Issue_June_2012/18.pdf)

hands.<sup>88</sup> In the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, the two powers divided Persia into Northern and Southeastern spheres of influence for future concessions and control.<sup>89</sup> This cooperation led to the extension of the Entente Cordiale of 1904 into the Triple Entente between Russia, Britain, and France. In addition to solidifying an alignment between three great powers, the entente accelerated collaboration over the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire in the pre-war period.<sup>90</sup>

For the Ottoman Empire, though it still formally possessed most of the current Middle Eastern region, had effectively lost control of many of its protectorates. Present-day Egypt, Cyprus, and the Gulf sheikhdoms were under the occupation and Administration of Britain.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, the region of Lebanon was essentially under the control of six European powers, Russia claimed protection over Orthodox populations, and France claimed protection over Catholic populations residing within the Empire.<sup>92</sup> In addition to power slipping into the hands of foreign powers, the Ottoman Empire was also facing decentralization from within. With the Turkification of the government at the beginning of the century, “Arab” populations began to push for greater decentralization from Istanbul’s grasp. Though the system already operated as highly localized domains under the umbrella of Ottoman rule, this departure towards Arabism over Ottomanism and Turkism would precipitate the breakdown of the Empire during the war.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Amanat, Abbas. *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831–1896*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. Pub. 1997.

[http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_3\\_No\\_12\\_Special\\_Issue\\_June\\_2012/18.pdf](http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_12_Special_Issue_June_2012/18.pdf)

<sup>89</sup> Greaves, Rose Louise. “Some Aspects of the Anglo-Russian Convention and Its Working in Persia, 1907-14--I.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*. vol. 31, no. 1. 1968. P. 74. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/612004](http://www.jstor.org/stable/612004).

<sup>90</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 134.

<sup>91</sup> Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Pub. 1990. Print. P. 33.

<sup>92</sup> Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Pub. 1990. Print. P. 36.

<sup>93</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 141.

By the time World War I broke out in Europe, the future of the Ottoman and Qajar Empires was being settled outside of Istanbul and Tehran. During the war, the Qajar Empire declared neutrality. Nevertheless, its land became the battleground for a plethora of clashes between the involved powers and the ensuing occupation by the Allied Powers until the close of the war. Weakened by the occupation, the Qajar Dynasty, ruled by Ahmad Shah, was eventually overthrown in a British-backed coup d'état and replaced by the Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1921.<sup>94</sup> The Pahlavi Dynasty would remain in power until the Iranian Revolution of 1979. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire had joined the war on the side of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By placing itself directly against the Great Powers that sought to conquer it, it opened the door for the resolution of the "Eastern Question". During the war, the Allied Powers began to carve out the new Middle East. Between 1914 to 1918, Russia, Britain, and France engaged in the backdoor Constantinople Agreement of 1915 and the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 in addition to Britain also making arrangements with Arab populations in the Empire and Jewish peoples through the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence between 1915 and 1916 and the Balfour Declaration of 1917. By the close of the conflict in 1918, Britain and France had advanced into all of the Ottoman's Arab provinces and the sultanate was confined to historic Anatolia.<sup>95</sup>

The Allied Powers brought the wartime arrangements to life through the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, the San Remo Conference of 1920, the Treaty of Sevres of 1920 and the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. Though the Treaty of Sevres was agreed to by the Ottoman government, the subsequent insurgency in the South and the Turkish War of Independence led to small adjustments of the agreement at Lausanne. Signed by Kemal Ataturk's Turkish

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<sup>94</sup> Rashidvash, Vahid. "The Qajar Dynasty in Iran: The Most Important Occurrence Evented in the Qajars Monarchy." *International Journal of Business and Social Science*. Pub. June 2012. P 184.  
[http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_3\\_No\\_12\\_Special\\_Issue\\_June\\_2012/18.pdf](http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_12_Special_Issue_June_2012/18.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard. Pub. 1991. Print.

government, the Treaty of Lausanne finalized European control in the region with an independent Republic of Turkey in historical Anatolia. Since the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the European Great Powers had viewed the region as inevitably falling into their respective controls, but the “Eastern Question” prevailed over how it would be divided.<sup>96</sup> The conclusion of the First World War and the subsequent peace settlements reached by 1922 solved the century long “Eastern Question.”<sup>97</sup>

Through these settlements and with the establishment of the League of Nations, Britain was granted Mandates over Transjordan and Iraq and France acquired the Levant through the French Mandate of Syria and Lebanon. Under the French Mandate, France implemented direct rule over the local government in Syria through a large military presence and French civilian administrators that disabled the ability of a galvanizing local voice until their withdrawal in 1946. Though there were a plethora of attempts at revolt and rebellion within Greater Syria during the Mandate, the French employed harsh military intervention to prevent losing their foothold.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the France’s hawkish stance proved to be a unifying force for developing Arab unity and anti-imperialist sentiment throughout the region that would impact Syrian political development in its early independence.

For the French Mandate in Lebanon, the local authorities were able to cultivate a greater role in the governmental and leadership structures in exchange for French influence in affairs and military bases in strategic locations.<sup>99</sup> During this period, the French intensified the sectarian

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<sup>96</sup> Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Pub. 1990. Print. P. 558.

<sup>97</sup> Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Pub. 1990. Print. P. 558.

<sup>98</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 217.

<sup>99</sup> Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 331.



divide to benefit Maronite Christians in Lebanon against a disenfranchised Muslim community. Through the governmental structure put in place in 1926 and inked into the National Pact of 1943, only a Maronite could ascend as president, a Sunni as Prime Minister, and a Shi'ite as Speaker of the chamber. This hierarchy is still engrained in the Lebanese constitution today and has had a lasting impact on ensuing sectarian violence, instability, civil wars, and susceptibility to non-state actors in recent decades.<sup>100</sup> Though both Lebanon and Syria were formally recognized as independent in 1941, France didn't fully surrender the Mandate until armed resistance and British intervention forced their withdraw from the region in 1946.<sup>101</sup>

For the British Mandate, the British structured the new system through indirect rule. Through multiple Anglo-Iraqi treaties in the following decades, Britain made Faisal I bin Hussein the ruler of the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq and proceeded to gain oil concessions and influence over the developing government.<sup>102</sup> The Kingdom was an amalgamation of three distinct provinces and the pulling together of Kurds, Assyrians, and Jews in addition to the large Shi'ite and Sunni populations. Strategically, the British favored the minority Sunni Arabs over the majority Shi'ite Arabs and limited Iraqi access to the Persian Gulf by favoring the Kuwaiti protectorate. Both of these actions lay the groundwork for a multitude of internal and external conflicts towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>103</sup>

In Transjordan to the East of the river, similar to Iraq, Britain recognized the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan in 1921 and placed Abdullah as King. In succeeding Anglo-

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<sup>100</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 226.

<sup>101</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 230.

<sup>102</sup> Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 331.

<sup>103</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 205.

Transjordanian agreements, the Kingdom would gain increasing freedom until it was fully independent in 1946. Britain was left to work out the region to the left of the Jordan River between the Palestinians who had been promised full rights and Jewish peoples who had been promised a homeland. Attempting to deliver on its contradicting promises, the people groups entering and already within the region would increasingly clash until its unfolding into the intractable conflict that still exists today: the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. For the British role in its development, the European power would attempt to, “retain direct rule, permit immigration within limits, favor on the whole the economic development of the Jewish community, and assure the Arabs from time to time that what was happening would not be allowed to lead to their subjection.”<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, decades of no resolution brought on riots, violent clashes, land seizures, underground militias, rapid immigration during the Second World War, and the eventual declaration of an independent Jewish State of Israel in 1948.

The interwar period also delivered the independence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa’ud’s rule and through the Wahhabi order. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the House of Sa’ud had made swift maneuvers to control the Najd region in northern present-day Saudi Arabia by the end of the First World War. Through employing Wahhabi sentiment, providing arms, and building up agricultural communities, Sa’ud was able to galvanize individual tribal groups under his authority. After driving the British-selected leader, Sharif Hussein, out of the Hijaz, the British negotiated a settlement with Ibn Sa’ud in the Treaty of Jiddah in 1927. The treaty recognized the independent state under the House of Sa’ud in exchange for the Kingdom respecting Britain’s special privileges with the sheikdoms and protectorates along the coast that would later become Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab

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<sup>104</sup> Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 331.

Emirates, Oman, and Yemen.<sup>105</sup> Despite the House of Sa'ud having successfully asserted its independence, the Kingdom itself was not immune to dependency and reliance on European and eventually American influence. With a major concession for oil exploration to Standard Oil of California in 1933 and its discovery in 1938, Saudi Arabia would emerge into the second half of the century as an increasingly important player in the region for outside powers to build and maintain stable and cooperative relations with.<sup>106</sup> This relationship will be explored in greater detail in later sections.

Additionally, in the Allenby Declaration of 1922, Britain effectively made Egypt a, “nominally independent protectorate,” with Fuad I on the throne.<sup>107</sup> This declaration came after the mounted revolution of 1919 led by the Wafd and subsequent Anglo-Egyptian negotiations that produced “independence” with Britain still in control of security, defense, and of its foreign interest and minorities in Egypt.<sup>108</sup> In the renegotiation of Allenby in 1936 and the Montreux Convention of 1937, Egypt had a promise for full independence by 1949. Despite these postwar efforts by the Wafd, this period brought fractionalization throughout the Egyptian population and the development of a variety of anti-foreign and Islamic groups that are pivotal to this day. One of the groups that came out of this period was the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood advocated for an embrace of Quranic Principles within the modern context to implement, “Islamic-based social reform,” in order to restore Egypt. This rhetoric appealed to a broad

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<sup>105</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 232.

<sup>106</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 233.

<sup>107</sup> Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. Pub. 1990. Print. P. 560.

<sup>108</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 196.

spectrum of Egyptian society and cut across class lines.<sup>109</sup> In the second half of the century, the Brotherhood would play a major role in the development of Egyptian society and political life. This period also witnessed the creation of the Arab League headquartered in Cairo and led by an Egyptian, Abd al-Rahman al-Azzam, in 1945. The Arab League was a forum for the emerging Arab states to engage in political, cultural, and economic cooperation. With Egypt heading the League, the state would take on a prominent role in the early development of the new Middle Eastern order and the establishment of cooperative and positive Arab relations.<sup>110</sup> The League would be an opportunity for unity against European powers and a step towards regionalization of the Middle Eastern system.

The post-World War I peace settlements and the establishment of quasi-independent states throughout the region in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century lay the foundations for the current Middle Eastern system. With the division of the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Empire into new states, protectorates, mandates, and sphere of influence, the European Powers had resolved the “Eastern Question”. Nevertheless, the new fragile system of control would in itself produce a new set of foreign policy implications and dilemmas for decades to come. With a heavy European hand in the region, the Great Powers originated anti-European and general anti-Western sentiment. In the process, the Powers also arbitrarily divided and packed an amalgam of cultures, religions, and ethnicities into single nation-states and favored minority groups like the Maronites in Lebanon, the Alawite in Syria, the Jews in Palestine, and the Sunni in Iraq. Additionally, in many cases, Britain handpicked the new rulers of the nation-states that emerged, such as with Fuad I in Egypt, Abdallah in Jordan, and Faisal I in Iraq. Many of these leaders were later viewed as

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<sup>109</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 200.

<sup>110</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 204.

puppets to foreign powers and overthrow in the post-World War II era. Even in states with more freedom, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran, the European Powers gained vital concessions that would carry into the second half of the century. During these formative years of the infant nation-states, outside influence played a critical role in the creation of the governmental structures and political identities that still exist today. Furthermore, by laying the precedent for outside intervention, the United States had a navigable path into the Middle Eastern system. The close of the Second World War brought the eventual withdrawal of troops and administrators from the region and the delivery of state sovereignty to Middle Eastern nations. Nevertheless, the protracted Cold War that materialized after the war would bring the United States in as a dominant outside player in the region. With European states weakened at home, indebted to the United States, and unable to maintain their imperial control, the era of European domination in its near eastern territory was superseded by a new era of American supremacy.<sup>111</sup> The United States' Cold War foreign policy had a long-lasting impact on the Middle Eastern system and its balance of power today that will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

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<sup>111</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 273.

## 4 U.S. Foreign Policy

The following section will lay out the maintenance U.S. alliances during the Cold War and the formation of further alliances to combat the Soviet threat. The Cold War era produced an intricate American alliance system throughout the world that integrated formerly small nations into its military structure and containment effort. The alliance system served the American interest by exerting its influence abroad, combating the Soviet threat, and protecting its economic interests. As a side effect, the sustained alliance system “involved the United States in entangling relationships with few real allies, many clients that have to be supported, and some states that are an obvious drain on American resources.”<sup>112</sup> Beyond the Cold War, the brief outlines of U.S. foreign policy set a context for the formation of the permanent Israeli alliance that will be explored in the later chapter. Analysis on Iran and Israel is limited in this chapter to preserve analysis for the next two chapters.

The Founding Fathers emphasized that the United States should avoid permanent alliances at all costs and advocated for unilateralism above multilateralism.<sup>113</sup> In its early decades, the policymakers of the newly formed nation continued to espouse and carry out unilateralism, while strengthening its domestic position. The United States began to shift its policy in the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. Through the doctrine and extended in the Roosevelt Corollary, the United States committed itself to acting as a policy power of the Western Hemisphere and excluded European influence. During the First World War, the United

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<sup>112</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 304.

<sup>113</sup> Hamilton, Alexander. “Draft Fragment of George Washington’s Farewell Address, c. August 1796.” *Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library*. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

States had the opportunity to export its values and exert its influence through the League of Nations and a commitment to Wilson's Fourteen Points. Nevertheless, the United States reversed its course in the interwar period and began to retreat to its Western sphere of influence. After the Second World War, however, the dominant European Powers were severely weakened and their previous role in the world political order was beginning to crack. According to American officials, "the drastic decline of two major imperial systems" in conjunction with the collapse of five empires over the course of two world wars had "fundamentally altered... the international distribution of power."<sup>114</sup> With the emerging Soviet threat and fading European imperial control, the U.S. emerged as a dominant power in an increasingly bipolar international system. Protecting "the integrity and vitality of our free society," the American policymakers attempted to export democratic values to block the spread of opposing ideology throughout the "free world."<sup>115</sup> The United States advanced its influence abroad through commitments to international organizations, such as the United Nations and NATO in Europe. Administrations throughout the Cold War committed to nation-states in the developing world through a plethora of doctrines and investments that would embed it into regions like the Middle East. Simultaneously, the United States was expanding its international markets, and private investment was venturing further abroad. As the U.S. ascended to be a dominant power in the aftermath of the Second World War, the foreign oil industry was booming and its demand at home was spiraling. With the British shrinking as an imperial order, the U.S. stepped in to secure the assets Britain could no longer protect. In the process, coupled with the Soviet threat, the U.S. committed itself to oil-endowed

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<sup>114</sup> "National Security Council Report, NSC 68, 'United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,'" April 14, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, US National Archives. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116191>

<sup>115</sup> "National Security Council Report, NSC 68, 'United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,'" April 14, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, US National Archives. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116191>

nation-states and entangled itself in the domestic affairs of Middle Eastern nations. These commitments molded into permanent alliances.

United States foreign policy in the Middle East did not truly begin until World War II. The Second World War precipitated the decline of British influence and the rise of the Soviet threat. Up to this point, American involvement included the King-Crane Commission to investigate the “Palestinian Question”, the backing of the Balfour Declaration, and direct private investments in foreign oil in the region.<sup>116</sup> These American direct investments provided a private interest in protecting Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. During the war effort, the U.S. sent 30,000 troops to Iran through the lend-lease program and set up American air bases in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. By the war’s end, the U.S. was already tied to the Saudi Arabia through oil concessions and defense interests.<sup>117</sup> Though the U.S. produced its own domestic oil, it was still invested in tapping into the foreign oil industry in the Gulf. World War II closed with the signing of the Paris Peace Treaties in 1947 and the establishment of the United Nations.

The United States affirmed its foreign policy in the Middle East and the rest of the “free world” through the assertion of the Truman Doctrine in 1947. Within the doctrine, the Truman Administration pledged support for “free peoples” against the “subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” This sentiment emerged out of the vacuum left by Britain’s withdrawal from Turkey and Greece. Following the crisis in both countries, the U.S. aligned with Turkey in a commitment remains until today. In a geostrategically pivotal location, the U.S. was able to capitalize on its relations with Turkey to contain the Soviet threat. The case of Turkey was an

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<sup>116</sup> Madadi, Hamid. “United States Involvement in Middle East Politics.” *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1970, pp. 294. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/41393034](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41393034).

<sup>117</sup> Ashton, Nigel John. “The Hijacking of a Pact: The Formation of the Baghdad Pact and Anglo-American Tensions in the Middle East, 1955-1958.” *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 19, no. 2. Pub. 1993. JSTOR. P. 124. [www.jstor.org/stable/20097327](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097327).



early example of the U.S. “balancing” against the Soviet Union in the region. At this stage, Turkey perceived the Soviet Union as the threatening power to its security. Under this perception, Turkey sought to “balance” against the Soviet threat by aligning with the United States to receive aid and protection without surrendering its sovereignty.<sup>118</sup> By filling the great power void left by Britain and protecting against the Soviet Union, the United States solidified its role as a policing power in a new region. The following year, Truman made one of the most consequential foreign policy decisions in the region. On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared an independent State of Israel and on the same day Truman recognized the provisional government of Israel.<sup>119</sup> This declaration climaxed the “Israeli-Palestinian” question that had dominated the British Mandate and the early days of the United Nations. Though the U.S. had previously involved itself through the UN and special commissions, its recognition of the Jewish State tied the U.S. to Israeli domestic affairs into modernity.

The policy of containment was officially iterated in the NSC-68 report in 1950. The report offered two interrelated policies: “develop[ing] a healthy international community” and “containing the Soviet system.” It advocates for the demonstration of power and capability throughout “the free world” to prevent nation-states from falling into the Soviet camp. The report argues that “the absence of affirmative decision” will lead to America’s “friends” becoming “more than a liability to us... they can eventually become a positive increment to Soviet power.” To carry out containment, the U.S. needed to build up its military, technological, political, and economic strength. Equally as important, the U.S. needed to build up the “capabilities of [its] allies,” to reach a “tolerable state of order among nations.” This includes “defend[ing]...

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<sup>118</sup> Walt, Stephen M. “Explaining Alliance Formation.” *The Origins of Alliance*. Cornell University Press, 1987. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6).

<sup>119</sup> “U.S. Recognition of the State of Israel.” *National Archives*. Pub. 27 Sept. 2019. Web. March 2020. <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/us-israel>

essential allied areas” and providing “aid to allies.” Embedded in the foreign policy objective was utilizing economic support and aid as a policy tool to influence relations. As an example, the report recommends assistance to Iran through “loans and credits by the Export-Import Bank, the International Monetary fund, and the International Bank to Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Iran, etc.” to diminish Soviet influence. The United States aimed to create a balance of power by building up the military strength of itself and its allies “to a point at which the combined strength” is “superior” to that of the Soviet Union.<sup>120</sup> The emphasis throughout the NSC-68 report was on maintaining and strengthening its alliances throughout the free world to “contain” the Soviet Union.

The U.S. asserted its dominant role in the Suez Crisis of 1956. Leading up to the crisis, the U.S. had attempted to bring Egypt into the American sphere of influence. Vying for regional influence, the U.S. operated under the strategy of backing a strong Arab leader to perpetuate pro-Western values throughout the Arab world. By having a “friend of the West” lead the Arab nationalists, the U.S. would be able to influence a peaceful outcome for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the rivalries among Arab states.<sup>121</sup> Despite attempts to court Gamal Abdel Nasser, the U.S. was unable to secure Egypt as its ally in the Middle East. When Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in July of 1956, the French and British collaborated with Israel to take back the Canal. Fearing alignment itself with the European intervention and the Soviet Union backing Nasser, Eisenhower condemned the invasion and placed economic pressure on its European alliances until they backed down. The Suez Crisis broadcasted the political and

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<sup>120</sup> “National Security Council Report, NSC 68, 'United States Objectives and Programs for National Security',” April 14, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, US National Archives. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116191>

<sup>121</sup> Copeland, M. *The Game of Nations*. London. Pub. 1969. P. 63.

military capabilities of the U.S. in the Middle Eastern system. This crisis prompted the proclamation of the Eisenhower Doctrine.

In the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957, the U.S. enunciated a commitment to Middle Eastern states. The Doctrine argued that the U.S. must fill the “existing vacuum in the Middle East” before it is filled by Russia.<sup>122</sup> Raising the support enacted in the Truman Doctrine, Eisenhower put forth a policy to provide 200 million USD in economic and military assistance to protect and secure the integrity of any state under threat of communism.<sup>123</sup> Through this doctrine and subsequent doctrines, the U.S. attempted to use military assistance as a bargaining position for political influence. In selling arms and bolstering the military strength of other nations, American policymakers, such as Secretary McNamara, argued that the U.S. could avoid “the serious danger of a radical shift in the orientation of the recipient country” to the Soviet sphere.<sup>124</sup> The doctrine succeeded in officially reeling Saudi Arabia and Jordan into the U.S. sphere and distanced from Nasser’s Soviet-backed Egypt. In 1957, the U.S. heightened military programs and coordination with Saudi Arabia and received “a vague statement of support” from King Saud over the Eisenhower Doctrine.<sup>125</sup>

Succeeding doctrines under Kennedy and Johnson reflected the U.S. sphere of influence in the Western hemisphere.<sup>126</sup> The Kennedy Administration approached Cold War foreign policy with the fear of nation-states “bandwagoning” into the Soviet sphere if the U.S. did not assert its

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<sup>122</sup> Eisenhower, Dwight. *Waging Peace, 1956-1961; The White House years*. New York: Doubleday. Pub. 1965. P. 178.

<sup>123</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 67.

<sup>124</sup> “U.S. Armament and Disarmament Problems.” *U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*. Pub. 1967. Extracted from Keohane, Robert O. “The Big Influence of Small Allies.” *Foreign Policy*. no. 2. Pub. 1971. P. 170-171. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1147864](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147864).

<sup>125</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 68. Citing Eisenhower, Dwight. *Waging Peace, 1956-1961; The White House years*. New York: Doubleday. Pub. 1965. P. 115-116.

<sup>126</sup> Rabe, Stephen G. “The Johnson Doctrine.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 36, no. 1. Pub. 2006. Web. Feb. 2020. P. 48. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/27552746](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552746).

military capabilities. He argued that “if the United States were to falter, the world... would inevitably begin to move toward the Communist bloc.”<sup>127</sup> Through the bandwagoning hypothesis, the Kennedy Administration concluded that if the U.S. maintained its hegemonic nature in foreign policy then states would remain under the American bloc. If the United States did not maintain its foreign relations through full commitment to its alignments and alliance then these nations would inevitably fall into the Soviet bloc.

This policy of “bandwagoning” as an extension of containment continued under the Nixon Administration. With Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State, the U.S. was driven by a joint philosophy of balancing and bandwagoning. Through the former, nation-states would “balance” against a nation perceived to be the greatest threat. If nation-states within the Middle Eastern system perceived the Soviet Union or other regional states to be the greatest threat, then they would “balance” against this state to maintain their own security by siding with the United States and other nations for protection.<sup>128</sup> These philosophies sustained the U.S. commitment to its alliances and alignment abroad. As Kissinger noted, “if leaders around the world... assume that the U.S. lacked either the forces or the will... they will accommodate themselves to what they will regard as the dominant trend.”<sup>129</sup> During the early 1970s, under the umbrella of the Nixon Doctrine, the Administration was dedicated to a “twin pillars” policy and the assertion that, “we should assist but we should not dictate.”<sup>130</sup> In other words, the Nixon Administration was

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<sup>127</sup> Brown, Seyom. *The Faces of Power*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pub. 1968. P. 217.

<sup>128</sup> Walt, Stephen M. “Explaining Alliance Formation.” *The Origins of Alliance*. Cornell University Press, 1987. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6).

<sup>129</sup> Committee on International Relations. “The Soviet Union and the Third World: Watershed in Great Power Policy?” U.S. House of Representatives, 97<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Pub. 1977. P. 157-158.

<sup>130</sup> “29. Editorial Notes, Foreign Relations of the U.S., 1969-1976, Vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972.” *Office of the Historian*. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v01/d29>

committed to transforming “a client into an independent regional superpower.”<sup>131</sup> By embracing a pragmatic realpolitik approach in foreign policy, the Nixon Administration was attempting to pivot in an era of post-Vietnam fatigue and accomplish détente to ease Cold War tensions. To prevent a Vietnam in the Middle East, Nixon “began to search for proxies that would take over the burden of regional security” through his “twin pillars” policy.<sup>132</sup> For the Middle Eastern system, the “twin pillars” policy contributed to jointly bolstering Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel to maintain the regional security structure. With the British announcing their withdrawal from the Gulf by 1971, the U.S. was taking action to ensure regional stability in the aftermath. In 1972, Washington offered Tehran a “blank check” arms agreement that resulted in Iran purchasing 18 billion USD worth of American arms over the next six years.<sup>133</sup>

The outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War in 1973 exposed the limits of a policy of détente and the basis of the Nixon Doctrine.<sup>134</sup> With the Soviet Union supplying equipment to the Arab states, the U.S. countered by ordering to “send everything that can fly” to its long-standing Israeli ally in Operation Nickel Grass.<sup>135</sup> Though the Arab States prevailed in the early days of the war, the U.S. intervention in the conflict drove Israel to take the offensive and deliver a stifling defeat to Syria and Egypt. During the Operation, the U.S. Air Force had sent 22,395 tons

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<sup>131</sup> Paolucci, Henry. *Iran, Israel, and the United States*. New York: Griffon House Publications. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 15.

<sup>132</sup> Shulman, Marshall D. *East-West Tensions in the Third World*. New York: W.W. Norton. Pub. 1986. Print. P. 194.

<sup>133</sup> Paolucci, Henry. *Iran, Israel, and the United States*. New York: Griffon House Publications. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 12.

<sup>134</sup> Daigle, Craig. *The Limits of Détente: The United States, the Soviet Union. And the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969-1973*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 2012. Print.

<sup>135</sup> Boyne, Walter J. “Nickel Grass: It was justifiably called ‘the airlift that saved Israel.’” *Air Force Magazine*. Pub. Dec. 1998. Web. Feb. 2020. PDF.

<https://www.airforcemag.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Documents/1998/December%201998/1298nickel.pdf>

of cargo.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, the U.S. provided 2.2 billion USD in emergency foreign assistance to Israel.<sup>137</sup> During the war, the U.S. came under economic pressure through a Saudi-led oil embargo through OPEC beginning October 20, 1973 and lasting until March 1974. The embargo was a direct message to the United States over its support for Israel during the war against the interests of its other regional Arab state allies.

The subsequent peace talks played out through what became known as “shuttle diplomacy” as Kissinger flew from one capital to the next in the Middle East to work out a diplomatic settlement. Acting as the mediator, the U.S. moderately fell back into its role as a heavy hand in regional politics and the systemwide security dynamics. Under the Ford Administration with Nixon’s Henry Kissinger remaining the National Security Advisor, the U.S. continued the Nixon Doctrine.

The period of realpolitik closed with the Carter Administration. Serving from 1977 to 1981, Carter led the U.S. through the Camp David Accords of 1979, the Iranian revolution of 1979, the 444-day Iranian Hostage Crisis, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, and the Iraqi invasion of Iran by Iraq in 1980.<sup>138</sup> When Carter first took office, he criticized the recent Administrations for fighting “fire with fire” and “never thinking that fire is sometimes best quenched with water.” In this regard, Carter aimed to assert a new role led by its “material wealth”, “military power”, and “rooted in our moral values.”<sup>139</sup> This approach led Carter to put pressure on the Shah in Iran. Carter also successfully mediated the Israeli-Egyptian

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<sup>136</sup> Boyne, Walter J. “Nickel Grass: It was justifiably called ‘the airlift that saved Israel.’” *Air Force Magazine*. Pub. Dec. 1998. Web. Feb. 2020. PDF.

<https://www.airforcemag.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Documents/1998/December%201998/1298nickel.pdf>

<sup>137</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 123.

<sup>138</sup> Ismael, Tareq Y. *International Relations of the Contemporary Middle East: A Study in World Politics*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. Pub. 1986. P. 37-38.

<sup>139</sup> Peters, Gerhard. “Jimmy Carter Speech to Notre Dame University May 22, 1977.” *Carter’s Foreign Policy*. <https://carterfp.omeka.net/items/show/1>

Peace Accords at Camp David. These peace talks simultaneously asserted the U.S. dominant position in Middle Eastern politics while producing temporary stability in the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict. The conflict up to this point had produced Cold War anxieties over a potential proxy war similar to Vietnam breaking out in the Israeli and Palestinian territories.<sup>140</sup>

This Middle Eastern foreign policy victory was overshadowed by the Islamic Revolution in Iran of 1979. A long-standing regional ally to the United States, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was driven from power and Ayatollah Khomeini assumed control of the clerical leadership in the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran. The fallout from losing the privileged relations with the regime coupled with the Iranian Hostage Crisis significantly set back the United States' regional influence. The Iranian Revolution also produced a massive shift in the regional politics. Iran had operated as a regional influencer for the U.S. since 1953. With Iran ousting the Shah and embracing Islamic principles, the whole system was engulfed in uncertainty over the future of the regional security dynamics. In the uncertainty of the regime change, the U.S. tightened its alignments with nearby states and held out to see if it could normalize relations when the revolutionary sentiment had settled. With nearby states uncertain about the regional repercussions of the Islamic Revolution, many formed coalitions or sought protection through an exogenous power like the United States.

In December of 1979, one month after the start of the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. With the U.S. still committed to protecting the Persian Gulf, the Administration perceived the invasion of the Afghanistan as a threat to its vulnerable position in Iran. As the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski, framed it, "the Soviet intervention in the present case is both more blatant and more brutal than

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<sup>140</sup> Hunter, Robert E. *Building Security in the Persian Gulf*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Pub. 2010. Print. P. 14.

in 1947,” when President Truman enacted the Truman Doctrine. He added, “the Gulf is unquestionably more vital to Western interests today than were Greece and Turkey 30 years ago.”<sup>141</sup> Under the presumption that the situation in Afghanistan could spread to the Persian Gulf, Carter took action to “contain” the crisis in Afghanistan from reaching Iran, the Gulf, and the broader Middle East. The U.S. began covert engagement with resistance movements in Afghanistan. To assert its protection over the Persian Gulf against the Soviet threat, the U.S. forwarded the Carter Doctrine.<sup>142</sup>

The 1980 State of the Union Address marked a pivotal iteration of the foreign policy shifts in the region through the Carter Doctrine. In the doctrine, the President pledged to protect the Persian Gulf while strengthening its commitments to other nations in the region. The Carter Doctrine asserted the U.S’ regional claim to the Persian Gulf. Carter threatened to use military force if “any outside force” attempted to “gain control of the Persian Gulf.” Any threat against the Gulf would be interpreted as “an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America.”<sup>143</sup> Amidst the hostage crisis, Carter aimed to “persuade the Iranian leaders that the real danger to their nation lies in the North.”<sup>144</sup> Additionally, Carter vowed to cooperate with all threatened states in the region.<sup>145</sup> As emphasized by Brzezinski, the U.S. required the integration of “political, economic, and military efforts” into its regional alliances.<sup>146</sup> Carter pledge to “strengthen political and military ties with other nations in the region” and to “cooperate with all

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<sup>141</sup> Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 67, Truman Doctrine: 1/80

<sup>142</sup> Hunter, Robert E. *Building Security in the Persian Gulf*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Pub. 2010. Print. P. 16.

<sup>143</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.

<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>144</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.

<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>145</sup> “Document 45, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula.” *Office of the Historian*. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/d45>

<sup>146</sup> “Document 45, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula.” *Office of the Historian*. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/d45>



Muslim countries” through a “cooperative security framework.”<sup>147</sup> The Administration carried out the rebalance of regional alliances by altering its “unified command structure” and coordinating “regional intelligence and military and economic assistance missions.”<sup>148</sup> Amidst the hostage crisis and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, Carter was prepared to place a heavy hand in the region.

At the opening of the 1980s, the United States sought to “balance what it perceived as a growing Soviet threat to the Middle East” from the outbreak of the Soviet-Afghan War and “to counter the effects of the revolution in Iran.”<sup>149</sup> The Iranian Revolution marked the beginning of the “containment” Islamic fundamentalism that consumed the 1980s and 1990s. This new form of containment led to the tightening of ties with other regional allies and alignment. The period heavily increased the political, military, and economic support for Israel and Saudi Arabia.<sup>150</sup> Continuing to pursue its oil interests following the loss of Iran, the U.S. secured its economic investment by deepening its commitment to Saudi Arabia and other oil-endowed nations. This prompted the military buildup of Saudi Arabia and its emergence as a dominant leader in the Gulf states and the broader Arab coalition.<sup>151</sup> Saudi Arabia heightened its role in OPEC and the international financial system. During the 1980s, Saudi Arabia “replaced Iran as the major American ally in the region.”<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.

<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>148</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew. “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs to Secretary of Defense Brown, Washington, January 24, 1980.” *Carter Library, National Security Affairs*.

[https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/pg\\_169](https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/pg_169)

<sup>149</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 269.

<sup>150</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 301.

<sup>151</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 303.

<sup>152</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 305.

Realpolitik returned to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy in 1981. Under the Reagan Administration, the U.S. intensified its security commitments to contain the Soviet threat by accelerating arms transfer programs and increasing its security assistance. This emphasis on commitments also derived from the uncertainty of the Iranian alliance. As Gause notes, “the Reagan and Bush administrations continued to see Iran and Iraq as key strategic players” in the region for Soviet containment and regional influence.<sup>153</sup> With officials holding out hope for better relations with Iran, the U.S. carried out the Iran-Contra affair to bolster Iran while fluctuating into the Iraq camp as the war escalated in Iran’s favor.<sup>154</sup> The Iran-Contra Affair demonstrated covert attempts to better relations with its formal regional ally, while publicly calling Iran a “terrorist state.”<sup>155</sup> However, the uncertainty of U.S. standing with Iran had a positive benefit on the United States’ relations with Saudi Arabia and Israel. Reagan argued that the “maintenance of our alliance partnerships is a key to our foreign policy.”<sup>156</sup> Out of the upheaval of the Carter Administration, the U.S. attempted to rebalance its security relations through tightening its ties with Israel in 1981.<sup>157</sup> When meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister Begin in 1981, Reagan promised to “work together with you and with our other friends in the region to counter Soviet aggression and to strengthen the security of all the countries in the area.”<sup>158</sup> From 1981 to 1989, the U.S. provided 27 billion USD in aid to Israel. This aid made up

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<sup>153</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 59 JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>154</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 59 JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>155</sup> Bill, James A. *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 1988. Print. P. 2.

<sup>156</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 297.

<sup>157</sup> Lawson, Fred. “The Reagan Administration in the Middle East.” *MERIP Reports*, no. 128, 1984, pp. 27–34. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/3011188](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3011188). Accessed 20 Feb. 2020. P. 27.

<sup>158</sup> Lawson, Fred. “The Reagan Administration in the Middle East.” *MERIP Reports*, no. 128, 1984, pp. 27–34. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/3011188](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3011188). Accessed 20 Feb. 2020. P. 29.

50% of the cumulative aid that had been administered to Israel between 1948 and 1989.<sup>159</sup>

Among the Arab states, the Reagan Administration simultaneously “strengthened ties with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the Gulf states.” In Saudi Arabia, the U.S. continued to build up the military establishment through arms supplies and extensive aid in exchange for military bases. This sharp increase illuminates the departure from building up Iran as a security ally to building up a diversified set of regional allies to retain influence following the Iranian Revolution of 1979. As Reagan noted, “If we cannot defend ourselves... then we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere... our credibility will collapse and our alliance will crumble.”<sup>160</sup> In this rhetoric, Reagan emphasized the need to commit itself to its alliances and alignments abroad to prevent countries from falling to communism. Though the American policymakers may have had the intention of placing temporary pressure on Iran by balancing against it in the aftermath of its Revolution, the U.S.’ long-term commitment to these regional allies fortified an American regional security system without Iran. This American security system built up regional allies to middle power capabilities leading into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This also led to the deep entanglement of the U.S. in the security plans of these regional alignments and alliances.<sup>161</sup> The Reagan era heightened American commitment through military invention and assistance. The U.S. not only remained heavily involved in funding resistance in Afghanistan, but also in balancing Iran and Iraq, and interfering in Lebanon on behalf of Lebanon. In 1982, Israel conducted cross-border attacks against Syrian forces in Lebanon.

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<sup>159</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 171.

<sup>160</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 9

<sup>161</sup> Lawson, Fred. “The Reagan Administration in the Middle East.” *MERIP Reports*, no. 128, 1984, pp. 28. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3011188](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3011188).

Despite the U.S. negotiating a de facto ceasefire, Israel invaded Lebanon two months later in an attempt to weaken the PLO and establish a pro-Israeli regime under Bashir Gemayel.

U.S. ground troops were active in Lebanon until 1984, including in overseeing the expulsion of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Beirut and subsequently in restoring an Israeli-friendly Lebanese regime following the Israeli invasion. The U.S. also conducted air strikes on Beirut. U.S. involvement in Lebanon was a major blow to its credibility in the region among Arab states.<sup>162</sup>

The U.S. also intervened in the Persian Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War. During the Bush Administration, officials “held out hope of better relations with Iran.” In Bush’s 1989 message to Iran in his inaugural address “goodwill begets goodwill.”<sup>163</sup> As Katzman notes, this implied “better relations if Iran helped obtain the release of U.S. hostages held by Hezbollah in Lebanon.” Though Iran assisted with the release in 1991, the U.S. did not normalize relations because of Iran’s continued sponsorship of groups “opposed to the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process.”<sup>164</sup>

Addressing Congress in March of 1991, George H.W. Bush announced that the Gulf War was over and laid out the future of Middle East policy. He affirmed, “our commitment to peace in the Middle East does not end with the liberation of Kuwait,” but instead the U.S. government “must work together to create shared security arrangements in the region.” To combat the threats to peace in the region the “friends and allies in the Middle East” of the U.S. will “bear the bulk of the responsibility for regional security” with the backing of American support. He emphasizes

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<sup>162</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 137.

<sup>163</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 59 JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>164</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 37

that the “vital national interests depend on a stable and secure gulf.” Emerging out of the Gulf War, Bush emphasized the prospect for “a new world order” based on the U.S. protecting its interests by ending the “micro-management of foreign and security assistance programs” and allowing the U.S. to lead its allies on a cooperative world stage.<sup>165</sup>

Clinton was “America’s first post-Cold War president.” Without the policy of containment to lead foreign objectives, the Clinton Administration embraced the idea of “enlargement.” Within the policy of democratic “enlargement” was a commitment to “contain reactionary regimes” in order to promote peace elsewhere.<sup>166</sup> Within the Middle East, this involved dealing “firmly” with regimes like” Iran and Iraq in the East” if they attempted to undermine the “Arab-Israel peace in the West.” This was carried out through what became known as “dual containment.” As outlined by Clinton’s Assistant Secretary of State for near East Affairs, Martin Indyk, nuclear proliferation and extremism in one state threatened the entire system. With Iran and Iraq pursuing destabilizing policies, the U.S. sought to “contain” the threat to stem its impact on the rest of the region.<sup>167</sup> This policy aimed to “contain” the two strategic threats to the Middle Eastern system from spreading instability to regional allies through economic and diplomatic sanctions.<sup>168</sup>

Under the Clinton Administration, the United States had a clear policy of “dual containment” in the Persian Gulf. Identifying both Iran and Iraq as “significant threats to

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<sup>165</sup> “After the War: The President; Transcripts of President Bush’s Address on End of the Gulf War.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 7 March 1991. Web March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/07/us/after-war-president-transcript-president-bush-s-address-end-gulf-war.html>

<sup>166</sup> Brinkley, Douglas. “Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine.” *Foreign Policy*, no. 106, 1997, pp. 118. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1149177](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1149177).

<sup>167</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

<sup>168</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions.” *The Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3. Pub. Fall 2001. Web. March 2020. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

America's interests in the region," the U.S. sought to prevent Iraq and Iran from spreading instability into its allies' territories.<sup>169</sup> The policy aimed to contain these nations through economic and diplomatic sanctions. The U.S. worked to tip the balance of power in favor of its regional allies. Integral to the policy was "continued American military commitments to Saudi Arabia and the smaller monarchies" in the GCC.<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, instead of containing instability, the policy exacerbated the regional security dilemma and heightened tensions between nation-states.

The Bush era reoriented U.S. foreign policy. Though terrorism was not a new global threat, the September 11 attacks marked the declaration of "a global war on terror." The declaration precipitated "significant spending increases, bureaucratic changes, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the deployment of U.S. military forces in many new places."<sup>171</sup> Domestically, this era established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security to combat terrorism at home. The U.S. foreign policy objectives centered around "defeating terrorism, promoting democracy, and stopping the development of weapons of mass destruction."<sup>172</sup> The Middle East was the central stage in the global war on terror. Combating "nonallied" states and bolstering its long-standing allies, the U.S. committed extensive military and political resources to the region at large. Backed by the UN and European allies, the U.S. began its military operations against the terrorist organization

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<sup>169</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. "The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions." *The Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3. Pub. Fall 2001. Web. March 2020. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

<sup>170</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. "The Illogic of Dual Containment." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 56. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>171</sup> Pressman, Jeremy. "Power without Influence: The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East." *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 4. Pub. Spring 2009. MIT Press. P. 155.

<sup>172</sup> Pressman, Jeremy. "Power without Influence: The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East." *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 4. Pub. Spring 2009. MIT Press. P. 152.

Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban regime. By December 2001, the Taliban leadership had collapsed.

Tying the initiative against Iraq into the broader U.S. foreign policy, Bush argued that the “gravest danger in the war on terror... is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.” These regimes, coined as the “axis of evil” during the 2002 State of the Union Address, included Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. These regimes and their “terrorist allies” could “attack [its] allies” at any moment. Combating non-state actors on foreign soil, the U.S. committed to “not allow the terrorists to develop new home bases” in an effort to contain terrorism.<sup>173</sup> The containment of terrorism extended to working “closely with [the United States’] coalition” by heightening the stability of its regional allies through increased commitment.<sup>174</sup> In the same address, Bush pledged to “prevent” these “terrorists and regimes... from threatening the United States and the world.”<sup>175</sup> By pledging to oppose these states, the Administration demonstrated that the perceived threat to the its allies was an offense against the United States. This pledge committed the U.S. to act on behalf of its threatened allies to protect broader U.S. interests.

With the post-war occupation and reconstruction of Iraq, the U.S. expended high military and political efforts towards democratization with little realized benefits. Intrinsic to the democratization policy was the effort at a new role model for the Middle East. Formerly pouring efforts into pre-1979 Iran as a “model” democratic state, the U.S. focused the Iraqi occupation era on building up a new regional example. The Bush Administration argued that Iraq, “a

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<sup>173</sup> George W. Bush. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, DC: White House, September 2002. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss.pdf>.

<sup>174</sup> “President Delivers State of the Union Address.” *The White House Archives*. Pub. 29 Jan. 2002 <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

<sup>175</sup> “President Delivers State of the Union Address.” *The White House Archives*. Pub. 29 Jan. 2002 <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

democratic Afghanistan and a democratic Palestine... can show by their example that honest government, and respect for women, and the great Islamic tradition of learning can triumph in the Middle East and beyond.”<sup>176</sup> Applying the “domino theory” to the spread of democracy, the Administration argued this would “create a balance of power that favors human freedom.”<sup>177</sup> To further the spread of the democracy, U.S. policy would “promote moderation and tolerance” through its development aid, diplomatic efforts, international broadcasting, and education assistance.<sup>178</sup> The democratization effort targeted “nonallied states” while continuing to provide aid and assistance to its long-standing allies, regardless of their democratic record, for wide-ranging regional security

Obama ascended to the White House in the middle of the Great Recession. Combating the economy at home, Obama aimed to take on a “hands off” policy abroad. Enunciated in the “Leading from Behind” initiative, the Obama Administration sought to pivot away from the former administration’s “hands on” policy and allow actors to resolve their external and internal affairs.<sup>179</sup> The initiative had a long-term impact on long-standing alliance in the region. By stepping back on its unilateral action and cutting its defense budget, the U.S. relied more on its allies to carry out its regional interests. This step back allowed its allies to gain increased aid from the United States to defend themselves from outside threat.<sup>180</sup> To this effect, Israel was at liberty to defend itself against Iranian aggression and Saudi Arabia was at liberty to lead an

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<sup>176</sup> George W. Bush, “Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City,” September 12, 2002, *Public Papers of the President of the United States: George W. Bush*, Vol. 2, P. 1572-1576.

<sup>177</sup> George W. Bush. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, DC: White House, September 2002. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss.pdf>.

<sup>178</sup> Bush, George W. “Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.” *Public Papers of the President of the United States: George W. Bush, 2002*, Vol. 1. Pub. 1 June 2002. P. 918.

<sup>179</sup> Chollet, Derek. *The Long Game: How Obama Defied Washington and Redefined America’s Role in the World*. New York: Public Affairs. Pub. 2016. Print.

<sup>180</sup> Moyer, Mark. *Strategic Failure: How President Obama’s Drone Warfare, Defense Cuts, and Military Amateurism Have Imperiled America*. New York: Threshold. Pub. 2015. Print.; Rothkopf, David. *National Insecurity: American Leadership in an Age of Fear*. New York: Public Affairs. Pub. 2014. Print.



offensive against extremism in Yemen. Inheriting troops stationed in both Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama had campaigned with the objective of withdrawing American soldiers from the region and allowing the sovereign governments to take full control. As a strong departure from the U.S.' dominant role in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as a whole, the Administration believed it could continue to back its regional allies through increased security and cooperation to achieve stability. Though the Administration attempted to reach a two-state Israeli-Palestinian settlement during both terms, the tensions from the Second Intifada and the concerns of the Netanyahu premiership over internal terrorist efforts negated the opportunities to broker a deal. Specifically, the growth of Hamas in Gaza continued to thwart efforts at peace.

During the Obama Administration, the insurgencies throughout the Middle East produced what became known as the Arab Spring. Beginning in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, vulnerable regimes all over the system destabilized under pressure for reform. Though U.S. oil interests were protected in the Gulf states, the U.S. moderated away from its regional ally, Egypt, toward permanent alliances, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. Though it still provided aid to its long-standing Egyptian ally, the Administration withheld some military aid and arms sales beginning in 2013 and subsiding in 2015.<sup>181</sup> By reinstating aid in 2015, Egypt was restored as the second-largest recipient of U.S. military aid behind Israel.<sup>182</sup> Though these allied states retained a certain level of control during the Arab Spring, both Syria and Yemen devolved into civil wars that still threaten regional stability today. As the region destabilized, the Obama Administration attempted to “pivot to Asia” as the future corner of U.S. national interest.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Gordon, Michael R. “In Crackdown Response, U.S. Temporarily Freezes Some Military Aid to Egypt.” *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/10/world/middleeast/obama-military-aid-to-egypt.html>

<sup>182</sup> Ackerman, Spencer. “Obama restores US military aid to Egypt over Islamic State concerns.” *The Guardian*. Pub. 31 March. 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/mar/31/obama-restores-us-military-aid-to-egypt>

<sup>183</sup> Manyin, Mark E et al. “Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration’s ‘Rebalancing’ Toward Asia.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 28 March 2012. P. 1. <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a584466.pdf>

In Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama maintained a policy of “leading from behind” and worked to withdrawal troops while encouraging stability under the respective governments. In 2011, American troops withdrew from Iraq at the expiration of the Iraqi immunity for U.S. troops. In Afghanistan, the Administration never fully withdrew troops, but worked towards a reduction in military presence.<sup>184</sup> When Obama left office, less than 10,000 troops remained in Afghanistan and an additional 5,000 personnel remained throughout the region in the campaign against the Islamic State.<sup>185</sup> The U.S. withdrawal from Iraq did not strengthen the statebuilding effort and consolidation of its divided Shi’ite, Sunni, and Kurdish factions. Leaving Prime Minister Nour al-Maliki to consolidate Shi’ite backing, the Iraqi government oscillated Sunni factions that formerly dominated the government. One main criticism of the withdraw of U.S. presence and the “lead from behind” strategy was the opportunity presented for the growth of insurgency and terrorism. Appealing to a pan-regional Islamic identity, the Islamic State gained traction and membership through the disenfranchised groups in Iraq and Syria. The growth of the non-state actor threatened established authoritarian regimes and monarchies across the region. The instability in Iraq and Syria allowed for not only the growth of the Islamic State, but for the increase in Iranian influence. As a product, Iran appeared to be spreading as a regional threat to Israel and Gulf States. In line with the policy of “leading from behind”, Obama iterated the importance of partnerships where “local forces, like Iraqis, take the lead.”<sup>186</sup> The U.S. armed various groups in Syria and Iraq, which further destabilized the power balance in the region. As one approach, the U.S. armed the Kurds in Northern Syria and Iraq to drive out the Islamic State,

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<sup>184</sup> Landler, Mark. “The Afghan War and the Evolution of Obama.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 1 Jan. 2017. Web. March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/01/world/asia/obama-afghanistan-war.html>

<sup>185</sup> Carter, Ash. “The Logic of American Strategy in the Middle East.” *Survival* 59, no. 2. Pub. May 2017. P. 13-24.

<sup>186</sup> Obama, Barack. “Remarks by the President on the Situation in Iraq.” *The White House*. Pub. 19 June 2014. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/19/remarks-president-situation-iraq>

but in the process threatened Turkey and the ruling government in Iraq.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, the Obama Administration passively cooperated with Tehran against the Islamic State in Iraq. Obama believed, “Iran [could] play a constructive role if it is helping to send the same message to the Iraqi government that [the U.S. is] sending” over unifying the sects within the divided state.<sup>188</sup> Without initiating formal ties, the two governments kept out of each other’s path in their unilateral steps against the Islamic State. Though they shared the goal of limiting the Islamic State, Tehran aimed to broaden its sphere of influence and protect its western border.

The Trump Administration inherited the Middle East in the middle of a shift in regional politics. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, regimes faced pressure to reform or devolved fully into civil war. Out of the instability, Islamic fundamentalism began to spring up in Iraq and Syria. U.S. troops and personnel were settled into Afghanistan and all over the Middle East to counterterrorism and produce order. The Trump Administration was committed to strengthening its permanent alliances in the region. On his first foreign trip in 2017, Trump made his first stops in Saudi Arabia and Israel.<sup>189</sup> In Riyadh, Trump met with King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud along with other Arab leaders.<sup>190</sup> The two leaders discussed the potential 100 billion USD arms deal and the Iranian threat to “destabilize the countries in the region.”<sup>191</sup> The action taken by Trump regarding Iran and Israel will be discussed in the following two chapters.

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<sup>187</sup> Rothkopf, David. *National Insecurity: American Leadership in an Age of Fear*. New York: Public Affairs. Pub. 2014. Print.

<sup>188</sup> Obama, Barack. “Remarks by the President on the Situation in Iraq.” *The White House*. Pub. 19 June 2014. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/19/remarks-president-situation-iraq>

<sup>189</sup> “President Trump Arrives in Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 22 May 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/president-trump-arrives-israel/>

<sup>190</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *Troubled Waters: Insecurity in the Persian Gulf*. Ithica: Cornell University Press. Pub. 2018. Print. P. 4.

<sup>191</sup> “Joint Statement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America. *The White House*. Pub. 23 May 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/joint-statement-kingdom-saudi-arabia-united-states-america/>



## 5 The United States and Israel

### 5.1 Alliance Formation

The United States relationship with Israel is an “unwritten, strategic alliance.”<sup>192</sup> Though it may not have appeared to be “strategic” from a foreign policy standpoint in the beginning, it emerged throughout the decades to be a pivotal relationship for the United States. In analyzing the American interest in aligning with Israel, Lewis writes that Israel was “a complicating factor for overall U.S. regional strategy directed toward thwarting Soviet influence, incursions, and alliances with key Arab states.”<sup>193</sup> The character of the Israeli alliance evolved throughout the Arab-Israeli conflicts. Throughout the decades, the U.S. increasingly favored the Israeli position in regional conflicts. Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the U.S. rebalanced its regional alliances in favor of Israel. As the U.S. became more reliant on Israel for achieving its foreign policy objectives, Israel gained small state influence over the United States. Highlighting the regional threats to Israeli national security, Israel received heightened commitment from the U.S. in the form of aid, assistance, coordination, and military intervention. As the alliance became permanent, it was increasingly clear that Israel was “both dependent on US support and independent of US control.”<sup>194</sup> The development of the alliance highlights periods of strain in relations. Regardless of the level of the strain, the U.S. continued to back its ally. As Iran

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<sup>192</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 364. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351).

<sup>193</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 374. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351)

<sup>194</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 284.

developed as a regional threat to Israel, the U.S. increasingly committed against Iran on behalf of Israel.

The United States had an early position on the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. Though the Zionist movement emerged in Europe at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it spread throughout the Western World. During the process of drafting the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Arthur Balfour corresponding with Woodrow Wilson and top White House advisors. Wilson initially declined to support the British “message of sympathy” to the Zionist movement writing, “there are many dangers lurking in it, and if I were the British, I would be chary about going too definitely into that question.”<sup>195</sup> A month later, Wilson communicated his support to the British and informed the Department of State following the Declaration became widely known that, “we had assented to the British declaration restoring Palestine to the Jews.”<sup>196</sup> Though scholars of this era disagree on what cause Wilson to reverse his position, this moment was critical for the U.S. position on the worldwide Zionist movement.<sup>197</sup> This early commitment demonstrates mutual strategic interests in the creation of a Jewish State.

President Truman was critical to the United States commitment to the establishment of Israel. Taking over the presidency following the death of Roosevelt in 1945, Truman occupied the White House for the three years leading up to the Israeli War of Independence and for the three years following. On May 14, 1948, the U.S. recognized the State of Israel within hours of its declaration by David Ben-Gurion. Regardless of the reasons leading up to this decision, American support for Israel had long-term foreign policy impacts. In the context of the Middle

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<sup>195</sup> House to Wilson, September 4, 1917. Wilson Papers. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/woodrow-wilson-papers/>

<sup>196</sup> General Records of the Dept. of State, File 867N.01/13 1/2 a. Lansing to Wilson, Dec 13, 1917; Adler, Selig. “The Palestine Question in the Wilson Era.” *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1948, pp. 308. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/4615334](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4615334).

<sup>197</sup> Stein, Selig. “The Palestine Question in the Wilson Era.” *Journal of Jewish Social Studies*. X, No. 4. Pub. 1948. P. 304-344; Stein, Leonard. *The Balfour Declaration*. New York. Pub. 1961.

Eastern system, scholars have argued that the U.S. believed the alignment could be a critical asset in containing communism and spreading democratic and western values throughout the region. Moreover, others have argued that the U.S. was concerned about protecting foreign oil in the region. Under this perspective, if the region destabilized, the private investments could be compromised and the economy could suffer. On the domestic side, scholars have attributed Truman's position to domestic pressure over foreign policy interests.<sup>198</sup> Though he oscillated under pressure from his foreign policy advisors, he forwarded a pro-Israel position. Moreover, many scholars have placed this decision within the context of the looming 1948 General Election. Scholars have argued that Truman believed he could secure the popular vote by coming out in favor of the establishment of the Jewish State.<sup>199</sup> Regardless of the reasons behind recognizing the independent state of Israel in 1948, the Truman Administration set the stage for a US-Israeli alliance that remains today.

## *5.2. Commitments to the Alliance*

From the Eisenhower Administration to the outbreak of the Arab-Israel War in 1967 under the Johnson Administration, Stephen Walt argues "the United States had established important security ties with Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia" as a balance against the Soviet Union's informal and formal ties with Egypt, Syria, North Yemen, and Iraq.<sup>200</sup> Though the Eisenhower Administration treated Israel predominantly as a regional client to leverage its position, the

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<sup>198</sup> Rubenberg, Cheryl. *Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination* University of Illinois Press. Pub. 1989. P. 48-49.

<sup>199</sup> Cohen, Michael J. *Truman and Israel*. University of California Press. Pub. 1990. P. 258.

<sup>200</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 50-51.

Kennedy and Johnson Administration strengthened the alliance through assurances of political protection and escalations of arms sales and military aid. As the alliance strengthened, Israel sought increased protection from outside “security threats” and the U.S. slowly assented. This was largely contributed to Israel’s isolation in the region. When choosing between two dominant powers, Israel favored the United States. The Soviet Union had backed “enemies” of Israel. Though Israel could not leverage the United States in the beginning, it gained in benefits from a low commitment payoff.

The Eisenhower Administration embraced Cold War containment in the Middle East. To achieve containment, the Administration needed a broad-based regional alliance framework. In carrying out U.S. policy, Eisenhower aimed to distance the U.S. from an Israeli alliance to prevent pushing Arab states into the Soviet bloc. At this point, the relationship was in its infant stages and the U.S. was capable of exiting at low cost to itself to achieve what it perceived to be a higher benefit from entering close relations with other states in the system. As stated by Secretary of State Dulles in 1953, “the U.S. has perhaps centered too much on its interest on Israel as a result of pressure groups in the U.S. The new Administration is seeking a balanced view of the Middle East directed against neither the Arabs nor the Jews.”<sup>201</sup> In Lewis’ analysis, “the U.S. government was concerned...because of an acute sensitivity to America’s strategic interests, clearly identified with Saudi Arabia and its oil reserves as well as with the need to avoid complicating the NATO allies’ traditional ties to Israel’s Arab enemies.”<sup>202</sup> The U.S.

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<sup>201</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Near and Middle East, 1952-1954*, Part I. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986, 9: 130.

<sup>202</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 364. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351).



carried out its foreign policy objectives in line with the “balance of power and national interest” despite objections from the Israeli government and domestic pressure.<sup>203</sup>

The Eisenhower Administration demonstrated a low commitment to Israeli interests and heightened strains on the relationship when Israel acted against U.S. foreign interests in the region. When Israel diverted water from the Jordan river in 1953, the Administration cutoff 26 million USD in aid until the Israeli government agreed to “abandon its diversion project and cooperate” with the UN on a development project for the river.<sup>204</sup> The Administration also assisted in the formation of the Baghdad Pact of 1955. Israel objected to the Pact because it strengthened the Iraqi threat to Israeli security. Despite the coalition’s threat to Israeli security, the Administration perceived Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan as strategic partners in containing the USSR from entering the Middle East.<sup>205</sup> Though the Pact ultimately disbanded, the U.S. assistance in its formation highlights the U.S. carrying out its foreign policy despite the objections of its regional ally. Israel repeatedly voiced concern that “the military balance in the middle East was being disrupted” through outside power alliances with Israel’s adversaries. When the Soviet arms supply with Egypt through Czech arms deal surfaced, Israel argued “the United States should become active in arming Israel.” The Administration still aimed to strengthen its other alliances in the region as not to upset the power dynamics and push other Middle Eastern states into the Soviet bloc. When the Eisenhower Administration rejected Israel’s request, Israel sought out European powers, specifically France, to build up their armaments.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Israel State Archives, 2479/1, February 20, 1952. Cited in Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel*, P. 26-27.

<sup>204</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 118.

<sup>205</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 58-62.

<sup>206</sup> Sheffer, Gabriel. *Dynamics of Dependence*. New York: W.W. Norton. Pub. 1992. P. 45; Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 121.

The Eisenhower Administration remained committed to strengthening other alliances in the region at the expense of its weak alliance with Israel.

The Suez Crisis of 1956 produced an enormous strain in US-Israeli relations. Without U.S. support, Israel collaborated with Britain and France to invade Egypt to take the Sinai and provide Israel access to the Straits of Tiran. Throughout the conflict, Eisenhower faced heightened domestic pressure to side with Israel. As Miglietta notes, the Suez Crisis demonstrated the domestic pressure placed on the Eisenhower Administration that undercut attempts to pressure Israel to withdraw through economic sanctions.<sup>207</sup> Pursuing Cold War interests, the U.S. strangled Britain's economy through the IMF to force the UN ceasefire resolution.<sup>208</sup> Though Eisenhower managed to reach an Israeli withdrawal by March 1957, Israel gained "personal assurances" from the U.S. for protection and obtained rights to use the Strait of Tiran. Moreover, Israel had pulled the U.S. into the first of many conflicts, threatened U.S. foreign policy interests by weakening its position with Egypt, and exposed the limits of U.S. influence on Israel.<sup>209</sup> Positively, the Eisenhower Administration marked the beginning of intelligence sharing between Mossad and the CIA to monitor Soviet technology and supplies and the first limited arms sales to Israel in 1958 and 1960.<sup>210</sup> Around the same time in Iran, the U.S.

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<sup>207</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 119-120.

<sup>208</sup> Neff, Donald. *Warriors at Suez: Eisenhower Takes America Into the Middle East*. New York: The Linden Press. Pub. 1981. P 409-413.

<sup>209</sup> Rubenberg, *Israel and the American*, P. 78-79; Ben-Zvi, Abraham. *United States and Israel*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pub. 1993. P. 69-71; David. Be-Gurion, *Israel A Personal Letter*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Sabra Books. Pub. 1971. P. 532-534; Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 120.

<sup>210</sup> "Secret, Department of State telegram 86 from Secretary of State to U.S. Embassy, Port-au-Prince, dated August 4, 1964." *Declassified Documents*. Washington, DC: Carrolton Press. Pub. 1979. 433D.

CIA and the Israeli Mossad helped develop Iran's SAVAK. These three states closely cooperated in intelligence sharing throughout the reign of the Shah.<sup>211</sup>

The US-Israeli alliance strengthened as Israel increasingly appeared to be vulnerable to Soviet-backed Egypt. With the buildup of military arms by the Soviet Union, the military balance in the region had "turned against" Israel presenting the need to secure Israel to stabilize the system.<sup>212</sup> The Kennedy Administration emphasized balancing strength in the region through political guarantees of protection and military sales. With the joint impact of the Soviet Union advancing its arms sales towards Egypt and France scaling back on its sales toward Israel, the U.S. tentatively stepped in to "secure" Israel.<sup>213</sup> The Kennedy Administration sold 21.5 million USD worth of HAWK missiles to Israel and financed over 80 million USD worth of arms sales from West Germany to Israel.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, in the last fiscal year under Kennedy, the U.S. allocated 40 million USD in economic aid to Israel.<sup>215</sup> The Kennedy Administration also expanded political backing of Israel. Though mostly through private correspondence, Kennedy accepted "Israel's definition of its borders, as well as the amount of water it was entitled to take from the Jordan River." Though Truman and Eisenhower had taken precaution in aligning with Israel on these issues, Kennedy backed "Israeli interests" as "American interests."<sup>216</sup> The alliance

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<sup>211</sup> Bill, James A. *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 1988. Print. P. 430.

<sup>212</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 132-133.

<sup>213</sup> Green, Stephen. *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*. New York: William Morrow. Pub. 1984. P. 183.

<sup>214</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 132. Citing Green, Stephen. *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*. New York: William Morrow. Pub. 1984. P. 187; Memorandum, Robert Kromer to President Johnson, April 23, 1965. *LBJ Library*.

<sup>215</sup> Ball and Ball, *The Passionate Attachment: America's Involvement with Israel, 1947 to the Present*. W. W. Norton. Pub. 1992. P. 52; Green, Stephen. *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*. New York: William Morrow. Pub. 1984. P. 187.

<sup>216</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 133. Citing Sheffer, Gabriel. *Dynamics of Dependence*. New York: W.W. Norton. Pub. 1992. P. 91.

was partially strained over Israel's developments at a potential nuclear facility in Dimona.<sup>217</sup> Through Ben-Gurion's premiership, the Kennedy Administration attempted to get full oversight on the Dimona Project leading to heightened tensions between the two leaders. Assuring Kennedy that "the only purposes are for peace," Prime Minister Ben-Gurion also stressed "we do not know what will happen in the future" and warned that Egypt "could achieve it themselves" over the next few decades.<sup>218</sup> This strain did not produce small state influence, but it demonstrated the limits of U.S. leverage over Israel. Under the Eshkol premiership, the Administration received the assent to inspect the facility, which continued annually until 1969.<sup>219</sup>

The U.S. took over as Israel's main arms supplier under the Johnson Administration.<sup>220</sup> Johnson accelerated Kennedy's policy toward Israel and ramped up arms sale that had begun under Kennedy. By 1965, the U.S. was the largest supplier of military goods to Israel.<sup>221</sup> In 1965, the U.S. allocated 71 million USD in aid to Israel, 20% of which was military aid.<sup>222</sup> In 1966, the U.S. sold 200 Patton tanks to Israel. That fiscal year, the U.S. allocated 130 million USD in aid, 71% of which was military aid.<sup>223</sup> Following the 1967 war, Israel requested F-4 Phantoms. The debate over the sale of 50 E series Phantoms put enormous pressure on Johnson. Despite the sale seeming to jeopardize the U.S. position in the region, the Administration used the French

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<sup>217</sup> "274, Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Vol. XVIII, Near East, 1962-1963." *Office of the Historian*.  
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v18/d274>

<sup>218</sup> Meyer. "Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy, Central Files, 884A.1901/1-3061. Secret, (NEA/NE)." *Department of State*. Washington, January 30, 1961.

<sup>219</sup> Cohen, Avner. *Israel and the Bomb*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pub. 1999. P. 115-174; Cohen, Avner and Burr, William. "How the Israelis Hoodwinked JFK on Going Nuclear." *Foreign Policy*. Pub. 26 April 2016. Web. March 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/26/how-the-israelis-hoodwinked-jfk-on-going-nuclear-dimona-atoms-for-peace/>

<sup>220</sup> Green, Stephen. *Living by the Sword*. Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books. Pub. 1988. P. 10

<sup>221</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 134.

<sup>222</sup> Ball and Ball, *The Passionate Attachment*, P. 52; Green, Stephen. *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*. New York: William Morrow. Pub. 1984. P. 187.

<sup>223</sup> Ball and Ball, *The Passionate Attachment*, P. 52; Green, Stephen. *Taking Sides: America's Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*. New York: William Morrow. Pub. 1984. P. 187.

embargo on Israel and the Soviet arms sales to Arab states to justify the sale.<sup>224</sup> France had sewn a privileged relationship with Israel and utilized Israeli intelligence to monitor rebel groups in Algeria. Once the French withdrew from Algeria in 1967, President de Gaulle “severed the connection” with Israel and imposed an embargo on sales to Israel.<sup>225</sup> The U.S. slowly stepped up as the main arms supplier to Israel as France slowed down. As the U.S. stepped up its arms sales to Israel, it also increased its sales to other states in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Lebanon.<sup>226</sup> Though the arms sales were not intended to set “a precedent for future U.S. action,” the military buildup of Israel continued to escalate beyond the Johnson Administration.<sup>227</sup> The heightened commitment toward Israel raised the bar for future commitment toward the smaller state. As stated by Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Warnke to Rabin, “we will henceforth become the principal arms supplier to Israel, involving more directly the security of the United States”, adding that the recent sales under the Johnson Administration “marked a distinct change from past policy.”<sup>228</sup> As an important note, the U.S. provided the arms sales without conditionality. That is, the U.S. committed without gaining any concessions that would forward its personal objectives in the region. The U.S. committed to the sale without gaining Israel’s withdrawal from occupied territories or its signature on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.<sup>229</sup> Hence, Israel had gained its objectives without the U.S. reaching its

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<sup>224</sup> Sheffer, Gabriel. *Dynamics of Dependence*. New York: W.W. Norton. Pub. 1992. P. 104; Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 137.

<sup>225</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 366. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351).

<sup>226</sup> Bard, Mitchell. G. *The Water’s Edge and Beyond: Defining the Limits to Domestic Influence on United States Middle East Policy*. Pub. 1991. 195.

<sup>227</sup> “Memorandum, Charles Baird to Assistant Secretary of Defense, Israel State Archives, January 5, 1968.” *LBJ Library*.

<sup>228</sup> “Memorandum, Yitzhak Rabin et al. and Paul Warnke et al., November 4, 1968.” *LBJ Library*

<sup>229</sup> Spiegel, Steven L. *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pub. 1985. P. 159-164.

own. The U.S. went further by backing Israeli objectives. As Stephen Walt notes, the U.S. “supported Israel’s diplomatic position that withdrawal would require the Arabs both to recognize Israel’s right to exist and to sign a formal peace treaty.”<sup>230</sup>

During the Six-Day War of 1967, the U.S. actively provided intelligence and surveillance on the Arab States. Within the context of the Cold War, the U.S. was heavily involved in Vietnam at the outbreak of the Six-Day War. Viewing the Arab-Israeli conflict within the Cold War context, the U.S. sought to limit Soviet-backed states and bolster its allies within the Middle East. Under the lens of containing the Soviet Union, the U.S. aimed for a decisive Israeli victory to “embarrass Soviet” by defeating Soviet-backed states and “force a peace settlement” by providing Israel with leverage over the opposing states.<sup>231</sup> With U.S. policy toward Israel contextualized within the Cold War, the U.S. policy “shifted from one of balance” to “facilitating Israeli military superiority.”<sup>232</sup> The U.S. pushing toward Israeli military superiority upset the balance of power. With the Arab-Israeli conflict shifting the balance in favor of Israel, the whole region faced relative instability that spilled over into the October War in 1973.<sup>233</sup> Following the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, the U.S. began to acquire a new role in Israeli affairs as a mediator. For every presidency, brokering a “peace in the Middle East” is a central goal on the foreign policy agenda. First taking on the “semi-permanent” role as the peacekeeper under the umbrella of the United Nations in the late-1960s, the U.S. evolved to its own diplomatic measures for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The special relationship between Israel and the U.S. provided

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<sup>230</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 107.

<sup>231</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 138; Green, Stephen. *Taking Sides: America’s Secret Relations with a Militant Israel*. New York: William Morrow. Pub. 1984. P. 211.

<sup>232</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 138

<sup>233</sup> Rubenberg, *Israel and the American*, P. 125.

an advantage for Israel in the peace process, but the Palestinians preferred the U.S. as the mediator because “only the United States is believed to have enough influence or leverage over Israel to have any chance of persuading the Israelis to yield some or all of the lands they conquered in 1967.”<sup>234</sup>

### *5.3 Heightened Commitment and Small State Influence*

The Nixon Administration expanded support for Israel. Out of the post-Vietnam fatigue, Nixon attempted to transform “a client into an independent regional superpower” by bolstering allies that would “take over the burden of regional security.”<sup>235</sup> This allowed room for increased small state influence. Without the U.S. as involved, Israel could inflate the need for additional aid to defend itself on its own. The “transformation” of client states escalated aid and arms toward Israel regardless of Israel carrying out U.S. foreign policy objectives. In 1969, Israel received 25 Phantom F-4z and 80 Skyhawk fighters.<sup>236</sup> In 1971, U.S. total aid toward Israel was at 631.8 million USD.<sup>237</sup> This escalated to 2.2 billion USD in grants and loans in 1973 and 2.63 billion USD in aid in 1974.<sup>238</sup> When tensions between Egypt and Israel escalated in the late 1960s as an extension of the Arab-Israeli war, the U.S. intervened on Israel’s behalf. With Egypt

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<sup>234</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 372. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351)

<sup>235</sup> Paolucci, Henry. *Iran, Israel, and the United States*. New York: Griffon House Publications. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 15; Shulman, Marshall D. *East-West Tensions in the Third World*. New York: W.W. Norton. Pub. 1986. Print. P. 194.

<sup>236</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 140.

<sup>237</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 110.

<sup>238</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 140. Citing Lenczowski, George. *American Presidents and the Middle East*. Duke University Press. Pub. 1990. P. 139-140.

receiving Soviet arms and eventually Soviet troops, the U.S. ensured Israel maintained an upper hand in the conflict. However, the tensions between the two states produced strains in the US-Israeli alliance. Israel sought to “maintain their military edge” and rejected U.S. attempts at peace proposals. This tension continued until Israel accepted a U.S. ceasefire in 1970 on the condition of the U.S. increasing its political and financial support.<sup>239</sup> In that same year, the U.S. collaborated with Israel to deescalate the crisis in Jordan. During Jordan’s “Black September” in 1970, the U.S. and Israel had a shared interest in preserving the Hashemite Kingdom over the alternatives. In coordination, both states backed King Hussein to prevent “the deterioration in Jordan” and to block “the attempt to overturn the regime.”<sup>240</sup> Leading up to the Arab-Israeli War in 1973, the U.S. and Israel clashed on a plethora of attempts at peace settlements. The failure to reach a peace ultimately escalated the region into another war. Specifically, Israel rejected Sadat’s interim settlement proposal and the Jarring mission. At the same time, Israel continued to receive unprecedented aid and arms in line with the Nixon Doctrine. With U.S. objectives of peace blocked by Israeli security objectives, the U.S. eventually agreed in 1972 to “obtain Israel’s approval before making any more peace initiatives.”<sup>241</sup> In doing so, the U.S. agreed to commit to peace only to the extent that Israel was willing to budge. The alliance retained high commitment from the U.S. to assist in producing Israeli objectives.

Though the Nixon Administration attempted to practice détente out of Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli War pulled the U.S. into another regional conflict on behalf of its ally and against

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<sup>239</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 110; Quandt, William B. *Decades of Decision: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Pub. 1977. University of California Press P. 97-98.

<sup>240</sup> Rabin, Yitzhak. *The Rabin Memoirs*. Boston: Little Brown. Pub. 1979. P. 189.

<sup>241</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 119. Citing Rabin, Yitzhak. *The Rabin Memoirs*. Boston: Little Brown. Pub. 1979. P. 193-209



the Soviet threat.<sup>242</sup> During the October 1973 War—or the Yom Kippur War—the United States sent 22,395 tons of cargo to Israel in Operation Nickel Grass.<sup>243</sup> Though the U.S. initially hesitated to get involved, its arms supplies changed the course of the war in Israel’s favor. In this form, the U.S. committed to back its smaller state against other opposing states in the system. Though the U.S. had objectives to influence these Arab states in the containment strategy, the U.S. risked its objective to protect the alliance. Throughout the conflict, the U.S. consistently forwarded arms to Israel above what the Soviet Union supplied to the Arab states.<sup>244</sup> Repeated attempts by the Soviet Union and the United States to reach a ceasefire were thwarted by their regional allies. The U.S. did not succeed in pressuring Israel into a ceasefire until the Soviet Union threatened “unilateral intervention if Israel did not halt its operations.”<sup>245</sup> Moreover, the U.S. came under economic pressure from a Saudi-led oil embargo that lasted throughout the war. Support for Israel placed a serious strain on the U.S. domestically and in its regional aspirations.

The United States negotiated a peace to the conflict at a high cost. Following the war, the U.S. mediated through “shuttle diplomacy” as Secretary of State Henry Kissinger flew from capital to capital to negotiate a peace. Critical to U.S. objectives, Kissinger succeeded in pulling Sadat’s Egypt into the U.S. sphere. The stages of “shuttle” diplomacy produced major strains in U.S.-Israeli relations as the U.S. attempted to leverage Israel by withholding aid. For every agreement met between Israel and another states, the U.S. provided a concession to Israel. In 1974, Kissinger negotiated disengagement between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and

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<sup>242</sup> Daigle, Craig. *The Limits of Détente: The United States, the Soviet Union. And the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969-1973*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 2012. Print.

<sup>243</sup> Boyne, Walter J. “Nickel Grass: It was justifiably called ‘the airlift that saved Israel.’” *Air Force Magazine*. Pub. Dec. 1998. Web. Feb. 2020. PDF.

<https://www.airforcemag.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Documents/1998/December%201998/1298nickel.pdf>

<sup>244</sup> Sheffer, Gabriel. *Dynamics of Dependence*. New York: W.W. Norton. Pub. 1992. P. 111.

<sup>245</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 123. Citing Kissinger, Henry. *Years of Upheaval*. Little Brown & Co. Pub. 1982. , P. 527.

Syria. In exchange, the U.S. waived 1.5 billion USD in Israeli debt and brokered a “major arms package” deal.<sup>246</sup> In 1975, under the Ford Administration, Kissinger reached the Sinai II agreement for Israel’s partial withdraw and the establishment of a demilitarized zone monitored by a multinational force (MNF).<sup>247</sup> The Sinai II Agreement of 1975 came at a high cost to the United States by producing a high-level of commitment toward Israel. Prior to the Sinai II agreement, the Ford Administration refused to commit additional aid to Israel. As a result, Ford faced high pressure from Congress to support a 2.59 billion USD bill for “military and economic aid” to Israel.<sup>248</sup> The final agreement was reached through a series of concessions to Israel. These concessions “expanded” the relationship to the point “where Israel was placed ahead of other foreign nations to receive weapons.”<sup>249</sup> In the Memorandum of Agreement of 1975, Kissinger wrote that “in view of the long-standing United States commitment to the survival and security of Israel,” the United States pledges “to be fully responsive...on an on-going and long-term basis to Israel’s military equipment and other defense requirements, to its energy requirements and to its economic needs.” This Agreement also assures the Israeli government that the U.S. is prepared to veto any motions in the UN that go against “the interests of Israel.”<sup>250</sup> In a letter directly from President Ford to Prime Minister Rabin in 1975, Ford reiterates the commitment made in the agreements and adds “it is my resolve to continue to maintain Israel’s defensive strength through the supply of advanced types of equipment” in addition to the annual allocation of “military and economic assistance.” Ford attributed this commitment to Israel to the “special

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<sup>246</sup> Pollock, *Politics of Pressure*, P. 180-182.

<sup>247</sup> Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, P. 619-623.

<sup>248</sup> Lenczowski, George. *American Presidents and the Middle East*. Duke University Press. Pub. 1990. P. 149-150.

<sup>249</sup> Gazi, “Israeli Military Procurement.” P. 114-115.

<sup>250</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearings on Memoranda of Agreements between the Governments of Israel and the United States*, 94<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, 1975, P. 249-253. Cited in Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 127

relationship existing between the United States and Israel...in light of the determination of both sides to avoid a situation in which the U.S. and Israel would pursue divergent courses.”<sup>251</sup> For the Egyptian side of the agreement, Kissinger pledged on behalf of the U.S. “one million tons of grain” in 1976 and further assistance in “economic development” in addition to the peace terms negotiated among the states.<sup>252</sup> By the close of the Ford Administration, Israel’s “tank forces had grown 50 percent, the mobile artillery had increased 100 percent, armored personnel carriers by 800 percent, and planes by 30 percent.”<sup>253</sup> This heightened commitment and set a new standard for commitment.

On negotiations with the Palestinians, Kissinger stated that the U.S. “will not recognize or negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)” until the PLO recognizes the right of Israel to exist and accepts the UN resolutions. <sup>254</sup> This portion of the Agreement was extended by future Administrations as a hard-bargaining chip when handling the Arab-Israeli conflict. By taking a hardline against the PLO, the U.S. increasingly backed the Israeli objectives in the Middle East Peace Process. This commitment to Israel inadvertently placed the United States against another “variable” in the Middle Eastern system. By determining to not “negotiate” unless future Palestinian organizations recognized Israel, the United States committed itself to one-side of the conflict. Though it still attempted to play the mediator, its favor for the Israelis in the process put the U.S. at odds with other Arab states. This form of

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<sup>251</sup> “The Kissinger Reports on USSR, China, and Middle East Discussion: Box 5 – September 1, 1975 – Sinai Disengagement Agreement – Documents (2).” *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*. PDF. P. 1-12. <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0331/1553991.pdf>

<sup>252</sup> “The Kissinger Reports on USSR, China, and Middle East Discussion: Box 5 – September 1, 1975 – Sinai Disengagement Agreement – Documents (2).” *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*. PDF. P. 15. <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0331/1553991.pdf>

<sup>253</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 142. Citing Rabin, *Rabin Memoirs*. P. 505.

<sup>254</sup> “The Kissinger Reports on USSR, China, and Middle East Discussion: Box 5 – September 1, 1975 – Sinai Disengagement Agreement – Documents (2).” *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*. PDF. P. 8. <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0331/1553991.pdf>

commitment towards its “long-standing” ally, strained the United States’ relations with other states in the system on behalf of protecting its relations with Israel. This policy was finally reached when Yasir Arafat publicly promises to “seek peace with Israel and to condemn terrorism” to initiate formal dialogue with the U.S. under the Reagan Administration in 1988.<sup>255</sup>

As the U.S. emerged as the many peacekeeper in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it developed the current strategic relationship observed today. As Lewis observes, the request “for large amounts of US military and economic aid” following the October War was “an ominous harbinger for future, seemingly permanent, dependence.”<sup>256</sup> Recognizing Israel as an increasingly important partner for regional security and the overarching policy of containment, the United States sought to secure its influence through aid, support, and arms supplies.<sup>257</sup> In reality, the high cost of supporting Israel produced low outcomes for U.S. objectives and pinned the U.S. against other regional allies. Balancing between the Israeli alliance and others in the region required lowering the level of conflict between the states and heightening the individual security to lower their perception of regional threat.

#### *5.4 The Rebalance and Increased Small State Influence*

The Carter Administration made significant strides in US-Israeli relations. In the 1980 State of the Union Address, Carter stated, “let no one doubt our commitment to the security of

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<sup>255</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 367. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351).

<sup>256</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 367. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351).

<sup>257</sup> Burns, William J. *Economic Aid and American Policy Toward Egypt, 1955-1981*. Albany: State University of New York Press. Pub 1985. P. 211-212.

Israel.”<sup>258</sup> At the beginning of the presidency, Carter followed Ford’s policy of using “arms sales as leverage over Israel” to achieve some concessions for Palestinians.<sup>259</sup> In line with the policy, Carter delayed coproduction of F-16 and the selling of Cobra helicopter gunships until Israel allowed Palestinian representation at the Geneva talks.<sup>260</sup> Though the U.S. used arms sales as leverage, Israel frequently inflated regional “security threats” to receive additional military supplies, assistance, and commitments. In 1978, Carter put forth a “package” of arms to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt to “maintain the existing military balance.”<sup>261</sup> The package allocated less arms to Israel than the Begin premiership had requested. According to White House officials, Carter was attempted to create a stronger regional balance. Committed to an “all or nothing” approach, Carter prepared to let the bill fail if arms towards all countries was not approved. Israel, “aided by its friends in Congress,” pressured the U.S. to drop Saudi Arabia from the package claiming that the sale would be “detrimental to Israel’s long-term security interests.”<sup>262</sup> The pressure achieved rhetorical commitment and additional arms. First, with voiced in Congress on behalf of Israel, Defense Secretary Harold Brown received confirmation from Saudi Arabia that the arms would “not be used against Israel” and would limit the use to solely on its national territory.<sup>263</sup> Second, Israeli pressure produced a compromise package. In addition to the arms it received in the first package, Israel received “additional supplies of

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<sup>258</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.

<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>259</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 142.

<sup>260</sup> Pollock, David, *The Politics of Pressure*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press. Pub. 1982. P. 235-236.

<sup>261</sup> Hovey, Graham. “U.S. Plans First Jet Sale to Cairo, Reduces Israeli Order for Craft; Saudis Get 60.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 15 Feb. 1978. Web. March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/02/15/archives/new-jersey-pages-us-plans-first-jet-sale-to-cairo-reduces-israeli.html>

<sup>262</sup> Pollock, David, *The Politics of Pressure*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press. Pub. 1982. P. 239.

<sup>263</sup> Weinraub, Bernard. “Brown Says Saudis Will Accept Curbs on the Use of F-15’s.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 11 May 1978. Web. March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/05/11/archives/brown-says-saudis-will-accept-curbs-on-the-use-of-f15s-foreign.html>

military equipment as compensation later on.”<sup>264</sup> Despite efforts by the Carter Administration to limit arms sales to Israel, Israel succeeded in gaining the additional arms it requested by appealing to the wider government apparatus and citing the threat to its national security interests.

The Carter Administration succeeded in mediating an Egyptian-Israeli peace deal at Camp David between 1978 and 1979. Leading up to the peace deal, Egyptian leader Sadat took unilateral action to work towards peace with Israel. Facing domestic unrest, Sadat sought to a peace settlement with hopes of alleviating the problems at home. Though Sadat aimed to reach a larger settlement on Middle East peace, Prime Minister Begin focused on a bilateral agreement separate from any relinquishment of its occupied territories with the exception of the Sinai.<sup>265</sup> The Camp David Accords produced the conditions for an Israeli-Egyptian peace and for “a Framework for Peace in the Middle East.”<sup>266</sup> In the peace process, Israel brokered a peace with “the most powerful adversary of the Jewish state” since 1948.<sup>267</sup> Without Egypt as a security threat, Israel shifted its efforts against the instability in its proximate neighborhood. For participating in the peace deal, Israel received a “supplemental foreign aid package” including “3 billion USD in military aid, 800 million of which was in the form of grants” for new air bases.<sup>268</sup> The Egyptian-Israeli alliance isolated Egypt politically and economically from the Arab states and made it more dependent on the United States. Following the deal, most Arab states severed

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<sup>264</sup> U.S. House International Relations Committee, *U.S. Arms Policy and Recent Sales to Europe and the Middle East, Hearings before the International Relations Committee*. 95th Congress, 2nd Session, 1978, 20.

<sup>265</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 378.

<sup>266</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 379.

<sup>267</sup> Quandt, William B. *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Pub. 1988. P. 358.

<sup>268</sup> U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, *Supplemental 1979 Middle East Aid Package for Israel and Egypt, Hearings and Markup, House Foreign Affairs Committee*, 96th Congress, 1st session, 1979, 157; Brown letter to Weizman, *American Foreign Policy, Basic Documents*, 667.

relations with Egypt and Egypt was subsequently expelled from the Arab League. Domestically, discontent over the peace deal coupled with economic disparity and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism culminated in the assassination of President Sadat in 1981.<sup>269</sup> The Arab coalition behind Palestinians was severely weakened without Egypt. Entering the 1980s, the Palestinian effort shifted to within the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, and between Israel and the Syrian military establishment. Regardless of the regional repercussions of the deal, the U.S. had solidified an alliance with Egypt and limited future prospects for another Arab-Israeli war.

The Reagan era is pivotal in the analysis of the “permanence” of the Israeli alliance. The early years of the Administration witnessed the reorientation of foreign policy in the region. Iterated in the Carter Doctrine and carried out under the Reagan Administration, the U.S. pivoted away from Iran as its dominant regional power and turned towards its other long-standing alliances. To the benefit of Israel, the tensions in Iran increased U.S. dependency on other states including itself. The period of rebalancing power coincided with the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, and the continuation of the Lebanese Civil War. The U.S. evolved its commitments as events unraveled in the region. Though the U.S. oscillated on its commitments to regional powers—Iran and Iraq in particular—the U.S.-Israeli and U.S.-Saudi relations withstood and strengthened throughout the 1980s. During the Reagan era, Israeli premierships tested the level of U.S. commitment on several occasions. These “tests” highlight the extent Israel could influence U.S. policy. Despite significant strains in the relationship, the U.S.-Israeli alliance deepened through U.S. military interventions and heightened aid. The sustainment of relations in spite of the severe push-and-pull demonstrate the level of “permanence” the alliance had reached by the close of the decade.

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<sup>269</sup> Cleveland, William L. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. 4th ed., Boulder: Westview Press. Pub. 2009. Print. P. 381.

The Reagan Administration shifted the importance of Israel to predominately within the Cold War containment strategy for the Middle East. In an op-ed in the *Washington Post*, Reagan stated, “the fall of Iran has increased Israel’s value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can truly rely.”<sup>270</sup> In the piece, Egypt was mentioned as a “secondary link” to Israel.<sup>271</sup> Without Iran as an ally in the East, American policymakers in the early 1980s saw Israel—in addition to friendly Arab states—as a pivotal geostrategic state for combating the Soviet threat. With some Arab states receiving support from the Soviet Union, it was in the United States’ interest to tighten its hold on its “allies” in the region. Under the policy of containment, Reagan advocated for the “maintenance of our alliance partnerships” arguing these relations were “key” to American foreign policy.<sup>272</sup> Under Secretary of State Alexander Haig, the Administration attempted to secure a “consensus of strategic concerns” to “counter the Soviet Union in an area stretching from Pakistan to Egypt and including such disparate nations as Turkey, Israel, and Saudi Arabia.” Haig added that American policymakers intended to improve relations with Iraq despite its history of close relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>273</sup> Reagan reiterated these policy goals to Prime Minister Begin in 1981 when he pledged to “work together with you and with our other friends in the region to counter Soviet aggression and to strengthen the security of all the countries in the area.”<sup>274</sup> This attempt to coalesce a broader band of regional allies was consistent with the Carter Administration’s early attempts to “rebalance”

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<sup>270</sup> Reagan, Ronald. “Recognizing the Israeli Asset.” *Washington Post*. Pub. 15 Aug. 1979

<sup>271</sup> Quandt, William B. *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Pub. 1988. P. 361.

<sup>272</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 297.

<sup>273</sup> Gwertzman, Bernard. “Haig says U.S. seeks Consensus Strategy in the Middle East.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 20 March 1981. Web. March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/20/world/haig-says-us-seeks-consensus-strategy-in-the-middle-east.html>

<sup>274</sup> Lawson, Fred. “The Reagan Administration in the Middle East.” *MERIP Reports*, no. 128, 1984, pp. 27–34. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3011188](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3011188). Accessed 20 Feb. 2020. P. 29.



following the invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979. Without Iran as a geostrategic ally to counter Soviet influence in the region, American policymakers shifted their focus on balancing through strengthening its other ties.

The Reagan Administration tightened its ties with Israel beginning in 1981.<sup>275</sup> Summarized by Lewis, “the United States developed quiet but increasingly elaborate patterns of military-to-military relationships with Israel,” which included “joint planning for certain contingencies, joint exercises, and greatly enhanced intelligence cooperation.”<sup>276</sup> The increased security commitment produced opportunity for Israel to exert influence. As the U.S. increased its commitment, it became increasingly entangled in Israeli affairs and reacting on its behalf.

The Reagan Administration faced its first strain to Israeli relations in the summer of 1981. In June, Israel acted unilaterally against Iraq by bombing “the Osiraq nuclear facility in Baghdad.” Prime Minister Begin, quoted by the *New York Times*, believed Hussein intended to develop atomic bombs to destroy Israel. Washington was not informed of the attack in advance. With the U.S. “trying to improve relations with Baghdad” at the time, the Reagan Administration condemned Israeli action and temporarily suspended “the delivery of F-16 aircraft” to limit the state’s capabilities to carry out further strikes.<sup>277</sup>

The second major strain arose with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon one month later. As Miglietta notes, “this illustrated the potential repercussions a large power can have in aligning with a smaller state.”<sup>278</sup> Prior to Israel’s invasion of Lebanon, Israelis officials visited

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<sup>275</sup> Lawson, Fred. “The Reagan Administration in the Middle East.” *MERIP Reports*, no. 128, 1984, pp. 27–34. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3011188](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3011188). Accessed 20 Feb. 2020. P. 27.

<sup>276</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 369. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351)

<sup>277</sup> Shipler, David K. “Israeli Jets Destroy Iraqi Atomic Reactor; Attack Condemned by U.S. and Arab Nations.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 9 June 1981. Web. March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/06/09/world/israeli-jets-destroy-iraqi-atomic-reactor-attack-condemned-us-arab-nations.html>

<sup>278</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 144.

Washington to outline their “ambitious plan for Lebanon” and left interpreting Secretary of State Alexander Haig’s response as a “green light.”<sup>279</sup> By invading Lebanon, Israel hoped to severely weaken the PLO and implement a pro-Israeli, pro-Western regime under Bashir Gemayel. By installing Gemayel, Israel aimed to gain a regional ally and produce stability on its northern border.<sup>280</sup> In the early stages of the conflict, Alexander Haig was replaced by George Shultz over disagreements on the policy toward the Lebanese conflict.<sup>281</sup> The invasion escalated Israeli-Syrian tensions and threatened a larger regional conflict. Under Shultz, the U.S. managed to get the IDF to halt its advance against Syrian forces, but it continued into Lebanon to isolate, besiege and bombard PLO headquarters in West Beirut. The U.S brokered a de facto ceasefire to end Syrian and Israeli fighting, evacuate the PLO from Beirut, protect Palestinians in the South, and install Bashir Gemayel.<sup>282</sup> Reagan agreed to send U.S Marines to contribute to a multinational force (MNF) to oversee the withdraw of the PLO.

During the ceasefire, Reagan announced an Arab-Israeli peace plan that reiterated the Camp David settlement and “said that the U.S. would oppose both Israeli annexation and an independent Palestinian state.” Instead, Reagan advocated for an association of the West Bank and Gaza with Jordan. This heightened tensions between the Reagan Administration and Israeli Prime Minister Begin. Begin immediately rejected the proposal because its implications of withdrawing Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories.<sup>283</sup> The announcement received less opposition from the Arab-states.

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<sup>279</sup> Haig, Alexander. *Caveat*. P. 332-335; Schiff and Ya’ari. *Israel’s Lebanon War*. P. 62-77.

<sup>280</sup> Bahout, Joseph. “The Sound of Silence” *Carnegie Endowment*. Pub. 20 Sept. 2016. Web. March 2020. <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/64610>

<sup>281</sup> Quandt, William B. *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Pub. 1988. P. 364.

<sup>282</sup> Quandt, William B. *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Pub. 1988. P. 365.

<sup>283</sup> Quandt, William B. *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Pub. 1988. P. 365.

Four-days after the withdraw of the U.S. marines, the Israel-backed President Bashir Gemayel was assassinated and Israel reentered West Beirut. Reagan committed to a new MNF that kept the U.S. military involved in Lebanon until February 1984. During that period, the American embassy and U.S. contingents were repeatedly attacked.<sup>284</sup> Despite the link between Iran's Revolutionary Guard and the attacks on American troops in Lebanon, the U.S. restrained from participating in France's attack on the IRGC's barracks in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon.<sup>285</sup> Following the attacks, Reagan forwarded NSDD 111 to urge "stronger strategic relationship with Israel and those moderate Arab states willing to work with us militarily" citing their importance in broader regional conflicts and within the Cold War context. On Israel, Reagan urged pressure on Israel "to mute its objection... in exchange for some of its own needs" while enhancing strategic cooperation.<sup>286</sup>

The United States' relations with Israel withstanding the friction of 1982 demonstrated their high commitment to maintaining the alliance. Despite Israel violating American arms restrictions, the U.S. largely continued to aid Israel and became entangled in the Lebanese Civil War. The largest response to Israel's violation was Reagan's suspension of 4,000 155 mm artillery shells and delaying the sale of 75 F-15 jets.<sup>287</sup> Moreover, despite attempts by the Administration to limit aid to Israel in 1982, Congress voted on an economic aid package to Israel "that exceeded the amount proposed by the Reagan Administration by an estimated 635 million USD" and on military aid to Israel that was 635 million USD "more than was requested

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<sup>284</sup> Quandt, William B. *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Pub. 1988. P. 367.

<sup>285</sup> "The Reagan Administration and Lebanon, 1981-1984." *Office of the Historian*.  
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/lebanon>

<sup>286</sup> "National Security Decision Directive Number 111, October 23, 1983, System II, 91276: Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East." *Reagan Library*.  
<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/archives/reference/scanned-nsdds/nsdd111.pdf>

<sup>287</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 144.

by the Administration.”<sup>288</sup> Specifically, Israel succeeded in blocking the Administration’s arms sale to Jordan. Though the NSDD 111 aimed to curtail Israel’s effort at blocking U.S. “military cooperation with Jordan” by muting its objections, Congress supported Israel’s concerns over its national security threat.<sup>289</sup> The outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987 reopened domestic criticism of the United States’ commitment to the Israel. The outbreak of the Intifada led to the establishment of Hamas. As an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas did not recognize the State of Israel and advocated for an Islamic Palestinian State in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel.<sup>290</sup> With a surge in attacks against civilians and military in Israel, Israel pushed the United States to take strong action on its behalf. <sup>291</sup> The U.S. met Israel’s national security concerns by delivering on its requested aid and assistance.

During the Reagan era, the U.S. allocated 27 billion USD in aid to Israel, making up 50% of the cumulative aid that had been administered to Israel between 1948 and 1989.<sup>292</sup> In 1985, Israel became the first country to enter a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States.<sup>293</sup> The U.S. and Israel collaborated through a plethora of agencies including high intelligence sharing and cooperation between Israeli Space Agency and NASA. Moreover, the U.S. actively

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<sup>288</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 144.

<sup>289</sup> “National Security Decision Directive Number 111, October 23, 1983, System II, 91276: Next Steps Toward Progress in Lebanon and the Middle East.” *Reagan Library*. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/archives/reference/scanned-nsdds/nsdd111.pdf>; Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 144.

<sup>290</sup> “Testimony of John S. Pistole before the House Committee on Financial Service Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, Washington DC, September 24, 2003.” *The Federal Bureau of Investigation Archives*. Pub. 24 Sept. 2003. Web. March 2020. <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-financing-operations-section>

<sup>291</sup> “Testimony of John S. Pistole before the House Committee on Financial Service Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, Washington DC, September 24, 2003.” *The Federal Bureau of Investigation Archives*. Pub. 24 Sept. 2003. Web. March 2020. <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-financing-operations-section>

<sup>292</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 171.

<sup>293</sup> “Israel Free Trade Agreement.” *Office of the United States Trade Representative*. Pub. 2017. <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/israel-fta>

assisted in the development of Israel's technological and defense base.<sup>294</sup> The U.S committed to heightened military collaboration with Israel through Strategic Cooperation Agreement of 1981. Reagan suspended the deal within three weeks of its announcement over Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights.<sup>295</sup> Responding to the suspension, Prime Minister Begin stated, "you will not frighten us with punishments. He who threatens us will find us deaf to his threats."<sup>296</sup> Despite the Administration's pressure on its ally, Israel continued to act unilaterally while still receiving aid from the United States. In the same year, the U.S. provided Israel a 910 million USD economic grant, a 550 million USD loan to produce the Lavi fighter, and a 1.3 billion USD grant that allowed 15% to be used for Israeli-made weapons as oppose to 100% toward American-made arms. By 1983, the Strategic Cooperation Agreement was restored and extended the agreement through the establishment of the Joint Political-Military Group. In 1986, Israel joined the Strategic Defense Installment (SDI) program through a Memorandum of Understanding where in the first three years Israel received 52% of the contract funds above that of West Germany. In the 1987 NDAA, Israel became a non-NATO American ally for collaboration on research and development programs.<sup>297</sup> As Miglietta highlights, "for this the United States did not receive any Israeli commitments on such questions as support for the Reagan peace plan, freezing West Bank settlements, or dropping opposition to American arms sales to Jordan."<sup>298</sup> As Stephen Walt adds,

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<sup>294</sup> Green. *Living by the Sword*. P. 223-224.

<sup>295</sup> Gwertzman, Bernard. "U.S. Suspends Strategic Pact and Arms Deal with Israel over Annexation of Golan." *The New York Times*. Pub. 19 Dec. 1981. Web. March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/12/19/world/us-suspends-strategic-pact-and-arms-deal-with-israel-over-annexation-of-golan.html>

<sup>296</sup> "Transcript of Prime Minister Begin's Statement to the U.S. Envoy to Israel." *The New York Times*. Pub. 21 Dec. 1981. Web. March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/12/21/world/transcript-of-prime-minister-begin-s-statement-to-the-us-envoy-to-israel.html>

<sup>297</sup> Gold, Dore. *Israel As. Am American Non-NATO Ally: Parameters of Defense Industrial Cooperation in a Post-Cold War Relationship*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Pub. 1992. P. 25.

<sup>298</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 171. Citing Mansour, Camille. *Beyond Alliance: Israel and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pub. 1994. P. 228.

“Israel’s dependence on the United States [for aid] did not stop it from bombing Iraq, annexing the Golan Heights, invading Lebanon and laying siege to Beirut, expanding settlements on the West Bank, and rejecting the so-called Reagan Plan within twenty-four hours, despite the fact that each step was contrary to expressed U.S. preferences.”<sup>299</sup> Both scholars’ analyses emphasize that the U.S. had limited influence on Israel, if any, in achieving its regional objectives. On the other side of the alliance, the heightened commitment without reaching U.S. objectives demonstrated the increase in Israel’s influence. As Israeli Defense Minister Sharon expressed, Israel envisioned American support as lifting Israel in power and stature in the region as it continued to use force to achieve its personal interests.<sup>300</sup> Israel carried out its foreign policy interests while aid flowed in from the U.S. and American Marines settled into Lebanon to mediate in a war that Israel drew it into against its objections.

The ascendance of the Bush Administration focused on the security and strategic aspects of the Israeli partnership. With the Soviet Union lessening as a threat at the beginning of the presidency, the Administration iterated “that the political changes in the world made America’s alliance relationships all the more important.”<sup>301</sup> On Israel specifically, the Administration voiced that Israel “played a crucial role in preserving stability in the region” in conflicts that did not involve the Soviet Union and would continue to do so “in the future.”<sup>302</sup> In 1990, Congress approved over one billion USD in aid to flow to Israel.<sup>303</sup> The Bush era “embodied a commitment to Israel’s ultimate security and an appreciation of the value of military-to-military

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<sup>299</sup> Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 272.

<sup>300</sup> Puschel, Karen. *U.S.-Israeli Strategic Cooperation in the Post-Cold War Era Perspective*. Westview Press. Pub. 1992. P. 41-43.

<sup>301</sup> Puschel, Karen. *U.S.-Israeli Strategic Cooperation in the Post-Cold War Era Perspective*. Westview Press. Pub. 1992. P. 104.

<sup>302</sup> Puschel, Karen. *U.S.-Israeli Strategic Cooperation in the Post-Cold War Era Perspective*. Westview Press. Pub. 1992. P. 104-105. Citing Wolfowitz, Paul. *USIS Press Clips*. NXE 309, December 19, 1990, 106.

<sup>303</sup> Testimony of James Baker, House Foreign Affairs Committee, October 18, 1990. *USIS Press Clips*, October 18, 1990, A13.

cooperation.”<sup>304</sup> Strategic cooperation heightened during the Gulf War. As a long-lasting effort, Washington established a “hotline” between the Pentagon and the Israeli Ministry of Defense to directly relay military strategy and warn of missile strikes<sup>305</sup>. Fearing that Israeli involvement in the Gulf War would deter Arab states from participating, Bush made a concerted effort to keep Israel on the sidelines. Hussein recognized that an attack on Israel could widen the conflict to his advantage. On January 17, 1991, the U.S. coalition carried out extensive air strikes on Iraq. The next day, Iraq bombed Israel using Soviet-made conventional SCUD missiles. In Washington, the White House condemned the strikes as a “brutal act of terror” and praised Israel for their “remarkable restraint in the face of aggression.”<sup>306</sup> Privately, the U.S. continued to push Israel to refrain from responding. Within “hours of the first reports of the attacks on Israel,” the U.S. and allied “planed were seen roaring away from bases in Saudi Arabia and setting course for Iraq.”<sup>307</sup>

The Bush Administration worked toward greater regional stability by tackling the Arab-Israeli conflict. From their first meeting in April 1989, President Bush put pressure on Prime Minister Shamir to pause settlement construction in the Palestinian territories and negotiate a peace for regional stability. The Administration’s pressure created early tensions in the U.S.-Israeli alliance. Following the success of the United States in forming a coalition in the Gulf War of 1991, the U.S. hoped to leverage its dominance in the region to facilitate the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991. Leading up to the negotiations, the U.S. agreed to subsidize the Israeli

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<sup>304</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 369. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351)

<sup>305</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 148.

<sup>306</sup> Atkinson, Richard. “Scud Hits Tel Aviv, Leaving 3 Dead, 96 Hurt.” *The Washington Post*. Pub. 23 Jan. 1991. Web. March 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/fogofwar/archive/post012291.htm>

<sup>307</sup> Walker, Martin and Fairhall, David. “Iraqi missiles strike Israel.” *The Guardian*. Pub. 18 Jan. 1991. Web. March 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1991/jan/18/iraq.davidfairhall>

Arrow antiballistic missile program by 72%.<sup>308</sup> At the same time, the U.S. conditioned Israel's request for 10 billion USD in aid upon it halting the construction of settlements. With neither side budging, the bill was postponed. The negotiations brought Israel into face-to-face dialogue with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinian delegation. The leaders agreed to work toward multilateral and bilateral agreement but didn't produce any concrete changes to the conflict.

### *5.5 High Small State Influence and Firming against Iran*

Clinton was "America's first post-Cold War president." Without the policy of containment to lead foreign objectives, the Clinton Administration embraced the idea of "enlargement." Within the policy of democratic "enlargement" was a commitment to "contain reactionary regimes" in order to promote peace elsewhere.<sup>309</sup> Within the Middle East, this involved dealing "firmly" with regimes like "Iran and Iraq in the East" if they attempted to undermine the "Arab-Israel peace in the West." This was carried out through what became known as "dual containment." As outlined by Clinton's Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, Martin Indyk, nuclear proliferation and extremism in one state threatened the entire system. With Iran and Iraq pursuing destabilizing policies, the U.S. sought to "contain" the threat to stem its impact on the rest of the region.<sup>310</sup> This policy aimed to "contain" the two strategic threats to the Middle Eastern system from spreading instability to regional allies through

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<sup>308</sup> Puschel, Karen. *U.S.-Israeli Strategic Cooperation in the Post-Cold War Era Perspective*. Westview Press. Pub. 1992. P. 145.

<sup>309</sup> Brinkley, Douglas. "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine." *Foreign Policy*, no. 106, 1997, pp. 118. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/1149177](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1149177).

<sup>310</sup> Indyk, Martin. "The Clinton Administration's Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993." *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>



economic and diplomatic sanctions.<sup>311</sup> On Iran, Indyk emphasized that containing the “fundamentalist regime” curbed the “emerging threat” of religious extremists that endangered U.S. allies.<sup>312</sup> Moreover, both Iran and Iraq are “hostile to American interests” and antagonists towards “the U.S. and its allies,” As Indyk notes, “Iran is doing its best to thwart our efforts to promote peace between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab states.”<sup>313</sup> Specifically, the U.S. sought to stem Hamas and Hezbollah in the West by pressuring Iran in the East. To normalize relations with Iran, Iran’s policies must change across the board. Until then, the U.S. will campaign to strain its economy and military acquisition.<sup>314</sup> If the U.S. fails, “Iran will be much more capable of posing a real threat to Israel, to the Arab world and to Western interests in the Middle East.” In the process, the policy worked to tip the balance of power in favor of its regional allies. Indyk articulates that the Arab-Israeli peace cannot be reached without the dual containment of Iran and Iraq, arguing that if “the balance of power” shifts in favor “of radical forces led by Iraq or Iran” then the negotiating parties will opt for the “military option” over diplomatic peace.<sup>315</sup> For Israel, Rabin will not “take those risks for peace” including “withdrawal from territory” unless it can be ensured of a “real peace” in the region and that “the United States stands four-square behind it.” The Clinton Administration backed Israel by giving it a

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<sup>311</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions.” *The Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3. Pub. Fall 2001. Web. March 2020. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

<sup>312</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

<sup>313</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

<sup>314</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

<sup>315</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

“qualitative military edge” and a partnership for research and development of technological goods.

The policy of “dual containment” was a departure from Reagan and Bush’s attempts to normalize relations with Iran and explicitly stated that the U.S. would no longer attempt to normalize relations with Iran until it reversed its foreign policy motives in the region.<sup>316</sup> In its logic, as long as Iran was a threat to its regional allies, Iran was a threat to U.S. regional interests. In this form, the permanent alliances that had surpassed the Cold War had informed upon the U.S. to reverse its attempts at normalization and to commit to non-alignment and active subversion. Moreover, though the Administration attempted to make the argument to its international allies that, “Iran is a bad investment in both commercial and strategic terms,” Iran provided a cumulative 12.5 billion USD export market for Europe and Japan in 1993.<sup>317</sup> Hence, even though the U.S. was not benefitting from the Iranian market, its international allies were. Moreover, the private American companies had a high interest in Iran. Gause mentions Boeings plans for sales to Iran’s national airline and American oil companies’ purchase of Iranian oil.<sup>318</sup> Though the U.S. and Iran have “serious disagreements,” Gause argues they have “parallel interests in avoiding a destabilization of the gulf.” Similar to the China approach the U.S/ took in 1971, the U.S. has an interest in normalizing relations with Iran. As Gause lays out, the U.S. opened relations with China in 1971 despite it being considered a “revolutionary” power and its backing of the Northern Vietnamese in the Vietnam War. Despite China acting against U.S.

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<sup>316</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 60. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>317</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

<sup>318</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 61. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

policy interests, the U.S. benefitted from conducting “business in a productive way on matters of mutual interest.” If the U.S. approached Iran in the same way without supplying arms or military aid that would threaten its regional allies, the U.S. could advantageously broker a regional peace.<sup>319</sup> The China model is similar to the EU’s approach to Iran beginning in 1997 under President Khatami. Without producing a contractual relation, the EU participated in biannual meetings with Iran to discuss issues such as “human rights, women’s rights, minority rights, regional issues including the middle East peace process and proliferation issues.” The EU slowly worked toward a trade-and-cooperation agreement with Iran under various conditions. As Cameron argued “Iran is simply too important a country in the region to be ignored.”<sup>320</sup>

Dual containment allowed Iran to influence the Shi’ite majority in Iraq. Toppling Saddam directly benefits Iran. If Iraq appeared to be reconstructed by the United States as an aim to further “intensify Iran’s isolation” then Iran would become more active in destabilizing Iraq and the whole region.<sup>321</sup> Meanwhile, the fall of Iraq would not only strengthen Iran, but also Saudi Arabia and Israel as middle powers. If Iran gained influence in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states would be directly threatened.<sup>322</sup> This policy succeeded in toppling Iraq under the Bush Administration in 2001, which subsequently strengthened the Iranian position in Iraq, allowed for the spread of radical extremism, and the advancement of Saudi Arabia and Israel as dominant powers in the region with prevalent influence over the U.S.

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<sup>319</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 66. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>320</sup> Cameron, Fraser. “The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions, Kenneth Katzman, Richard Murphy, Fraser Cameron, Robert Litwak, Gary Sick, Thomas Stauffer and Chas. W. Freeman Jr.” *Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3, Fall 2001. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

<sup>321</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 61. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>322</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 63. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

The Administration sought to protect and buildup long-standing allies through continued military and economic commitments.<sup>323</sup> The Administration aimed to “work with [its] friends and allies in the Middle East—Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—to protect American interests.”<sup>324</sup> As Indyk outlined, U.S. interests in the region “remained unchanged.” The U.S. still maintained a concerted interest in foreign oil, “good relations” with those seeking friendship in the Arab world, and “in the security, survival and well-being of the state of Israel.”<sup>325</sup> The maintenance of these alliances beyond the Cold War strategy and into the “enlargement” policy formulated permanent alliances. To exit these relations under subsequent Administrations would require a radical reorientation of U.S. foreign policy or of the allied state’s regime or policy.

Critical to Clinton’s foreign policy was the continuation of the peace process in the Middle East. The Clinton Administration acted as a third party in the Israeli-Palestinian peace settlements of the 1990s. Similar to how the Egyptian-Israeli agreement came about under the Carter Administration, the Palestinian-Israeli path towards peace was largely without U.S. involvement. In 1993, Israel and the PLO brokered a peace deal in Oslo. Up to this point, Prime Minister Rabin maintained close relations with President Clinton. Lewis observes that Rabin outlined “to Clinton the diplomatic strategy he wanted to follow and readily obtain[ed] Clinton’s support.” When Clinton was informed about the Oslo Accords, he offered his full support and hosted the official signing of the deal. In its aftermath, the Administration pledged 500 million USD to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in addition to the two billion USD jointly

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<sup>323</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 56. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](https://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>324</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

<sup>325</sup> Indyk, Martin. “The Clinton Administration’s Approach to the Middle East, Soref Symposium 1993.” *The Washington Institute*. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east>

pledged by foreign leaders around the world.<sup>326</sup> The Israeli peace process worked towards negotiations with Syria and successfully reached a deal with Jordan in 1994. The Administration continued to back Israeli efforts at peace. During the Rabin Administration in Israel, the U.S. increased its security cooperation to combat terrorism. Following the assassination of Rabin, Clinton attended his funeral and organized an anti-terrorism summit with Middle Eastern leaders in 1995. Under the Peres premiership, Israeli-Syrian negotiations were broken off following a wave of terror bombings two months before the 1996 election.

The U.S. was consistently entangled in the implementation of the Oslo Accords. When Netanyahu came to power, the implementation of the Accords “became painfully slower.”<sup>327</sup> Netanyahu was a member of the right-wing Likud party. Prior to his first premiership, he served as the UN ambassador, worked at the embassy in the U.S., and held positions in the Knesset. He hosted a plethora of conferences on terrorism as early as 1979 and wrote several books on how to defeat terrorism prior to coming to office. Upon assuming the premiership, Netanyahu recognized the importance of the U.S.-Israeli relationship, but criticized the concessions made under Oslo.<sup>328</sup> The U.S. committed a high-level of effort towards bettering the relationship between Netanyahu and Arafat and at times functioned as the arbitrator.<sup>329</sup> In 1998, Clinton facilitated the Wye River Memorandum. The Memorandum settled a timeline for the implementation of past agreements following Israel’s “security concerns.”<sup>330</sup> The Netanyahu

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<sup>326</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 371. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351)

<sup>327</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 371. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351)

<sup>328</sup> “Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, Defense Minister.” *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/pages/benjamin%20netanyahu.aspx>

<sup>329</sup> Samuel W. Lewis. “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3. Pub. 1999. P. 371. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/4329351](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351)

<sup>330</sup> “The Why River Memorandum., 22 Oct. 1998.” *UNSCO*. [https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/the\\_why\\_river\\_memorandum.pdf](https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/the_why_river_memorandum.pdf)

premiership produced a minor strain on the U.S.-Israeli relations, but it was limited to between the two leaders. By 1999, the “U.S. Administration was sick of [Netanyahu].” In the general election that year, Ehud Barak won the premiership over Netanyahu on the basis of withdrawing from Lebanon after 17 years of occupying the South.<sup>331</sup> The ascendance of Barak softened the tensions. Regardless of who sat in the White House, the U.S. would remain a permanent ally to Israel.

The Bush Administration distanced the U.S. from Iran and tightened the friendship with Israel. As the Administration waged the War on Terror, it tied Iran into list of enemy states. Coined as the “axis of evil”, Bush argued encompassed these states in the “gravest danger in the war on terror” for seeking and possessing “nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.”<sup>332</sup> Bush pledged to “prevent” these “terrorists and regimes... from threatening the United States and the world.”<sup>333</sup> By pledging to oppose these states, the Administration demonstrated that the perceived threat to the its allies was an offense against the United States. This pledge committed the U.S. to act on behalf of its threatened allies to protect broader U.S. interests.

Iran threatened the United States’ regional allies. The 2002 State of the Union Address heightened U.S. commitment to its allies by pledging to protect them from “dangers” in the system. For the Middle Eastern system, the U.S. identified Iraq and Iran as two of the three greatest threats to global stability. With the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime and the subsequent occupation of Iraq, Iran was the remaining regional threat to U.S.-backed regional

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<sup>331</sup> Harel, Amos and Issacharoff, Avi. “Introduction and Acknowledgements.” *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah and the War in Lebanon*. Trans. Ora Cummings and Moshe Tlamim. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pub. 2008. Print. P. 17.

<sup>332</sup> George W. Bush. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, DC: White House, September 2002. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss.pdf>.

<sup>333</sup> “President Delivers State of the Union Address.” *The White House Archives*. Pub. 29 Jan. 2002 <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

powers and U.S. influence. Iran “aggressively pursue[d]...weapons and export[ed] terror.” The exportation of terror mainly played out in Lebanon and against Israel through a group called Hezbollah. During the Bush Era, this escalated in the Second Lebanese War, also known as the June War or the Israeli-Hezbollah War. As framed by Israeli journalists following the Second Lebanese War in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah, the war “took place against a background of much broader processes, including America’s floundering in the Iraqi mud and the rise of Iran as an extremist regional superpower.”<sup>334</sup> The argument simultaneously highlights the growing Iranian threat to Israel and the necessity for U.S. support.

The U.S. “exacerbated nuclear proliferation rather than tamed it” during its military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>335</sup> Though the demonstration of military capabilities would presumably deter other nations from building up nuclear arsenals, Iran continued to enhance its nuclear programs during the American invasion and occupation of Iraq.<sup>336</sup> Though Iran had no ability to attack U.S. soil, it could attack U.S. allies. Therefore, the increase in the enhancement of the Iranian nuclear program heightened the threat to other middle powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel. Despite attempts to continue to contain Iran after the invasion of Iraq, the occupation of Iraq instead presented the opportunity for Iran to spread its influence throughout the region.<sup>337</sup> As a threat to Israel, the U.S. stepped up its commitment to contain Iran and actively carried out sanctions against the state.

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<sup>334</sup> Harel, Amos and Issacharoff, Avi. *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah and the War in Lebanon*. Trans. Ora Cummings and Moshe Tlamim. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pub. 2008. Print.

<sup>335</sup> Pressman, Jeremy. “Power without Influence: The Bush Administration’s Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East.” *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 4. Pub. Spring 2009. MIT Press. P. 151.

<sup>336</sup> Pressman, Jeremy. “Power without Influence: The Bush Administration’s Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East.” *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 4. Pub. Spring 2009. MIT Press. P. 152.

<sup>337</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *Troubled Waters: Insecurity in the Persian Gulf*. Ithica: Cornell University Press. Pub. 2018. Print. P. 17.

## 5.6 The Possible Change under Obama

The Obama Administration produced a strain on the U.S.-Israeli alliance by negotiating a deal with Iran. Obama aimed to “keep front and center... what is in the national security interests of the United States of America.”<sup>338</sup> Perceiving that brokering a nuclear deal would benefit American interests, the Obama Administration pursued the deal against the interest of the United States’ permanent regional ally. Iran was identified as the greatest security threat to Israel in the region. Netanyahu referred to Iran as “an existential threat to Israel and a grave threat to the peace and security of the world.”<sup>339</sup> Throughout P5+1 negotiations with Iran, Prime Minister Netanyahu represented Israel’s concerns over Iran by speaking to the UN, U.S. Congress, and in a plethora of direct talks with the Obama Administration. Netanyahu carried out a large campaign to exert small state influence to invoke the U.S. to continue its policy against Iran. In 2012, Israeli Prime Minister took to the UN General Assembly to push for a “clear red-line” on Iranian nuclear enrichment. Beyond that point, Netanyahu stressed Israel was a vulnerable target of Iranian aggression and believed a “nuclear bomb’ would “eliminate” Israel.<sup>340</sup> In a speech delivered to a joint session of Congress in March 2015, Netanyahu argued that the Iran nuclear deal “would all but guarantee that Iran gets weapons, lots of them.”<sup>341</sup> In 2013, Prime Minister Netanyahu encouraged the United States to increase pressure on Iran through not only continued

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<sup>338</sup> Obama, Barack. “Remarks by the President on the Situation in Iraq.” *The White House*. Pub. 19 June 2014. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/19/remarks-president-situation-iraq>

<sup>339</sup>“President Obama Holds a Press Conference with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 20 March 2013. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/photos-and-video/video/2013/03/20/president-obama-holds-press-conference-prime-minister-netanyahu-is#transcript>

<sup>340</sup> “At UN General Debate, Israeli leader calls for ‘red line’ for action on Iran’s nuclear plans.” *UN News*, Pub. 27 Sept. 2012. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2012/09/421552>

<sup>341</sup> “The complete transcript of Netanyahu’s address to Congress.” *The Washington Post*. Pub. 3 March 2015. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/03/03/full-text-netanyahus-address-to-congress/>



“diplomacy and sanctions” but also “by a clear and credible threat of military action.”<sup>342</sup> In 2015, U.S. officials assured Israeli officials that the Iran nuclear deal heightened security in the region toward the benefit of Israel. With Iran’s nuclear program in check, the U.S. and its allies were “better positioned” to confront Hezbollah and its reliance on the IRGC-Quds Force. The Administration stressed that the “trade embargo on Iran will remain in effect” and the U.S. “will not lift sanctions that target Iran’s support for terrorist groups” or “its destabilizing activities in the region.”<sup>343</sup> Following the Iran Nuclear Deal, the U.S. continued to assure Israel that the agreement would benefit Israeli regional security.

President Obama often stating that “whoever was in the Oval Office would support Israel.”<sup>344</sup> At former-Israeli President Shimon Peres’ funeral, Obama spoke on the “unbreakable bond” between the U.S. and Israel forged through “common interests” and “vital cooperation that makes both nations more secure.”<sup>345</sup> The Obama Administration allocated a record level of aid to Israel. During the Administration’s negotiations with Iran, the U.S. increased Israel’s Qualitative Military Edge (QME) and provided unprecedented amounts of aid to Israel. Under the Obama Administration, Israel received 23.5 billion USD in U.S. foreign military financing (FMF) between 2009 to 2016. In 2016, Israel accounted for 51.4% of the U.S. global FMF.<sup>346</sup> In

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<sup>342</sup>“President Obama Holds a Press Conference with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 20 March 2013. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/photos-and-video/video/2013/03/20/president-obama-holds-press-conference-prime-minister-netanyahu-is#transcript>

<sup>343</sup> Obal, Jamie. “Highlighting the Importance of the Iran Deal in Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 2 Sept. 2015. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/09/01/highlighting-importance-iran-deal-israel>

<sup>344</sup> Ross, Dennis. *Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Pub. 2015. Print.

<sup>345</sup> Obama, Barack. “Remarks by President Obama at Memorial Service for Former Israeli President Shimon Peres.” *The White House*. Pub. 30 Sept. 2016. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/30/remarks-president-obama-memorial-service-former-israeli-president-shimon>

<sup>346</sup> “Fact Sheet: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 14 Sept. 2016. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/14/fact-sheet-memorandum-understanding-reached-israel>

2014 alone, the U.S. vetoed 18 resolution in the UN that went against Israeli interests.<sup>347</sup> In the 2013 budget proposal, the Obama Administration requested 3.1 billion USD in foreign aid to Israel. The aid increase played into the ten-year Memorandum of Understanding of 30 billion USD established in 2007. In 2016, Obama established a new Memorandum of Understanding of 38 billion USD over a ten-year period intended to distribute 2.8 billion USD in FMF annually.<sup>348</sup> Foreign aid toward Israel has increased every year since 2009 under the Obama Administration.<sup>349</sup> This aid is in addition to the 3 billion USD in missile defense funding toward the Iron Dome Program between 2011 to 2016. When the conflict with Hamas escalated in 2014, Congress provided additional emergency funds for the program. In addition to aid, the Administration collaborated on “research pilot programs”, shared high levels of intelligence, and contributed to research and development.<sup>350</sup> Though many scholars argue that Obama and Netanyahu had a strained relationship, the U.S. committed unprecedented levels of aid, assistance, and support to Israel throughout the Obama Administration.

## *5.7 Solidified Adversary under Trump*

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<sup>347</sup> Meehan, Bernadette. “5 Things You Need to Know About the U.S.-Israeli Relationship Under President Obama.” *The White House*. Pub. 1 March 2015. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/03/01/5-things-you-need-know-about-us-israel-relationship-under-president-obama>

<sup>348</sup> “Fact Sheet: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 14 Sept. 2016. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/14/fact-sheet-memorandum-understanding-reached-israel>

<sup>349</sup> Bernstein, Jarrod. “Budget in Focus – Aid to Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 14 Feb. 2012. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2012/02/14/budget-focus-aid-israel>

<sup>350</sup> “Fact Sheet: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 14 Sept. 2016. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/14/fact-sheet-memorandum-understanding-reached-israel>

The Trump Administration strengthened ties with Israel. On his first visit, Trump stated “we are great allies. We have so many opportunities in front of us. But we must seize them together,”<sup>351</sup> In 2017, the Trump Administration committed to working towards an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal. In the same year, the Administration announced the movement of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in recognition of Jerusalem as the official capital of Israel.<sup>352</sup> In January 2020, the Trump Administration announced the Middle East Peace Plan. While thanking Netanyahu for his partnership, Trump stated, “America’s partnerships in the region have never been great, and our alliance with the State of Israel has never, ever been stronger.” In the plan, Trump recognized Israel’s sovereignty in the Jordan Valley and in strategic areas of Judea and Samaria. In response to the plan, Netanyahu applauded Trump’s efforts and stated that Trump has “been the greatest friend that Israel has ever had in the White House.” In listing the “friendship and depth of [Trump’s] leadership and commitment to Israel,” Netanyahu cited the U.S. recognition of Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, the confrontation of Iran by pulling out of “that dangerous Iran deal,” and the elimination of the leader of Iran’s Quds Force Qasem Soleimani.<sup>353</sup> In addition to U.S. support for Israeli regional objectives, the U.S. has continued its Memorandum of Understanding established under the Obama Administration to allocate 3.8 billion USD annually to Israel in military assistance and imposed harsh sanctions on Hamas and Iran.<sup>354</sup> This is supplemented by 705 million USD annually toward Israeli missile defense

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<sup>351</sup> “President Trump Meets with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 22 May 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/president-trump-meets-prime-minister-netanyahu-israel/>

<sup>352</sup> Gause, Gregory. “Donald Trump and the Middle East.” *Chaos in the Liberal Order*. Eds. Robert Jervis et al. New York: Columbia University Press. Pub. 2018. P. 276.

<sup>353</sup> “Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu of the State of Israel in Joint Statements,” *The White House*. Pub. 27 Jan. 2020. Web. March 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-prime-minister-netanyahu-state-israel-joint-statements/>

<sup>354</sup> “President Donald J. Trump Stands by America’s Cherished Ally Israel.” *The White House*. Pub. 25 March 2019. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-stands-americas-cherished-ally-israel/>

systems.<sup>355</sup> Similar to former administrations on their concessions to Israel, the Trump Administration delivered these major steps for Israel without reaching its regional objectives in return. Particularly, the Trump Administration's "commitment" to Israel has distanced the Palestinian Authority and some Arab states, making an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal unlikely in the future. Trump's policy toward Iran highly benefits Israeli interests. As Omar Ayasrah argued, "the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal was aligned with Israeli interests." Ayasrah stressed not only the importance of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states in determining U.S. policy, but also the importance of "Israel is an influential actor with respect to U.S.-Iran relations."<sup>356</sup>

The current state of U.S.-Israeli relations is as strong as ever. This relationship will remain "permanent" as long as these states continue to share mutual strategic interests and gain high benefits from remaining in the alliance. This permanent alliance has played an important role in U.S. relations with other states in the system. In more recent developments, Israel has played a major part in determining the state of U.S.-Iranian relations. The Trump Administration reverted U.S.-Iranian relations to the level of previous administrations. This reversal is explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

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<sup>355</sup> Blackwill, Robert D. "Trump's Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem." *Council on Foreign Relations*. Pub. 2019. P. 47. [www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21419.14](http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep21419.14).

<sup>356</sup> Ayasrah, Omar. "Pushing the limits: U.S.-Iranian brinkmanship in the Gulf." *The Brookings Institute*. Pub. 20 Oct. 2019. Web. March 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/events/pushing-the-limits-u-s-iranian-brinkmanship-in-the-gulf/>

## 6 The United States and Iran

### *6.1 Iranian Relations*

The United States and Iran share a rich history. The United States was a strong ally of Iran throughout the reign of the Shah. Iran was geostrategically an important ally throughout the Cold War in containing the Soviet Union. Moreover, Iran provided the U.S. and Israel with the majority of their foreign oil imports throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the United States attempted to hold onto the alliance. In the midst of the Hostage Crisis, the U.S. suspended diplomatic relations with Iran. Despite the public denouncement of the Iranian regime, the U.S. attempted to reconcile these relations through covert lines of engagement. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. and Iran became further strained with the exception of a plethora of minor attempts to work towards normalization.

Iran maintained close private relations with Israel throughout the Shah regime. Following the Iranian Revolution, Israel attempted to mend relations as well. The Ayatollah was not receptive to Israeli attempts, but Israel participated in the Iran-Contra Affair to deliver aid to Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. When Iraq fell, Israel began to focus its efforts against Iran. As Iranian-backed groups carried out attacks on Israel, this solidified even further. The U.S. continued to back Israel and increasingly came out with statements against Iran. This was solidified throughout the Bush Administration. More recently, it seemed these relations would soften under the Obama Administration, but the revocation of the JCPOA and the imposition of sanctions

under the Trump Administration reverted Iran back to a permanent adversary. The next few sections attempt to demonstrate the U.S. objective to maintain close relations with Iran.

## 6.2 Background on Iran

Iran is geostrategically significant. It lies between Turkey and Iraq on its western border, Afghanistan and Pakistan on its eastern border, Azerbaijan, Armenia, the Caspian Sea, and Turkmenistan touching its northern border.<sup>357</sup> The country sits on the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Optimally positioned between this critical water channel and the Caucasus, the region is and has been “a place to dominate and govern either directly or through colonial means or indirectly via pliant local rulers.”<sup>358</sup> First fought over by Britain and Russia as the Qajar Empire weakened, modern-day Iran was divided into spheres of influence at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The spheres functioned similarly to the French and British mandates that came a decade later. Between the two spheres was a buffer zone under the control of the remaining Qajar Dynasty in Tehran.

The rulers in this region were subject to British and Russian interference in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the Qajar in rapid decline, it was unable to fight off foreign intervention and implement the necessary reform to strengthen the regime.<sup>359</sup> When oil was discovered in 1908 through an English entrepreneur’s sixty-year oil concession, the British government stepped in to buy up the shares in the concession and form the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Iran

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<sup>357</sup> Rashidvash, Vahid. “The Qajar Dynasty in Iran: The Most Important Occurrence Evented in the Qajars Monarchy.” *International Journal of Business and Social Science*. Pub. June 2012. P. 181. [http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol\\_3\\_No\\_12\\_Special\\_Issue\\_June\\_2012/18.pdf](http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_12_Special_Issue_June_2012/18.pdf)

<sup>358</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *Troubled Waters: Insecurity in the Persian Gulf*. Ithica: Cornell University Press. Pub. 2018. Print. P. 11

<sup>359</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 16.

was a pivotal asset at this point in time. Under British control, the region excelled in the oil industry, with oil exports jumping from 82,097 tons in 1912 to 6,549,244 tons in 1932.<sup>360</sup> The British became the dominant power in Iran not only because of the oil concessions in the South, but because of the Russian Revolution. Under the Bolshevik regime, the newly established Soviet Union revoked its claims to Iran and encouraged the Qajar regime to revolt against Britain. The British responded by occupying the region and cornering Tehran to sign the Anglo-Iranian treaty in 1919 that would surrender the Iranian army and finances to Britain.<sup>361</sup> This treaty never went into effect. With mounting pressure at home, Britain was forced to withdraw and the Bolsheviks reversed their position by occupying the North and establishing an Iranian Soviet Socialist Republic of Gilan. This occupation was also short-lived. Having succeeded in driving out the British and annulling the Anglo-Iranian treaty, the Soviet Union surrendered Gilan back to Iran and signed an Iranian-Soviet treaty that gave the USSR the right to intervene in Iranian affairs whenever a third party threatened its security.<sup>362</sup>

The Anglo-Soviet rivalry was put to a test when Reza Shah seized power from the Qajar and established the Pahlavi Dynasty. Though the new regime wanted to free itself from outside influence, it relied on aid and concessions for internal growth. To foster sovereignty, the Tehran government balanced between the two rivalrous powers. Reza Shah attempted to centralize the government and initiate socio-economic reforms to unify and stabilize the region. Under the new regime, the Majlis (the Iranian Parliament) and Reza Shah ratified the Iranian-Soviet treaty. This relationship was strained after the underground pro-Moscow communist party, known as Tudeh, was blamed for a series of violent uprisings and the burning down of the Majlis in 1935. In an

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<sup>360</sup> Amuzegar, J. *Iran: Economic Development under Dualistic Conditions*, p. 18-19.

<sup>361</sup> Sanghvi, R. *Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran*. New York: Macmillan. Pub. 1968. P. 337-338.

<sup>362</sup> Lenczowski, George. *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: A Study in Big-Power Rivalry*. P. 317-318.

attempt to limit British influence, the Iranian government canceled the sixty-year oil concession in 1932. After high tensions between the two states, they eventually came to a new concessionary agreement in 1933. The new deal allocated 20% of dividends on shares to Iran annually for sixty-years. Though Iranians were allocated a cooperative role in operating the oil industry, the British continued to monopolize it.

Reza Shah made several attempts to rebalance the power structure in the region through a third party. The Iranian government sought out close ties with Iraq, Afghanistan, and Turkey to form a “small-power bloc” against exogenous powers, which materialized in the Sa’adabad Pact of 1937 between the aforementioned nation-states.<sup>363</sup> Most importantly, the Iranian government sought out the United States as an exogenous third party to rebalance against the British and Soviet influence. Through an appeal to the American oil companies and the government for privileged relations, Tehran conveyed its preference for U.S. influence over that of other powers. At this point in time, the United States did not have an imperial record that amounted to that of the British and French Empires. As a distant power from the Western hemisphere, the Shah viewed the U.S. as less likely to exert its influence through military force and interventionism. However, the U.S. did not have a self-interest in committing to the security of Iran until 1944.<sup>364</sup>

During World War II, Iran lost its true sovereignty. Both Britain and the Soviet Union were committed to ensuring Iran didn’t fall to Germany and to securing the oil fields for the war effort. The English navy converted “from British coal to foreign oil,” and the rest of the world followed within a decade.<sup>365</sup> Britain produced no oil on its own and relied on “vast oil trusts under foreign control” to supply their whole fleet.<sup>366</sup> This heightened the interest in maintaining

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<sup>363</sup> Lenczowski, Geroge. *Russia and the West in Iran*. P. 305-306.

<sup>364</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 24.

<sup>365</sup> Churchill, Winston S. *The World Crisis*. Vol. 1. New Work: Scribner’s. Pub. 1923. P. 134.

<sup>366</sup> Churchill, Winston S. *The World Crisis*. Vol. 1. New Work: Scribner’s. Pub. 1923. P. 133-136.



influence and control of the Iranian government during a time of uncertainty. For the rest of the world, the movement towards oil would precipitate the movement towards the Middle East. Similar to Britain, the Soviet Union wanted to secure its oil fields. With most of its known oil in the Baku region in Azerbaijan, the USSR needed a buffer zone in the South to maintain its wartime economy.<sup>367</sup> Anglo-Soviet forces occupied Iran to neutralize the country's close relations with Germany and to use the region as a supply route to the Eastern front. Under pressure during the Allied occupation, Reza Shah abdicated and his son Mohammad Reza took over in 1944 at 20 years old. The political and economic structure slowly fell apart and new nationalist parties began to brew in the disorder. During this time, the British moved to secure their oil fields in the South and to assist pro-Western and anti-Communist parties within the Tehran government. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was actively pursuing the "Sovietization" of its occupied region in the north by establishing an independent government in Azerbaijan, encouraging autonomy in the Kurdish province, and bolstering the pro-Moscow communist party in Tehran.<sup>368</sup> This division of the country into pro-Western and pro-Communist blocs exemplified early "cold war" tensions. These tensions played a major role in drawing the U.S. into the Iranian region.

### *6.3 Alliance Formation and Commitment*

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<sup>367</sup> Ermolaev, Sergei. "The Formation and Evolution of the Soviet Union's Oil and Gas Dependence." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Pub. 29 March 2017. Web. Feb. 2020. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/29/formation-and-evolution-of-soviet-union-s-oil-and-gas-dependence-pub-68443#The%20Emergence%20and%20Evolution%20of%20the%20Soviet%20Union's%20Oil%20and%20Gas%20Dependence>

<sup>368</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 25-28.

The 1940s was a critical decade for the development of the United States' ties to Iran. As a trifecta, the United States was committed to standing behind its British ally, deterring the Soviet Union, and obtaining oil for its domestic economy. In the infant stages of the Cold War, Roosevelt received a plethora of reports expressing the economic and political importance of safeguarding Iran from growing communist influence.<sup>369</sup> Accordingly, the U.S. strengthened its political, economic, and military ties with Iran. It provided military advisors and experts to Tehran and to the lend-lease program in Iran. In addition, it assisted in reorganizing the Iranian financial system and upgraded to embassy status in Tehran. Through the former, the U.S. secured control of the revenues and expenditures of the state. Through the latter and the former, the U.S. committed itself to Tehran by entrenching itself in its domestic affairs. In 1944, the U.S. spoke out against the actions of the Soviet Union in the region of interest by joining the British in charging the USSR with violating the Tripartite Treaty of 1942.<sup>370</sup> By occupying the Northern province, the two powers argued that the Soviet Union had failed to respect the sovereignty of Iran and to safeguard "the economic existence of the Iranian people against the deprivation and difficulties arising" from the war. In the Tripartite Treaty and at the Tehran Conference of 1943, the three powers also affirmed that all forces were to be withdrawn from the territory within six months of the war's end. Fearful that the Soviet Union would disregard the agreements to secure the northern provinces, the two allies set up in the south, while still supplying arms to the USSR. The United States assisted in the Lend-Lease shipments to the USSR by moving 30,000 men into Iran to provide technical assistance for transportation of supplies. It also provided lend-lease funds to construct a plethora of oil pipelines across Iran. As a precursor for the loan, the U.S.

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<sup>369</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers: The British Commonwealth, the Near East and Africa*. Vol. III. P. 374-382.

<sup>370</sup> Hurewitz, J.C. *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*. Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand. Pub. 1956. P. 232-234.

secured American oil companies access to the pipelines in the postwar period.<sup>371</sup> At the same time, the U.S. was becoming increasingly concerned about guaranteeing Iran's security to protect all Western economic and political interests. In conjunction with its British ally, it recognized the Soviet threat to the Persian Gulf region. With the USSR advancing the communist agenda in the Northern province, the Western nations empowered pro-West, anti-communist groups in the South and in Tehran.

The U.S. became more entangled with the ascension of the Truman Administration in Washington and of Ahmad Qavam in Tehran. With Qavam more willing than the prior Premier to negotiate with the USSR, Truman asserted the need to fight Soviet influence at all costs. Following the oil crisis in 1944 and the USSR's refusal to withdraw in 1946, the U.S. warned it could not "remain indifferent" and Truman declared, "Russian activities in Iran threatened the peace of the world," and "the balance of the world."<sup>372</sup> Under pressure, the USSR withdrew in 1946. Iran was one of the earliest attempts by the Soviet Union to input a communist regime following World War II. As one of the most vulnerable states to Soviet influence just North of its border, the U.S. committed to Iran. With containment at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy, the U.S. stepped up its economic, social, and military involvement. In 1949, a group of American advisors assisted in drafting Iran's First Seven Year Development Plan. Militarily, the U.S. bolstered up its aid to fight off the pro-Moscow Tudeh regimes in the North. In 1950, the U.S. formally committed to arms supplies through the Mutual Defense Aid program. In the same year,

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<sup>371</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 29-30.

<sup>372</sup> Truman, Harry S. *Memoirs. Vol. 2, Years of Trial and Hope: 1946-1952*. New York: Doubleday. Pub. 1955. P. 94-95.

the two countries increased their collaborative efforts through the implementation of the Point IV technical program.<sup>373</sup>

The United States' commitment led to political intervention in 1953 through a CIA-backed military coup d'état. Iran was reliant on the U.S. during this period for aid largely because the oil concessions enjoyed by outside powers drove profits out of Iran rather than pouring into it. In 1949, Tehran attempted to renegotiate with AIOC for a fifty-fifty percent profit sharing deal similar to that made between Aramco and Riyadh. When the British refused, an influential leader named Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq encouraged the Majlis to nationalize AIOC. Mossadeq was inimical to Western influence at a time the West was more committed than ever to securing Iran as a proxy in the Middle East. In 1951, the Majlis voted to nationalize and one month later named Mossadeq as Prime Minister. One month following his ascension, Mossadeq officially nationalized AIOC and created NIOC. The British were not willing to surrender their monopoly on oil in Iran and implemented a pressure campaign on Mossadeq's regime. To strain the Iranian economy, both BP and Aramco doubled production in countries like Saudi Arabia. The Iranian blockade declined Mossadeq's internal and international appeal. Under pressure, Mossadeq attempted to take over the constitutional responsibilities of the Shah to assume more authority over the country. This led to widespread opposition and framed Mossadeq as a dictator. In line with the U.S. containment strategy and in a commitment to its British ally, the Eisenhower Administration rejected Mossadeq's appeal for aid and backed a military coup d'état led by General Fazlollah Zahedi. Through the CIA-backed coup, the Shah and the military succeeded in deposing Mossadeq and establishing a pro-American regime.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Harris, Franklin S. "The Beginnings of Point IV Work in Iran." *Middle East Journal*. vol. 7, no. 2. Pub. 1953. *JSTOR*. P. 222. [www.jstor.org/stable/4322488](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4322488).

<sup>374</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 43-48.

The coup d'état “locked in” U.S. interests with the “fate of the Shah,” and commenced the “process where Iran would eventually become the most important ally of the U.S. in the third world.”<sup>375</sup>

For the remainder of the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (1953-1979), the Shah was heavily tied to and reliant on the U.S. for political power. As President Bani Sadr recounted in 1979, “Iran is a country that, since the coup d'état of 1953 until the fall of the regime of the Shah, was placed directly under the domination of the United States, that is to say on the road to political, social, and economic decadence.”<sup>376</sup> Following the coup, Kermit Roosevelt recounts in his memoir that the Shah said to him, “I owe my throne to God, my people, my army, and to you.”<sup>377</sup> To consolidate his command of Tehran, the Shah sought extensive economic and military aid from the United States. In exchange for the United States’ assistance, Iran forwarded pro-American interests in the region, exported high volumes of oil to the West, and was outwardly anti-communist throughout the Cold War.<sup>378</sup> In 1953, the Eisenhower Administration extended the Point IV program with \$23,500,000 towards technical assistance in addition to the \$45,000,000 in foreign aid to stabilize the post-coup regime. This aid was doubled the following year.<sup>379</sup> From 1953 to 1957, the U.S. allocated \$366,800,000 in economic aid and loans to Iran. From 1957 to 1960, this aid continued to flow at an average of \$45,000,000 a year and was upped to \$107,200,000 on average a year in 1961.<sup>380</sup> In the 1950s, private investment into Iran

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<sup>375</sup> Gasiorowski, Mark J. *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1991. P. 109.

<sup>376</sup> Nossiter, Bernard D. “Khomeini v. Shah: What the Record Says.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 26 Nov. 1979. <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/11/26/archives/khomeini-v-shah-what-the-record-says-khomeini-v-the-shah-what-the.html>

<sup>377</sup> Roosevelt, Kermit. *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pub. 1979. Print.

<sup>378</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 45.

<sup>379</sup> Senate Committee, *Sale of AWACS to Iran*, 79. Testimony of Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ).

<sup>380</sup> “July 1, 1945 through June 30, 1966.” *U.S. Office of Statistics and Reports, International Administration, Foreign Assistance and Assistance from International Organizations*. P. 12.

tripled. By the 1960s, the U.S. led as Iran's top import nation and export nation. In 1963, Iran exported 40.4 million USD worth of goods to the U.S. while it imported 103.7 million USD worth of goods from the United States.<sup>381</sup> U.S. private investment stood at \$200 million in excess in Iran.<sup>382</sup> Through the Mutual Security Act, the U.S. allocated \$535,400,000 in military aid to Iran between 1953 and 1963. The U.S. also contributed around 10,000 experts to Iran for military development. In 1957, the CIA in collaboration with Israel's intelligence service, Mossad, assisted in the establishment of Iran's intelligence service known as SAVAK.<sup>383</sup> Within the Iranian oil industry, the U.S. secured a prominent position in the sector through the American oil companies in an Anglo-Iranian settlement of 1954. The settlement tied five American oil giants into a consortium with 54% combined shares to operate the industry that allocated fifty-fifty percent shared profits to the Iranian government. Though the deal benefitted Iran on paper, the oil companies controlled full operations and output of Iranian oil to the detriment of the Iranian people.<sup>384</sup> This relationship cemented Iran's "dependence" on the United States. In the region, the Shah was widely viewed as a "puppet" regime and "agent of Western imperialism."<sup>385</sup> As a representative of American values in the Middle East throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Iran was pivotal to the U.S. sphere of influence and balance of power in the region. In containing communism, the U.S. fully committed itself to ensuring the longevity of the Shah and the build-up of Iran as a regional power.

In the region, the United States solidified its influence through Iran. The U.S. had recognized the State of Israel de facto in 1948. In 1950, Iran became the second majority Muslim country after

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<sup>381</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 51-53.

<sup>382</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 53.

<sup>383</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 55.

<sup>384</sup> Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pub. 1980. Print. P. 50.

<sup>385</sup> Campbell, John C. *Defense of the Middle East: Problems of American Policy*. Rev. ed. Pub. 1961. P. 162-163.

Turkey to recognize Israel de facto.<sup>386</sup> Iran was one of Israel's main regional allies under the Shah. As a mutually beneficial relationship, Iran received military, economic, and technological aid and assistance from Israel in exchange for oil. Through the reign of the Shah, Israel "maintained a representative office" in Tehran. Moreover, the Shah "supported a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute."<sup>387</sup> Throughout the US-Iranian alliance, Iran played into "an offensive protective interest centered on U.S. commitments to the state of Israel" and "a defensive containment interest" over "Soviet expansionism."<sup>388</sup> The Israeli-Iranian relations under the Shah "developed along political, economic, military, and intelligence lines." Israel benefitted in its early decades from importing Iranian oil. Mossad assisted in the creation of the Iranian intelligence service, SAVAK. Since its creation, Mossad "engaged in joint operations with SAVAK."<sup>389</sup> Though the states never formally adopted diplomatic relations, Iran and Israel worked closely throughout the reign of the Shah. One of the main benefits from the close relations was Israel's access to oil. During the Shah regime, the two states drafted plans for the joint venture of an Eilat-Ashkelon oil pipeline.<sup>390</sup> In 1963 Agreement, Israel was guaranteed "first rights to oil produced by Iran's national oil company (NIOC)" if Israel purchased a minimum of 50% of its oil from NIOC.<sup>391</sup>

When the regional alliance of the Baghdad Pact of 1955 and the subsequent Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) of 1958 failed to produce regional security, Iran formalized a

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<sup>386</sup> Weinbaum, M. G. "Iran and Israel: The Discreet Entente." *Orbis* 28, no. 4. Winter 1975. P. 1070-1087.

<sup>387</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. "Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048." *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF.

<sup>388</sup> Bill, James A. *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 1988. Print. P. 429.

<sup>389</sup> Bill, James A. *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 1988. Print. P. 430.

<sup>390</sup> Bialer, Uri. "Fuel Bridge across the Middle East—Israel, Iran, and the Eilat-Ashkelon Oil Pipeline." *Israel Studies*. Vol. 12, no. 3. Pub. 2007. JSTOR. P. 29. [www.jstor.org/stable/30245672](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30245672).

<sup>391</sup> Bialer, Uri. "Fuel Bridge across the Middle East—Israel, Iran, and the Eilat-Ashkelon Oil Pipeline." *Israel Studies*. Vol. 12, no. 3. Pub. 2007. JSTOR. P. 29. [www.jstor.org/stable/30245672](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30245672).

state-to-state military “alliance” with the United States. CENTO did end up continuing up to the Iranian revolution, but it was not the balancing coalition that had been envisioned. This was at the same time as the Suez Crisis of 1956 that cemented the U.S. as the dominant outside power in the region. With Egypt slipping into the Soviet camp, the U.S. increased its commitment to other nation-states in the region, including Iran. Through the treaty of 1959, the United States committed itself to “the use of armed forces” in the event of any aggression against Iran.<sup>392</sup> Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the United States maintained close relations with Iran by assisting in its Development Plans and continuing to provide economic and military aid. In 1972, the U.S. under the Nixon Administration, offered the Shah a “blank check” arms agreement that allowed Tehran to “purchase any U.S. weapons system... in any quantity, short of nuclear weapons.”<sup>393</sup> This marked a heightening of U.S-Iranian relations and fortified the United States’ reliance on Iran as a regional proxy. Following the “blank check”, arms purchases over the next six years reached 18 billion USD. In comparison, between 1945 and 1972 Iran had spent a collective 1.2 billion USD on arms purchases.<sup>394</sup> Through the backing of the U.S., Iran developed into a middle power and potential hegemon in the region. The U.S. invested in the economic, social, and military viability of the Iranian regime. Offering its strategic and political support in conjunction with its aid and arms supplies enabled the U.S. to exert its influence in the proximate region, while containing the Soviet Union.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> Magnus. *Documents on the Middle East*. P. 83-85.

<sup>393</sup> McGlinchey, Stephen. “Richard Nixon’s Road to Tehran: The Making of the U.S.–Iran Arms Agreement of May 1972.” *Diplomatic History*. Vol. 37, no. 4. Pub. 2013. P. 841. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable/26376491](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26376491).

<sup>394</sup> Paolucci, Henry. *Iran, Israel, and the United States*. New York: Griffon House Publications. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 12.

<sup>395</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 301.



The regime was still vulnerable to the fluctuations in the oil market into the 1970s. The oil price increases in 1973 and 1974 led to the Iranian economic value of oil rising from 4 billion USD in 1973 to 18 billion USD in 1974. The increase in oil prices in conjunction with the heightened American aid enabled the Shah to experiment with economic policies such as lowering taxes and increasing the purchase of imports. He also attempted to rapidly modernize the nation, which led to many setbacks in production from inefficiency in the projects. The Shah's investments also led to high inflation and an increase in the already destabilizing unemployment problem. One major contribution to destabilization was the U.S. prioritization of the defense budget. For Iran, it had been shaped to allocate over a fourth of its national budget to the military. Outside of the agricultural sector, the military employed around 17% of the labor force. With the U.S. bolstering military aid to Iran since the 1940s, the country was accustomed to prioritizing security and its military apparatus. The military budget produced many external outcomes for communities nearby newly built bases such as roads, housing, utilities, water supplies, electricity lines, and education at the base schools. However, the emphasis on militarization negated the possibility of socio-economic development over the long-run. The Shah was continuing to purchase arms from the United States through its arms development program, which dislocated the funds needed to realize his goals of modernization. Without this funding funneling towards curbing unemployment or providing social services, many internal supporters of the regime began to resent the Shah and the United States.<sup>396</sup>

## *6.4 The Iranian Revolution*

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<sup>396</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 90.

In 1979, the Shah's regime collapsed under the pressure of the Iranian Revolution. Despite the implementation of a plethora of reforms in the decade preceding, the Shah was tied to the United States' interests at the expense of the prosperity and "full" sovereignty of the Iranian people for decades. Just two years earlier during a visit to Tehran, President Carter had applauded the Shah, declaring, "Iran is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world."<sup>397</sup> As noted by Gary Sick, the White House aide for Iran during this period, "Iran appeared to be stable, the Shah seemed to be firmly in control, and policy differences between Iran and the U.S. were regarded as relatively minor and manageable."<sup>398</sup> One month after Carter's visit to Iran, the Shah began to face heightened internal unrest following the regime-backed publication of an article criticizing the exiled clerical leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in a national newspaper.<sup>399</sup> Following the swell of protests throughout 1978, Carter public stated that the U.S. "prefer[s] that the Shah maintain a major role, but that is a decision for the Iranian people to make."<sup>400</sup> In the same month, the Shah appointed a nationalist and critic of the Shah, Shapour Bakhtiar, as Prime Minister to appease the people. By that point it was too late. Protestors were demanding the removal of the Shah and the return of Ayatollah Khomeini.

During the protests, the United States became tied to the movement against the Shah in the joined chants, "death to the Shah, death to America." This chant would later extend to other "enemies" of Iran including Israel.<sup>401</sup> Though the rhetoric should not be taken literally, the

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<sup>397</sup> Alikani, Hossein. *Sanctioning Iran: Anatomy of a Failed Policy*. New York: I.B. Tauris. Pub. 2000. Print. P. 2.

<sup>398</sup> Sick, Gary. *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran*. Penguin. Pub. 1986. P. viii.

<sup>399</sup> Keddie, Nikki R. *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*. Yale University Press. Pub. 2006. P. 225.

<sup>400</sup> "Excerpts from President's Meeting with Reporters." *The New York Times*. Pub. 8 Dec. 1978.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1978/12/08/archives/excerpts-from-presidents-meeting-with-reporters-opening-statement.html>

<sup>401</sup> Taylor, Adam. "The history of 'Death to America'." *The Washington Post*. Pub. 18 Feb. 2015.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/02/18/the-history-of-death-to-america/>

intertwining of the U.S. to the Shah mounted a challenge to U.S. influence following the establishment of the new regime. By 1979, the Shah's leadership crumbled under domestic pressure and the "island of stability" broke down into revolution. The Shah left Iran in January 1979 and Ayatollah Khomeini returned on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. As Sick reflects on the revolution and its aftermath, he contends that "not since the fall of Saigon had a series of foreign policy events so shaken the United States."<sup>402</sup> The events of 1979 turned the United States' "dependable regional ally" into a "seemingly implacable foe."<sup>403</sup> The U.S. was inextricably link to the Shah. The U.S. Embassy in Tehran was attacked as early as February 14, 1979, but the provisional government ordered the protestors to withdraw. On November 4, 1979, the U.S. Embassy was overrun again and its personnel were taken hostage. The provisional government resigned in protest and Ayatollah Khomeini consolidated his full authority in Iran. Over the next 444 days, the U.S. became embedded in the Iranian Hostage Crisis.<sup>404</sup>

The revolution was followed by the clerical leadership consolidating full control of the government and establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran with Ayatollah Khomeini as its figurehead.<sup>405</sup> The Islamic Republic of Iran was founded on the basis of installing Islamic principles as an integral and dominating force in the political system. This produced uncertainty in the United States and in regional states about the Republic's foreign policy intentions. In its initial stages, the state produced a foreign policy that was dedicated to "exporting" the revolution for Islamization throughout the region. As a threat to the incumbent regimes and dictators, this foreign policy isolated Iran in the region. Central to this policy was its anti-Western and anti-

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<sup>402</sup> Sick, Gary. *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran*. Penguin. Pub. 1986. P. viii.

<sup>403</sup> Hooglund, Eric. "The United States and Iran, 1981-1989." *Iran and the International Community*. P. 31

<sup>404</sup> Maloney, Suzanne. "The Iranian revolution—A timeline of events." *The Brookings Institute*. Pub. 24 Jan. 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/01/24/the-iranian-revolution-a-timeline-of-events/>

<sup>405</sup> Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates (ed.). *The Changing Security Dynamics of the Persian Gulf*. London: C. Hurst & Co. Pub. 2017. Print. P. 2.

American stance. As an anti-American state, Iran used this central identity to set parameters for inclusion and exclusion in foreign policy choice in its “axis of resistance.”

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 shifted not only the foreign policy of the United States, but also that of Israel. Iran was a long-standing de facto ally of Israel. Facilitated by the United States and mutually benefitting both parties, the alliance generated enhanced security for both states. During the Iranian Revolution, the Israeli mission was seized and Israeli diplomats were forced to leave the country. Under Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran severed public ties with Israel. As openly anti-Zionist, the new regime was dedicated to distancing itself from Israel. Israeli-Iranian relations deteriorated following the Iranian Revolution. In February, the Israeli mission was overrun by Iranian civilians. Following its seizure, the regime congratulated the attackers and transferred “Israel’s mission” to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). On February 19, 1979, Iran severed its diplomatic relations with Israel and ordered Israelis to leave the country. The Israeli diplomats appealed to the U.S. for an emergency evacuation by aircraft.<sup>406</sup> According to Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, “cutting all ties with Israel” was “fully in keeping with the policy announced before we came to power.”<sup>407</sup> In Paolucci’s analysis, the new regime resolved to reject Israel in the early stages of the revolution, but had not clearly settled to sever American ties.<sup>408</sup>

At the time of the revolution, Israel relied on Iran for 60% of its oil imports. Moreover, Israel had benefitted from the acquiescence of the Shah over the several decades during heightened Arab-Israeli tensions. With a regional power like Iran in its pocket, Israel had a secure footing in

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<sup>406</sup> Sick, Gary. *All Fall Down: America’s Tragic Encounter with Iran*. Penguin. Pub. 1986. P. 345.

<sup>407</sup> Randal, Jonathan C. “PLO Chief, in Iran, Hails Shah’s Fall.” *The Washington Post Archives*. Pub. 19 Feb. 1979. Web March 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/02/19/plo-chief-in-iran-hails-shahs-fall/04eae6e9-d5db-4aa4-ba4b-709ed90edb9a/>

<sup>408</sup> Paolucci, Henry. *Iran, Israel, and the United States*. New York: Griffon House Publications. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 217.

the balance of power dynamic in the region. With the new regime backing the PLO, there was heightened uncertainty and an overt threat against the Israeli state. As Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat stated upon his arrival in Tehran, the change of government in Iran had “altered the Middle East power balanced” and had “turned the whole policy and strategy in the region upside down.”<sup>409</sup> The Iranian revolution left Israel more vulnerable in the system. Israel attempted to covertly mend the ties between itself and Iran. Over the next decade, it would become increasingly clear that Iranian interests directly oppose those of Israel.

### *6.5 Attempts to Restore Relations*

The regime change was an “enormous shock to the system” in the balance of power dynamic throughout the Persian Gulf and the Middle Eastern system.<sup>410</sup> The period of power transition and the ensuing hostage crisis significantly shifted American foreign policy in the Middle East over a period of two years. From the stepping down of the Shah to the conclusion of the hostage crisis, American policymakers and regional allies battled uncertainty over the future of Iranian relations. In the early months, the Carter Administration demonstrated a concerted effort to preserve the Iranian alliance through the regime change. In the Carter Doctrine, the President pledged to protect the Persian Gulf while strengthening its commitments to other nations in the region. The Carter Doctrine asserted the U.S’ regional claim to the Persian Gulf.

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<sup>409</sup> Randal, Jonathan C. “PLO Chief, in Iran, Hails Shah’s Fall.” *The Washington Post Archives*. Pub. 19 Feb. 1979. Web March 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/02/19/plo-chief-in-iran-hails-shahs-fall/04eae6e9-d5db-4aa4-ba4b-709ed90edb9a/>

<sup>410</sup> Sick, Gary. “Iran 1979: the Islamic Revolution that shook the world.” *Al-Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/01/iran-1979-revolution-shook-world-2014121134227652609.html>

Carter threatened to use military force if “any outside force” attempted to “gain control of the Persian Gulf.”<sup>411</sup> Amidst the hostage crisis, Carter aimed to “persuade the Iranian leaders that the real danger to their nation lies in the North.”<sup>412</sup> Additionally, Carter vowed to cooperate with all threatened states in the region.<sup>413</sup>

The failure to resolve the hostage crisis put an enormous strain on the Carter Administration and stagnated efforts at normalized relations. By the close of Carter’s presidential term, the U.S. publicly denounced the new regime and rebalanced its security relations in the Middle East. Shifting away from protecting its long-standing regional ally, the U.S. dug into its other alliances. This shift allowed Israel to gain higher benefits from the alliance as the U.S. pulled into its remaining alliances in the region. To protect the regional influence of these allies, the U.S. resolved to contain Iran. Carter pledged to “strengthen political and military ties with other nations in the region” and to “cooperate with all Muslim countries” through a “cooperative security framework.”<sup>414</sup> The Administration carried out the rebalance of regional alliances by altering its “unified command structure” and coordinating “regional intelligence and military and economic assistance missions.”<sup>415</sup> In the uncertainty of the regime change, the U.S. tightened its alignments with nearby states and held out to see if it could normalize relations when the revolutionary sentiment had settled. With nearby states uncertain about the regional repercussions of the Islamic Revolution, many formed coalitions, such as the formation of the

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<sup>411</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.  
<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>412</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.  
<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>413</sup> “Document 45, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula.” *Office of the Historian*. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/d45>

<sup>414</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.  
<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>415</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew. “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs to Secretary of Defense Brown, Washington, January 24, 1980.” *Carter Library, National Security Affairs*.  
[https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/pg\\_169](https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/pg_169)

GCC, or sought protection through an exogenous power like the United States. Though Israeli-Iranian relations deteriorated publicly, the Israelis opted to covertly deal with the new regime. Israel offered Iran arms supplies in exchange for the protection of the 80,000 Jews residing in Iran.<sup>416</sup> Though this worked for a time, this relationship would not last.

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the middle of the Iranian power shift and one month into the Iranian Hostage Crisis.<sup>417</sup> For American policymakers, the new Iranian regime was unpredictable and the future of Iranian relations was uncertain. However, the U.S. was not prepared to let Iran fall into the hands of the Soviet Union. In line with the policy of containment, the U.S. committed to protecting the Persian Gulf from “outside force” through the Carter Doctrine.<sup>418</sup> The Carter Administration stated that any attempt to “gain control of the Persian Gulf” would be treated as “an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America.”<sup>419</sup> With this rhetoric, the U.S. was not only protecting its interests in the region, but also continuing to committing to Iran’s security. If Iran was threatened, the U.S. would interpret it as a threat to itself. If the conflict was to spread, Carter vowed to cooperate with any threatened state.<sup>420</sup> In an effort to “contain” the crisis in Afghanistan from spreading into Iran and the greater Middle East, the U.S. conducted covert operations with resistance movements in Afghanistan.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Paolucci, Henry. *Iran, Israel, and the United States*. New York: Griffon House Publications. Pub. 1991. Print. P. 19.

<sup>417</sup> Milani, Mohsen M. “The Hostage Crisis.” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. VII. New York: Columbia University. Pub. 2004. P. 525-535.

<sup>418</sup> Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 67, Truman Doctrine: 1/80

<sup>419</sup> Carter, Jimmy. “State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.” *Carter Library*.

<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>

<sup>420</sup> “Document 45, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula.” *Office of the Historian*. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v18/d45>

<sup>421</sup> Hunter, Robert E. *Building Security in the Persian Gulf*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Pub. 2010. Print. P. 16.

The U.S. formed the “Washington-Islamabad-Riyadh” axis to support Pakistani-based resistance against the Soviets. Through the axis, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia provided an estimated 3 billion USD and 4 billion USD respectively.<sup>422</sup> Though Iran did not join the axis, it supported it as a legitimate movement and enjoyed close ties with Pakistan.<sup>423</sup> However, Iran viewed the Saudi-US alliance as “a grave security threat” and their coordinated efforts in Afghanistan as a threat to its unilateral efforts.<sup>424</sup> The Saudi government and private Saudi donors funded predominately Sunni resistance movements, while Iran was attempting to organize Shi’ite groups. For the Islamic regime, the instability in Afghanistan presented an opportunity to export its revolution and gain a neighboring ally. As the Hostage Crisis ensued, the regime tilted “in favor of the Soviet Union in order to neutralize the impending U.S. threat.”<sup>425</sup> The Soviet Union did not invade the predominately Shi’ite Hazarjat region in Afghanistan. Iran used this opportunity to organize Shi’ite resistance. Throughout the course of the 1980s, Iran galvanized the Shi’ite community not only in Afghanistan but the Afghan refugee population within Iran to form a coalition of Afghan-Shi’i groups.<sup>426</sup>

While the Soviet-Afghan War ensued in the East, Iraq invaded Iran from the West in September 1980. Taking advantage of the vulnerability of the revolution, Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein acted to overthrow the Islamic regime before Iran could topple Hussein’s regime. Iraq, along with other Sunni-led states, feared the exporting of the Shi’ite revolution outside of Iran.

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<sup>422</sup> Rashid, Ahmad. *Taliban*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 2001. P. 197.

<sup>423</sup> Nasr, Vali. “The Iranian Revolution and Changes in Islamism in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan” *Iran and the Surrounding World*. Eds. N.R. Keddie and R. Matthee. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Pub. 2002. P. 327-352.

<sup>424</sup> Roy, Oliver. “Afghanistan: An Islamic War of Resistance.” *Fundamentalism and the State*. Eds. M. Marty and R.S. Appleby. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pub. 1993. P. 490-510.

<sup>425</sup> Milani, Mohsen M. “Iran’s Policy Towards Afghanistan.” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 60, no. 2. Pub. 2006. P. 235–256. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/4330248](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4330248).

<sup>426</sup> Cooley, John K. *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism*. London: Pluto Press. Pub. 2000. P. 103.



Gaining the support of other Arab states, Iraq succeeded in the early stages of the war. However, in 1982 Iran refused a ceasefire and began the counterattack that prolonged the war for six more years.<sup>427</sup>

The U.S. publicly declared neutrality during the Iran-Iraq war. US-Iranian relations escalated when the U.S. began to supply Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. During the war, the U.S. practiced “dual containment” by providing both Iran and Iraq arms through backchannels. By providing both the means to continue the war, the U.S. had a higher probability of influencing both states the weaker the war made them. In 1981, the Reagan Administration approved “several billion dollars’ worth of American arms and spare parts to Iran” through Israel. In 1982, the U.S. provided Iraq “highly classified intelligence” through Jordan and permitted the “sale of American-made arms to Baghdad.”<sup>428</sup> The latter sale of arms came largely from Iraq’s Arab-state allies that had received the weaponry from American arms sale programs, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Kuwait. This excluded Syria who had severed diplomatic relations with Iraq in 1979 and supplied arms to Iran.<sup>429</sup> According to a former senior State Department official, the U.S. assisted Iran and Iraq to “avoid victory by both sides.”<sup>430</sup> Protecting its foreign oil interests and its regional allies, American objectives would be threatened if either side had a decisive victory. The U.S. “block[ed] conventional arms sales to Iran.” When the war expanded to the Persian Gulf, the U.S. protected its allies and oil interests through naval operations and air

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<sup>427</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 130.

<sup>428</sup> Hersh, Seymour M. “U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 26 Jan. 1992. Web March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/26/world/us-secretly-gave-aid-to-iraq-early-in-its-war-against-iran.html>

<sup>429</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 133.

<sup>430</sup> Hersh, Seymour M. “U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 26 Jan. 1992. Web March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/26/world/us-secretly-gave-aid-to-iraq-early-in-its-war-against-iran.html>

strikes. At the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran lay mines along the Strait of Hormuz to disrupt trade between Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. Not long after, a U.S. warship was damaged entering the Strait leading to a strong escalation of the security dilemma in the region. In the 1988 Operation Praying Mantis, the U.S. took out a quarter of [Iran's] larger naval ships." In that same year, the U.S. shot down an Iranian passenger flight, killing 290 civilians. Though the U.S. claimed it was an accident, the Iranian government invokes the incident as an intentional act against the Iranian people.<sup>431</sup>

The period heavily increased the political, military, and economic support for Israel and Saudi Arabia.<sup>432</sup> While the U.S. publicly denounced the Iranian regime as a "terrorist state", the Reagan Administration carried out the Iran-Contra Affairs. As Gause notes, "the Reagan and Bush administrations continued to see Iran and Iraq as key strategic players" in the region for Soviet containment and regional influence.<sup>433</sup> With officials holding out hope for better relations with Iran, the U.S. carried out the Iran-Contra affair to bolster Iran while fluctuating into the Iraq camp as the war escalated in Iran's favor.<sup>434</sup> The Iran-Contra Affair demonstrated covert attempts to better relations with its formal regional ally."<sup>435</sup> The Iran-Contra Affair included efforts by the Israeli government in cooperation with the U.S. government to arm Iran during the Iran-Iraq War. The relationship between the Islamic Republic and Israel sustained itself under the table in the early 1980s but was completely disbanded by the 1990s. The regime argued that

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<sup>431</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. "Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048." *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 37.

<sup>432</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 301.

<sup>433</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. "The Illogic of Dual Containment." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 59 JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>434</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. "The Illogic of Dual Containment." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 59 JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>435</sup> Bill, James A. *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pub. 1988. Print. P. 2.

Israel was and is an occupying power of Muslim lands. Israel tolerated this rhetoric while Saddam Hussein's Iraq threatened its security. Once Hussein was weakened following the war, Israel picked up its rhetoric against the Iranian regime and denounced attempts to normalize relations with the "terrorist state." Israel became increasingly outspoken about Iran. Growing as adversaries in the region, the U.S. became less overt in its attempts to salvage Iranian relations, while continuing to back its long-standing ally. As Israel became increasingly threatened by Iran, the United States committed to Israel's security.

Though several Middle Eastern states were involved in the arms transfers to Iran and Iraq, the involvement of Israel in supplies to Iran and Saudi Arabia in supplies to Iraq is particularly important. For Israel, both states presented a threat to its regional security. However, Hussein's regime was a greater threat to its immediate regional security. If Iraq eliminated Iran as a regional power, Israel feared it would be next. Moreover, the goals of Khomeini's regime in the region were far more uncertain. Having enjoyed privileged relations with Iran until the revolution, Israel betted on covert cooperation with Tehran stemming Khomeini's anti-Israeli rhetoric in its early stages. In March 1982, intelligence reports indicated an Iraqi defeat. Arab-state allies, including Saudi Arabi, rallied for U.S. support against Iran. An Iraqi defeat would produce high insecurity throughout the authoritarian, monarchical, and dictatorial regimes. The Iran-Iraq war served as a preview for how other Arab-states would fair against Iran in the future. Backing its Arab-state allies, the U.S. abandoned its official policy of neutrality "in favor of a 'tilt' toward Iraq."<sup>436</sup> The U.S. supplied intelligence and enabled third party American arms

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<sup>436</sup> Sterner, Michael. "The Iran-Iraq War." *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 129.

transfers.<sup>437</sup> This shifted again when Iraq and Iran escalated the conflict into the Gulf by disrupting the oil industry in 1984.<sup>438</sup>

Saudi Arabia was deeply entangled in the Iran-Iraq War in addition to its high involvement in the Soviet-Afghan war throughout the 1980s. The Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war “posed the worst security threat” to the Saudi regime. The Iranian regime “openly proclaimed its hostility to the ‘corrupt’ rulers and societies across the Gulf.”<sup>439</sup> This played out in the Gulf through the Tanker Wars. The Tanker Wars were the campaigns waged by Iran, Iraq, and outside parties to harm the economic and financial capabilities of involved states in the protracted Iran-Iraq war. By carrying the conflict into the Gulf, Iraq secured the active support of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and forced international powers to respond. The U.S. stepped up its diplomatic efforts “to restrain escalation” while simultaneously assisting “the air defense of its Arab friends, especially Saudi Arabia.”<sup>440</sup> To protect Saudi Arabia, the U.S. supplied its ally with “Stinger antiaircraft missiles,” “an additional aerial tanker,” and intelligence on incoming Iranian warplanes.<sup>441</sup> Through U.S. intelligence sharing and American-manned AWACs, Saudi interceptors shot down two Iranian warplanes that were “hunting for ship targets” in June 1984.<sup>442</sup>

In 1985, the Central Intelligence Committee designated Iran as a State Sponsor of Terror. In the report, it cited 40% of “all international terrorism in 1984” originated from the Middle

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<sup>437</sup> Hersh, Seymour M. “U.S. Secretly Gave Aid to Iraq Early in Its War Against Iran.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 26 Jan. 1992. Web March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/26/world/us-secretly-gave-aid-to-iraq-early-in-its-war-against-iran.html>

<sup>438</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 129.

<sup>439</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 135.

<sup>440</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 129.

<sup>441</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 129.

<sup>442</sup> Sterner, Michael. “The Iran-Iraq War.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 63, no. 1. Pub. 1984. JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20042089](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20042089). P. 136.

East and two thirds of that were “conducted with the active support and encouragement or at a minimum with the acquiescence of three states—Iran, Syria, and Libya.” Out of the three, Iran was identified as the “most dangerous,” “most vehemently anti-Western”, and possessing the greatest capability. Out of the 62 Iranian-backed attacks in 1984, 41 took place in Lebanon. Its terrorist activities were identified as threatening the U.S., France, and moderate Arab states. The report cited its close relationship with Damascus, another State Sponsor of Terror, and the possible links of Iran to Syrian-backed attacks on Israel.<sup>443</sup>

During the Bush Administration, officials “held out hope of better relations with Iran.” In Bush’s 1989 message to Iran in his inaugural address “goodwill begets goodwill.”<sup>444</sup> As Katzman notes, this implied “better relations if Iran helped obtain the release of U.S. hostages held by Hezbollah in Lebanon.” Though Iran assisted with the release in 1991, the U.S. did not normalize relations because of Iran’s continued sponsorship of groups “opposed to the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process.”<sup>445</sup> The Bush Administration, as explored previously, led coalitions

## *6.6 Uncertainty and Increasing Threat to Israel*

The policy of dual containment was a direct shift from the implications of “goodwill begets goodwill” toward completely isolating Iran. Up until Clinton’s enunciation of “dual

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<sup>443</sup> “State Supported Terrorism by Iran, Syria, and Libya, January 31, 1985.” *Central Intelligence Agency*. Pub. 24 Nov. 2009. Web. March 2020. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87B00342R000400900005-0.pdf>

<sup>444</sup> Gause, F. Gregory. “The Illogic of Dual Containment.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2. Pub. 1994. P. 59 JSTOR. [www.jstor.org/stable/20045919](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20045919).

<sup>445</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 37

containment”, the U.S. was “the major importer of Iranian oil” despite pressuring other countries to shut down trade with Iran .<sup>446</sup> Through Executive Order 12947 in 1995, the Clinton Administration designated Hezbollah, Hamas, and a plethora of Palestinian Organizations as terrorist organizations that “threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.” The order argued that the disruption of the peace process constituted “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.” <sup>447</sup>The identified terrorist organizations were threats to Israel. Hamas had carried out attacks against Israel since its inception and was designated by Israel as an illegal organization in 1988.<sup>448</sup> In an act of commitment to Israeli security, the U.S. came out against the organizations that threatened its regional ally. The Administration had “growing concerns about Iran’s weapons of mass destruction, its support for terrorist groups, and its efforts to subvert the Arab-Israeli peace process.”<sup>449</sup> In 1996, the U.S. implemented the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act to “impose sanctions on persons making certain investments directly” to “the enhancement of the ability of Iran or Libya to develop its petroleum resources.” This Act was intended to put Iran in check for attempting to “acquire weapons of mass destruction” and for promoting “international terrorism.” Both actions threaten the U.S. and “those countries with which the U.S. shares common strategic and foreign policy objectives.”<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>446</sup> Murphy, Richard. “The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions, Kenneth Katzman, Richard Murphy, Fraser Cameron, Robert Litwak, Gary Sick, Thomas Stauffer and Chas. W. Freeman Jr.” *Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3, Fall 2001. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

<sup>447</sup> “The President: Executive Order 12947—Prohibiting Transactions with Terrorists who Threaten to Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process.” *Federal Register*, Vol. 60, No. 16. Pub. 25 Jan. 1995. P. 5079-5081.

<sup>448</sup> “Testimony of John S. Pistole before the House Committee on Financial Service Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, Washington DC, September 24, 2003.” *The Federal Bureau of Investigation Archives*. Pub. 24 Sept. 2003. Web. March 2020. <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-financing-operations-section>

<sup>449</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 37

<sup>450</sup> “Iran Sanctions Act of 1996.” *U.S. Congress, House of Representatives*. H. R. 3107. Pub. 19 March 1996. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3107>

U.S. oscillation between normalized relations and harsh sanctions can be seen in its slow lifting and installment on sanctions and trade bans from Iran. When Iranian President Khatami took office in 1997, the U.S. took a slight shift back to engagement. As Murphy notes, under hopes of better relations following the election of President Khatami in 1997, the U.S. lifted the ban in 2000 on caviar, carpets, and pistachios.<sup>451</sup> In 2000, Secretary of State Albright expressed that “the time is right” to “plant the seeds of a new relationship that will enable [the U.S. and Iran] to harvest shared advantages in years to come.”<sup>452</sup> As the Atlantic Council report suggests, U.S. interests “are not well served by the continuation of 20 years of adversarial relations.” As Murphy identifies, the central obstacles to normalized relations with Iran are “harsh Iranian attacks on Israel’s right to exist as a state, its documented support for Hezbollah and radical Palestinians groups.”<sup>453</sup> All of these obstacles center around Israel’s relationship with Iran. As Murphy explicitly states when discussing the Iran-Libya Sanction Act’s extension in Congress in 2001, “the road has been so thoroughly and creatively prepared by AIPAC” to “corral the votes so that there will be virtually no discussion of what it means for U.S. interests.” Despite these obstacles, Murphy argues “it is in [the U.S.] broader national interest” to attempt normalized relations.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Murphy, Richard. “The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions, Kenneth Katzman, Richard Murphy, Fraser Cameron, Robert Litwak, Gary Sick, Thomas Stauffer and Chas. W. Freeman Jr.” *Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3, Fall 2001. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

<sup>452</sup> Albright, Madeleine K. “American-Iranian Relations.” *U.S. Department of State Archive*. Pub. 17 March 2000. <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/2000/000317.html>

<sup>453</sup> Murphy, Richard. “The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions, Kenneth Katzman, Richard Murphy, Fraser Cameron, Robert Litwak, Gary Sick, Thomas Stauffer and Chas. W. Freeman Jr.” *Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3, Fall 2001. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

<sup>454</sup> Murphy, Richard. “The End of Dual Containment: Iraq, Iran, and Smart Sanctions, Kenneth Katzman, Richard Murphy, Fraser Cameron, Robert Litwak, Gary Sick, Thomas Stauffer and Chas. W. Freeman Jr.” *Middle East Policy Council*. Vol. VIII, No. 3, Fall 2001. <https://mepc.org/journal/end-dual-containment-iraq-iran-and-smart-sanctions>

## 6.7 Permanent Adversary

Early in the Bush Administration, the U.S. made minimal contact with Iran to coordinate. As Katzman notes, while the Bush Administration “undertook multi-faceted efforts to limit Iran’s strategic capabilities through international diplomacy and sanctions,” it also “engaged in bilateral diplomacy with Iran on specific priority issues, such as Afghanistan and Iraq.”<sup>455</sup> These lines were severed following the May 2003 terrorist bombing in Riyadh.<sup>456</sup> However, in 2008, Secretary of State Rice stated that the U.S. does not consider Iran a “permanent enemy.”<sup>457</sup> Regardless of this rhetoric, Iran was primarily categorized as a threat to the system through the Administration.

During the Bush era, Iran was identified as a “danger in the war on terror” for its backing of Hezbollah.<sup>458</sup> Israel became increasingly outspoken against Iran following the toppling of Saddam Hussein. Iran sponsored Islamic fundamentalist movements throughout the region. The Iranian-backed groups of Hezbollah and Hamas directly threatened Israel. Moreover, it became increasingly clear that Iran was carrying out a Russian-assisted nuclear armaments program by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>459</sup> Without Iraq, Iran was the greatest threat to Israeli regional dominance and internal security. In 2002, Prime Minister stated that the U.S.

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<sup>455</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 38.

<sup>456</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 40.

<sup>457</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 41.

<sup>458</sup> “President Delivers State of the Union Address.” *The White House Archives*. Pub. 29 Jan. 2002 <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

<sup>459</sup> Hirst, David. *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East*. New York: Nation Books. Pub. 2003.



should turn its pressure toward Iran “the day after” the war ends in Iraq.<sup>460</sup> Playing into the identification of Iran and Iraq as members of the “axis of evil”, Israel strongly advocated for heightened pressure and limitations on both states. In 2003, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz echoed Sharon’s vision by asserting the U.S. should put “political, economic,” and “diplomatic pressure” on Iran.<sup>461</sup> In the same year, Sharon spoke to a delegation of congressmen to encourage sanctions on Iran, Libya, and Syria.

In 2006, this escalated in the Second Lebanese War, also known as the June War or the Israeli-Hezbollah War. As framed by Israeli journalists following the Second Lebanese War in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah, the war “took place against a background of much broader processes, including America’s floundering in the Iraqi mud and the rise of Iran as an extremist regional superpower.”<sup>462</sup> The argument simultaneously highlights the growing Iranian threat to Israel and the necessity for U.S. support. The conflict took place within the context of the growth of Hamas in Gaza Strip and its victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 2006.<sup>463</sup> These elections increased pressure from Israel on the United States as a perceived growth of terror.<sup>464</sup> In 2007, the IRGC-Quds Force was identified as a Specially Designated

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<sup>460</sup> Farrell, Stephen et al. “Attack Iran the day Iraq war ends, demands Israel.” *The London Times*. Pub. 5 Nov. 2002. Web. March 2020. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/attack-iran-the-day-iraq-war-ends-demands-israel-j0kqj6tpczz>

<sup>461</sup> Bennet, James. “Threats and Responses: The Middle East; Israel Says War on Iraq would Benefit the Region.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 27 Feb. 2003. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/27/world/threats-responses-middle-east-israel-says-war-iraq-would-benefit-region.html>

<sup>462</sup> Harel, Amos and Issacharoff, Avi. “Introduction and Acknowledgements.” *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah and the War in Lebanon*. Trans. Ora Cummings and Moshe Tlamim. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pub. 2008. Print. P. X.

<sup>463</sup> Harel, Amos and Issacharoff, Avi. *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah and the War in Lebanon*. Trans. Ora Cummings and Moshe Tlamim. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pub. 2008. Print. P. 8

<sup>464</sup> Pressman, Jeremy. “Power without Influence: The Bush Administration’s Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East.” *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 4. Pub. Spring 2009. MIT Press. P. 161.

Global Terrorist for its activities in support of a plethora of terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah and Hamas.<sup>465</sup>

In 2009, Obama warned of the “danger of an arms race in the Middle East or East Asia” led by Iran and North Korea that threatened to destabilize their respective systems and endanger U.S. regional allies.<sup>466</sup> In a 2009 Congressional Report outlining “U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses” surrounding Iran, Katzman highlights Iran’s obstruction of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Moreover, Egypt, Jordan,” and “Saudi Arabia” are threatened by “Iran’s growing regional influence and reported Iranian support for efforts to discredit these leaders” for “insufficient support for Hamas in its recent war with Israel.” These states have also expressed opposition to Obama’s “outreach to Iran” perceiving the U.S. will “downplay their concerns about Iran” in an effort to reach a deal.<sup>467</sup>

In an attempt to produce stability, the Administration announced that it would participate in negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. The Administration argued that the U.S. had a “credible chance of reaching a deal that is in the best interest of America’s security, as well as the security of [its] allies.”<sup>468</sup> Departing from the precedent of past administrations, the Obama Administration joined France, Russia, the United Kingdom, China, and Germany in its negotiation process with Iran. Known as the P5+1, these states took unilateral and multilateral action to impose a series of harsh sanctions on Iran for its uranium enrichment. Through UN

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<sup>465</sup> “Designation of the Islamic Republic Guard Corps.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 8 April 2019. Web. March 2020. <https://www.state.gov/designation-of-the-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps/>

<sup>466</sup> Obama, Barack. “A Just and Lasting Peace: Nobel Lecture by Barack H. Obama, Oslo, 10 December 2009.” *The Nobel Prize*. Pub. 10 Dec. 2009. Web. Mar 2020. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2009/obama/26183-nobel-lecture-2009/>

<sup>467</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 31.

<sup>468</sup> Blinken, Anthony. “Written Statement, Anthony Blinken, Deputy Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State: Iran Nuclear Negotiations.” *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*. 21 Jan. 2015. [https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Blinken\\_Testimony1.pdf](https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Blinken_Testimony1.pdf)

Resolution 1929, member states placed an arms embargo on major weapons system transfers to Iran.<sup>469</sup> In 2010, the U.S. implemented a Comprehensive Iran Sanction, Accountability, Divestment Act to tighten restrictions on aiding Iran’s energy sector until 2016.<sup>470</sup> In the 2012 NDAA, the U.S. enabled sanctions on foreign banks that coordinated with the Central Bank of Iran. In the same year, negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran increased following an EU-wide ban on Iranian oil imports.<sup>471</sup> In August 2013, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad completed his two-term presidency and was succeeded by Hassan Rouhani. Closing the era of Ahmadinejad, Iran began to “re-engage with world powers.”<sup>472</sup> In September 2013, Obama marked the highest level of U.S. contact with Iran since 1979 by calling Iranian President Rouhani to work towards a comprehensive resolution.<sup>473</sup> After countless talks between the P5+1 and Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is officially reached on July 14, 2015.<sup>474</sup> The JCPOA aimed to reduce Iran’s uranium stockpile by 98% and dismantle two-third of the installed centrifuges.<sup>475</sup> Though the JCPOA did not normalize relations between the U.S. and Iran, it produced “the most high-level and comprehensive negotiations with Iran since the 1979 revolution.”<sup>476</sup> Moreover, it set a path toward stabilizing the Iranian economy and limiting its security threat. In the process, Obama argued, Iran may slowly moderate its aggressive policies

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<sup>469</sup> “Security Council Imposes Additional Sanction on Iran, Voting 12 in Favor to 2. Against, with 1 Abstention, 6335<sup>th</sup> Meeting.” *The United Nations*. Pub. 9 June 2010. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>

<sup>470</sup> U.S. Cong. House of Representatives. *Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010*. 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. H.R. 2194. Pub. 1 July 2010. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-bill/2194>

<sup>471</sup> DiColo, Jerry A. “EU Embargo on Iran Oil Takes Effect.” *The Wall Street Journal*. Pub. 1 July 2012. Web. March 2020. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303649504577496463851879258>

<sup>472</sup> Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates (ed.). *The Changing Security Dynamics of the Persian Gulf*. London: C. Hurst & Co. Pub. 2017. Print. P. 4.

<sup>473</sup> “Background Briefing on Iran by a Senior Administration Official via Conference Call.” *The White House*. Pub. 27 Sept. 2013. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/27/background-briefing-iran>

<sup>474</sup> Obama, Barack. “The Iran Deal.” *The White House*. Pub. 14 July 2015. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/07/14/iran-deal>

<sup>475</sup> Obama, Barack. “The Iran Deal.” *The White House*. Pub. 14 July 2015. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/07/14/iran-deal>

<sup>476</sup> Ulrichsen, Kristian Coates (ed.). *The Changing Security Dynamics of the Persian Gulf*. London: C. Hurst & Co. Pub. 2017. Print. P. 4.

in the region.<sup>477</sup> The JCPOA received widespread criticism from long-standing regional allies, mostly from Saudi Arabia and Israel. In Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman openly challenged the U.S. and the deal for threatening its security and directly going against its interests.

The JCPOA marked the highest contact between the two states since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the subsequent severance of diplomatic relations following the 444-day hostage crisis. Israel openly criticized the Obama Administration for the deal. Under Prime Minister Netanyahu, Israel took to the international stage to enunciate the security threat Iran imposed on Israel. Israel went so far as the state that it would carry out unilateral strikes against Iran if its nuclear weapons passed the “red line.” In Katzman’s Congressional report, it outlines Israeli preparation for an air strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities. However, U.S. officials “actively discouraged” Israel from taking action. Because of the U.S. backing of Israel, the report cites fears that “an Israeli strike would inevitably draw the U.S. into a conflict with Iran yet without the degree of planning, preparation, or capability that would make a similar U.S. action a success.”<sup>478</sup> Implicitly, if the U.S. softened its policy toward Iran, Israel would face a survival threat in the region. Though the Iran Nuclear Deal hindered the Obama Administration’s relations with Netanyahu’s premiership, U.S.-Israeli relations reached record levels of commitment through annual streams of 3.1 billion USD in military assistance, 500 million USD toward an Iron Dome program, and unparalleled cooperation of American and Israeli departments and agencies on intelligence, research, development, infrastructure, and a plethora of other programs. The Obama Administration appeared to be an outlier in Middle East policy by

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<sup>477</sup> Friedman, Thomas L. “Obama Makes His Case on Iran Nuclear Deal. *The New York Times*. Pub. 14 July 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/opinion/thomas-friedman-obama-makes-his-case-on-iran-nuclear-deal.html>

<sup>478</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 42.

pursuing a settlement with Iran. The campaign against the Iran Nuclear Deal by the Israeli government demonstrates the strength of small state influence. When the Administration appeared to be against Israel, Netanyahu took to Congress. This effort paid off with the ascendance of the Trump Administration.

The Trump Administration identified Iran as “a major threat to American interests.” This rhetoric aligns the Trump Administration with past presidents. As Gause argues, Trump’s “hard line against Iran does not make him an outlier,” but rather his approach is “more consistent” with that of “American presidents since the Iranian Revolution.” In 2018, the Administration officially withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions on Iran. Moving forward, the Administration pledged to “halt the Iranian regime’s destabilizing drive for regional hegemony” citing its efforts in supporting Assad in Syria, the Houthis in Yemen, Shia militant groups in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas.<sup>479</sup> For the U.S. to tolerate the Iranian regime, the Trump Administration argued that Iran must not only cease its “development of nuclear weapons” and “its support for terrorist,” but also “end its publicly declared quest to destroy Israel,” deescalate the Yemini conflict, and halt “cyber-attacks against the U.S. and our allies, including Israel.”<sup>480</sup> As Prime Minister Netanyahu highlighted, the U.S. was taking a stance against Iran who threatened “to wipe out the 6 million and more Jews of Israel.”<sup>481</sup>

The Trump Administration has exerted a maximum pressure campaign against Iran that has produced instability throughout the region. Four days before the Trump Administration took

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<sup>479</sup> “President Donald J. Trump is Ending United States Participation in an Unacceptable Iran Deal.” *The White House*. Pub. 8 May 2018. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-ending-united-states-participation-unacceptable-iran-deal/>

<sup>480</sup> “President Donald J. Trump is Ending United States Participation in an Unacceptable Iran Deal.” *The White House*. Pub. 8 May 2018. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-ending-united-states-participation-unacceptable-iran-deal/>

<sup>481</sup> “Remarks by Vice President Pence and Prime Minister Netanyahu of the State of Israel after Bilateral Meeting.” *The White House*. Pub. 23 Jan. 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-prime-minister-netanyahu-state-israel-bilateral-meeting-jerusalem-israel/>

office, the Obama Administration revoked four previously implemented executive orders to carry out the lifting of sanctions guaranteed under the JCPOA.<sup>482</sup> Since the withdraw from the JCPOA, the Trump Administration reinstated previous sanctions in 2018 and added further sanctions in 2019. In the “maximum pressure” campaign, the Administration aimed to drive “Iran’s oil exports to zero” to “deny the regime the revenue it needs to fund terrorism.”<sup>483</sup> The State Department continued to impose sanctions on “entities” within Iran and those linked to Iran within Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.<sup>484</sup> Out of this campaign, various crises within the Persian Gulf have escalated to brinkmanship. On April 8, 2019, the Trump Administration designated Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). This adds the IRGC to the long list of FTOs, including Iran-backed Hezbollah and Hamas. The Administration argues that the IRGC “has engaged in terrorist activity or terrorism since its inception 40 years ago,” referring to its establishment following the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The State Department cited the IRGC for its “financial and other material support, training, technology transfer, advanced conventional weapons, guidance, or direction to” Hezbollah, Hamas, and a plethora of other FTOs. In the list of activities attributed to the IRGC, the

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<sup>482</sup> “Executive Order 13716, Presidential Documents.” *Federal Register*, Vol. 81, No. 13. 21 Jan. 2016. 3393. [https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/jcpoa\\_eo.pdf](https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/jcpoa_eo.pdf)

<sup>483</sup> “Fact Sheet: Advancing the U.S. Maximum Pressure Campaign on Iran.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 22 April 2019. <https://www.state.gov/advancing-the-u-s-maximum-pressure-campaign-on-iran/>

<sup>484</sup> “Sanctioning of Three Senior Hezbollah Officials.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 9 July 2019; “The United States To Impose Sanctions on Chinese Firm Zhuhai Zhenrong Company Limited for Purchasing Oil From Iran.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 22 July 2019; “On Sanctioning of Four Financial Facilitators for Hamas.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 29 Aug. 2019; “The United States Imposes Sanctions on Chinese Companies for Transporting Iranian Oil.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 25 Sept. 2019; “On Sanctioning Those Involved in Killing Protestors and Corruption in Iraq.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 6 Dec. 2019; “Treasury Targets Iran’s Billion Dollar Metals Industry and Senior Regime Officials.” *U.S. Department of the Treasury*. Pub. 10 Jan. 2020; “Intensified Sanctions on Iran.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 10 Jan. 2020; “Treasury Targets International Network Supporting Iran’s Petrochemical and Petroleum Industries.” *U.S. Department of the Treasury*. Pub. 23 Jan. 2020; “New Sanctions under the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA).” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 25 Feb. 2020; “Sanctions on Entities Trading in or Transporting Iranian Petrochemicals.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 18 March 2020; “Further Sanctions on Entities Trading in or Transporting Iranian Petrochemicals.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 18 March 2020. <https://www.state.gov/iran-sanctions/>

Department refers to several attempted attacks and covert operation against Saudi Arabia and Israel.<sup>485</sup> The Quds Force—along with its commander Qasem Soleimani—within the IRGC was previously designated as a terrorist organization in 2007. In January 2020, following escalation against the U.S. in Iraq, the U.S. took out Qasem Soleimani in an air strike in Iraq.<sup>486</sup> As the leader of the Quds Force, Soleimani was heavily associated as the link between the Iranian Government and the terrorist groups (FTOs) throughout the region.<sup>487</sup> Following this attack, the U.S. and Iran have waged precise and calculated attacks, mostly within Iraq. The most recent reported air strike carried out by the U.S. targeted multiple Iranian-backed militias in Iraq.<sup>488</sup> One day prior, Congress voted to “terminate the use of U.S. Armed Forces for hostilities against Iran unless explicitly authorized by a congressional declaration of war.”<sup>489</sup> The continued escalation has engulfed the whole region in uncertainty and heightened instability. Specifically, the escalation within Iraq threatens to become a “U.S.-Iran ‘proxy war’” if both continue vying for influence and arming militias within the destabilized state.<sup>490</sup> The escalation under the Trump Administration demonstrates the level of commitment the U.S. has for its regional allies and the degree Iran has become a permanent adversary. Despite attempts by the Obama Administration to reverse the course of Iran, U.S. ties in the region make it less in the interest of the U.S. to work

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<sup>485</sup> “Designation of the Islamic Republic Guard Corps.” *U.S. Department of State*. Pub. 8 April 2019. Web. March 2020. <https://www.state.gov/designation-of-the-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps/>

<sup>486</sup> “Statement by the Department of Defense.” *U.S. Department of Defense*. Pub. 2 Jan. 2020. <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2049534/statement-by-the-department-of-defense/>

<sup>487</sup> Trump, Donald J. “Remarks by President Trump on Iran.” *The White House*. Pub. 8 Jan. 2020. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-iran/>

<sup>488</sup> “U.S. Carries out Retaliatory Strikes on Iranian-Backed Militia in Iraq.” *The New York Times*. Pub. 12 March 2020. Web March 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/world/middleeast/military-iran-iraq.html>

<sup>489</sup> “S.J.Res.68 - A joint resolution to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress.” *U.S. Senate*. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. 11 March 2020. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/68?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22iran%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=16>

<sup>490</sup> Katzman, Kenneth. “Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses., CRS Report RL32048.” *Congressional Research Service*. Pub. 22 June 2009. PDF. P. 29.

towards a strong Iran. Rather, as long as the permanent alliances stand in the region, Iran will continue to be a threat and these relations will continue to require increased commitment.

The escalation in recent months also demonstrates the instability that these relations have produced. Despite the U.S. entering into the alliances with the intention of gaining influence and stability in the region, its permanent alliances have increased instability to the point of brinkmanship with another state.



## 7 Conclusion

### 9.1 Future Study

The case of permanent alliances is not unique to the United States and Israel. As some may argue, the U.S.-Israeli relationship is highly unique—known as *sui generis*—and it cannot be applied to other cases.<sup>491</sup> Though the relationship is an exception in many regards, its outcomes as a permanent alliance are easily applicable to other cases in the region and beyond. For future study, extending the analysis beyond the narrow scope of U.S.-Israeli relations would diversify the understanding of permanent alliances in the system.

Within the Middle Eastern System, this form of long-standing alliance can equally be observed between Saudi Arabia and the United States. The close alliance enabled the U.S. to retain regional influence over the Gulf States and maintain privileged access to foreign oil.<sup>492</sup> Similar to Israel, Saudi Arabia expressed open opposition to the United States normalizing relations with Iran. In more recent developments, Saudi Arabia has escalated its efforts against Iran in the proxy war in Yemen and in the Gulf.<sup>493</sup> As a permanent ally to Saudi Arabia, the United States has repeatedly come out against Iran and committed to its regional ally. Despite Saudi Arabia's increased offensive action in the region, the United States continues to support its

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<sup>491</sup> Walt, Stephen M. "Methodological Barriers." *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.6).

<sup>492</sup> Miglietta, John P. *American Alliance Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1992: Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Pub. 2002. Print. P. 21; Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press. Pub. 1987. P. 269.

<sup>493</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *Troubled Waters: Insecurity in the Persian Gulf*. Ithica: Cornell University Press. Pub. 2018. Print. P. 21; Gause, Gregory. "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War." *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper*, No. 11. Pub July 2014. P. 1.

permanent ally through extensive arms sales and aid. Moreover, similar arguments can be applied to Turkey, Jordan, and Egypt. Though the impact on relations in the system may not tie the U.S. against Iran, the cases follow the same trend. Egypt and Jordan are still in their earlier phases of the alliance. For the Middle East, Israel and Saudi Arabia are the most indicative cases on permanent alliances.

The case of permanent alliances is not unique to the Middle East. Throughout the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union forged alliances all over the world that still remain today. Though these permanent alliances foster regional influence for the dominant powers, they have also come at a high cost to the national interest. Analyzing permanent alliances beyond the Middle East is critical for understanding one possible explanation for destabilization.

For quantitative study on this topic, examining alliances through a numerical “level of commitment” would contribute to a comparative strength of an alliance over that of others in the system. By quantifying the commitment, the study could also examine the timeline of heightened commitment in an attempt to link escalated commitment to increased enunciation of a regional security threat or national security interest by the smaller state. This can link the dominant state’s responsiveness to the small state attempts at “influence” and the actual correlation of the enunciation of threat perception to the commitment taken by the dominant state.

## *9.2 Implications*

This study illustrates the destabilizing effects of permanent alliances within a system. Though an alliance serves to balance against a mutual security threat, the maintenance of an alliance has the potential to destabilize the system. The long-term commitment and continued

joint strategic interests of two states will evolve into a permanent alliance. Despite the perceived benefits of the alliance, the smaller state will continuously entangle the dominant state in heightened levels of commitment against its own regional security threats until those threats become permanent adversaries of the dominant state. As long as the security threat exists against the permanent ally, the dominant state will maintain a permanent adversary.

This case is applied to the Middle Eastern system. The long-standing alliance between Israel and the United States has heightened commitment overtime through the Cold War effort and into the War on Terror. Every president dating back to Truman has had a hand in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Over the past few decades, consecutive administrations have attempted to mediate a Middle East Peace process. Both the United States and Israel have benefitted from collaborative efforts to achieve their mutual strategic interests in the region. The United States has committed extensive amounts of aid, assistance, and support to Israel. This commitment has created a divide between the United States and Iran. Despite a plethora of attempts to normalize relations, the U.S. has reverted back to its commitment to weaken Iran and strengthen Israel. In the foreseeable future, the United States will remain at odds with Iran as long as Iran continues to undermine Israeli security. Though the permanent alliance has high benefits, the growing cost of maintaining a permanent adversary will heighten instability in the region. By understanding the impacts and risks of permanent alliances, policymakers can take steps to expand the benefits and limit the costs of the alliances. By examining the obstacles to stability, constructive action can be taken to work towards relative peace.

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