



**Universiteit Utrecht**

**The Arab Lobby in the United States**  
*Times of Trouble, Signs of Hope*

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## Abbreviations

ADC	American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
AZPCA	American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs
CAIR	Council on American-Islamic Relations
CIA	Central Intelligence Office
IR	International Relations
NSC	National Security Council
PA	Palestinian Authority
PAC	Political Action Committee
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

## Introduction

*“The United States has enormous potential leverage at its disposal for dealing with the Israel and the Palestinians”.*<sup>1</sup>

*“Theoretically, the aid gives the United States leverage over Israel, but various administrations have been loath to exercise it”.*<sup>2</sup>

As these statements suggest, perhaps the fundamental key to solving the problem of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not lie in Israel or Palestine, but in the United States (US). The US seems to be the only power in the world that has enough leverage to force Israel into accepting a two-state solution to this long-lasting dispute. A very important aspect of the domestic political system in the US is the influence certain ethnic interest groups hold in the making of US foreign policy. The best-known example of this is the Jewish or pro-Israel lobby. This lobby includes more than five million Jewish-Americans and about 75 separate organizations that aim to shape and influence the actions and policy positions of the US government towards Israel.<sup>3</sup> According to John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, it is under the influence of this lobby that the US government seems to support Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>4</sup> The main expression of US support towards Israel has been foreign aid. Since 1985, the US has provided almost \$3 billion per year to Israel, which makes Israel the largest recipient of American aid. Nearly all US aid to Israel is now in the form of military assistance, while in the past it also received significant economic assistance. This support resulted in Israel receiving benefits not available for other countries.<sup>5</sup> In addition to financial and military aid, the US also provided political support to Israel. Having used its United Nations Security Council veto power 42

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<sup>1</sup> John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> New York Times, “At the Boiling Point with Israel”, October 2016. Accessed via: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/07/opinion/a-way-to-keep-the-2-state-option-alive.html?r=0>. Last accessed March 1, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Mohammed E. Ahrari, *Ethnic Groups and US Foreign Policy*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel lobby*, p. 225.

<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Sharp, *US Foreign Aid to Israel*, Congressional Research Service, December 22, 2016, p. 2. Accessed via <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>. Last accessed August 13, 2017.

times with respect to resolutions relating to Israel, out 83 times in which its veto has ever been used.<sup>6</sup>

In the literature, a lot has been written on the Israel lobby and its influence on US foreign policy. On the other side, contrary to what one might expect, very little has been written about those who are lobbying in favor of the Palestinians and therefore cast a more critical stance towards the ‘special relationship’<sup>7</sup> between the US and Israel.<sup>8</sup> If the fate of the Palestinians actually lies in the hands of the US, why does nobody seem to be fighting the fight of the Palestinians on Capitol Hill, trying to exploit the leverage they have? One of the characteristic laments of the Arab lobby, both in Washington and the Middle East, concerns the incapability of Arab nations to make their cases to the public in the US.<sup>9</sup> If only the Arab nations weren’t so divided; if only they explained their case better; if only there was an Arab lobby as powerful as the Jewish lobby. According to Mitchell Bard, however, this Arab lobby exists in the US, and it has helped to shape US foreign policy from WWII onwards.<sup>10</sup> What efforts have been undertaken in favor of the pro-Palestinian case and how fits this lobby in the bigger trend of ethnic lobbying in the US? Is the Arab lobby able to influence US foreign policy?

Does a meaningful pro-Arab lobby exist at all in the United States? Or is it the case, as Mearsheimer and Walt have asserted, that in comparison with the pro-Jewish lobby, “pro-Arab interest groups are weak and non-existent?”<sup>11</sup> The main question that will be answered in this thesis therefore is: *why is the Arab American lobby not successful in influencing US foreign policy?* In order to answer the main question, this thesis will tackle the following issues: what is an ethnic lobby in general, and what do we mean when we speak of the pro-Arab lobby in the United States? What strategies

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<sup>6</sup> Sahar Okhovat, *The United Nations Security Council: Its Veto Power and its Reform*, December 2011, p. 39. Accessed via [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/peace\\_conflict/docs/working\\_papers/UNSC\\_paper.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/peace_conflict/docs/working_papers/UNSC_paper.pdf). Last accessed August 13, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> As stated by President John F. Kennedy, after signing of the first arm agreement between the US and Israel in 1962. <http://www.mepc.org/special-relationship-israel-it-worth-costs>. Last accessed May 9, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> The pro-Arab groups include about 2.5 million Arab-Americans and organizations, such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

<sup>9</sup> Mitchell Bard, *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance that Undermines America’s Interests in the Middle East*, (New York: Harper, 2010), p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, p. 49.

<sup>11</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel lobby*, p. 115.

does this ethnic group employ and what makes an ethnic group's lobbying efforts effective or not? The main topic of this thesis will thus be the Arab American lobby, an ethnic lobby that has been mainly ignored, especially in contrast to the Israel lobby.

Examining the domestic political situation of the US, an element that immediately comes to fore is that of ethnic groups and their power in the making of US foreign policy. This is also known as 'ethnic lobbying'. It is with these domestic interest groups that one can find an explanation for why certain foreign policy decisions were made. Ethnic interest groups are groups within the US, which seek to influence the foreign policy, and, to a lesser extent, the domestic policy of the US. Ethnic lobbying is defined as a categorization and mechanism of national and sub-national regions identified with a community within one territorial unit whose interests are represented at the domestic level within the US. Ethnic lobbying is a crucial element of representation in the US, and therefore chapter one will address the process of foreign policy making in the US and will provide an historical overview of US foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The second chapter will focus on the Arab lobby, identifying the main actors within the lobby and assessing the group's electoral power, financial resources and organizational strength in the US. The final chapter will employ Vaughn Shannon's levels of analysis – geo-strategic, domestic-political and individual beliefs - to critically assess the successes and failures of the Arab lobby during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack.<sup>12</sup> The conclusion will reflect on the main findings, on the broader significance and the limitations of this thesis. The period under scrutiny in this thesis is from the end of the Cold War (1989) until the end of the presidency of Barack Obama (2016). This period is chosen because the end of the Cold War marks a radical shift in US foreign policy, and the end of the presidency of Barack Obama also features a different approach towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These shifts are important in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because new phases in the peace process began. The two presidents are chosen, because of their different viewpoints – one being a Republican

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<sup>12</sup> Vaughn Shannon, *Balancing Act: US Foreign Policy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 3.

and the other a Democrat – which mark a total different stance towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The theoretical debate on whether these groups were able to influence US foreign policy only started after the 1990s.<sup>13</sup> Because so many political theorists have traditionally adhered to the theory of Realism, in which only states are seen as actors and domestic politics as insignificant, the study of ethnic interest groups is relatively new. Haney and Vanderbusch have determined three factors that define whether an ethnic interest group will be successful at influencing foreign policy or not. These factors are: (1) ethnic group population and electoral power, (2) the financial resources of an ethnic interest group, and (3) the organizational strength of the group.<sup>14</sup> These three factors are crucial in the analysis of interest groups and their influence over foreign policy and have been selected as the three main criteria against which to measure the successes and failures of the Arab lobby. The sources used in this thesis are primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used in this thesis consist of governmental reports, speeches, resolutions, and official documents on US foreign policy, drafted by the US State Department. Such material can be seen as authentic and as having meaning, but at the same time the question of credibility raises the issue of whether the documentary source is biased.<sup>15</sup> This is an important point to be aware of during this qualitative research. In this thesis the primary sources were compared to the secondary sources, in order to measure their importance and their meaning. Extensively reading and comparing them to earlier claims then verified the claims made by the US State Department. Besides these official documents, records of the different Arab American advocacy groups were used, such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Arab American Institute (AAI). A thing to keep in mind is that only public-domain documents were used in this thesis. Documents that were not in the public domain, such as minutes of meetings, memos and internal and external correspondence, were not available. Despite these shortcomings, the primary sources employed in the course of this research are nonetheless revealing, given the

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<sup>13</sup> Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p.2.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Haney and Walt Vanderbusch, "The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups", in *International Studies Quarterly*, June 1999, Vol. 43, Issue 2, p. 344-345.

<sup>15</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 542.

insights they offer in the process of making foreign policy in the US and because they offer a good insight in how the Arab lobby works and what difficulties they face. In order to triangulate the claims found expressed by the primary sources, secondary sources, such as monographs on US foreign policy and the role of advocacy groups in making foreign policy, were used. Besides that, several articles from magazines and articles from international newspapers gave good background information of the events happening during the time under scrutiny in this thesis.

The Arab lobby is chosen here as a point of investigation, because of three reasons. Firstly, the domestic Arab lobby that is active in the US deserves further inquiry; especially after the US, the United Nations (UN), the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel have reached a consensus on the fact that the two-state solution should be the official policy when trying to resolve the conflict.<sup>16</sup> This consensus has brought more attention to the case of the Palestinians and the Arab world from the US government and official agencies. Secondly, while the pro-Israel lobby has been investigated comprehensively, the Arab lobby has not. Thirdly, US law restricts direct lobbying by foreign governments on policies that are favorable to themselves or their allies. This is why the domestic Arab lobby has great potential in the US. The Arab lobby in the US can be classified into several main categories, namely Arab governments and embassies, the League of Arab states, politicians and foreign service officers, human rights organizations, the petroleum and business industry, and ethnic organizations. Arab governments pay many of the players in the Arab lobby. In an article in *The New York Times* these players were described as “an elite band of former members of Congress, former diplomats, and power brokers who have helped Middle Eastern nations navigate diplomatic waters on delicate issues like arms deals, terrorism, oil and trade restrictions.”<sup>17</sup> Arab governments have paid millions of dollars to top lobbying firms in order to influence the US government. This includes the Saudi Arabia lobby, Egypt lobby and the Libya lobby.<sup>18</sup> The National Association of

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<sup>16</sup> “The Two-State Solution: What Is It and Why It Hasn’t Happened”, *NY Times*, December 29, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/29/world/middleeast/israel-palestinians-two-state-solution.html? r=0>. Last accessed May 5, 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Lichtblau, *Arab Unrest Puts Their Lobbyists in Uneasy Spot*, *New York Times*, March 1, 2011. Accessed via <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/world/middleeast/02lobby.html?scp=1&sq=arab%20lobby&st=cse>. Last accessed on July 25, 2017..

<sup>18</sup> *Idem*.



Arab Americans (NAAA) was the first Arab-American organization to officially register as a lobby. The organization was founded in 1972 and its goal was to “strengthen US relations with Arab countries and to promote an evenhanded American policy based on justice and peace for all parties in the Middle East.”<sup>19</sup> However, despite its early origins and ambitious goals, the pro-Arab lobby seems to have fallen short on its original aims. This thesis stresses how the Arab American community still finds it difficult to consolidate its efforts and exert pressure on the decision-making process in the US. In this regard, the term ‘Arab lobby’ is a misnomer, because it is very often used to indicate the loose coalition of organizations that seek to improve Arabs’ conditions in the US and to influence US foreign policy in the Middle East. Notwithstanding, there is a difference between the informal Arab lobby, which is often sponsored by the rich oil countries, and the formal Arab American lobby, represented by the Arab American Institute (AAI) and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), which have their headquarters in Washington D.C., and which will be the focus of this thesis. While these different components of the Arab lobby are not able to represent the ‘Arabs’ as a united political group, they have been able to share one communal case: Palestine.<sup>20</sup> This thesis aims to measure the degree of the Arab contribution to the decision-making process on the level of the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, and to assess the efficiency of Arab American advocacy groups in promoting the ‘Arab Agenda’, which places the question of Palestine at the heart of their concerns.

While much has been written about ethnic groups and their role in the making of US foreign policy, only a few writings are about the Arab lobby specifically, that is why this thesis fills a gap in the literature. Most of these writings advance the hypothesis that the pro-Israel lobby is the most influential and successful example of an ethnic interest group that tries to influence US foreign policy. However, lately a more critical stance towards this hypothesis has been voiced. The uncritical American support for Israel, shaped by powerful lobbying organizations such as The American

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<sup>19</sup> Lanouar Ben Hafsa, *The Role of Arab American Advocacy Groups in Shaping American Foreign Policy*, Society (2014) 51, p. 513. Published online: 13 September 2014. Accessed via: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs12115-014-9817-7.pdf>. Last accessed: July 26, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem.

Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), does grave harm to both American and Israeli interests, according to the authors of *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, Mearsheimer and Walt. Israel has become a strategic liability for the US, but retains its strong support because of a well-organized lobby that has a stronghold over Congress. In light of the Realist view, diplomatic decisions should be made on the sole basis of national interest. Still, almost all US presidents have fiercely supported Israel and this will, most likely, not change in the foreseeable future.

Most of the literature shows how the pro-Israel lobby and other domestic interest groups have been significantly successful in creating government and financial support for Israel. David Verbeeten gives a counterargument. He poses that AIPAC has become a well-organized and well-funded expression of the Jewish-American community, which is part of the broader phenomenon of ethnic participation in US politics. However, its impact upon foreign policy decisions is nothing out of the ordinary. Verbeeten argues that the significance of US-Israeli relations is the consequence of the importance of US-Israeli relations and not the consequence of the strength of the pro-Israel lobby.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, Arab-American groups and Arab governments have had less success in putting their agendas forward. Khalil Marrar has written a monumental monograph on the Arab lobby and US foreign policy. In his book, Marrar advances the hypothesis that reactions to domestic and international developments by public opinion, policymakers, and the pro-Arab lobby, in addition to the pro-Israel lobby, are important to understand the American posture toward the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Value has been given because of the unprecedented calls for the creation of a Palestinian state from the highest levels of the US government. The fact that the two-state solution is being seen as the most viable solution to the conflict, also suggests that the Arab lobby has had some success in influencing US foreign policy.<sup>22</sup>

To explain how these lobby groups work, one should analyze how they are organized, what techniques they use and why some techniques are more successful than others. Also the lobby groups should be placed in a broader context of how the

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<sup>21</sup> David Verbeeten, "How Important is the Israel Lobby?", in *The Middle East Quarterly* XIII.4 (2006); <http://www.meforum.org/article/1004>. Last accessed May 2, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Khalil Marrar, *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 113.

US public, and the media, view the Middle East. According to Janice Terry, Israel is America's key ally in the region and it helps the US to maintain dominance. Her book, *US Foreign Policy and the Middle East*, provides a historical overview with specific case studies to explain how policies are made and what role, if any, lobbyist and pressure groups have in influencing and guiding US policies in the Middle East. She claims that the pro-Israel lobby has been fairly successful, in contrast with the Arab lobby. If, in the future, the Arab lobby wants to compete with the pro-Israel lobby, pro-Arab groups would be wise to adopt long-term, unified and vigorous agendas. The fact that the Arab lobby does not have one unified message is the main reason why this lobby has not been able to influence US foreign policy, according to Terry. Also, the developments in the region itself, such as the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Israeli attacks on the Occupied Territories, have worsened the problems of the Arab lobby. At this moment it should be emphasized that although the US public is sympathetic to the human rights plight of the Palestinians, Washington has not acted on these sentiments. This inactivity shows how foreign policies can take precedence over the protection of human rights. It also shows that public opinion in the US is not the determining factor when it comes to foreign policy decision-making.<sup>23</sup>

Israeli-US relations are an important factor in US policy in the Middle East. These relations have evolved from an initial American policy of sympathy and support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in 1948 to an unusual partnership that links a small but military powerful Israel, dependent on the US for its economic and military strength, with the US power trying to balance competing interests in the region.<sup>24</sup> These close ties did not develop immediately after 1948; the year the Jewish state was established. Relations were both cool and rather narrow during the Truman (1945-1953) and Eisenhower (1953-1961) administrations. During the presidencies of John F. Kennedy (1961-1963) and Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969) the relations between the two countries improved slightly, but it was not until the Nixon administration (1969-1974) that the ties began to develop into the all-encompassing

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<sup>23</sup> In this thesis a new view is being proposed on the Arab lobby; who are they, what are their objectives and what are their means of influence? The agents and networks on influence form the main level of analysis in this thesis.

<sup>24</sup> Clyde R. Mark, *Israeli-United States Relations*, Congressional Research Service, October 17, 2002.

relations that exist today.<sup>25</sup> The relationship improved especially in September 1970, when Israel backed Jordan, an American ally, at the time that Soviet ally Syria invaded Jordan.<sup>26</sup> Then after 9/11, when both the United States and Israel were threatened by Islamist-inspired terrorism (the US by al-Qaeda and Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah), the relations grew even stronger.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.

## **Chapter one – Making Foreign Policy in the US and the US in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

### *Introduction*

In order to answer the question whether ethnic interest groups are able to influence US foreign policy, a theoretical and historical framework is needed. This chapter will illustrate how foreign policy decisions are being made in the US and provide an overview of the history of US foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### *Making foreign policy in the US*

The US faces many new challenges and opportunities when it comes to foreign policy. Questions of how the country will respond to certain problems in the world, but also the question whether the US will remain a major player in global conflicts seem more difficult to answer. The issues of foreign policy involve different interpretations of crucial values and interests, and therefore, foreign policy can be divisive. When it comes to debates about foreign policy, actors are involved with interests in determining the policy direction and scope of this policy. For example, the framers of the Constitution discussed which brand of government should have the authority in foreign affairs. After WWI, some leaders called for a total retreat from the engagement in global affairs of the US and events like the Vietnam War and the question whether the US should help developing countries with aid divided the country. Nowadays, some lawyers query the legality of the use of drones and the US surveillance system in the war on terrorism.<sup>27</sup>

Foreign policy can be defined as the actions and strategies that guide government relations with the rest of the world. This includes actions taken by states, such as providing aid, making official statements of support for other countries, or even deploying military troops. Besides these actions, foreign policy is also a function of strategies behind these actions, like a doctrine that is formulated to achieve national security interests.<sup>28</sup> Foreign policy develops out of a multifaceted interaction among a number of agencies of the government including the President, the State Department,

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<sup>27</sup> Jeffrey Lantis, *US Foreign Policy in Action* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Congress and the National Security Council (NSC). Since WWII, the influence of Congress has declined, while that of the President and his advisors has grown. The NSC also plays an important role when it comes to foreign policy decisions.<sup>29</sup> In a perfect world, the decisions made in the field of foreign policy would be based on the nation's best interests in the context of geopolitics and economics. However, the world is not perfect, and therefore, presidents have to consider domestic demands when making foreign policy decisions. In practice, this means that domestic politics and pressures have priority over hard and cold 'realpolitik'.<sup>30</sup> Actors ranging from civil servants in government agencies and lobbyists who share information also influence foreign policy and sometimes they participate directly in the process. Lobbyists have a small window of opportunity when a newly elected President takes his foreign policy under review in the first months after inauguration. It may be clear that the groups with firm ties and connections directly to the White House have the advantage.<sup>31</sup>

The first major force that is able to influence foreign policy is external. Global political developments influence foreign policy every day. There are countless ways in which world politics can influence US foreign policy – from debates in the US about immigration policy to nuclear disarmament, to support for Israel. These events show that the US must deal with difficult occurrences in the international sphere at all times.<sup>32</sup>

The President is a second main force that is able to influence foreign policy. Many presidents leave one's mark on the direction and scope of foreign policy during their presidencies. The US Constitution gives the president significant authority over foreign policy and this often leads to major policy decisions. An example is the decision of President Bush to invade Iraq in 2003. The US and the region are still reaping the bitter fruits of this invasion. Presidents also serve as the commander-in-chief of the US armed services and they must sign and implement legislation that is related to foreign policy that passed through Congress.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Janice Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups*, (London: Pluto Press, 2005), p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Idem, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Lantis, *US Foreign Policy in Action*, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Idem, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

US Congress is the third major actor in forming and influencing foreign policy. Through the Constitution, Congress holds considerable power over domestic as well as foreign policy. Congress has the power to declare war, which is the ultimate commitment in foreign policy. Besides that, Congress is able to legislate and make laws that define the behavior of foreign relations. Where the president is able to negotiate international treaties, it is Congress that has to ratify these treaties with a two-third majority. Congress also holds other checks and balances over the power of the president and these include the right to approve the nominees the president prefers for top offices and control over presidential spending. Congress has exercised these powers in relation to US dealings with the world. Given that Congress has significant power over foreign relations and is directly chosen by voters gives lobby and special interest groups a chance to actually influence the foreign policy process via this institution.<sup>34</sup>

Besides these elected actors, there are also unelected actors who are able to influence foreign policy. These unelected actors include the media, public opinion and interest groups. Interest groups try to influence the foreign policy of a country by lobbying the government. These groups can play an important role in the process by influencing parts of the local, state and national levels of government. The media report on events in the US and the world that might influence public opinion. Public opinion subsequently is able to impact policy decisions. Each of these actors is a participant in the process of forming policy.<sup>35</sup>

As demonstrated earlier, presidents and their top advisers desire to be able to exclusively control the formation of foreign policy. But presidents and other politicians have to take into account that on the one hand positive public opinion makes some foreign policy decisions popular with voters. However, negative attitudes of the public predispose the administration toward more hostile or confrontational policies. An example hereof is the negative image of the Muslim and Arab world and the subsequently adverse impact this has on the US foreign policy in the Middle East. On the other hand, there is almost a visceral pro-Israeli position in the US<sup>36</sup>, which results in more positive foreign policy decisions towards Israel.

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<sup>34</sup> Lantis, *US Foreign Policy in Action*, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> *Idem*, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 5.

*US foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the US government has worked to promote a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute along the lines conducive to the maintenance of Israeli security and to the preservation of friendly ties with Arab countries.<sup>37</sup> This formula comes forth out of rational considerations, namely the simultaneous commitments to Jewish national survival and to continued Western access to the oil reserves of the Arab world. All US administrations have contributed to the view that any lasting peace will require painful concessions from both sides. In fact, however, US governments have been more reluctant to advance Israeli concessions than Arab ones. Since the early 1970s Washington has steadily revised its prescriptions for a settlement to bring them more in line with Israeli preferences.<sup>38</sup> This pattern reflects the fact that a 'special relationship' exists between the US and Israel and that Israel's supporters have gained considerable influence in domestic American politics.

The relations between Israel and the US demonstrate one of the most complex sets of bonds between any two countries in the period after the end of World War II. This is because they not only comprise of diplomatic and economic ties, but also religious (both Jewish and Christian), legal, military and strategic ties. Besides that, both countries also share the same values, particularly democracy.<sup>39</sup> The relationship between the US and Israel has often been characterized as 'special' by scholars, policymakers and diplomats.<sup>40</sup> American presidents have acknowledged the shared values between the countries and statements on the special relationship have become a refrain part of speeches. For instance, President Barack Obama declared, "the deep bonds of friendship between the United States and Israel remain as strong and unbreakable as ever."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Salim Yaqub, "The United States and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947 to the Present", in *OAH Magazine of History*, May 1, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Freedman, 'Introduction', in *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*, ed. by Robert Freedman, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Idem, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup> Speech by Barack Obama, September, 21 2016. Accessed via <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3799761/Obama-Netanyahu-meeting-capstone-years-testy-ties.html>. Last accessed April 3, 2017.



A very important factor reinforcing the special relationship between these two countries has been the American Congress. On the one hand, Congress has the responsibility over the budget and the spending thereof. This means that Congress decides how much aid Israel gets. Consequently, it also determines which Arab parties do, or do not, receive aid in the form of money. The influence of the US Congress, on the other hand, extends beyond the responsibility of allocating the aid, as Congress often voices its opinions through bipartisan statements and resolutions.<sup>42</sup> In the history of the Jewish state, Congress frequently passed resolutions in favor of Israel during crises in the Middle East. An example is Resolution 88, which expresses “the sense of the Congress that: (1) all Arab nations should enter into direct negotiations with Israel to recognize Israel, end the economic boycott against Israel, and end the state of belligerency with Israel; and (2) the United States should use all available means to influence and encourage the Arab states which were allied with it in the Gulf War to achieve those objectives.”<sup>43</sup> More recently, in the midst of tensions between the administrations of Netanyahu and Obama, 333 members of Congress signed a letter sent to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reasserting their promise “to the unbreakable bond that exists between the US and the State of Israel.”<sup>44</sup>

Notwithstanding the existence of a loyal support from the US towards Israel, there is also a drawback. The fact that there is another side to the ‘special relationship’ has been proved by recent administrations. Bill Clinton endeavored to implement the Oslo Accords, George W. Bush paved the way for the two-state solution and Barack Obama tried to solve the conflict numerous times through peace talks.<sup>45</sup> There even were periods, for example during the presidency of Jimmy Carter

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<sup>42</sup> Bernard Reich and Shannon Powers, ‘The United States and Israel: The Nature of a Special Relationship’, in *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics and Ideologies*, ed. by David Lesch and Mark Haas, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2013), p. 221.

<sup>43</sup> H.Con.Res.88 – 102nd Congress (1991-1992). Accessed via <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-concurrent-resolution/88?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22israel%22%5D%7D&r=25>. Last accessed March 4, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> Letter by Representative Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Representative Eric Cantor (R-VA) to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, March 26, 2010. Accessed via [http://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/issue-memos/2010/05/aipac\\_memo\\_administration\\_reaffirms\\_value\\_of\\_us\\_israel\\_alliance.ashx](http://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/issue-memos/2010/05/aipac_memo_administration_reaffirms_value_of_us_israel_alliance.ashx). Last accessed March 4, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Reich and Powers, ‘The United States and Israel’, p. 221.

(1977-1981) that Arab (particularly Egyptian) views were factored into the process and actually affected US policy. Some of the Arab states (but never the Palestinian Authority, or the Palestine Liberation Organization) became gradually involved in foreign policy, because they were seen as moving forward to a general direction towards peace for the whole region.<sup>46</sup>

While official US involvement with Palestine dates back to World War I, the 1970s were a pivotal decade in the evolution of the relationship between the US and the Arabs living in Palestine. The 1970s were a time when Americans and Arabs became an inescapable presence in each other lives and perceptions. In those years fundamental patterns were established, setting out much of the tone and substance of the US-Arab relations as they have unfolded in the subsequent years. The 1970s saw an emergence of an irony in the relationship between the US and the Arab world. Foreign affairs of this time often saw extraordinary and escalating antagonism between the official policies of the US and much of the Arab society. Domestically, however, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans became more and more an integral part of the American community.<sup>47</sup> In the second half of the 1970s, however, a more negative stance towards the Arab culture emerged as international terrorism and the oil crisis took a firm hold of the public imagination in the US.<sup>48</sup>

The late 1970s saw a breakthrough in the peace process when President Carter brokered an agreement at Camp David between Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Israel withdrew from the remainder of the Sinai, and Egypt granted full recognition to Israel. The Camp David accords also included arrangements for Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza, but these provisions were never implemented.

Meanwhile, Israel was facing a growing challenge from the PLO. From military bases in Lebanon, PLO militias launched rocket attacks and raids into northern Israel, to which Israel responded with air raids against Palestinian camps and Lebanese villages. President Reagan sent a special convoy to Lebanon and in May 1983 the administration convinced the Lebanese government to sign a peace treaty

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<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>47</sup> Salim Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and US – Middle East Relations in the 1970s*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), p. 8-9.

<sup>48</sup> Idem, p. 27.

with Israel. The treaty aroused bitter opposition in Lebanon and it also angered the Syrian government, because the country had its own troops in Lebanon. In October 1983, a suicide bomber, apparently a Syrian-backed Lebanese Shiite, killed 241 US servicemen. This disastrous experience in Lebanon left the Reagan administration cautious of Arab-Israeli diplomacy. Washington, however, was forced to revisit the subject when the Palestinian uprising, or Intifada, began in late 1987. In the months that followed, Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO, renounced terrorism and recognized Israel's right to live in peace and security. Because of this, President Reagan was prompted to establish, for the first time in history, a dialogue between the US and the PLO. Reagan's successor, George H.W. Bush, suspended the dialogue in June 1990 when Arafat refused to condemn a faction of the PLO for an attempted terrorist attack inside Israel.<sup>49</sup> During his presidency, Bush sought Arab support for the Gulf War by pledging to revisit the Arab-Israeli issue once the war was ended. In October 1991 the US co-sponsored a Middle East conference in Madrid, attended by Israel, the major Arab states, and a Palestinian delegation, which yielded few results.<sup>50</sup>

The secret talks between the PLO and Israel in Oslo, which had begun in the summer of 1993, had more success. The parties agreed on a formula for resolving the long-lasting dispute: Israel would withdraw from portions of Gaza and from the West Bank, allowing for Palestinian self-rule there. The Palestinians would gradually assume responsibility for administrating Gaza and unspecified portions of the West Bank. Although the United States did not play any role in these peace talks, the agreement was disclosed on the White House lawn, making the presidency of Bill Clinton the principal mediator for subsequent Arab-Israeli negotiations.

In January 2001, George Bush was elected President and during the first months of his presidency Prime Minister Sharon ended the negotiations and treated the Palestinian Authority that had come into power during the negotiations in Oslo as little more than a terrorist group. The administration of Bush was skeptical of this approach at first, but after the terrorist attacks of September 11, Arafat's failure to stem the tide of the many suicide bombings in Israel and powerful pressure from

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<sup>49</sup> William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), p. 291.

<sup>50</sup> Idem, p. 293.

Israel's American supporters all swung the opinion of the administration towards Sharon.<sup>51</sup>

The US has invested heavily in Middle East peacemaking for decades. The overall strategic goal has been to achieve a peace settlement; in fact, however, the US has focused on the essentially tactical objective of bringing face-to-face negotiations between the parties. Administrations have eschewed to articulate positions on the substantive outcome the US seeks. The idea of the two-state solution – the cornerstone of US policy in the region – is now on life support, and its chances of surviving cannot improve without active diplomacy. Besides that, public opinion is losing confidence that the outcome of the two-state solution is achievable. The issues in the peace process are complex and the American policy needs to address this complexity.<sup>52</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The years 1979-1991 shaped a dramatic change for US foreign policy in the Middle East and the world. From the end of the Cold War until the start of the First Gulf War (1990) new opportunities for peace surfaced in combination with new risks to the interests of the US in the region. Relations between the US and Israel were strengthened during the context of a new period in the Cold War, namely the invasion of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The stage of relaxation was over and that is why the peace process suffered a setback. Under these circumstances, Israel could take the role of a strategic asset the US could use to contain the influence of the Soviet Union.<sup>53</sup>

As the Cold War wound down in 1990, the strategic environment for the US changed once again under the influence of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The Arab states became valuable in the coalition to remove Saddam Hussein from power for the US. As a consideration, the Palestinian issue was raised again. This means that in exchange for the support of the Arab states towards the US, the US 'promised' to resolve the Palestinian issue. On the other hand, Israel also became

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<sup>51</sup> Yaqub, "The United States and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947 to the Present", in *OAH Magazine of History*, May 1, 2006, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> Daniel Kurtzer, "American Policy, Strategy, and Tactics", in *Pathways to Peace: America and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. by Daniel Kurtzer, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 193.

<sup>53</sup> Reich and Powers, "The United States and Israel", p. 221.

valuable to the US. Israel was able to restraint the Iraqi missiles attack and because of that it also prevented an Arab coalition to emerge. This convergence of events led to a renewed dynamism in US relations with Israel and the Arab states, under a new world order which was called the unipolar system.<sup>54</sup> From that point onwards the US was the only one all sides in the conflict could turn to for aid, which uncovered new possibilities to unravel the long-lasting disputes in the conflict. The period from the end of the Cold War to the beginning of the Gulf War marks a pivotal moment that redefined the US role in the region as well as the Arab-Israeli conflict in terms of that the Palestinian case was largely ignored by American policymakers.<sup>55</sup>

The conclusion of the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War opened a new chapter of chances to resolve the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. The Oslo peace life cycle, concurring with the term of the Clinton presidency, began with great optimism in 1993 and ended with discontent and dissatisfaction in 2000. At that moment, President Clinton wanted to make sure the US was merely a ‘neutral mediator’ of a process whose content must be decided by the participants themselves. That is why Clinton did not want to pressure any of the sides into compromises or sacrifices. On the other hand, there is a possibility that Clinton was not able to force a solution, even if he had used more dramatic threats and promises.<sup>56</sup> The events of September 11, 2001 were defining for US foreign policy. The fact that the perpetrators of the attack were from the Middle East augmented the probabilities that the policy would affect the Arab-Israeli conflict. George W. Bush’s initial view was that the violence needed to stop before the US could get involved again, but in the aftermath of the attacks on New York and the Pentagon he believed that the Arab world sought for the help of the US in resolving the Palestinian predicament. Not long after 9/11 the US made the immense leap of calling for a Palestinian state.<sup>57</sup>

From the beginning of his administration, Barack Obama pledged for the creation of a Palestinian state. Supplementary, the election of Barack Obama in 2008 raised even more momentum for the Arab American community. Obama was open to

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<sup>54</sup> Clyde R. Mark, *Israeli-United States Relations*, Congressional Research Service, October 17, 2002.

<sup>55</sup> Shannon, *Balancing Act*, p. 77-78.

<sup>56</sup> Graham Usher, *The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process*, (London: Pluto Press, 1999), p. 67.

<sup>57</sup> Shannon, *Balancing Act*, p. 105.

ethnic group influence, including Arab Americans and more liberal Jewish American groups. This provided a unique opportunity for the Arab lobby.

## Chapter two – The Arab lobby and its Strategies

### *The Arab Lobby*

The origin of the Arab lobby can be traced back to 1951. King Saud of Saudi Arabia asked US diplomats to financially back an Arab lobby to be able to counter the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs (AZPCA), which later became The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The founder of AZPCA, Isaiah Kenen, stated that this newly founded Arab lobby comprised of a “petro-diplomatic complex”, which was formed by the oil industry, missionaries and diplomats.<sup>58</sup> According to Mitchell Bard, this setup of the Arab lobby has not changed since the days of king Saud.<sup>59</sup> He claims that the Arab lobby consists of the notion that the Saudis and other Arab states in the Persian Gulf have all the oil in their possession, and they will supply it to the US, but only on the condition that the US keeps the Arab ruling families in power.<sup>60</sup> The lobby of Saudi Arabia became an active proxy in favor of the Arab cause and it served as a counterweight to AZPCA. Despite the fact that the Jewish and Arab movements were always on each other’s opposite with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the US has had good reasons to support the Arab lobby. This was firstly reflected by the promise of President Truman to king Saud during World War II that he would make no decisions about Palestine without consulting the Arabs.<sup>61</sup> A reason for this promise is that Truman wanted to maintain good relations with the Arab states in order to secure the flow of oil at a good price. Between 1953 and 1956 President Eisenhower strengthened the ties with the Arab countries. He did this by seeking regional alliances with Arab countries in order to encircle the Soviet Union with western-aligned states. During these years, US-Israeli relations cooled down, which was in favor of the Arabs, because of conflicting national interests and Israel’s refusal to meet some of America’s demands. Eisenhower denied the supply of arms to Israel and the administration even threatened the Jewish state with economic sanctions. They did this to avoid the vindication of the

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<sup>58</sup> Reich and Powers, ‘The United States and Israel’, p. 221.

<sup>59</sup> Mitchell Bard, *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance that Undermines America’s Interests in the Middle East*, (New York: Harper, 2010), p. 66-70.

<sup>60</sup> Idem, p. 344-347.

<sup>61</sup> Ami Isseroff, ‘President Harry S. Truman and US Support for Israeli Statehood’, MidEastWeb (2001-2003); [http://www.mideastweb.org/us\\_supportforstate.htm](http://www.mideastweb.org/us_supportforstate.htm). Last accessed April 25, 2017.

Arab perception that the US favored Israel.<sup>62</sup> The Suez crisis of 1956 showed the desperate intention of the US to remain neutral. After Nasser had nationalized the Suez Canal, Great Britain and France decided to invade Egypt on the grounds that the action of Nasser threatened their national interests. Both countries, together with Israel, agreed on a joint invasion. The US strongly opposed the invasion of Egypt and ordered them to withdraw their troops. At the cost of the good relations with France and Britain, the US and Egypt grew closer. The decision to finance an Arab lobby does not come as a total surprise and it was in the best interest of the US to maintain good relations with the Arab world, so that they could try to do away the fact that they had always supported Israel.

Despite the promising progress made between the US and the Arab states, it did not consolidate into a secure fixture of the Arab case into US foreign policy.<sup>63</sup> Until 1972, no organizations of significance were established in the US and the ones that were already active only started to focus their activities on Washington since 1978. The oil embargo of 1973 by the Arab states against the West, turned the Arab lobby into an “official, active and visible spokesperson for the Arab cause”, but the embargo was not very constructive for the development of the relations between the US and the Arab states.<sup>64</sup> However, the main reason the Arab lobby was not as constructive as for example the Jewish lobby, was that it existed of a few small organizations without one unified ambition. Besides that, the priorities of the Arab states did not coincide with the ones in Washington, and according to the State Department “Arab leaders were unreliable and did not share the US vision of international security.”<sup>65</sup> The Middle East tends to operate according to internal affairs and foreign forces do not easily channel these. An example of this is the Arab uprising in the West Bank and Gaza in 1987, which unified the Arab lobby. The Gulf War, however, once again split the Arabs in 1990, as supporters of Saddam Hussein clashed with the moderate factions in the Arab countries.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> David Verbeeten, “How Important is the Israel Lobby?”, in *The Middle East Quarterly* XIII.4 (2006); <http://www.meforum.org/article/1004>. Last accessed May 2, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>64</sup> Mitchell Bard, “The Pro-Israel & Pro-Arab Lobbies”, in *The Jewish Virtual Library*, July 2012.

<sup>65</sup> Verbeeten, “How Important is the Israel Lobby?”, <http://www.meforum.org/article/1004>. Last accessed May 2, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Eric Uslaner, “Cracks in the Armor?”, in *Interest Group Politics*, ed. by Allan Cigler and Burdett Loomis, (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2002), p. 358-359.



The absence of a dialogue is certainly not the only reason to explain the fact that the Arab-American lobby lacks influence in Washington. The majority of Arab-Americans come from countries without a tradition of political involvement, such as Lebanon and Saudi-Arabia.<sup>67</sup> As a result, they do not feel the urge to become political active in the US. Besides this, the Arab community in the US is still divided over basically “everything from religion to nationality.”<sup>68</sup> This lack of unity is an ever returning cause that keeps the Arab lobby from having greater success in influencing US foreign policy. Besides that, the Arab culture has always been and still is under a high level of scrutiny, and as a result of that, also suffers of discrimination. In more recent years there were also incidents after which Arab-Americans felt they were made “politically voiceless”. Examples of this feeling are the spying activities the FBI conducted on Arab-Americans after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, and the arresting of Muslim activists in Chicago without a criminal charge in the 1990s.<sup>69</sup> Especially the attacks of 9/11, and the following War on Terror, gave the Arabs a negative image, not only in the US. After the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels this image has become even more negative. Many people immediately associate Islam with terrorist extremists or fundamentalists. This negative image affects the Arab lobby in the US.

The events of September 11 initiated an ideological gap between the US and the Arab world. Nowadays, Arab-American lobby groups are still engaged in combating discrimination and educating people about Islam. Through these efforts, the lobby groups are trying to bring the two worlds closer together again. Since the terrorist attacks of 2001, many people link the Arab-American community with Islam. This happens despite the fact that the majority of the American Muslims do not have an Arab background, and in fact most of the community is Christian.<sup>70</sup> The immediate link American people make between the Arab-American community and Islam affects the work of the lobby groups. The community claims “their situation has eroded considerably” since the attacks of 2001, and that “few politicians are even willing to offer a sympathetic gesture, while the slights have been more open and more

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<sup>67</sup> “The Birth of an Arab-American Lobby”, in *The Economist*, October 12, 2000; <http://www.economist.com/node/392685>. Last accessed May 2, 2017.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>69</sup> Louise Cankar, “No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion after September 11”, in *Middle East Report Online*, vol. 32 (Fall 2002), p.24.

<sup>70</sup> Shawn Zeller, “The Uncourted Constituency of Arab Americans” in *CQ Weekly - In Focus* (25 Sept. 2006), p. 2522.

grievous.”<sup>71</sup> According to influential Arab scholars, the rejection of the Arab-American community is a direct result of the link Americans make between all people from the Arab world and the Islamist terrorist groups that were involved in the attacks of 9/11.<sup>72</sup>

Besides the fact that the perception of the Arab-American community has changed noticeably after the attacks on the Twin Towers, a part of the confusion can also be contributed to the Arab lobby itself. An example is the mission statement of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). ADC claims it “supports the human and civil rights of all people and opposes racism and bigotry in any form.”<sup>73</sup> ADC, however, is still very focused on Islam. For example, the committee takes action against misinformation and stereotypes about Islam in the curricula of schools. Furthermore, ADC published a “Factsheet about Islam”, stressing, “Muslims, Christians and Jews all worship the same God” and that “Islam has been a relatively tolerant religion.”<sup>74</sup> Even though ADC claims to be a committee for people with all backgrounds, a large part of its mission is combating stereotypes and discrimination against and affecting the Arab-American community in the US.

One of the top priorities of the Arab lobby is to take away the preconceptions and misunderstandings mentioned above. Besides that, the lobby wants to increase the knowledge about the Arab-American community and the Islam in the US. It seems that the Arab lobby still has a long way to go in order to gain the reputation the Jewish lobby managed to develop. This assumption proved to be even more true after President Trump recently issued his second travel ban for certain Islamic countries.

The Arab lobby can be categorized in several main groups. First of all, the Arab governments try to influence US foreign policy through the contacts they have in the embassies in Washington. These attempts were not as successful as they had wanted, due to the failure to coordinate the lobby efforts between the different governments. Besides the failure to coordinate their efforts, many Arab leaders did not understand the subtleties of the US political system. Following WWII, Arab leaders even thought lobbying was illegal and that all efforts should be directed

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<sup>71</sup> Zeller, “The Uncourted Constituency of Arab Americans” p. 2522.

<sup>72</sup> Idem, p. 2525.

<sup>73</sup> About ADC, <http://www.adc.org/about-us/>. Last accessed April 11, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Factsheet about Islam, <http://www.adc.org/2009/11/facts-about-islam/>. Last accessed April 10, 2017.

through diplomatic channels.<sup>75</sup> As a result, Arab governments hired US based public affairs firms to carry out their lobby. These attempts were sometimes a complete failure.<sup>76</sup> Saudi Arabia is the exception to the rule; this country already established close relations with presidents and top officials in the administration from the 1970s. The PLO also has a full time spokesman in Washington, but the organization has failed to promote an image that is echoing with that of the US public. The Institute of Palestine Studies publishes books and studies in order to keep the Palestinian history alive, but these publications reach very limited audiences.<sup>77</sup>

The League of Arab States is the second and most logical organization to promote the policies of the Arab lobby. The league has, however, also failed to create a positive image that would resonate with the American people. To some extent, this is due to the general ignorance that exists in the Arab world about the US political system and the dynamics that drive public opinion in the US. This can be directly attributed to the fact that Arab countries have not studied US history and culture in the past, which is opposite in Israel. From the outset Israel recognized the important notion of understanding the US system and culture and they have attributed large sums of money to study the role of the media, politics and the government in the US. Besides that, Israel also funds centers that study the Arab world and their culture, while the Arab governments have been reluctant, and sometimes even hostile, towards the study of Hebrew and Israel.<sup>78</sup> Another contribution to the failure of the League of Arab States in order to conduct a successful lobby in the US is that the league is hindered by the failure to coordinate long-term and clear-cut policies.<sup>79</sup>

Finally, Arab Americans have mobilized their forces, however, with varying success. The 2010 census estimated that about 1.5 million people with Arab ancestry are living in the US, an increase from the 1.2 million people in 2000.<sup>80</sup> About half of this population lives in the six mainly northern industrial states, such as Illinois,

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<sup>75</sup> Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 50.

<sup>76</sup> In the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion, Kuwait hired a public affairs firm in order to acquaint the world with the atrocities Iraq had committed. However, it was discovered that several of their claims were fabricated, causing a huge embarrassment to the government of Kuwait and in the end doing more harm than good.

<sup>77</sup> Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 51-52.

<sup>78</sup> *Idem*, p. 52.

<sup>79</sup> Michael Suleiman, "The Arab Information Effort in North America: An Assessment," in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, Summer 1986, p. 24.

<sup>80</sup> 2010 Census Data, <https://www.census.gov/2010census/data/>. Last accessed May 2, 2017.

Massachusetts, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, with the highest concentration Arab Americans living in Michigan. Because they live in these key urban states, and also states that are key swing states, the Arab American community could potentially have a far greater political impact. Despite the fact their population numbers are very similar to the numbers of Greek Americans, Arab Americans have never had a lobbying success that can be compared to the success of the Greek American community over the Cyprus crisis.<sup>81</sup> By the 1990s, approximately seventy Arab American organization had their headquarter in Washington D.C., but only a few of them had national recognition. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) was established in 1980 and soon became the most important promoter for the Arab American community. The committee has been most successful in domestic issues concerning opposing intimidation, stereotypes and court cases.<sup>82</sup>

#### *Strategies of the Arab Lobby*

Operating within the existing limitations of the system, ethnic interest groups, such as the Arab lobby, try to manipulate and utilize the dominant cultural environment. They do this first by gaining access to, and later convincing, policy-makers to implement policies that are favorable to their agendas. There have been many attempts to identify specific conditions that have to be met before an ethnic interest group is able to influence US foreign policy. These conditions consist of attributes of the interests of the groups that indicate in favor or against success.<sup>83</sup> Haney and Vanderbush have examined several factors that determine whether an ethnic interest group will be successful at influencing foreign policy or not. They have detected three main factors: electoral power and ethnic group population, financial resources, and the organizational strength of the ethnic interest group. All three factors will be examined.

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<sup>81</sup> Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 60. The Greek Americans enjoyed a lobbying success over the Cyprus crisis and in instituting and maintaining an arms embargo on Turkey.

<sup>82</sup> About ADC, <http://www.adc.org/about-us/>. Last accessed May 2, 2017.

<sup>83</sup> Trevor Rubenzer and Steven Redd, "Ethnic Minority Groups and US Foreign Policy: Examining Congressional Decision Making and Economic Sanctions", in *International Studies Quarterly*, September 1, 2010, No 54, p. 759.

- *Ethnic group population and electoral power*

An ethnic interest group needs to have a solid community behind it that votes as one bloc, in order to be successful. Besides this, the members of this community need to be partially assimilated. This means that the group members are assimilated enough to be accepted by the larger society, but the group also must not lose its specific interest in the developments and activities in the homeland.<sup>84</sup> One way the ethnic groups can make their voices heard is through voting. Obviously, it is expected that groups with larger populations will be able to influence policy better than groups that are smaller in size.<sup>85</sup> However, if an ethnic group is not able to influence a national election, it does not automatically mean that they are not heard on Capitol Hill. When the group has certain well-placed members of Congress on their side, this can be enough. Besides that, it is also argued that the geographic concentration of an ethnic group plays a role. As stated above, the Arab American community mostly lives in six mainly northern industrial states and because they are living in these highly urban environments and in these key electoral states, the impact of their votes could also be greater.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the fact there is not much research on this, there are estimates that an ethnic group must comprise of around ten percent of the voters in an area in order to get the attention of the member of Congress in that area.<sup>87</sup> This means that there must not be a significant opposition bloc within the ethnic group and the group must be well organized in order to attract the attention of the members of Congress.<sup>88</sup> It has been said that it is important for an ethnic group to vote as one bloc. The geographic concentration will help to achieve this, because it will increase ethnic identification and the formation of a strong ethnic identity.<sup>89</sup> However, an ethnic group can also be successful in influencing policy through members of Congress when they live scattered and are spread across different Congressional districts, because more members of Congress can be targeted. Another important condition for an ethnic

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<sup>84</sup> Haney and Vanderbusch, "The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups", p. 344.

<sup>85</sup> David Paul and Rachel Paul, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*, (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienne Publishers, 2009), p. 102.

<sup>86</sup> Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 99.

<sup>87</sup> Paul and Paul, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*, p. 109.

<sup>88</sup> Rubenzer and Redd, "Ethnic Minority Groups and US Foreign Policy", in *International Studies Quarterly*, September 1, 2010, No 54, p. 760.

<sup>89</sup> Paul and Paul, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*, p. 103.

group in order to be successful at influencing members of Congress is that the group is not opposed in advance. According to the literature, the Arab lobby is in great disadvantage here, because of the negative images the US public holds towards this ethnic group.<sup>90</sup> Of all the existing ethnic groups in the US, the Jewish Americans are the only one that has successfully combined these two strategies on the population area. This group has both a large concentration of people, and significant numbers that live across a number of important districts in the US.

In 2008 James Zogby, the founder of the Arab American Institute (AAI), announced, “Arab Americans have more at stake in the upcoming elections than ever before: civil liberties, immigrant rights, Middle-East peace-issues that affect lives, our freedom and security, and the future of our country.”<sup>91</sup> The AAI wanted to build a legacy that would expand the community’s identity and to create an Arab American political coalition that would last. If any conclusion is to be drawn from the involvement of the Arab American community in the 2008 election, it is a political “coming of age” and an example of the Arab American community’s greater political adeptness. The community wanted to prove that they are a complex constituency and not a single-issue voting bloc. Pressure groups such as AAI and ADC understood that to gain national visibility, they needed first to voice their concerns through effective contributions to organized fundraising groups, also known as Political Action Committees (PACs).

- *Financial Resources*

Arab American organizations have difficulties with mobilizing the community, they have organizational problems, but the financial resources remain the biggest stumbling block to their effective lobby efforts. The major Arab American organizations lack considerable endowments and therefore they operate on a day-to-day basis. The failure to develop a sound financial foundation for political efforts automatically means that the activists spend considerable time on raising money

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<sup>90</sup> Liat Ross, “Muslim Interest Groups and Foreign Policy in the US, Canada and the UK: Identity, Interests and Action”, in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, July 1, 2013 No.9, p. 290.

<sup>91</sup> James Zogby, quoted in Lanouar Ben Hafsa, *The Role of Arab American Advocacy Groups*, Society (2014) 51, p. 520. Accessed via: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs12115-014-9817-7.pdf>. Last accessed: July 28, 2017.

instead of on lobby campaigns.<sup>92</sup> When the numbers of the Political Action Committee (PAC) of the Arab American and Jewish American organizations are compared, the difference becomes clear. In 1984, pro-Arab PACs raised \$17,350 and the pro-Jewish PACs raised \$3,772,994; by 1996 the figures had only improved very slightly from \$20,636 to \$2,738,647 respectively.<sup>93</sup> Without any major financial resources no long-lasting lobby effort or media campaign is possible. In the two decades, however, there is an increase visible of the number of Arab American organizations that have entered the political arena and subsequently they have gained more access to the White House and top officials. This increase has yet to be translated in also influencing US foreign policy. But, just as they were gaining more and more influence, their programs and activities were being hindered by the introduction of the Patriot Act<sup>94</sup> and other restrictions on the daily life of the Arab American community that were followed by the attacks of 9/11.<sup>95</sup>

It is obvious that financial resources are important to the ethnic groups, but it is also fairly difficult to determine in each case how influential the contributions have been. Besides that, it is also difficult to measure the level of influence of these contributions, because it is impossible to know whether the same policies would have been implemented had the money not been donated. In the face of the steady pressure by pro-Israeli groups and the public's hostility to Arabs and Muslims, most politicians remain reluctant to deal openly with Arabs, and this also has its effect on the amount of money the Arab American organizations have at their disposal.

- *Organizational Strength*

The financial resources of an ethnic interest group are important for the formation of a solid organization that is able to influence foreign policy through the other aspect that is discussed above, namely the electoral power of the organization. One of the main features of an ethnic interest group that is able to influence foreign policy is its

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<sup>92</sup> Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 66.

<sup>93</sup> Rachele Marshall, "Israel Negotiates New Agreements While it Violates Old Ones", in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, April/May 1997, p. 10.

<sup>94</sup> The Patriot Act is a US law passed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Its goals are to strengthen domestic security and broaden the powers of law-enforcement agencies with regards to identifying and stopping terrorists.

<sup>95</sup> Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 66.



organizational strength.<sup>96</sup> This involves certain tasks of the community, such as ensuring unity within the group, forming alliances with other groups on certain issues, advocating the group's position to policymakers and the US public and monitoring political developments.<sup>97</sup>

Firstly, before an organization is able to influence any member of Congress or policymaker, there needs to be a consensus on what policies the ethnic group wants to pursue. This also means that there needs to be unity in the organization.<sup>98</sup> For the Arab lobby this is a difficult point, because there are so many different policies that the Arab world wants to pursue. For example, the Palestinians want an independent state next to Israel, but the Gulf States want to ensure their control over the flow of oil. The Arab lobby claims that they represent the interests of the American Muslim community before US Congress, the White House, and federal agencies. However, the different Arab American organizations do not enlarge upon these specific interests. For the two biggest organizations in the US, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), one of the main objectives is to combat stereotypes and discrimination against and affecting the Arab American community in the US. Besides this, the organizations work to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims in the US.<sup>99</sup>

Secondly, an organization that is successful in influencing foreign policy needs to be able to build coalitions and be involved in agenda setting. Ethnic interest groups that are active in the US, such as the Arab lobby, can make three sets of 'demands' towards the US administration. These are value-related, economic-related, and security-related demands. Demands related to values, such as human rights and democracy, are made very often, also by the Arab lobby. People who live in the occupied territories are living in refugee camps in severe circumstances. Also the Palestinians are lobbying for an independent state, which is a democracy related demand, based on their right of self-determination. At the same time, women in Saudi Arabia are subordinate to men and they are not allowed to drive for example. In this illustration the differences within the Arab lobby are made clear.

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<sup>96</sup> Haney and Vanderbusch, "The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups", p. 344.

<sup>97</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>98</sup> Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, p. 30.

<sup>99</sup> Vision and Mission CAIR, <https://www.cair.com/about-us/vision-mission-core-principles.html>. About ADC, <http://www.adc.org/about-us/>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.



Almost every ethnic group in the US makes economic demands. Every organization is trying to get more financial aid from the US. On the other hand they are also trying to place embargos against enemies of their homeland.<sup>100</sup> Demands that are related to security are most important for the ethnic interest groups. This is because these might involve US military commitment. For the Arab lobby this plays an important role, because many US presidents have promised to protect the state of Israel in the occurrence of an attack. Especially because of security related issues it is important for the Arab lobby to build and form coalitions, because partners may provide different resources that can be used in the lobby.<sup>101</sup> In history, Arab American organizations often plotted coalitions with the African American community, but these coalitions were regularly fluid and abandoned when the target of a specific organization shifts.<sup>102</sup> For the ethnic groups in the US it is important that their coalitions can count on both the support of the Democratic and Republican Party, but this is hard to achieve, especially for the Arab lobby with its differences. According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, “they build networks and coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding to support domestic policies that promote civil rights, diversity and freedom of religion and oppose policies that limit civil rights.”<sup>103</sup> Also the ADC needs the organization and mobilization of the Arab American community in order to carry out the other objectives of the organization.<sup>104</sup>

The last important task the organizations are occupied with is the monitoring of the policymaking process. When ethnic interest groups have determined their policies, they subsequently need to know how the public and policymakers respond to these strategies. Ethnic lobbies mostly focus on Congress when doing this, because a direct link to the White House is more difficult to establish.<sup>105</sup> The Council on American-Islamic Relation claims it is responsible for ‘actively monitoring legislation

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<sup>100</sup> Haney and Vanderbusch, “The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups”, p. 350.

<sup>101</sup> Paul and Paul, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*, p. 65.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>103</sup> What We Do CAIR, <https://www.cair.com/government-affairs/what-we-do.html>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.

<sup>104</sup> About ADC, <http://www.adc.org/about-us/>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.

<sup>105</sup> Haney and Vanderbusch, “The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups”, p. 353.

and government activities that affects Muslims and responding on behalf of the American Muslim community.’<sup>106</sup>

Although direct lobbying is essential in order to be successful in shaping foreign policy, pro-Arab leaders dedicate the majority of their time and resources to indirect means to represent the interests of the 1.5 million Arab Americans.<sup>107</sup> One of the main strategies of the Arab lobby is speaking at civic forums, hoping these speeches make a differences in altering the negative image that exists of the Arab American community, and subsequently, influence policymakers in favor of the preferences of the Arab lobby. Although the Arab lobby is in a great disadvantage, especially when compared to the pro-Israel lobby, two features give the Arab lobby some power. First of all, despite the fact that almost all Arabs are divided by nationality and religion, all Arabs and Arab Americans have some sort of sympathy for the Palestinian case. The Palestinian cause could serve as the foundation for the pan-Arab ethnic identity in the US.<sup>108</sup> Still, not all Arab Americans lobby directly for the Palestinian case, but most of them see a solution to this long-lasting conflict as a possible broader answer to the conflict between the Arabs and Israelis as a whole. Secondly, the pro-Arab lobby has gained much more momentum to become successful since a consensus has been reached on the fact that the two-state solution is the only solution for this problem. This consensus corresponds with US officials on the highest levels. These are actual signs of hope for the Arab lobby.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter gives a short history of the Arab lobby. Besides that it covers the different participants that can carry out the Arab lobby in the US, such as the governments of Arab states, the League of the Arab States and the Arab American community. These three participants encounter the problems of having too little money, too little resources and too little engagement in US history and culture to be as effective as they want to be. Another argument made in this chapter is that

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<sup>106</sup> What We Do CAIR, <https://www.cair.com/government-affairs/what-we-do.html>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.

<sup>107</sup> Khalil Marrar, *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 85.

<sup>108</sup> Marrar, *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 88.

numerical significance in the context of an ethnic interest group implies geographic concentration, which is combined with a tendency to vote in high numbers.

The second part of the chapter covers three factors that can determine whether an ethnic interest group will be successful or not at influencing foreign policy. These factors include electoral power, financial resources and organizational strength. For the Arab lobby it is argued that it falls short on all three of the factors. This is mainly due to the fact that the Arab lobby is too scattered, has too little financial resources and it does not have a coherent message that they can carry out in the US. Even though the number of Arab American organizations has grown, the Arab lobby still cannot compete with the well-organized pro-Israel lobby. The fact that the Arab American community has to deal with a fairly negative image in the US contributes to the failure of success in influencing foreign policy. The next chapter will show the attempts the Arab lobby has made to become an important participant in US foreign policy. This will be done according to the presidencies of Bush and Obama, because these two presidents ended up in the midst of turning points regarding their policies in the Middle East.

### **Chapter three – The Presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama**

#### *Introduction*

The background of the Arab lobby and its strategies will be used to analyze the potential and the attempts of the Arab lobby during two presidencies, namely that of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. These two presidencies are being used to place the Arab lobby in a broader picture because during these two presidencies a few turning points occurred. In the case of Bush, this turning point is 9/11 and the aftermath thereof. After the terrorist attacks, Bush declared the beginning of a ‘War on Terror’ in which the perpetrators of the attack would be captured and tried. This war on terror eventually encompassed not only the search of those responsible for 9/11, but it contained a wider purge of hostile governments, such as Iraq. In the case of Obama, this turning point is not as arbitrary, but it is more a development throughout his whole presidency. From the beginning of his presidency and during his campaign, Obama was more favorable towards the Arab lobby and this was a hopeful sign. However, under the influence of, among other things, domestic pressures Obama had to concur with the reality of the consequences of the ‘special relationship’ between the US and Israel.

#### *George W. Bush*

Just after the attacks of 9/11, Bush and his advisors created their plan for a new Middle East, which they named the ‘Freedom Agenda’. This agenda laid the groundwork for a future Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement and a democratic Palestinian state by launching direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA).<sup>109</sup> The agenda would first vindicate in the Occupied Territories, and from there in the rest of the Middle East, with Iraq as second country to succumb to freedom.<sup>110</sup> The Bush era marked a shift in US-Israeli relations. Since the Kennedy administration, the US and Israel share a special relationship and for more than half a century, the US had been involved in the conflict between the Israelis and the

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<sup>109</sup> George W. Bush, “The Freedom Agenda”, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/freedomagenda/>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.

<sup>110</sup> Daniel Zoughbie, *Indecision Points: George W. Bush and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014), p. 3.

Palestinians, however, with very little success. The policies Bush was about to implement changed the whole conflict for the worse. During the presidencies before Bush, there were two parties involved in the conflict, namely the PLO and Israel. Nowadays, there are three parties: Hamas, the Palestinian Authority and Israel. The coming of a third party has proven to be very problematic to the peace process.<sup>111</sup> Perhaps more significant, the Bush era was followed by a series of Arab revolutions. Presidential decision-making after 9/11 has had a considerable impact on the decisions undertaken by both regional leaders and civilians, which resulted in the Arab Spring.<sup>112</sup> Many scholars, however, claim that this link is too easy to make. The people of the Middle East have struggled for their rights for decades already and the Bush administration did not suddenly open their eyes to the true miseries they were living in. Besides that, experts point out the hypocrisy of the freedom agenda. The president supported autocratic regimes while praising democracy and he cherry-picked election results, removing hostile, yet democratically elected governments.<sup>113</sup> Yet one cannot dismiss this link entirely and it has to be taken into account when analyzing the Bush administration.

The geo-strategic American response to the terrorist attacks of 2001 was a total restructuring of foreign policies along the lines to fight a long “war on terror.” Bush defined this new war on the basis of statements like: “either you are with us, or against us”, and that the US would not make a difference between those who carry out the attacks and those who harbor them.<sup>114</sup> Bush needed a cease-fire in order to build a coalition he could use against al Qaeda. In the midst of his need of Arab support, Bush called for the establishment of a Palestinian state and for an end to the building of the settlements by the Israelis. These statements seemed a victory for the Arab lobby, but in fact they reflected the political opportunism on US side, that if the conflict were to be resolved, as much attention must be given to the Palestinian need for freedom and statehood as was given to the needs of the Israelis in order to obtain

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<sup>111</sup> Zoughbie, *Indecision Points*, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> The Arab Spring was a revolutionary wave of both violent and non-violent demonstrations, protests, riots, coups and civil wars in North-Africa and the Middle East that began on December 17, 2010 in Tunisia.

<sup>113</sup> *Idem*, p. 5.

<sup>114</sup> Michael Hirsch, “Bush and the World”, in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81(5) 2002, p. 18-19.

recognition and security.<sup>115</sup> While the Arab lobby could claim a victory on one part of their strategy, on another part this victory was much less visible, and this concerned the suicide bombings in the region. On the one hand, the suicide bomb attacks against Israeli civilians were called unjustifiable, but on the other hand the Arab-American advocacy groups pointed out that American politicians, among which the president, neglected to condemn the attacks that were carried out against the Palestinians. Arab-American organizations claimed that a double moral standard had been used when they stated, “Outrage over suicide bombings cannot be allowed to eclipse the equal immorality of other forms of murder.”<sup>116</sup>

With the war on terror well underway, President Bush repeatedly stated that the war was not targeting Arabs or Islam in general, but approximately a year after declaring the war, in 2002, the Arab American community was not as sure that this was the truth. In fact, the Arab American community was at the time concerned about discrimination and a growing number of hate crimes against their community. Besides that, the actions of the government were contradictory. On the one hand, the government had implemented good policies that fought discrimination and hate crimes when these were applied by individuals and corporations. On the other hand, some of the government’s own policies, especially regarding immigration, actually sent mixed messages, because some of these policies were discriminatory.<sup>117</sup> An example of this is the Patriot Act and the anxiety the passage of this act provoked in the Arab American community.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, the defense of the civil rights became the top priority for the different Arab American organizations.<sup>119</sup>

On the domestic front, the US seemed willing to make some changes on the issue of the Palestinians: Bush was the first US president to call for the two-state solution. This new situation would have the virtue of showing that the US did mind the Palestinian case.<sup>120</sup> On the other hand, the zero-sum “with or without us” statements were rather open-ended and they tended to describe all terrorism as

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<sup>115</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>116</sup> Hirsch, “Bush and the World, p. 18-19.

<sup>117</sup> CNN Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer, May 9, 2002.

<http://edition.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/late.edition/>. Last accessed April 12, 2017.

<sup>118</sup> Wendy Cho, “Clarifying the Role of the SES in Political Participation: Policy Threat and Arab American Mobilization”, in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 4, 2006 (Nov. Issue), p. 979.

<sup>119</sup> Marrar, *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 109.

<sup>120</sup> Shannon, *Balancing Act*, p. 113.

equivalently bad and evil. This rhetoric of the administration collected various forms of conflicts and violence, including the violence carried out by the Palestinians fighting the Israeli occupation.<sup>121</sup> It could become cumbersome on the domestic field when the US would yield too much sympathy and assistance to the Palestinians, who also used terrorism against Israeli civilians, both in selling the war on terrorism and in relation to Israel and its sympathizers. For Bush this also posed a problem on the individual beliefs level. Because of the harsh words Bush used to condemn terrorism and those who harbor terrorists, he ended up in a somewhat awkward position. This was especially the case when, in the context of the war on terror, dealing with Arafat raised a difficult discussion, because of the suspicions of Arafat's enabling of terrorist attacks against Israel were brought up.<sup>122</sup> Under pressure of domestic criticism, Bush stated that a future Palestinian state "could not be built on a foundation of terror and corruption."<sup>123</sup> Shunning unilateral acknowledgement, Bush took the Israeli position that "a Palestinian state must be achieved by negotiating an end to occupation, but such a state cannot be based on a foundation of terror or corruption."<sup>124</sup> In the meantime, US Congress passed resolutions that expressed unqualified political solidarity with Israel, despite the fact that the Bush administration discouraged Congress to take such actions, because it could jeopardize the peace process. The resolutions consisted of ratifications of Israel and denunciations of Arafat. While these resolutions were not legally binding, they were in fact a reminder of the position of Congress, "that we stand with Israel historically and morally."<sup>125</sup> At the same time, the US House of Representatives appointed another \$200 million in aid to Israel, after the Bush administration persuaded lawmakers to also appoint \$50 million in aid to the Palestinians.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Camille Mansour, "The Impact of 11 September on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Vol. 31 (2), p. 13.

<sup>122</sup> Shannon, *Balancing Act*, p. 114.

<sup>123</sup> New York Times, *MidEast Turmoil*, May 3, 2002.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/03/world/mideast-turmoil-white-house-us-surprise-announces-global-talks-for-mideast.html>. Last accessed May 16, 2017.

<sup>124</sup> BBC News, *Arafat urged to act for peace*, May 3, 2002.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/1963469.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1963469.stm). Last accessed May 16, 2017.

<sup>125</sup> Democratic House Minority leader Richard Gephardt quoted in "Congress to Take up Pro-Israel Resolutions", *Reuters*, May 2, 2002.

<sup>126</sup> Shannon, *Balancing Act*, p. 117.

During the time of the aftermath of the attacks of 9/11, Arab American organizations gained unprecedented levels of access to influence public opinion and policymakers toward their end goal for a Palestinian state. This showed that one could speak of a forceful relationship between international developments and domestic ethnic groups on foreign policy. The stakes for reaching peace in the Middle East are high, but under the extensive pressure of the pro-Israel lobby, American policy fails to realize peace between Israel and the Palestinians.<sup>127</sup> There are several explanations for this continuous failure. Firstly, policymakers traditionally followed public opinion insofar as the public has supported Israel over the Arab world. Even though the public opinion favors a two-state solution, it has not been ensured by Israel, because they have not yet allowed the existence of an independent Palestinian state. Secondly, the pro-Arab lobby has not proved capable to be an effective counterpart to the pro-Israel lobby in their attempts to delay the two-state solution. This has been proved by the fact that the US has yet to inflict pressure on Israel to keep up its end of the deal in the talks for a workable Palestinian state.<sup>128</sup>

The Arab American organizations must acknowledge that during the presidency of George W. Bush their influence on foreign policy was slim. The director of communications of the American-Arab-Anti-Discrimination Committee, Laila Al-Qatami, admitted that the attempts of the Arab lobby has not been very successful thus far: “I would be hard pressed to say the lobbying we do on foreign policy has been all that successful. It really hasn’t.”<sup>129</sup> Despite the disappointing results, ADC filed a lawsuit in 2006 against Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, claiming that they failed to protect US citizens under attack in Lebanon, and therefore the US failed his constitutional promises.<sup>130</sup> Some time later, a cease-fire was implemented in Lebanon and therefore ADC withdrew its lawsuit against the top officials from the Bush administration. With the implementation of the cease-fire, ADC claimed it achieved its goal with the

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<sup>127</sup> Shannon, *Balancing Act*, p. 122.

<sup>128</sup> Marrar, *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 122.

<sup>129</sup> Justin Vogt, “Imagined Community”, in *The National Newspaper*, October 31, 2008. <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/imagined-community>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.

<sup>130</sup> “ADC Files Lawsuit Against Secretaries of State and Defense for Failure to Protect US Citizens in Lebanon,” ADC Press Releases (24 July 2006); <http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=2865>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.



lawsuit.<sup>131</sup> With this case it has been proved that ADC does have the ability to put pressure on US policies using the legal system of the US. However, its lack of influence is shown by their failed attempts to successful lobby US Congress. This lack of influence is partly due to the fact that not just national, origin and religion divide Arab-Americans, but also by an undermining form of ‘exile politics’, which correspondingly exists in the US. These types of detachments have made it almost impossible to reach consensus on many issues, even on the one issue most expected the Arab American community to have reached a consensus, namely the Arab-Israeli conflict. The reason that the pro-Israel lobby is having success is that groups like AIPAC have managed to create a powerful image of unity and solidarity, when in fact Jewish-Americans have many disagreements about Israeli politics. In contrast, Arab-Americans operate from a weaker position, because the unity and solidarity is lacking, even though this unity could be illusory.

For the whole two periods of the presidency of George W. Bush the administration struggled to end the violence between the Palestinians and Israelis and lead them forward towards a peace agreement. The effort to reach a final peace agreement, however, failed. According to the deputy national security advisor, the effort failed despite the immense amount of time and energy spent on it.<sup>132</sup> President Bush believed that the separation of Israelis and Palestinians into two states would benefit both, but only when the Palestinian state would be peaceful and democratic. The security of Israel was essential to any hope for peace in the region and therefore President Bush backed the right of self-defense of Israel, even when international criticism was loud and clear. Bush believed that in any peace agreement Israel would keep the major settlements and that the Palestinian refugees would have to settle in Palestine, rather than ‘return’ to Israel.<sup>133</sup> These insights were formed under the influence of the war on terror and the personal beliefs of the President and his advisors, but also under the influence of pressure of members of Congress and the pro-Jewish lobby.<sup>134</sup> The Arab lobby tried to oppose this influence, and it could

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<sup>131</sup> “ADC Achieves Goal with Lawsuit,” ADC Press Releases (22 Aug. 2006); <http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=2936>. Last accessed May 3, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> Elliot Abrams, *Tested By Zion: The Bush Administration and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> *Idem*, p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> Marrar, *The Arab Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, p. 85.

celebrate a victory when Bush claimed that a Palestinian state should be established. In fact however, this was a Pyrrhus victory, because the aim of the administration of Bush was not to decrease the power of Israel, but only reinforce it and during the eight years Bush was president, the US would back Israel numerous times. The Arab lobby had put its hopes on the coming president, Barack Obama, who was during his presidential campaign and from the beginning of his presidency more in favor of the Arab lobby and its message.

### *Barack Obama*

No previous US President has had such a strained relationship with Israel as Barack Obama. Michael Oren, Israeli Ambassador, said in 2010, “Israel’s ties with the US are in their worst crises since 1975, a crisis of historic proportions.”<sup>135</sup> According to the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, Obama basically “threw the special relationship between the US and Israel out of the window.”<sup>136</sup> This perception was reinforced during a meeting between Obama and Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas in May 2009. Obama guaranteed, “the establishment of a Palestinian state is a must for me personally. In an expeditious manner, we will get to the two-state solution.”<sup>137</sup>

In his first address to the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2009, President Obama addressed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this speech he called the settlements of Israel illegal and he referred to Israel as being the “occupier of Palestinian territory.”<sup>138</sup> Obama’s goal for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was clear: “Two states living side by side in peace and security; a Jewish state of Israel with true security for all Israelis and a viable, independent Palestinian state with

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<sup>135</sup> “Israeli envoy sees ‘historic crisis’ with US: report, *Reuters*, March 15, 2010. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-usa-palestinians-envoy-idUSTRE62E11020100315>. Last accessed April 13, 2017.

<sup>136</sup> “US-Israel relationship thrown ‘out the window’, *News Now*, May 20, 2011. <https://www.onenewsnow.com/national-security/2011/05/20/us-israel-relationship-thrown-out-the-window>. Last accessed April 13, 2017.

<sup>137</sup> Josh Ruebner, “Obama’s Legacy on Israel/Palestine”, in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 46 No. 1 (Autumn 2016), p. 51.

<sup>138</sup> Barack Obama, *Transcript Address UNGA*, September 2009. <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/09/23/obama.transcript/index.html>. Last accessed April 13, 2017.

contiguous territory that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and realizes the potential of the Palestinian people.”<sup>139</sup>

On the geo-strategic level three aspects can be distinguished. Firstly, during the first year in office, the Obama administration reached out to countries the Bush administration had fierce conflicts with. These countries included Iran, Syria, Cuba, Venezuela, Russia, China and North Korea. The administration believed that if opponents were met halfway, they would reciprocate.<sup>140</sup> Another aspect of the administration of Obama was an extended outreach towards the Muslim world. Obama tried to represent the US as a friend of the Muslim world, instead of an adversary, despite the wars the US fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>141</sup> A third aspect was the cooling down of the ties with Israel, as described above. Obama believed that this new attitude towards Israel was necessary in order to facilitate efforts that could solve the conflict.<sup>142</sup> The cooling down of the relationship between the US and Israel resulted in a call to halt the settlement activities, including in Jerusalem. Besides, despite trips to several Middle Eastern countries, Obama did not visit Israel in the first year of his presidency. Reinforcing this new phase of the relationship was the fact that Obama was a left-of-center liberal, while Netanyahu was a right-of-center conservative. Obviously, these three aspects of Obama’s foreign policy did not amuse Israel. For Israel the most important aspect was that Iran did not succeed in obtaining a nuclear weapon, while Obama felt that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would bring the Arab world and Israel closer together.

From the outset of his presidency, Obama made the Israeli-Palestinian conflict a high priority in his foreign policy. He tried to restore the image of the US in the Arab world, but at the same time he also declared that the bond between Israel and the US is “unbreakable”, despite the cooling down of the relationship between the two countries.<sup>143</sup> As part of his foreign policy Obama made the establishment of a

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<sup>139</sup> Barack Obama, *Transcript Address UNGA*, September 2009. <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/09/23/obama.transcript/index.html>. Last accessed April 13, 2017.

<sup>140</sup> Robert Freedman, “George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict”, in *The Middle East and the United States*, ed. by Lesch and Haas, (Boulder: 2013), p. 280.

<sup>141</sup> *Idem*, p. 281.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>143</sup> White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President on a New Beginning, Cairo, Egypt,” 4 June 2009, [www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09). Last accessed May 24, 2017.

Palestinian state the cornerstone of his regional policy. He argued, “Israeli’s must acknowledge that, just as Israeli’s rights right to exist cannot be denied, neither can Palestine’s.”<sup>144</sup>

On the domestic political level, the Obama administration announced that restoring the balance and restraint in a region with several unresolved conflicts was the most important and therefore it was declared as an American objective.<sup>145</sup> Because of the fact that all players involved, Arab and non-Arab, live in a violent world, this objective seemed harder to achieve than anticipated. Obama was willing to pressure both the Palestinians and the Israeli’s, maybe more than any other President, but much of the actions during the presidency of Obama that criticized Israel were either indicative or lacked force. The US has held the position that Israel needs to leave the occupied territories, a call that became more vocal during the presidency of Obama, but at the same time, the US never threatened with sanctions or punishments for Israel’s unyieldingness on implementing the resolutions adopted by the UN.<sup>146</sup> However, Obama deserves credits for the fact he articulated the rights of the Palestinians more powerfully and persuasively than any other president. The statements he made on the rights of the Palestinians and the criticism he expressed on Israel reflected changes in discourse. But, at the same time, Obama merits blame for the fact he fell short in devising any comprehensible strategy for translating such sentiments into policy changes that would effectuate those rights.<sup>147</sup> The unwillingness to move beyond the realm of rhetorical shifts was most evident in Obama’s refusal to challenge the pro-Israel lobby and in his rebuttal to consider imposing sanctions on Israel for defying his policy goal. President Obama also learned the power the pro-Israel lobby held in the US rather early in his presidency. After a call of secretary of state Hillary Clinton to put a halt to all settlements activities, the pro-Israel lobby struck back. AIPAC mobilized Congress and 76 senators and 328 representatives signed letters politely telling the president he should

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<sup>144</sup> Associated Press, "Obama Seeks 'New Beginning' in Muslim World," 4 June 2009. [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/31098535/ns/politics-white\\_house/t/obama-seeks-new-beginning-muslim-world/#.WSU8xhPyhPM](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/31098535/ns/politics-white_house/t/obama-seeks-new-beginning-muslim-world/#.WSU8xhPyhPM). Last accesses May 24, 2017.

<sup>145</sup> Linda Miller, “The United States and the Arab Spring: Now and Then in the Middle East”, in *Obama and the World: New Directions in US Foreign Policy*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 232.

<sup>146</sup> Shannon, *Balancing Act*, p. 130.

<sup>147</sup> Ruebner, “Obama’s Legacy on Israel/Palestine”, p. 55.

stop demanding a settlement freeze. From this moment onwards it was clear that no matter how powerful Obama spoke of the rights of the Palestinians it would never come to consequences for Israel's continued violation of these rights.<sup>148</sup>

Before Obama won the 2009 election he developed an intimate relationship with the Palestinian-American community. Obama felt empathy for the cause of the Palestinians on a level that few American politicians achieve. As an Illinois senator with many Palestinian-American constituents he often attended community events at which he criticized the half-hearted attempts of US foreign policy to an equal approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>149</sup> On the level of individual beliefs, Obama appointed George Mitchell, a Lebanese American, as his special envoy for Middle East peace.<sup>150</sup> Mitchell is the author of the plan named after him, which called for a halt to the settlement activities of Israel. This appointment inspired the hope of Palestinians that the pro-Israel tendency in the peace process would change under Obama. However, the hopes of the Palestinians for a fairer approach from the Obama administration were rapidly deflated. Not long after the inauguration, the administration returned to the more familiar tropes of the pro-Israel policies that were also very clear during the presidencies of Clinton and Bush.<sup>151</sup> Obama will, therefore, not be remembered as a peacemaker. Instead, the chances for a negotiated two-state solution are slim. For this, Benjamin Netanyahu, who has vetoed the possibility of the coming of the Palestinian state, is mostly responsible. But the maleficent policy decisions of the Obama administration also contributed to this status quo.

At the beginning of the presidency of Barack Obama, the Arab lobby was convinced it could make a change and that they could actually influence the administration of Obama to take action against Israel. This hope was being encouraged by the fact that Obama pointed, in his Inaugural Address in 2009, to America's 'patchwork heritage' and of being a 'nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and non-believers.'<sup>152</sup> As stated above, however, this was not the

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<sup>148</sup> Ruebner, "Obama's Legacy on Israel/Palestine", p. 57.

<sup>149</sup> Idem, p. 51.

<sup>150</sup> "President Obama Delivers Remarks to State Department Employees," *Washington Post*, January 22, 2009. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/22/AR2009012202550.html>. Last accessed April 22, 2017.

<sup>151</sup> Ruebner, "Obama's Legacy on Israel/Palestine", p. 51.

<sup>152</sup> Patrick Haney, "Ethnic Lobbying in the Obama Administration: Reconnecting to the Outside through the Inside". Presented to the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association,

case, because Congress still tended to vote in favor of Israel. Also in the United Nations the pro-Israel stance of the US was proved. An example of this policy came in February 2011. The US exercised its first and only UN veto to prevent a Security Council disapproval of Israeli settlement expansion. The wording of the resolution was in line with the stance of the Obama administration of the past two years, but the US still had to veto the resolution. US ambassador to the UN Susan Rice explained this veto with the following reasoning: “Our opposition to the resolution should not be misunderstood to mean we support settlement activity. On the contrary, we reject in the strongest terms the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity.”<sup>153</sup> The US vetoed this resolution because it believed that it did nothing good to the peace process and Rice argued that condemning Israeli settlements in the Security Council only hardened the position of both sides.<sup>154</sup>

On the matter of Palestinian rights, it seemed that for the Obama administration any initiative that would promote the rights of the Palestinians, even if it was pure symbolic, meant a setback for Israel and the administration felt it was worthy of US intervention to prevent this. An example hereof is the attempt of the PLO to become a full member in the UN and their bid for statehood recognition. Obama’s administration mobilized all kinds of US resources to prevent these wishes. Obama diverged from his May 2011 speech on the Arab Spring, wherein he spoke of freedom and democracy for the region and he claimed that the Palestinians were seeking to “delegitimize” Israel by pursuing statehood recognition and UN membership.<sup>155</sup> At an AIPAC conference three days later, Obama proclaimed: “No vote at the United Nations will ever create an independent Palestinians state.”<sup>156</sup>

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New York. February 16, 2009 : 12 p. 35.

<sup>153</sup> Ruebner, “Obama’s Legacy on Israel/Palestine”, p. 56.

<sup>154</sup> Susan E. Rice, “Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Resolution of the Situation in the Middle East, Including the Question of Palestine, in the Security Council Chamber” (explanation of vote, United Nations Security Council, New York, 18 February 2011), <http://usun.state.gov/remarks/4978>. Last accessed April 24, 2017.

<sup>155</sup> Barack Obama, “Remarks of President Barack Obama—as Prepared for Delivery—‘A Moment of Opportunity’” (remarks, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, 19 May 2011), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-barack-obama-prepared-delivery-moment-opportunity>. Last accessed April 24, 2017.

<sup>156</sup> Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President at the AIPAC Policy Conference 2011” (remarks, AIPAC Policy Conference 2011, Washington, DC, 22 May 2011), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the->

President Abbas nevertheless submitted the application for UN membership in September 2011, but as expected the Palestinians lost the vote. As a solace, the General Assembly voted to grant Palestine the status of “non-member observer” in November 2012.<sup>157</sup>

In the next years it became more and more apparent that the window to establish an independent Palestinian state was closing. Secretary of State John Kerry even believed that there only was a period of “a year to a year and a half to two years, or it’s over.”<sup>158</sup> He warned, “a unitary state winds up either being an apartheid state with second-class citizens – or it ends up being a state that destroys the capacity of Israel to be a Jewish state.”<sup>159</sup> In its last two years as president, Obama preferred the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be on the background of his policies. Nowadays, the degree of the settlements and the rule Israel has over these territories are on the one hand strongly encircled, but at the same time they are weaker than ever. This is because the establishment of the Palestinian state is further away, while the Israeli government is drifting rightward. But it is also possible that the “apartheid” way of ruling of Israel is becoming more and more apparent to more people, and therefore it is possible it will be isolated by the international community, just as happened in South Africa. Although this is a possibility, it is not likely to happen. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is going into its fiftieth year, so the apartheid way of ruling should be known by now and the international community has not been able to actually intervene in the conflict. One of the main reasons hereof is that the US is continuously supporting Israel, even a President who seemed sympathetic to the Palestinian cause at first. But he also has to wheel and deal with Congress and he does not have a *carte blanche*, as regards to foreign policy. It has become regular that approximately just over a third of the measures taken by Congress benefit Israel. These measures fall in the categories of awarding military support, strengthening the US-Israeli alliance,

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[pressoffice/2011/05/22/remarks-president-aipac-policy-conference-2011](http://pressoffice/2011/05/22/remarks-president-aipac-policy-conference-2011). Last accessed April 24, 2017.

<sup>157</sup> Ruebner, “Obama’s Legacy on Israel/Palestine”, p. 57.

<sup>158</sup> Harriet Sherwood, “Kerry: Two Years Left to Reach Two-State Solution in Middle East Peace Process,” *The Guardian*, 13 April 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/18/kerry-two-state-solutionmiddle-east>. Last accessed April 24, 2017.

<sup>159</sup> Josh Rogin, “Exclusive: Kerry Warns Israel Could Become ‘an Apartheid State,’” *Daily Beast*, 27 April 2014, <http://www.dailybeast.com/articles/2014/04/27/exclusive-kerry-warns-israel-could-becomean-apartheid-state.html>. Last accessed April 24, 2017.



commemorating Israeli and Jewish history and displaying ceremonial support.<sup>160</sup> Just less than a third of the measures were directed at the adversaries of Israel, mainly Iran and the Palestinians. From this overview it becomes clear that Obama's administration was in strong favor of Israel. This has always been the case in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but it looked like Obama would make a change. The believers of this change got deceived.

### *Conclusion*

US foreign policy under President Bush reflected a balanced sheet of geo-strategic, individual and domestic influences. Personally, Bush had to deal with Arafat, a relationship that was strained under the context of the terror after 9/11 and that further strained under the continued attacks of terror in the occupied territories under the leadership of Arafat. On the domestic level, Bush had the chance to create a new policy pathway, which he did when he called for the establishment of a Palestinian state. On the geo-strategic level, Bush was forced to implement a new foreign policy, because a terrorist group from the Middle East had struck in the heart of the US. This new foreign policy was committed to rooting out all terrorist threats and those who were abiding terrorists.

With the coming of the president Obama, hope rose in the Arab American community. However, it was soon clear that the Obama administration solidified the US' role as a biased arbitrator in the negotiations between the Palestinians and Israeli's, served as Israel's protector at the UN, and supported Israel's ongoing illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip.<sup>161</sup> Obama will likely go down in history as the President who had the last shot at brokering a two-state solution of the conflict. At the end of the presidency of Obama, the world is waiting to see if there are signs of hopes of momentous change or if that the times of troubles are going to be the continuous status quo of yet another cycle in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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<sup>160</sup> Congressional Monitor: The 113th Congress First Session, compiled by Paul Karolyi, in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 43 No. 3 (Spring 2014), [http://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/JPS171\\_12\\_Congressional\\_Monitor.pdf](http://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/JPS171_12_Congressional_Monitor.pdf). Last accessed April 24, 2017.

<sup>161</sup> Ruebner, "Obama's Legacy on Israel/Palestine", p. 60.



## Conclusion

After having examined the Arab lobby, it can be concluded that the Arab American lobby has been quite active and has attempted, through both direct and indirect lobbying, to have an impact on US foreign policy. Many of the strategies they use and used are similar to those of other ethnic lobbies. That the Arab American lobby is less effective than some of those other lobbies is partly due to the fact there is a strong anti-Arab prejudice in the public opinion in the US. However, one can see certain 'trends' that indicate that the level of influence of Arab American organizations is on the rise in the making of US foreign policy. Their electoral power is growing, Arab American organizations have developed lobbying expertise, and Arab Americans have had, over the years more access to government officials. These trends make the Arab lobby a player to watch in the process of influencing US foreign policy and therefore the Arab lobby is worthy of more extensive research.

The weakness of the Arab lobby can be illustrated by an anecdote attributed to President Truman. He responded to officials of the State Department, who advised him to be careful in his support for the state of Israel in 1948, as follows: "I am sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents."<sup>162</sup> Coming late to the political scene, Arab American interest groups have lacked the expertise of their pro-Israeli counterparts. As a consequence, US politicians and policymakers have little reason to adjust their behaviour to accommodate it. The failure of Arab American interest groups to develop a positive agenda could also be attributed to their inability to raise money, cultivate membership, or develop persuasive arguments to shape US policymaking, as illustrated in chapters two and three. Last but not least, reduced impact and lack of representation in various forms could be attributed to less success in reaching prominent positions in academia, business and the media. Because the majority of them come from different countries and backgrounds, Arab Americans are unlikely to speak with a unified voice, especially when it comes to Middle Eastern issues.

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<sup>162</sup> Mitchell Bard, "The Israeli and Arab Lobbies," Jewish Virtual Library, American-Israeli Cooperative (AICE) (2005), p. 5, [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org). Accessed on July 26, 2017.

In order for the Arab lobby to be successful in the future it needs to implement several new strategies. First, it is necessary to outline the different approaches to peace that are available. These approaches are the two-state solution, the currently most studied approach, and the one-state solution, the approach that has a lengthy tradition, but little formal support. Since the pro-Arab groups exist to advance the rights they should be able to invoke both solutions efficiently. Second, Arab American organizations should try to focus the public opinion in the direction of Palestinian equality in the region, while pushing policymakers in the US to honour the two-state solution, which is the official stance of the US government. Third, Arab American organizations could adopt a similar approach the pro-Israel lobby had implemented in the early years, namely that of political activism. This approach had success because of the fact it consisted of two extreme elements and one moderate one. When it comes to the Arab lobby the lesson is this: the likelihood of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state could be enhanced if it was presented as the middling approach to peace among a variety of other options, such as the one-state solution. When compared to the approach of the pro-Israel groups this tactic should lead to an increase of the competitiveness of the pro-Arab lobby with the Israel lobby. This would eventually lead to more influence of the pro-Arab lobby with US policymakers. Fourth and last, the pro-Arab lobby has a key political advancement against its counterpart, and that is the unanimous support for the establishment of a Palestinian state. The solution of the Arab lobby is the method of choice for everyone that is involved. On the other hand, the pro-Israel lobby has not been able to present an alternative message, which contributed to a lack of direction in the peace process. The domestic Arab lobby does not seek to delegitimize Israel. Arab American groups, especially groups like ADC and AAI, do not even question Israel's right to exist, because that would be a form of anti-Semitism and that right is now endorsed by more than 160 countries in the world. What they question is the magnitude of US support, and especially the unconditional nature of this support. They want to bring the American government to adopt a more balanced approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Indeed, the Arab lobby has a long way to go in order to be able to effectively counter the pro-Israel lobby. One factor that contributes most to the disparity between

the two groups is the broad support that exists in the US for Israel. While this factor will never fully disappear, it is important to note that the official stance of the US went from an exclusion of an independent Palestinian state in the 1980s to an embrace of limited autonomy just after the end of the Cold War, and later, after 9/11, the roadmap of President Bush has given the Palestinians the hope of a state of their own. However, a major stumbling block in achieving this hope still remains the pro-Israel lobby groups, such as AIPAC. Pro-Arab action will not be given any significance as long as it is being disregarded in the literature. That is where the significance of this thesis lies. The efforts of the pro-Arab lobby have corresponded with the gradual promotion of the two-state solution and if this is not seen as a success, than it should certainly obligate policymakers, academics, journalists and the public to further investigate the Arab American organizations and their efforts to pursue peace in the conflict in the Middle East. It is never too late to achieve peace and the Arab lobby has given signs of hope to achieve this peace after a long time of trouble.

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