In Peaces:

The Bush Administration and the Israel-Palestine Conflict, 2001-2006

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Introduction

Topic Description

In May 2008, President George W. Bush gave a speech to the Israeli Knesset on the sixtieth anniversary of the Jewish state. He said that "America is proud to be Israel's closest ally and best friend in the world" and that "the source of our friendship runs deeper than any treaty."[1] Yet, Bush's own commitment to the Israel-Palestine conflict started relatively late in his presidency. As president, Bush intentionally paid little attention to the conflict during his first eight months in office before September 2001. His position regarding the peace process and overall American foreign policy would change dramatically as a result of the terrorist attacks in September 2001. After these cataclysmic events the Bush administration would embark on a new and controversial foreign policy in which renewed attention was paid to the Israel-Palestine conflict. In his 2008 speech to the Knesset, Bush also praised the former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon when he said that his "only regret is that one of Israel's greatest leaders is not here to share the moment. He is a warrior for the ages, a man of peace, and a dear friend. The prayers of all Americans are with Ariel Sharon."[2] Despite these accolades, the Bush administration's relations with Sharon were not always good either, as there were many disagreements.

This thesis will discuss the foreign policy of the Bush administration with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict in the years 2001-2006. This period is characterized by various and intertwining national and international events, such as the increasing violence between Israel and the Palestinians in the Second Intifada and the death of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 2004. The period discussed in this thesis starts with the inauguration of George W. Bush as President of the United States in 2001 and ends in early 2006, when Ariel Sharon suffered a stroke and disappeared from political life and Hamas was democratically elected by the Palestinians. Most importantly, the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 against the United States played a crucial role in the way the Bush administration constructed and conducted its foreign policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The period discussed in this thesis is crucial for several reasons; first of all, the violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians was escalating. After the beginning of the Second Intifada, casualty rates began to rise. Also, the election of the Israeli hard-liner Ariel Sharon was significant since the only way he knew how to deal with the Palestinians was by force. He often proved to be a difficult ally, focused on obstructing any chance for a peaceful solution. Also, the Bush administration undertook a confrontational and unilateral policy which is described as a revolution in American foreign policy. In this policy, Bush displayed a distinct view of the Middle East which differed from

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[1] "Prepared Text of Bush's Knesset Speech," *The Wall Street Journal*, 15 May 2008, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121083798995894943.html.
[2] Ibid.

that of his predecessors. Bush would not act as a mediator in the conflict, as Bill Clinton had done. Instead, he would set the rules for both parties to follow.

Overview of academic discussion

The period before the 9/11 attacks was characterized by a focus on domestic affairs and a lack of engagement towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. Overall, scholars are in agreement that the Bush administration did not continue the intense focus on negotiations that occurred during the years that Bill Clinton was in office. According to Phyllis Bennis, the United States kept their "hands off peace talks."[3] Douglas Little writes that, in his first months as president, Bush "saw no hope in resolving the Middle East conflict" and "distanced himself from the peace process during his first months in office" until the events of 11 September, 2001 provided the "darkest and most chilling image to emerge from the Middle East."[4] The terrorist attacks are widely held to be significant for the uncompromising foreign policy that the Bush administration pursued. There are scholars who consider the terrorist attacks as the prime event that spurred the Bush administration to take action on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Sean Wilentz for instance writes that it "completely altered his presidency."[5] Historian George C. Herring suggests that the administration "found purpose and direction." because of the 9/11 attacks.[6]

Yet, not everyone agrees with the idea that it were solely the horrors of 9/11 that brought about the change in course in Bush's foreign policy. According to Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, the terrorist attacks did enable Bush to "set in motion a revolution in American foreign policy," but the policies of unilateralism were already prevalent before 9/11. Daalder and Lindsay write that the terrorist attacks compelled the administration to devote a considerable amount of time to the Israel-Palestine conflict after it had been mostly absent during the first eight months in office.[7] Harvard political economist Sara Roy agrees with this assessment as she writes that "Presidents Bush's war on terrorism mandated that the Palestinian problem be solved."[8]

There are academics who consider the policies of the Bush administration as a part of the

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[3] In their work *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics*, Richard Johnston, Michael J. Hagen and Kathleen Hall Jamieson write that the 2000 presidential campaign was focused on domestic politics, such as education, character and social security. Also, the campaign's television advertising focused almost solely on domestic affairs. Richard Johnston, Michael G. Hagen and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 129-130, 132, 137, 140, 141, 145, 158-159, 167, 168, 170; "2000: Bush vs. Gore," *The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2008*, 2008, http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/2000. Phyllis Bennis, *Before and After: U.S. Foreign Policy and the War on Terrorism* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2002), 201.
[4] Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 7, 33.
[5] Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 440, 539.
[6] George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4, 941.
[7] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsey. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005), 2, 13.
[8] Sara Roy, *Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 223.

tradition of spreading America's values throughout the world. This being in the line with America's divine mission to shape the world in America's democratic image.[9] According to these writers, the Bush administration practiced a policy of Wilsonianism. Philip H. Gordon writes that President Bush was striving to "reshape the Middle East," as well as holding a "vision of a recognized Palestinian state."[10] Douglas Little sees the role of the United States with regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict as that of a force for peace, while the Israelis and Palestinians were the primary obstacles for attaining a viable settlement.[11] This view is also proclaimed by former diplomats such as Dennis Ross who writes that Bush "was serious about promoting peace."[12]

Critics of American foreign policy have challenged these ideas of selflessness and noble intentions. Instead, they argue that the goals are based on domination and power politics. Chalmers Johnson describes the United States more as an informal empire. In this theory, the United States is not selflessly helping the world, but intervening for selfish reasons. These theories regard the foreign policy of the United States harming other countries and often write from the perspective of the people who are on the receiving end of American power. They often portray Bush's unilateral policies as an America that is acting in an imperial fashion. Andrew Bacevich even considers the United States a new Rome.[13]

According to these critics of the Bush administration's handling of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the American effort for a revival of the peace process through the Road Map was incomplete. Also, these critics of American foreign policy see the continued American military, economic and diplomatic support for Israel as fundamentally unhelpful for solving the conflict since it has created an imbalance of power.[14]

According to Daalder and Lindsay, the focus of the president was on "power and resolve" in which he would use military means to reach his goals. Therefore, Harvard specialist on international

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[9] John Winthrop's notion of "a city upon a hill" has gone through various incarnations such as Manifest Destiny. George W. Bush would focus on the spread of freedom and democracy. Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean, *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 260, 262-264.

[10] Philip H. Gordon, "Bush's Middle East Vision," *Survival* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 155, 159.

[11] Regarding the foreign policy of the Bush administration, it is seen by some as the return of Wilsonian idealism with wanting to change matters dramatically. Little, *American Orientalism*, 305. David M. Kennedy, "What 'W' Owes to 'WW,'" *Atlantic Monthly* 295, no. 2 (March 2005): 36-40;

[12] Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 792.

[13] Campbell and Kean, *American Cultural Studies*, 261, 267, 274-276. Examples of this school of thought are; Andrew Ross and Kristen Ross, eds., *Anti-Americanism* (New York University Press, 2004). Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (London: Time-Warner, 2002). Johnson describes empire as the projection of American military power. John Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World* (London, Verso, 2003).

[14] Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 137. Tanya Reinhart, *The Roadmap to Nowhere: Israel/Palestine Since 2003* (London: Verso, 2006), 12-13. Naseer H. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker: The U.S. Role in Israel and Palestine* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2003). Edward W. Said, *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (London: Granta Publications, 2002), 384-385. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 201-202, 204, 208. Other critical scholars like political scientists John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt focus on realpolitik and assert that "U.S. and Israeli rhetoric became similar" with regards to the responses to terrorism.

relations Stanley Hoffman's description of the confrontational policy of the Bush administration as "Wilsonianism in boots" seems correct. Yet, it is essential to understand that American foreign policy is not monolithic. Notions of just selflessness or empire are too simplistic since they exclude other factors, such as political realities before and after the 9/11 attacks. However, due to its enormous scope, power and influence, America can be regarded as an empire. Still, one explanation of American foreign policy is insufficient to understand the actions of the Bush administration. While Wilsonian idealism was an important element that was often used by the president in speeches and the focus on Palestinian elections, the Bush administration also tried to further extend its influence in the Middle East and expand its military power by means of preemptive war, which means to deal with a perceived threat. As part of Bush's war on terrorism, the preferred option was to have a solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict in order to focus on their priorities such as Afghanistan and Iraq.[15]

Since this thesis examines a relatively recent period there is no abundance of academic books. There are some useful academic and journalistic accounts on the Bush administration and its policies; Daalder and Lindsay's *America Unbound* provides an excellent overview of Bush policies before and after the 9/11 attacks and analyzes the motivations of the president as he pursued his war on terrorism, as well as the differences of opinion in his war cabinet. The volume *Power Trip*, edited by John Feffer, offers a critical view towards the Bush administration on various topics, including the war on terrorism and the policies directed towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. In her work *Before & After*, Phyllis Bennis provides another critical account.[16]

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[15] That American foreign policy is not monolithic is crucial. The Bush administration's policies on the Israel-Palestine conflict were even confusing at certain times. Bush displayed a critical stance towards Sharon's government at several times and repeatedly called for the creation of a Palestinian state. This is also shown through the disagreements that the United States and the Israeli government had in the months after 9/11. A very serious disagreement was about the implementation of Sharon's plan of disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005. At that time the United States used its influence to force its implementation. Also, the ideological differences within the administration between pragmatists and ideological hardliners will be addressed. The radical shift in foreign policy as described by Daalder and Lindsay, resulted in a hard-line approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict in which a solution was welcomed, but not required. As for solving the conflict, the United States was primarily focused on the war on terrorism after the 9/11 attacks, which meant that the ideal situation would be for the Israel-Palestine conflict to be quiet, sidelined or resolved. The ideological rhetoric of bringing democracy to the Middle East and the creation of a viable Palestinian state was clouded by an unbalanced policy from Washington. Daalder and Lindsey. *America Unbound*, 15-16. Stanley Hoffman quoted in Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 944. Ivo H. Daalder, "American Empire, Not 'If' but 'What Kind,'" *Brookings Institution*, 10 May 2003, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2003/0510iraq_daalder.aspx.

[16] Of these academic works, the academic account by Daalder and Lindsay is the most comprehensive and thorough. In *America Unbound*, the Israel-Palestine conflict is mentioned occasionally, but their analysis of the Bush administration's ideas, policies and unilateralism is invaluable. Daalder and Lindsey. *America Unbound*. John Feffer, ed., *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003). Phyllis Bennis, *Before and After: U.S. Foreign Policy and the War on Terrorism* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2002). Important journalistic accounts include the works by Bob Woodwards, Robert Fisk, James Mann and Mark Matthews. George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 995. In his bibliographical essay on the Bush administration, Herring writes that Woodward's account became increasingly critical towards the Bush administration. Bob Woodward, *Bush in Oorlog* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2003). Bob Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2003). Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (London: Pocket Books, 2007). Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East* (London: Harper

In order to present the evidence in a structural manner, the thesis is divided in four chapters. The first chapter will briefly discuss the legacy left by Bush's predecessor, Bill Clinton, on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The core of this chapter is devoted to Bush's foreign policy training by a group of policymakers called the Vulcans and the first eight months in office before the 9/11 attacks. The second chapter will examine the new course in American foreign policy that was taken after the terrorist attacks and the differences of opinion on the Israel-Palestine conflict within the administration. The third chapter will focus on the actual policies that were taken by the Bush administration while the fourth chapter places these actions in the war on terrorism that was enacted after the events of September 11, 2001.

This thesis will examine the foreign policy of the Bush administration with regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict during the years 2001-2006. Here, the differences between the first months of Bush's presidency and the policies enacted after the terrorist attacks will be addressed. This thesis will argue that the events of September 11, 2001 were crucial in pushing the Bush administration towards making an effort on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The conflict was the prime example of the struggle within the administration between the moderates like Colin Powell and the hardliners like Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. The thesis will argue that the relationship between the Bush administration and the Sharon government experienced several disagreements. Also, in the context of the war on terrorism, the Bush administration placed the guilt of the violence almost solely on the Palestinians. The thesis will argue that there was no real coherent policy practiced by the Bush administration on the Israel-Palestine conflict in the years 2001-2006. Instead, it moved back and forth between the pragmatic approach advocated by Colin Powell and hard-line opinions of supporting Sharon. Also, after the 9/11 attacks, the administration again practiced a hands-off policy during the buildup to the Iraq war. As a part of Bush's war on terrorism, the conflict also served as an opportunity to either improve the relations with the Arab world or to improve the image of the United States in the Middle East. By examining the policies, ideas and initiatives of the Bush administration, this thesis hopes to give new insights into the pre- and post-9/11 world. It aims to be a useful addition to the discussion on United States foreign policy with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict before and after September 11, 2001.

Perennial, 2006). Robert Fisk, *The Age of the Warrior: Selected Writings* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008). James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004). Mark Matthews, *The Lost Years: Bush, Sharon and Failure in the Middle East* (New York, Nation Books, 2007).

Chapter 1: The Bush Administration Before 9/11

Introduction

This chapter will examine the policies of the Bush administration with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict in the first eight months in office before the terrorist attacks of September 2001. The final negotiations that Bill Clinton undertook in the summer of 2000 at Camp David will be shortly discussed, followed by an examination of the viewpoints expressed by George W. Bush during the 2000 presidential elections. As a result of poor performances on matters of foreign affairs, Bush was advised by a group of policymakers and intellectuals who went by the name of the Vulcans. The ideological substance of this group and its effects on the new American president and his policies will be addressed. Lastly, the hands-off approach that Bush practiced towards the Israel-Palestine conflict in his first eight months in office will be discussed.

The Collapse of the Oslo Process

Even though this thesis is concerned with the Bush administration, it is essential to discuss the legacy that was left by Bill Clinton. His administration marked a turn in the approach of the United States towards Israel; Clinton did not have to deal with Cold War thinking. He was considered to be more pro-Israel in his policies than his predecessors. Veteran Middle East correspondent Robert Fisk writes that Clinton "was surely *more* pro-Israeli than Truman."[17] In his first year in office, the Oslo Accords were signed. The accords called for a transitional period of five years which would lead to final-status talks on crucial issues like borders, refugees and Jerusalem. Even though Clinton did not have much input in the drafting of its Declaration of Principles since the accords were the result of secret negotiations between Norway, Israelis and Palestinians, he presided over the famous handshake on the White House lawn between then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat on September 13, 1993. The impression was that the Oslo Accords would create a peaceful settlement for the conflict and for most people in the region, the agreement offered hope for an era of peace. The Palestinians accepted many of Israel's demands on retaining a presence in the Occupied Territories. Yet, the Oslo Accords did not improve the situation of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Instead, their economic situation suffered from a combination of Israeli policies and the corruption of the Palestinian Authority. The Israelis ended up controlling even more of Palestinian daily life.[18]

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[17] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 35, 45, 138-139; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 535. Emphasis in original.

[18] Interestingly, the Palestine National Council voted 253-46 that the historical Palestine should be partitioned. This vote happened in November 1988 when the First Intifada was at its peak. The First Intifada also convinced the Israelis that occupation was "unfeasible." The Oslo Accords ended the already fading First Intifada which started in December 1987. For Yasser Arafat, Oslo offered a victory by which his deteriorating status would improve. Laura Zittrain Eisenber and Neil Caplan, "The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process in Historical Perspective," in Ilan Peleg (ed.) *The Middle East Peace Process: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 7-8, 11; William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 2005), 327-330; Fisk, *The Great War*

The Oslo process collapsed in the summer of 2000 at Camp David. In part to save his image after the scandals with Monica Lewinsky, Clinton made a last-ditch attempt to work out a settlement with Yasser Arafat and then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.[19] According to Alexander Moens, Barak made an "unprecedented set of concessions"[20] at Camp David which Arafat declined. Yet, according to various commentators and scholars, this offer would have caused the Palestinian territories to be broken up in cantons which resembled the South African Bantustans. By refusing to accept the proposals, the Palestinian leader received the burden of guilt from both Barak and Clinton, even though White House Arab-Israeli specialist Robert Malley said that both parties were equally responsible.[21]

The failure of the Camp David talks partly contributed to the outbreak of Second Intifada in September 2000. This outburst of protest and violence suggested that the Oslo process had not made life for the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank any better. The violence followed a controversial visit by Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif on Jerusalem on 28 September, 2000. The former Israeli general called the temple Mount "our site" at a time when Palestinians were already showing signs of frustration. The ensuing violence escalated while the American public was getting ready to cast their votes in the 2000 presidential elections.[22]

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for Civilisation, 483; Bennis, *Before and After*, 63-66, 68-70; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 7, 10, 81-84, 167-168; Tanya Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 9-10, 13-16, 17, 18. Roy, *Failing Peace*, 234, 236-237; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 28-29, 31.

[19] Reinhart writes that by this time "the situation was worse than it had ever been." According to Oren, Clinton was raised a Baptist with the childhood message that "God will never forgive you if you don't stand by Israel." Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 16, 19; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 233, 244-245; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 120; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, xii; Bennis, *Before and After*, 74-80, 169; Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 574-575, 578.

[20] Alexander Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush: Values, Strategy and Loyalty* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 107.

[21] Roy describes Barak's offer as "anything but generous." Her assessment is that the Palestinians would be left with "an edifice of autonomy in geographic non-contiguous areas and little more, a reality they could not accept." Roy, *Failing Peace*, 216-217, 233, 245-248; Richard Falk, "Epilogue: Ending the Death Dance," in *Unlocking the Middle East: The Writings of Richard Falk* ed. Jean Allain (Gloucestershire: Arris Books, 2003), 226; Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 179-181, 183-184; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 26-27, 29, 33-38, 44-45, 49, 226-227; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 171, 172-176; Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 285; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 121-124; Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy* (London: Phoenix Paperbacks, 2006), 264, 266-267, 272; Little, *American Orientalism*, 304; Jeremy Pressman, "The Second Intifada: Background and Causes of the Israel-Palestine Conflict," *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, Fall 2003, http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS/Fall03/pressman.pdf.

[22] Barak had made the Temple Mount part of the Camp David negotiations. He wanted Israeli sovereignty over the entire site, which was an entirely new claim by the Israeli government. When Sharon arrived at the Temple mount, 200 Palestinians "squatted to deny him entry," only to be dispersed by means of batons and rifles. One of the conclusions of the Mitchell rapport of May 2001 was that the Sharon visit did not cause the intifada, but that "it was poorly timed and the provocative effect should have been foreseen." It did provide the spark. Within two years, 2,000 Palestinians and 700 Israelis were killed. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 11, 167, 179, 184, 186. Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 9, 88, 92-93, 94, 95-97, 98-99, 100, 104-105, 110, 113-114, 115. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 107; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 215, 218, 219, 234, 295; Sara Roy, "Decline and Disfigurement: The Palestinian Economy After Oslo," in Roane Carey *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (London: Verso, 2001), 91, 93-94, 95, 98, 103-104; Bennis, *Before and After*, 57, 80-81; Mouin Rabbani, "A Smorgasbord of Failure: Oslo and the Al-Aqsa Intifada," in Roane Carey *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid*

In the end, Clinton's legacy was one of prolonged engagement in the Israel-Palestine conflict which produced little result. At first, there were high hopes with the signing of the Oslo Accords, but this process only created a worse situation in the Occupied Territories. At the end of Clinton's presidency, the Israelis and Palestinians were engulfed in a new cycle of violence and the possibility of a solution seemed impossible.[23]

Election 2000

The American presidential elections were held during the time when violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians escalated, but virtually no attention was given to the conflict during the political campaign. Through a heavily contested election in which he won by a majority of electoral votes, but not the majority, Bush became president of the United States.[24]

Both the Democrat and Republican campaigns focused mostly on domestic affairs. Bush did not make American foreign policy center stage. Instead, he focused on domestic affairs such as tax cuts and education and describing himself as a 'compassionate conservative.' Still, during the campaign Bush did outline his foreign policy program; this was characterized by a form of unilateralism in which 'peace through strength' was the motto and where the United States would not be constrained by international organizations. His presidency would be different from Clinton's, who was seen by the Republicans as not having his priorities in the right order. Bush promised that he would not force the United States into any "foreign engagements" like Clinton had done in Somalia. Bush said he wanted clear priorities in American foreign policy, but never went into details beyond stating ideas and aspirations to the voters.[25] He called for "a more humble foreign policy" in which neither nation-building nor peacekeeping would play a significant role.[26]

(London: Verso, 2001), 77, 83, 85; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 373; Stephen Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 132; Falk, "Epilogue," 227; Edward W. Said, "Palestinians Under Siege," in Roane Carey *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (London: Verso, 2001), 27; Glenn E. Robinson, "The Peace of the Powerful," in Roane Carey *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (London: Verso, 2001), 111;

[23] Roy, *Failing Peace*, 234, 236-237. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 377-381.

[24] After 36 days of partisan and legal struggle over the vote count in Florida, the Supreme Court decided, by a vote of 5 to 4, that the Republican candidate was now President-elect. It was one of the closest elections ever held in the history of the United States. The American population was skeptical of the newly elected president. The voter turnout had been around 50 percent and 42 percent of Americans believed that Bush did not have the qualifications to act in a foreign policy crisis. Jeffrey Toobin, *Too Close to Call: The Thirty-Six Day Battle to Decide the 2000 Election* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2002), 281-282; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 385; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 49; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 260; L. Sandy Maisel, *American Political Parties and Elections: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10, 16, 21, 23, 110, 136, 138.

[25] In some instances, Bush's ideas could have been mistaken as displaying an isolationist view of American foreign policy. "2000: Bush vs. Gore," *The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2008*, 2008, http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/2000; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 386; Eric Alterman and Mark Green, *The Book on Bush: How George W. (Mis)Leads America* (New York: Viking, 2004), 1; Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 87; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 36-37, 47-48; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 10.

[26] Bush's apparent lack of knowledge on foreign policy and inexperience in travelling abroad pointed towards an isolationist approach. Daalder and Lindsay argue that the revolution in a unilateral foreign policy did not begin

The Israel-Palestine conflict was hardly discussed the 2000 presidential campaign, but it was occasionally mentioned. During the campaign, Bush had said that he would promote peace, "based upon a secure Israel."[27] According to Edward Said, the famous Palestinian-American scholar and author of the classic work *Orientalism*, the Democratic candidate Al Gore was uncompromisingly pro-Israel and in his view, Bush "would be only slightly less pro-Israeli than Gore."[28]

Bush's eventual electoral victory over Gore was welcomed in the Arab world. Bush had promised a more moderate policy towards the region and he was the son of George H.W. Bush, who had been critical of the Israeli government during his term as president. The Gore campaign had been given a mixed reception from Arab Americans due to the Clinton administration's warm relations with Israel.[29]

Bush's experiences with the actual Middle East were slim. As governor of Texas, Bush had made one trip to Israel in November 1998. Then-Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon invited the governor from Texas for a helicopter tour. The two men seemed to enjoy a good relationship and saw the world in similar ways; both saw the world in terms of black and white.[30]

In all, the 2000 presidential elections were focused on domestic affairs. Bush did make clear that he would be different from Clinton and would not have the United States get entangled in all kinds of ventures abroad. He made clear that America would not be constrained by international organizations.

The Vulcans and Bush's Foreign Policy Training

During the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush was also trained by policymakers on foreign policy issues. These instructions were crucial for his mindset and actions. In November 1999, Bush did an interview with journalist Andy Heller on the station WHDH-TV. This interview provided material for

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with the events of 11 September, but were already outlined by Bush in the campaign for president. George W. Bush quoted in: Bennis, *Before and After*, 1, 3. Also: John Feffer, "Introduction," in *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 14. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 12.

[27] Bush also stated that the United Nations sanctions against Iraq should be "tougher." This, even though hundreds of thousands had already died as a result. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 38. Also: 41.

[28] Said, "Palestinians Under Siege," 40. Also: Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 139.

[29] Not much was to be expected of the new Republican president on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Bush did repeat Clinton by promising that the United States would move their embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In office, both Clinton and Bush kept holding back the decision to move the U.S. embassy, presumably fearing a negative reaction of the Arab states. Bush did focus on the Arab vote during the campaign. Bush pursued the endorsements of Arabs and he could build on the fact that his father had played hardball with the Israeli state. Unger does go too far when suggesting that Bush was "the Arabian Candidate." A Gallup Poll taken in October 2000 showed that 43% of the American people were convinced that Bush could handle the situation involving both Israel and the Palestinians. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 143-144, 196; Craig Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud: The Hidden Relationship Between the World's Two Most Powerful Dynasties* (London: Gibson Square Books, 2004), 209, 212, 214-215; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 386; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 257; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 9-10, 73-75; Frank Newport, "Presidential Race Close as Final Debate Nears," *Gallup*, 17 October 2000, http://www.gallup.com/poll/2428/Presidential-Race-Close-Final-Debate-Nears.aspx.

[30] Bush gave religious reasons for his three-day visit of politics and tourism visit. Apparently, Sharon undertook helicopter tours with foreign visitors more than once. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20-21, 22, 23. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 107-108. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 202.

ridicule since the Republican candidate could not name the leaders of Pakistan, Chechnya, Taiwan and India. That Bush was inexperienced was true; before his presidential run, he had shown little interest in foreign affairs and was distrustful of diplomacy. Therefore, in the 2000 campaign he consistently pointed out that he had a well-experienced group of advisors. Bush was no "dunce" and capable of grasping new insights.[31] According to Matthews, Bush had a "quick grasp of issues and deep faith in his own instincts."[32]

Bush was instructed and trained on foreign policy issues by the group who called themselves the Vulcans, after the Roman god of fire. This group of foreign policy advisors included Condoleezza Rice, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Armitage, Stephen Hadley, Richard Perle and Robert Zoellick. James Mann, author of *Rise of the Vulcans*, also places veteran policymakers Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell within this group. Even though Bush would also be in touch with his father, Henry Kissinger and George Shultz on foreign policy matters, the Vulcans were his main advisors in foreign relations. the lessons Bush learned from his advisors prompted him to undertake a more confrontational approach in American foreign relations. The Vulcans were internationalist, pro-free trade hardliners and part of the military generation of American foreign policy. Nearly all members of Bush advisors on foreign policy had worked at the Department of Defense or in the Chiefs of Staff. In the campaign Bush signaled that he aimed for a reforming of the United States military. Mann writes that the Vulcans represented the generation of policymakers and ideologues who strove to recover and rebuild the United States armed forces after the Vietnam War and wanted to create a coherent foreign policy after the end of the Cold War. Many Vulcans had been policymakers and were genuinely afraid of a possible loss of American power. While the Vulcans were genuinely convinced of the importance of American military power, there were differences between the members of the team of advisors. These differences, especially between the more hawkish, hard-line group consisting of Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz and the more dovish and pragmatist Powell and Armitage, would have serious implications for the Bush administration's handling of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Mann writes that the concept "dove" within the Vulcans was relative. While Powell and Armitage were

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[31] The host of the program attempted to show that the son of George H. W. Bush, who was widely regarded an expert on foreign policy and international relations, was inexperienced on the issue. Commentators ridiculed the Texas governor for his apparent lack of knowledge of foreign affairs. This was only encouraged when Bush, in the Spring of 2000, did not seem to know who the Taliban were. Bush would later say that this "is a big world and I've got a lot to learn." Daalder and Lindsay also point out that he was not the first American president who never tested in the realm of foreign policy. Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, all formerly governors, never had experience with foreign policy. Still, Bush was lacked certain credentials these former presidents had, such as long political careers and high intelligence that the Texan governor appeared to lack. Clinton, according to Daalder and Lindsay, "oozed smarts." Matthews writes that "Bush tended to get impatient with complexity and diplomatic nuance." Glen Johnson, "Bush Fails Quiz on Foreign Affairs," *Washington Post*, 4 November 1999, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/19991104/aponline181051_000.htm; David Corn, "Bush Gets and F in Foreign Affairs," *Salon*, 5 November 1999, http://www.salon.com/news/feature/1999/11/05/bush; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, ix, 255; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 17-21; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 51, 73.
[32] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 73.

doves within the group, they shared many aspects of Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz.[33]

According to Daalder and Lindsay, many of the Vulcans can be labeled as being hegemonist. The authors discern five reasons why members of the Bush administration had elements of hegemonic thinking. First of all, their view of the world was black and white, with dangerous element lurking to destroy America. Also, they are willing to use America's power and dislike international institutions. Lastly, they see America as a unique power in the world.[34]

Of his team of foreign policy advisors, Rice would serve as Bush's National Security Advisor and Wolfowitz would become deputy secretary of Defense under Donald Rumsfeld. Bush would choose Colin Powell to become his Secretary of State, with Richard Armitage as his deputy secretary of state. According to Bob Woodward, Powell gave Bush a more moderate look in the world, even though he did not share the opinions of the new president. Yet, the relationship between the two men remained cool in the first months. During the 2000 campaign he rarely appeared in public with Bush. In the administration Powell was isolated, as he opposed the more hawkish members such as Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz. Powell felt that both Madeleine Albright and Bill Clinton had been too desperate and naïve in trying to solve problems in the Middle East. The Bush administration was divided between hawks and doves.[35] Powell complained in 2002 that hardliners like Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were constantly "dip-sticking" him.[36] In his administration, Bush viewed himself as a CEO president in which he was the dominating factor. As president of the United States he would be pursuing a policy of "pushing the world where Washington wanted it to go."[37]

In all, Bush assembled a "seasoned, well-experienced team" which consisted of individuals

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[33] The statue of Vulcan stood in Condoleezza Rice's hometown of Birmingham where the Vulcans had met. Mann describes their infighting as that of a "feuding family." Cheney was "determinedly conservative and proud of it." Powell, through his experiences in Vietnam was "reluctant to use military force," but nevertheless took charge of the military intervention in Panama in 1989. Several Vulcans, like Paul Wolfowitz expressed an ideal of democracy promotion. The Vulcans' fear of the decline of American power was further fueled by Paul Kennedy's 1987 book called *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. After the Cold War Paul Wolfowitz took part in framing a new strategy for American foreign policy. This new strategy will be discussed in chapter two where the strategies developed in the 1990s will be reviewed in light of the revolution in foreign policy after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The general expectation that Bush would emulate his father and his methods of foreign policy turned out to be not the case. According to Daalder and Lindsay, especially Vulcan members Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle were proud that they were hawks. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, ix-x, xi-xii, xiv, xv-xvi-xvii, 52-53, 54, 63, 89, 93, 120-121, 136-137, 138-139, 151, 160-164, 179-180, 182, 196, 198-199, 246-247, 248-257, 256, 274, 322-323; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 21-31; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 7; Michael T. Klare, "The Policies: Resources," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 55; William D. Hartung, "The Policies: Military," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 61.
[34] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 40-47.
[35] Interestingly, a number of the Vulcans were passed over when Bush formed his cabinet. Rice and Wolfowitz were Bush's principal advisors from 1998. Rice was closest to Bush and was one of the critics of the policies of the Clinton administration. Bush met her at Stanford University in 1998. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 30, 50, 54-57, 130-131; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 146-148, 171-172, 248-252, 264-267, 269-270, 275. Woodward, *Bush in Oorlog*, 25-26; Patrick Tyler, *A World of Trouble: America in the Middle East* (London: Portobello Books, 2009), 515; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 386; Bennis, *Before and After*, 4-6.
[36] Colin Powell quoted in: Todd S. Purdum, "Embattled, Scrutinized, Powell Soldiers On," *New York Times*, 25 July 2002, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/25/international/25POWE.html?pagewanted=1.
[37] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 31, 32, 46, 72.

who had "nothing but contempt" for Clintonian visions of multilateralism, peacekeeping and conflict prevention.[38] *New York Times* journalist Patrick Tyler writes that this new team understood that the Middle East was "complex and treacherous and its tentacles intruded into domestic politics."[39] The ideas and theories of the Vulcans of a more aggressive American foreign policy, taken together with the failure of diplomacy at Camp David and the election of hardliner Ariel Sharon into power in Israel in February 2001, suggested a new American policy for the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine conflict in which peace initiatives would receive little attention.[40]

In Office the First Eight Months

Ironically, while there was much skepticism and criticism of Bush's abilities on foreign policy when he entered office, it would become his main focus in his presidency. According to Daalder and Lindsay, Bush had more going for him; he had solid ideas on leadership, experience in the White House when his father was president and he had a solid foreign policy team of experienced policymakers.[41]

The first eight months of the Bush administration were not reminiscent of the engaging, multilateral strategy that was evident during the time that Bill Clinton was in the White House. Instead, it showed a unilateralist course in which his goal was to get the United States out of already signed accords, such as the Kyoto Protocols and the International Criminal Court (ICC).[42] Bennis writes that the Bush administration was pursuing "an aggressive brand of unilateralism, characterized

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[38] First quote: Bennis, *Before and After*, 4. Second quote: Tom Barry and Jim Lobe, "The People," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 41, 48.

[39] Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 515; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 274.

[40] Several of Bush's staff, including Rumsfeld and Cheney signed the letters of the Project for a New American Century and had already advocated preemptive action, such as against Iraq. Bush's national security team consisted of conservative Republicans who were more Reaganite than reminiscent of the first Bush administration. Their subordinates, among them people like Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, were termed neoconservatives. These ideologues were considered radical since they talked of American dominance next to balance of power. With regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict, the neoconservatives generally made light of the situation. They also had ideas on regime changes in the Middle East that came to define Bush's foreign policy. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 386, 387-388; Barry and Lobe, "The People," 42-47; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 1150; Robert Fisk, "The Wind from the East," in *The Age of the Warrior: Selected Writings* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008), 53; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 238; Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud*, 194-195, 211; "Statement of Principles," *Project for the New American Century*, 3 June 1997, http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm.

[41] The "intellectual lightweight and Texas good ol' boy" was regularly mocked by a variety of political and satirical critics. Bennis, *Before and After*, 3. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 31-32, 49-50, 55. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 72; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 386-387; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 277.

[42] These actions resulted that the United States received much criticism from all over the world. Bush was especially critical towards the ICC, stating he would never allow Americans to be tried by the international judicial body. This showed that he was unwilling to make compromises in international affairs. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 63, 64-65, 70-71, 188-189; Feffer, "Introduction," 14; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 286, 287; Bennis, *Before and After*, 10-11. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 115; Tom Barry, "How Things Have Changed," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 29; Edward W. Said, *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (London: Granta Publications, 2002), 386. Barry and Lobe, "The People," 41; Hartung, "The Policies: Military," 78-80, 83; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and*, 226.

by disdain for global opinion and contempt for international law and institutions."[43] Even before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States was on a unilateralist path. Thomas Friedman, columnist for the *New York Times*, wrote in July 2001 that America was regarded as a rogue state by much of Europe.[44]

Bush inherited a difficult situation on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after Clinton. Yet, the conflict did not receive much attention from the new American government. Already in his first month in office, Bush made clear that he was not interested in dealing with this issue, even while the violence of the Second Intifada was escalating. Bush was not prepared or willing to throw away his political capital on endless negotiations. The basic policy of the Bush administration was ABC – Anything But Clinton. This was a good sign for Ariel Sharon, who was aiming to become the Israeli Prime Minister and was not at all interested in negotiations with Arafat and the Palestinian Authority.[45]

Middle East expert William B. Quandt writes that most administrations do review the options for the Middle East and he writes that the Bush administration was no exception. Bush met with the National Security Council on January 30, 2001. Here, he made clear that his administration would be taking a step back on the issue of peace negotiations. In Bush's mind, Clinton had overreached his possibilities and the United States could not force the two sides to the negotiating table. Bush basically thought that it was time to pull out. His initial thoughts of the conflict were giving the Israelis the benefit of the doubt.[46]

Even the pragmatic Powell reflected the standoffish position of the entire Bush administration when he said that "in the end, we cannot want peace more than the parties themselves."[47] The words

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[43] Bennis, *Before and After*, 1.

[44] Thomas Friedman, "Foreign Affairs; Noblesse Oblige," *New York Times*, 31 July 2001, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/31/opinion/foreign-affairs-noblesse-oblige.html?pagewanted=1.

[45] As a result of the failures of the Oslo Agreements, the failed negotiations at Camp David in the summer of 2000 and increasing violence between both parties, hopes for a solution were slim. Shlomo Ben-Ami writes that negotiators on both sides thought, and perhaps hoped, that the new American president would be the same as his father. Instead, George W. Bush turned out to be, in Ben-Ami's words, "an updated Reagan." Daalder and Lindsay also point out that the Israel-Palestine conflict was not the only one the Bush administration abandoned since there was also less attention towards the conflicts in Northern Ireland and in Colombia. According to Tyler, Bush remarked that he would be "unlike" his father with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Tyler writes that Bush "expressed a near total disdain for the Middle East peace process." Talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians continued in Taba, Egypt, but achieved no positive results for the conflict. Where Clinton had been actively involved from the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 up to the failure at Camp David in 2000, Bush would not even send an envoy to the peace talks in Taba. He also scrapped the post that Middle East envoy Dennis Ross had occupied for over eight years. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 107; Bennis, *Before and After*, 201; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 65, 66; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 418; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, xv-xvi, 78-79; Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud*, 234-235; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 12-13, 516-517, 519; Rabbani, "A Smorgasbord of Failure," 84; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 576-577; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 273-277, 279, 290-291; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 209-216, 219; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 324; Zittrain Eisenber and Caplan, "The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process in Historical Perspective," 8;

[46] Bush even suggested that increasing aggression from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) could be the best way to achieve balance. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 389-390.

[47] Powell's view of Ariel Sharon were that he was a "bull elephant," who "hated Arafat," and "probably hated the Palestinians and the Arabs." Colin Powell quoted in: Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 65. Also: Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 518. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 85.

'Middle East Peace Process' were rarely said, either by the president or his staff. Powell even issued a directive to his staff at the State Department that they would talk of 'peace negotiations,' but not of a 'peace process.' This diminished the importance of the Israel-Palestine conflict.[48] On the whole, Powell said that the United States would "assist but not insist"[49] negotiations. Overall, Middle East scholar and critic of American foreign policy Stephen Zunes writes that the Bush administration made contradictory statements regarding the conflict while the premise was that the Israelis and Palestinians should work out their problems by themselves.[50]

According to Bennis, Bush "continued to keep the US out of serious Israel-Palestine negotiations," while the United States at the same time supporting the Israelis with $4 billion in military and economic aid.[51]

Significant for the relations between the United States, Israel and the Palestinians was the election of Likud candidate Ariel Sharon into office on February 6, 2001. The new Israeli Prime Minister had a long and infamous military career and was notorious for his military record, including the massacres in the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps during the war in Lebanon in 1982. In public life, he was a founding member of the rightwing party Likud. Sharon's hard-line approach was evident from the start; in March 2001, his cabinet was already openly discussing the toppling of Yasser Arafat, as well as the takeover of the Occupied Territories. Sharon felt that the Israelis should fight over land and could break Palestinian resistance. Because of his uncompromising attitude and violent history, Sharon was not always highly regarded in the White House. Therefore, he changed his image and pursued warm relations by portraying himself as being interested in peace through security.[52]

According to Tanya Reinhart, Sharon had in common with his predecessor Ehud Barak that both men opposed the Oslo agreements and thought that a viable peace with the Palestinians was impossible. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States, he would announce on October 2001 that "Oslo is over."[53] Sharon's election campaign focused on "security first, peace negotiations

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[48] The reasoning for disentangling themselves from the peace process was based on the notion that they could do no better than Bush's predecessor. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 392; Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 107; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 79; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 198; Little, *American Orientalism*, 7.

[49] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 198.

[50] Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 136.

[51] Bennis, *Before and After*, 81, 201.

[52] Sharon had joined the Haganah and became one of the top commanders in the IDF. Sharon had always dealt with Arabs through brute force. Former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft had said that Sharon was "a milestone around our Neck." Ben-Ami, Foreign Minister under Ehud Barak writes that both Arafat and Sharon "were the embodiment of an archaic political orthodoxy devoid of a vision of the future." Ben-Ami writes that the "support for Sharon was always the result of the hopelessness and despair he himself had generated." Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 132; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 137, 188-197; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 43-45, 47-48, 50, 77. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 391; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 518; Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 107; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 285, 286, 289-290.

[53] Ariel Sharon quoted in: Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 78, 82, 87, *129*. Also: Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 167; Little, *American Orientalism*, 114; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 50, 51. Noam Chomsky and Gilbert Achcar, *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), 173.

second."[54] Sharon said that he was congratulated by Bush and that the president had offered unwavering support for Israel.[55]

In March 2001, Sharon visited the White House for the first time. In this meeting Bush expressed great enthusiasm for both Israel and Sharon. The two men apparently had a bond between them and loathed Arafat. Sharon pressed upon Bush that terrorism was the greatest threat warned against meeting Arafat at the White House. In Sharon's mind, terrorism needed to be rooted out and Arafat was the main target. Bush gave a positive response to Sharon's ideas, saying that he fully understood his position. Sharon was convinced that Bush was more an admirer of Israel than his father.[56] Bush's stance towards the conflict was plain and simple when he said that the "signal I'm sending to the Palestinians is to stop the violence."[57]

On March 27, the United States vetoed a Security Council Resolution that would have considered an unarmed observation force into the West Bank and Gaza with the specific goal of protecting civilians. The same month, Powell affirmed the unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel in a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and told the pro-Israeli lobby group that pressure from the United States towards the Jewish state had been ruled out.[58] According to Tyler, Bush "spoke with a ferocious enthusiasm for the Jewish state" and even said that he "would use force to protect Israel."[59]

Stephen Zunes writes that the Bush administration merely issued mild statements regarding Israel's use of targeted killing and on the other hand strongly condemned Palestinian terror. Vice-president Cheney was one of the hard-line officials who considered these targeted killings in some instances as justified.[60]

The Bush administration further demonstrated its unwillingness to get seriously involved in a peace process by refusing to work with Yasser Arafat. The Palestinian leader did not enjoy Washington's confidence and the Palestinians were being held responsible for the violence by the Bush administration. The failure of the 2000 Camp David meetings was universally blamed on the

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[54] Zunes writes that after Sharon was elected, the human rights standard worsened. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 107. Also: Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 52-53, 78; Ghassan Andoni, "A Comparative Study of Intifada 1987 and Intifada 2000," in Roane Carey *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (London: Verso, 2001), 213; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 27.

[55] Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 517. Sharon also said that it reminded him of the 1998 visit of then-Governor Bush to Israel. Tyler writes that in 1998 Sharon had "imprinted on Bush the visual justification for the 'activist' or militarist instinct in Israeli policy."

[56] According to Moens, the Israeli choice for Sharon had "given him a clear mandate which Bush decided he would respect." Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 108; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 196; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 517, 518; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 95, 96-97.

[57] George W. Bush quoted in: Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 521.

[58] Bush merely followed the Clinton administration which had abstained in October 2000 when the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution condemning Israel's use of violence. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 180-181, 198, 199-200; Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, 587; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 97; Abunimah and Ibish, "The US Media and the New Intifada," 235.

[59] Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 518.

[60] Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 27-28; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 516-517, 521; Bennis, *Before and After*, 201.

Palestinian leader by both the Americans and Israelis.[61]

The condemnation towards Arafat was taken over by the Bush administration from Clinton, who was enraged at the Palestinian leader. On January 20, 2001, Clinton repeatedly spoke to both Bush and Cheney on failure of Camp David and voiced his disappointment with Arafat. Clinton conveyed the image that he was untrustworthy and difficult to deal with. This effects were that the already existing skepticism of the Bush administration towards dealing with Arafat increased. Despite his remarks, Clinton did hope that the new president would continue the diplomatic efforts.[62] Yet, in a telephone call with Powell, Clinton even called the ageing Palestinian leader "worthless" and "a goddamned liar."[63]

While Powell agreed with Clinton on Arafat, he still saw a possibility for a Palestinian state with a symbolic role for him. Unlike Sharon, Arafat was not on the list of people the American president would meet at the White House. Cheney and Rumsfeld, who were the hard-line members of the administration, even pressed upon the president that talking with Arafat would be a waste of time. In the first eight months in office, the Palestinians were mostly condemned for the violence by the Bush administration. Especially Arafat remained the main target for scrutiny and criticism until his death in November 2004.[64]

Bush made several trips to the Middle East in the first months in office in which he tried to engage the Arab leaders in the peace process, but did not have the diplomatic skills of George H. W. Bush. These 'cursory' attempts did not achieve results. Powell also made a trip to the Middle East in which he met both Sharon and Arafat and pressed for a cease-fire. Overall, the Bush administration practiced a policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict that Bennis describes as disengagement.[65]

Bush did accept the Mitchell Commission report in April 2001. The report suggested a road map scenario which could revitalize the framework of Oslo. However, Bush did not make a public speech on the report. He wanted Powell to give the speech, which indicates that the president was not very much interested. On the hawkish side of the Bush administration, Cheney already expressed low

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[61] The feelings towards Arafat were also due to the fact that he had supported Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War undertaken by Bush's father. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 107; Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud*, 234; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 198-199; Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 285. Abunimah and Ibish, "The US Media and the New Intifada," 233-254. Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 124-125, 137; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 469.

[62] Clinton had said to the Palestinian leader that "I am a failure, and you have made me one." Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 75-76, 80; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 388; Ron Pundak, "From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?" *The Peres Centre for Peace*, June 2001, http://www.peres-center.org/Media/from%20oslo%20to%20taba.pdf.

[63] Bill Clinton quoted in: Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 514-515, 522.

[64] Todd S. Purdum, "Embattled, Scrutinized, Powell Soldiers On," *New York Times*, 25 July 2002, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/25/international/25POWE.html?pagewanted=1; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 515, 519, 521. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 199; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 141; Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 108.

[65] Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 108; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 518-519; Bennis, *Before and After*, 81, 201; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 391.

expectations of successful negotiations.[66] The attitude of the Bush administration towards Israel before the attacks of September 11 was clear to Bennis; during the first eight months Israel had to be immune from international criticism, but "slid out of first place" as the Bush administration was not very much concerned with the conflict.[67]

The hands-off policy angered many of the Arab states, including America's key ally and oil supplier Saudi Arabia. The Saudi royals had hoped that George W. Bush would be like his father, but considered his stance as being too pro-Israel. The popularity of the American president had decreased rapidly as he appeared to be too close to Ariel Sharon in the eyes of the Saudi royals. Secretary of State Powell had received numerous calls from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries that were disappointed with the hands-off approach of the Bush administration with regard to the conflict. According to journalist Craig Unger, "Bush's standing in the House of Saud plummeted."[68]

Even though the State Department as far back as 1975 had acknowledged that the conflict was at the heart of the problems in the Middle East, the Bush administration did not treat it as such in the first eight months in office.[69] Bush's predictions of a humble nation in foreign were put into practice by a hands-off approach on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Bush administration made contradictory statements on the conflict and were convinced that the Israelis and Palestinians should work out their problems by themselves. America would no longer be a mediator on the conflict.

Conclusion

The Bush administration was not very much concerned with developing the peace-process. Bush's policy, which had its roots in the ideology of the Vulcans, was not concerned with diplomacy and multilateral actions. The diplomatic failures of the Clinton administration were taken as proof that this

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[66] George Mitchell, a respected diplomat with achievements in Northern Ireland had undertaken an investigation after being appointed by Clinton when the Second Intifada broke out in September 2000. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 76, 90, 103-104, 107, 110; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 391-392; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 181, 182-184; Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 108; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 137-138; Little, *American Orientalism*, 304-305.

[67] Bennis, *Before and After*, 201.

[68] There was an incident where the Saudi royals tried to force Bush into a more engaging approach on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Crown Prince Abdullah had apparently seen how an Israeli soldier mistreated an elderly Palestinian woman on TV. When he then heard that Bush was defending Israel's right to defend itself, he was furious. Prince Bandar bin Sultan was ordered to give blunt statement to the Bush administration in which the Saudis would rethink their relationship with the United States. Bush apparently took this threat seriously and decided to give a speech to the United Nations on the issue. He did make a statement regarding the Palestinians' right to self-determination and also wrote a letter to the Crown Prince. The final draft of the speech to the United Nations was originally intended to be discussed on September 11, 2001 if it were not delayed due to a trip to Peru by Powell. Daalder and Lindsay also point out that Bush did not give George Tenet enough support "to make any significant progress in bringing the Israelis and Palestinians together." After 9/11, the Bush administration would undertake a diplomatic offensive to engage the Arab world. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 65; Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud*, 235, 241-245. Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 522-526; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 112; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 392; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 45-47, 75-77. For an interesting look into the dependency on Saudi Arabia's oil, see: Robert Baer, *Sleeping With the Devil: How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2003).

[69] Donald Neff, *Fallen Pillars: U.S. Policy towards Palestine and Israel since 1945* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 1.

approach did not work, as well as the belief that the Palestinian Authority was not ready or willing to negotiate a lasting peace with Israel. Clinton's remarks on Arafat only intensified the skepticism that Bush had of the Palestinian leader. The seeds for the new course after the 9/11 attacks were already sown in the first eight months in office. Also, the fact that hard-liner Ariel Sharon was now in power in Israel did not help either in improving the possibilities for negotiations. The criticisms towards the Bush administration's lack of engagement would stop with 9/11. The horrific events of that day brought forth an "un-nuanced approach to using U.S. power"[70] and transformed George W. Bush "who intended to follow a 'humble' foreign policy to a war president intent on bringing fundamental changes to the Middle East region."[71]

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[70] Barry, "How Things Have Changed," 28. Also: Bennis, *Before and After*, 20, 81.
[71] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 423.

Chapter 2: A New Course

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the important changes in American foreign policy after the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001. The new course that was set by the Bush administration, as well as its black and white view of the world will be examined and analyzed. Also, the different ideas within the administration on the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine conflict are discussed.

9/11

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Chief of Staff Andrew Card told George W. Bush that America was under attack. Nineteen hijackers had caused horrific suffering by flying passenger airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Also, one of the airplanes had crashed in Pennsylvania. Around 3.000 people were killed on that day.[72] According to Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean, the attacks "destroyed the sense of relative geographical safety."[73]

In his televised address to the nation the same day, Bush issued a warning to the entire world. He said that his administration would make "no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." Bush's post 9/11 worldview was that one was either supportive of the United States, or against what values the country stood for. Nuance would be difficult to detect in this black and white view. Bush ended his speech with the Wilsonian ideal that "we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world."[74]

After the evens of September 11, Bush became "the most popular American president on record"[75] with approval ratings up to 90 percent. Doubts about his credibility vanished and his administration was in the situation to pursue basically any policy it wanted.[76]

The terrorist attacks made sure that a more humble foreign policy was now irrelevant. The administration could no longer practice a total hands-off approach on the Middle East. Political scientists John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt comment that 9/11 "forced Americans to focus considerable attention on the Arab and Islamic world."[77] Historian and social critic Howard Zinn writes that the "cataclysmic event pushed all other issues into the background."[78] According to critical scholar Naseer H. Aruri, Israel was in the forefront of Bush's war on terrorism. For both the United

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[72] Jason Burke, *Al Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 22; Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, 433; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 1026-1028; Woodward, *Bush in Oorlog*, 28-40.

[73] Campbell and Kean, *American Cultural Studies*, 271.

[74] "Text of Bush's Address," *CNN*, 11 September 2001, http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/bush.speech.text/index.html; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 393.

[75] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 77, 92; John Feffer, "The Response," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 183; Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, 435; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 81.

[76] Bennis, *Before and After*, xv, 161; Hartung, "The Policies: Military," 60; Feffer, "The Response," 173; Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, 583.

[77] Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 201.

[78] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States 1492-Present* (New York, HarperCollins, 2003), 677-678.

States and Israel the enemy was now international terrorism.[79]

Bush gave a speech on September 20, 2001 to a joint session of Congress where he outlined his strategy. The focus was on "*our* plan, *our* strategy."[80] It was clear that the Bush administration would set the rules on the policy that would follow the 9/11 attacks, instead of undertaking a multilateral approach to deal with the threat of terrorism. The speech to Congress provided a broad outline of the war on terrorism in which the Al Qaeda network would be only the beginning.[81]

"Why do they hate us?" asked Bush in the September 20 speech. In Phyllis Bennis' analysis, Bush's 'they' could have meant virtually anyone; 'they' could mean people from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Somalia or Afghanistan. With regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict, she writes, 'they' could also mean Palestinians. In his speech, Bush even stated that 'they' wanted to "drive Israel out of the Middle East."[82]

In all, 9/11 made sure that the Bush administration could no longer practice a hands-off policy to the Middle East. Bush's black and white worldview divided the world into two groups; the forces of good versus the evils of terrorism. This would have an effect on the Bush administration's foreign policy. James Mann, journalist and author of *Rise of the Vulcans*, writes that the Bush team was "determined to do things differently from the past."[83]

The Revolution in American Foreign Policy

While many commentators hoped that the unilateralist course of the first eight months of the Bush administration would be replaced with a multilateral policy, the Bush administration became even more unilateralist in its actions.[84] Chris Patten, European Commissioner of Europe's international relations, even warned in early 2002 that the Bush policies might go in a state of "unilateralist overdrive."[85] Bush was on a unilateral mission to change the world in America's favor.[86]

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[79] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 46, 194-195, 197.

[80] Bennis, *Before and After*, 95-99. Emphasis in original.

[81] According to Roy, Osama Bin Laden also mentioned the conflict and warned that "Americans will not be safe until Palestinians are safe." Michael T. Klare, "The Policies: Resources," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 56; "Transcript of President Bush's Address," *CNN*, 21 September 2001, http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 233.

[82] Also, television images of small groups of Palestinians, some of whom lost their homes or family members due to Israeli violence, dancing and cheering in response to the terrorist attacks against the United States were unhelpful. These were neither appreciated in Washington D.C. nor helpful in providing a positive image of Palestinians. It gave the impression that there were at least some who were celebrating the misery and horror that the American people were going through and would therefore not be on Bush's side. Bennis, *Before and After*, 98; Little, *American Orientalism*, 2; Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Affairs* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 121; "Transcript of President Bush's Address," *CNN*, 21 September 2001, http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 526.

[83] Paul Wolfowitz said that the United States had "entered a new era." Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 297, 300.

[84] Bennis, *Before and After*, xv, 109-110; Hartung, "The Policies: Military," 74-75; Feffer, "The Response," 175; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 297, 303-304, 305.

[85] Chris Patten quoted in: Bennis, *Before and After*, 82.

[86] Woodward quotes Richard Armitage who said that Bush "believes that his role is to change the face of the world." Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 40, 44; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 100.

The Bush administration's new direction in foreign policy came to be defined by a unilateralist undertaking in which the country would act alone if it chose to. The use of preemptive and preventive wars meant that the officials in the Bush administration were convinced that they had the right to intervene when and where it was deemed necessary. These wars were primarily focused on regime change in countries that were perceived as a threat. In order to challenge these rogue states, the United States would form *ad hoc* coalitions of the willing. The policy was rooted in the ideas of the Vulcans and their idea that America should expand its military power to counter any future threat. September 11, 2001 provided a new climate in which these far-reaching ideas of national security and American military dominance could reign free.[87]

The Bush revolution in American foreign policy was not primarily the result of 9/11. Instead, the terrorist attacks were "the rationale and the opportunity to carry out his revolution."[88] Daalder and Lindsay write that "Bush had set in motion a revolution in American foreign policy" which "left an indelible mark on politics at home and abroad."[89] They see two main threads running through Bush's revolution in foreign policy. The first thread was to "shed the constraints imposed by friends, allies, and international institutions."[90] This meant that America would abide by its own rules, not by international standards. The second thread was that the military strength would be used to change the world's status quo. The new course in American foreign policy did not change the objectives of American foreign policy, but it differed on how to achieve these goals.[91]

September 11 "provided a theme and a context"[92] and even a "mission"[93] for the Bush administration in which Islamic terrorism was equated with "the path of fascism, and Nazism, and

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[87] The roots of this confrontational, unilateral foreign policy are traced back to the 1992 Pentagon strategy, which focused on preserving American military power and its ability to conduct offensive military action. Common policies of containment and deterrence were cast aside in favor of a more confrontational policy in which the United States alone would set the rules. Tom Barry calls these ad hoc partnerships "coalitions and alliances of convenience." This was also made possible because of the fact Congress gave the president extraordinary power to combat terrorism. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 2, 13-14, 40-47, 78, 80, 97-98, 191; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xii, 198-200, 312, 313; Feffer, "Introduction," 21; Barry, "How Things Have Changed," 31; Zinn, *A People's History*, 678; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 528-529; Barry and Lobe, "The People," 40; Bennis, *Before and After*, 106; Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 10-11; Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, 585; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 939; George Packer, "Paved with Good Intentions," *Mother Jones*, July/August 2003, http://motherjones.com/politics/2003/07/paved-good-intentions.

[88] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 12, 92-93.

[89] Former United Nations Ambassador Richard Holbrook said in 2002 that the Bush policy was a "radical break with 55 years of bipartisan tradition that sought international agreements and regimes of benefit to us." Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, xi, 2-3. Also: Todd S. Purdum, "Embattled, Scrutinized, Powell Soldiers On," *New York Times*, 25 July 2002, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/25/international/25POWE.html?pagewanted=1.

[90] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 12-13.

[91] Nuance would have little place in the Bush's foreign policy; even old alliances such as the one with Europe would be seen in a new light by American officials. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld would even dismiss European countries like France and Germany as "Old Europe." Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 13, 40, 77; Bennis, *Before and After*, 107; Feffer, "Introduction," 16; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 393; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xii; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 938-939, 950; Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, 435, 438-439; Nye, *Soft Power*, 121-123.

[92] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 193-194.

[93] Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 527.

totalitarianism."[94] The president's famous words that "either you're with us or you're with the terrorists"[95] made clear that the Bush post-9/11 view of the world was one of black and white, good versus evil and freedom versus tyranny.[96] Here Bush displayed no signs of the pragmatism of his father; George W. Bush instead displayed "Manichaean certitudes of Good and Evil."[97] In his mind, America was defending itself from the threat of evil. As far as Bush was concerned, there were no shades of grey in the new political framework. Also, in the minds of the members of Bush's cabinet, as well of the president himself, the history of their worldview and policies began on 9/11.[98]

Even though columnist Noy Thrupkaew writes that the Bush administration went on a public relations offensive in the Middle East, Joseph S. Nye's more elaborate analysis concludes that there was too much focus on hard power. In all, the Bush administration used more sticks than carrots in the war on terrorism.[99] Also, the war on terrorism involved crude and controversial methods which had nothing to do with soft power. Vice-president Cheney even said that in the post-9/11 world it was necessary to go to the "dark side." These policies included the Central Intelligence Agency's "controversial operations, including political assassinations."[100]

Important to note is that the neoconservatives played secondary roles in the Bush administration and were the subordinates of Cheney and Rumsfeld. Even though the neoconservatives, referred to by Daalder and Lindsay as "democratic imperialists," have often been credited as being primarily responsible for the new direction in American foreign policy, Bush was "the puppeteer, not

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[94] George W. Bush quoted in: Little, *American Orientalism*, 42.

[95] "Bush Says It Is Time for Action," *CNN*, 6 November 2001, http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/ret.bush.coalition/index.html; "You Are Either with Us or Against Us," *CNN*, 6 November 2001, http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/; Bennis, *Before and After*, 95.

[96] By evoking these simplistic notions of human affairs and foreign policy, Bush was reminiscent of Ronald Reagan who referred to the Soviet Union as the Evil Empire. Also, a battle between the forces of good versus evil could last forever. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 82, 85-86, 186; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 1036; Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, 393-394; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, xvi, 194, 196; Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 13; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 145, 159, 160.

[97] Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud*, 193.

[98] Neoconservative thinker and Vulcan Richard Perle said that 9/11 was the "catalyst" of the Bush administration's policy towards terrorism. Ivo H. Daalder, "Bush's Foreign Policy Strategy: Is the Revolution Over?" *Brookings Institution*, 14 October 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/1014forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 299; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 119; Jeremy Pressman, "Power Without Influence: The Bush administration's Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East," *International Security* 33, no. 4 (Spring 2009): 174-175; Bennis, *Before and After*, 108.

[99] Soft power almost had no place, even though the Bush administration could have used it to its advantage considering the enormous sympathy after 9/11. Nye's critique says that Bush had squandered the possibilities to use American soft power. Noy Thrupkaew, "The Policies: Culture," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 107-108, 116; Nye, *Soft Power:*, 25, 29, 35, 54, 59-60, 105, 115-116; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 204-205.

[100] Bush's new and controversial course also showed through his authorization of torture. "Why can't we send them to be tortured?" Bush remarked in a meeting with George Tenet, then-director of the CIA. Mel Goodman, "The Policies: Intelligence," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 100. Also: Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World*, 120-121; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 1067, 1100, 1108; Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, 442; Woodward, *State of Denial*,80-81; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 8.

the puppet" who "led his own revolution."[101]

The new course in American foreign policy was primarily focused on hard power. After the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration would embark on a confrontational foreign policy in which granted itself the right to deal with any adversary. Even though the terrorist attack provided the catalyst for this policy to unfold, the ideas were already present in the ideology of the Vulcans. The United States would go its own way and would use its enormous military capacity to challenge the world's status quo through controversial policies like preemptive wars and regimes change. As the Bush administration was concerned, history had started on September 11, 2001. To them, everything that came before that date was insignificant.

The Revolution and the Israel-Palestine Conflict

The Middle East deserves special mentioning since this region became the main focus of Bush's foreign policy after the terrorist attacks. Before the terrorist attacks he devoted little attention to the region, but this changed with 9/11. Yet, his methods and ideas were different from his predecessors. While Clinton saw the Israel-Palestine conflict strictly in regional terms, the Bush administration was mostly convinced that the conflict was just another part of the war on terrorism. The Bush administration made a radical turn from the role as mediator in the conflict to forcing his demands on both sides.[102]

According to Aruri, the worldview of the Bush administration was shaped by 9/11. He writes that "Bush's Middle East policy has been shaped and reinforced by a worldview derived from the horrors of September 11."[103] Bush said that he considered the terrorist attacks a turning point in his presidency.[104]

Daalder and Lindsay write that in contrast to the first eight months in office, the 9/11 attacks were the cause that the Middle East became "the defining mission" of Bush's presidency.[105] The region was central to the planning of the Bush administration in the post-9/11 world. Still, while the Israel-Palestine conflict became more prominent in the policies of the Bush administration, it was

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[101] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 14, 15, 46.

[102] According to Middle East expert William B. Quandt, visions of transforming the Middle East ignored the bitter realities on the ground. American action towards reaching a settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians would have been extremely useful for its own course after 9/11; it could have resulted in the democracy which Bush wanted to promote, it could have stabilized the region and could have made a contribution in reducing the rising tide of anti-Americanism. Quandt, *Peace Process*, ix, x, 418, 422, 423, 425; Robert G. Kaiser, "Bush and Sharon Nearly Identical on Mideast Policy," *Washington Post*, 9 February 2003, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A45652-2003Feb8.

[103] Law Professor Richard Falk writes that "September 11 unleashed a fearsome sequence of reactions, and none so far worse than the anguishing fury of this latest cycle of Israeli-Palestinian violence." Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 194; Falk, "Epilogue: Ending the Death Dance," 224.

[104] The 9/11 attacks were committed by stateless actors that had received little attention of the Bush administration in the first eight months in office. After 9/11, great powers were replaced with a new focus on terrorists and tyrants. Apparently, the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat fit both the shoe of tyrant and terrorist. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 77; Little, *American Orientalism*, 1; Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, 582; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 73, 89; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 393; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 6.

[105] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 79, 85, 96.

secondary to other priorities in the war on terrorism, such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The president repeatedly acknowledged that "the global campaign against terrorism is his most important responsibility."[106]

In the Bush administration, there was a tug of war between Hamiltonian realists like Colin Powell and Richard Armitage, and a combination of Jacksonians like Cheney and Rumsfeld and neoconservative Wilsonians like Wolfowitz. Pragmatists were outnumbered in the Bush administration.[107]

Powell, who took a more evenhanded stance towards both sides in the conflict than the hardliners, focused on more diplomacy after 9/11. His reasoning was that it would result in support from the Arab states for the war on terrorism. His goal was to build a large coalition of states against the threat of international terrorism and the United States could use the help of the Arab states. In the mind of the realists within the Bush administration, the Israel-Palestine conflict could not be seen apart from the larger problems in the Middle East.[108]

Powell's pragmatic ideas clashed with the hardliners and neoconservatives of the administration. Many of these officials were supportive of Israel and saw the conflict as secondary in the war on terror. Attempts to resolve the ongoing violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians was seen by them as a distraction from the war on terrorism.[109] The hawks saw diplomacy as "catering to Arab demands" and this was considered to be "the worst form of appeasement."[110] A more evenhanded policy on the conflict would make the United States look weak; their reasoning was if extremists thought the United States was closest to Israel, why would the Bush administration cater to the demands of Al Qaeda? In their mind, the United States should be focused on displaying its military strength.[111]

The hawks within the Bush administration saw the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as the main culprit for the ongoing violence and regarded him as Israel's Osama Bin Laden. They thought that Ariel Sharon should be left alone to deal with him. After the 9/11 attacks the attitudes of the administration in Washington hardened even more against the Second Intifada.[112]

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[106] Klare, "The Policies: Resources," 50.

[107] Nye, *Soft Power*, 140-141; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xvii; Barry, "How Things Have Changed," 30; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 393.

[108] Important to mention is the fact that Powell was only a dove in comparison with the other members of the administration. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 393-394, 416, 417, 422; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xvii, 297, 322; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 120-121, 122.

[109] The opinions of some of the hardliners were crystal-clear; Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld considered the Gaza Strip and West Bank the "so-called occupied" territories. According to Roy, the geopolitical realities were not understood by them, as the entire world was treated with idea that someone was 'either with us or against us.' Roy, *Failing Peace*, 223. Robert Fisk, *The Age of the Warrior: Selected Writings* (London: Fourth Estate, 2008), 45.

[110] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 195; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 301.

[111] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 394.

[112] Complexities in other countries were ignored as shades of grey were out and black and white was the new fashion. Even though Bush never fully accepted both analyses, his criticism of Israel "subsided over time."

Terrorism became the main focus after 9/11 and the goals were to destroy both the perpetrators and the states that harbored or supported terrorism. Yet, in the Bush administration's discourse after the 9/11 attacks, only Palestinian violence would be considered terrorism. Law Professor Richard Falk considers this a failure of the approach on conflict.[113]

In all, the Bush administration was determined to change the Middle East to their liking. However, they were divided on how to achieve these goals. Where pragmatists like Powell thought that the road to a successful military campaign had to go through coalition-building and the solution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the hawks were convinced that the United States could act alone and regarded diplomacy as a weakness and appeasing of terrorism.

The Bush Doctrine

The revolution in foreign policy meant that the United States continued to seek new threats. The war in Afghanistan would be the first phase of Bush's war on terrorism. Phase two featured many speeches with ominous warnings. The origins lay in the November 2001 warning that terrorist groups like Al Qaeda could be acquiring weapons of mass destruction, possibly from Iraq. The war on terrorism was expanded to rogue states. Iraq was the first choice of the Bush administration for the second phase in the war on terrorism..[114]

Terrorism was the main subject matter of Bush's State of the Union of January 29, 2002. Bush named Iraq, together with Iran and North Korea in the 'axis of evil' that was "arming to threaten the peace of the world."[115] According to Foreign Policy in Focus coeditor John Feffer, the Bush formulation of an axis of evil is illogical since it "implies a group of states working together."[116] The president used the State of the Union to "redefine the war, its venue and its scope."[117]

The Bush administration's foreign policy was given a new course in which the United States would be dealing with rogue states who were suspected of possessing weapons of mass destruction

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Quandt, *Peace Process*, 394; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 121-122, 303; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 299, 322; Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 132-133.

[113] Palestinian terrorist groups like Hamas were seen by Bush as part of the infrastructure of terrorism. Suicide bombing were the focus of the discourse devoted to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 39, 73, 81, 116-117; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 198; Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, 383; Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 285; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 300-301; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 119-120; Falk, "Epilogue: Ending the Death Dance," 224-225.

[114] According to Henry Kissinger, Afghanistan was not enough after the 9/11 attacks. The war against Iraq was "essential to send a larger message." Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 308-309, 311, 317, 318; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 116-117, 118-121 Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 120, 134-135; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 943, 946, 947; Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, 442; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 408.

[115] George W. Bush quoted in: Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 528. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 118-121; Pressman, "Power Without Influence," 166. Richard Falk, "Foreword," in Stephen Zunes, *Tinderbox: U.S. Middle East Policy and the Roots of Terrorism* (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 2003), i; "Bush State of the Union Address," *CNN*, 29 January 2002, http://transcripts.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/01/29/bush.speech.txt/. "Bush's Evil Axis Comment Stirs Critics," *BBC News*, 2 February 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1796034.stm.

[116] Feffer, "Introduction," 17, 19, 20.

[117] Bennis, *Before and After*, 177.

and Iraq became the top priority after the war in Afghanistan.[118] With the increasing focus on Iraq, critical scholar Bennis writes that "US military unilateralism […] was indeed running amok."[119]

Bush explicitly called Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist organizations in the same vain as Al Qaeda. At this time there were several hawks who did not mind regime change of the Palestinian Authority. Bush's State of the Union was regarded by critical scholars like Bennis and Zunes as a green light for further Israeli crackdowns in the Occupied Territories.[120]

In his speech to cadets at West Point in June 2002, Bush said that Americans should get ready for preemptive action in order to protect their national security which basically meant that the Bush administration would be attacking sovereign nations if it felt attacked or even threatened. The speech at West Point laid the groundwork and justification for the Bush administration to go to war against Iraq.[121]

In September 2002, the Bush Doctrine was finalized in the National Security Strategy. This controversial document had as its core message that the United States "will not hesitate to act alone."[122] The views of the Vulcans were firmly represented in the document, which made preemption go hand in hand with military dominance and the spread of democratic values. The Bush Doctrine was focused on the destruction of terrorism, to work against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the spread of democracy through the means of military power. The Bush administration's ideas were to confront these dangers head-on, alone if it so wanted. It was feared that the strategy would turn the world into the Wild West.[123] Harvard Professor Stanley Hoffman called the new course in American foreign policy "Wilsonianism in boots."[124]

The National Security Strategy made use of the tradition of America's special role in the world; in the introduction to the document it clearly stated that "freedom, democracy, and free enterprise" would be the "single sustainable model for national success."[125]

The Bush revolution in American foreign policy was clarified in the crucial speeches Bush gave in 2002. Also, the National Security Strategy provided the foundation of Bush's view of how to conduct his policies abroad. The Bush administration would expand the war on terrorism to confront

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[118] Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 317-320. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 116-117.

[119] Bennis, *Before and After*, 185, 187.

[120] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 396-397; Bennis, *Before and After*, 203-204; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 145.

[121] Mann does note that the United States "has always implicitly reserved for itself the right of preemptive action." According to Tom Barry, Bush made clear that the policy undertaken after the terrorist attacks was there to "prevent the rise of a potential global rival." "Text of Bush's West Point Speech," *New York Times*, 1 June 2002, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/01/international/02PTEX-WEB.html. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 327-328. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 371. Barry, "How Things Have Changed," 28.

[122] "Full Text: Bush's National Security Strategy," *CommonDreams*, 20 September 2002, http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0920-05.htm. Hartung, "The Policies: Military," 65.

[123] There were fears that Bush's unilateral ideas and plans was so confrontational that it might force other nations to create their own similar policies in response. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 944-945, 946. Pressman, "Power Without Influence," 152-155. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 329. Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, 442. Nye, *Soft Power*, 129.

[124] Stanley Hoffman quoted in: Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 944.

[125] National Security Strategy quoted in: Campbell and Kean, *American Cultural Studies*, 269.

rogue states and tyrants. Afghanistan was the first phase of Bush's self-declared war. Confronting Iraq would become the second and most important stage for his administration.

Conclusion

Bush had devoted little attention to the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine conflict during his first eight months in office. The September 11 attacks changed his perspective and the region would become the most important arena of Bush's presidency.

The tragedy that unfolded on 9/11 was essential in shaping Bush's foreign policy. Yet, Daalder and Lindsay are explicit in their assessment that the terrorist attacks provided the means for an even more confrontational foreign policy. The goals remained the same, but the methods changed significantly. After 9/11, preemptive wars and regime change were favored by the administration. After the war in Afghanistan, the Bush administration's main focus would be on taking action against Iraq.

The administration was bitterly divided on the conflict. While having the same goal of strengthening America's military capabilities and fighting terrorism, the doves and hawks saw the Israel-Palestine conflict in different ways. Moderates like Powell advocated coalition-building and engaging the Arab world in the war on terrorism while the hardliners like Cheney and Rumsfeld saw the conflict as merely one part of the war on terrorism. Where Powell advocated that the administration should practice diplomacy on the Israel-Palestine conflict in order to gain Arab support for the war on terrorism, the hawks were in favor of disengaging from the conflict and merely focusing on the war on terrorism. They favored letting Ariel Sharon deal with Yasser Arafat, who was regarded by them as a terrorist. This meant that it depended on the decisions of the president what kind of policy would be undertaken on the conflict.

The general notion of the Bush administration is nicely captured by *Mother Jones* columnist George Packer, who writes that the general feeling among its officials was that "We are righteous; therefore what we do is right."[126]

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[126] Packer, "Paved with Good Intentions," *Mother Jones*, July/August 2003, http://motherjones.com/politics/2003/07/paved-good-intentions.

Chapter 3: The Bush Policies

Introduction

This chapter will examine the policies of the Bush administration with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict after the 9/11 attacks. The difficulties between the Bush administration and the Israeli government in the final months of 2001, as well as the attitudes of the Israeli Prime Minister Sharon towards a cease-fire of a peaceful settlement will be addressed. The pragmatic and hard-line policies of the Bush administration will also be discussed. The Bush administration's policies were not a linear process which developed from a pragmatic to a hard-line approach. Instead, it moved back and forward between these two approaches, all depending on particular situations.

The Pragmatic Approach

William B. Quandt writes that the peace process was virtually nonexistent in Bush's first term due to other priorities in the war on terrorism.[127] Yet, the Bush administration did pursue pragmatic policies focused as will be demonstrated in the text below.

Harvard economist Sara Roy writes that the events of 9/11, together with the ongoing violence of the Second Intifada "refocused attention on the […] conflict as a primary concern of the Arab world."[128] As the Bush administration was getting ready to attack Afghanistan, the president decided to go along with the pragmatic approach of Colin Powell. The goal of the Bush administration was to devote some diplomatic effort on the Israel-Palestine conflict in order to gain Arab support for the war on terrorism. In the days after the terrorist attacks, both the Secretary of State and the president would press upon Israel to reach a cease-fire with the Palestinians. In October 2001, the Bush administration pressed Sharon to withdraw temporarily from the Occupied Territories.[129]

Sharon made clear that he had no intention of sitting at the sidelines during America's war on terror. He was fearful of American coalitions with the Arab states and the effects this could have on the relationship between him and Washington. He also feared that the Bush administration could make a distinction between Al Qaeda extremists and Palestinian suicide bombings. Therefore, he continuously pursued the tactics of equating Palestinians and the extremists of Osama Bin Laden.[130]

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[127] Quandt also asserts that the first four years of Bush in the White House were a hiatus in the peace process. Quandt, *Peace Process*, ix.

[128] Roy, *Failing Peace*, 233.

[129] Matthews quotes an Israeli reporter who said that the exchange between Bush and Sharon was "difficult and unpleasant." Bush hinted at a new form of engagement on the Israel-Palestine conflict in which the United States "would be more generous to the Palestinian side." Bennis, *Before and After*, 113, 117, 203; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 395, 416; Andrew Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster* (London: Verso, 2007), 137; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 302-303; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 223; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 201; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 123-124, 125.

[130] Israel was forced to stand at the sidelines during the Gulf War when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. George H. W. Bush wanted Israel to stay out of that conflict in order to acquire a solid coalition which included Arab states. According to Matthews, Sharon even feared betrayal; he said that "Israel cannot pay for this coalition. We cannot pay for this with our blood." Instead, he wanted a parallel policy between his government

Bush's comments in October 2001 that a Palestinian state "has always been part of a vision"[131] only deepened Sharon's fears. He made a public statement where he compared Bush to Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister who appeased Adolf Hitler at Munich. He warned that Israel would be not like Czechoslovakia in 1938 when this country was abandoned by Chamberlain and invaded by the Nazis. Simultaneously, Sharon launched the heaviest military offensive on the Occupied Territories of the entire year. The comparison of Bush and Chamberlain was unacceptable to the White House and Sharon had to apologize. In his apology, Sharon praised Bush for his policies in the war on terror. Afterwards, the Bush administration tried to make clear to the Israeli government that they would benefit when the United States was successful in the war on terror.[132]

The events of September and October 2001 were certainly not the first time that there was a rift between the United States and Israel. As political scientist Naseer H. Aruri describes, differences on matters of settlements, the status of Jerusalem and the occupation have resulted in fierce crises between the two states.[133] During the years 2001-2006, the Bush administration and the Sharon government "clashed on a number of occasions over the Palestinian issue."[134] Yet, even though Ariel Sharon had had various disagreements with different American administrations, he did make it his goal to remain close to the Bush administration. According to the former Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami, "never quarrel with America" became the principal goal of his government.[135]

The pragmatic policies with regards to the conflict continued to prevail in the fall of 2001. In November of that year, Bush spoke at the United Nations where he talked of a "vision" of a two-state solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict. According to Quandt "this was the first time that an American president had so forthrightly spoken of a Palestinian state."[136] Yet, according to Mark Matthews Bush's vision remained rhetorical as "the administration was slow to mount a serious-on-the-ground effort to halt what had become a war of attrition."[137]

Sharon continued to do everything in his power to influence both the Israel-Palestine conflict and the opinion of the Bush administration. In November 2001, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

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and the Americans. Ibid., 116; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 206; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 14; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 125, 126, 128-129, 131.

[131] George W. Bush quoted in: "Bush 'Endorses' Palestinian State," *BBC News*, 2 October 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1575090.stm.

[132] Ari Fleischer said that Israel "could have no better or stronger friend that the United States and no better friend that President Bush." Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World*, 146-147; Bennis, *Before and After*, 202; Derek Gregory, "Palestine and the War on Terror," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (2004): 184; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 129-130; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 205; Little, *American Orientalism*, 114; Suzanne Holdenberg, "Furious Bush Hits Back at Sharon," *The Guardian*, 6 October 2001, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/oct/06/israel.

[133] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 44.

[134] Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 202.

[135] Ben-Ami was Foreign Minister under Ehud Barak and was one of the Israeli negotiators at Camp David in the summer of 2000. Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 316.

[136] This time however, Sharon was notified before Bush made his remarks. Even though Bush made historic remarks of a Palestinian state, his disdain for Yasser Arafat was still prevalent. The American president continued to refuse meeting with Arafat, even though both men were present at the United Nations. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 395, 396. Also: Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 132-133; Bennis, *Before and After*, 155.

[137] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 131. Also: 133-134.

assassinated a Hamas leader. According to critical commentators like the investigative journalist John Pilger, Phyllis Bennis and Naseer H. Aruri, this action was undertaken to provoke a Palestinian response which would destroy any chance for a cease-fire. The response from Hamas came through mortar attacks and suicide bombings, one of which killed 30 Israelis on a bus in Haifa on December 3, 2001. This was the pretext Sharon had waited for to go into action and he publicly compared Arafat to Bin Laden and equated the Palestinian Authority with the Taliban. The Bush administration hardened its position in response to the terrorist attacks in December 2001. This time, Bush did not call for Israeli restraint.[138]

Both the president and the pragmatist Powell now said that they were "in the same trench"[139] with the Israelis in the war on terror. The worldview after 9/11 influenced the way in which the Bush administration viewed the violence in the Israel-Palestine conflict. In an interview with *ABC*'s Barbara Walters on December 3, 2001, the president said that "I support the fact that we must root out terror in order to get us back to a peace process." He also stated that Sharon had "the responsibility to defend his people."[140] Matthews writes that by making these statements, Bush had "fused the American and Israeli struggle against terrorism."[141]

According to Matthews a pragmatic route was taken by the United States and retired General Anthony Zinni was sent to the region with the explicit mandate to reach a cease-fire. Bennis contradicts this notion. She writes that Zinni's mandate was limited only to establish a ceasefire, but not to restart negotiations. The continued violence in the region had made Zinni's mission impossible.[142] The United States Ambassador in Israel said that the peace initiative from the Bush administration at the end of 2001 "didn't have legs…" He thought that diplomacy was not wanted by "parts of Washington."[143]

Critical Palestinian-American scholar Edward W. Said writes that by this time the Bush administration "has underwritten Israel's intransigence and brutality."[144] According to Stephen Zunes,

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[138] Bennis, *Before and After*, 202-203; Gregory, "Palestine and the War on Terror," 184-185; Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World*, 146-147; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 129, 138-140, 145; Bennis, *Before and After*, 88; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 201-202; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 138-139; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 207; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 233;

[139] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 202.

[140] The Bush administration continued to put the blame for the violence solely on Arafat and the Palestinians, even though the Israeli Prime Minister had said that the "aim is to increase the number of losses on the other side." According to *Ha'aretz* commentator Yoel Marcus, Arafat's "had pissed off everyone, especially Bush." George W. Bush quoted in: Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 140. Also: 120. Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 132. Falk, "Foreword," ii.

[141] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 140.

[142] At this time, Arafat had answered some of the calls of the Bush administration to crack down on militants and during Zinni's visit, his security forces fought with Hamas militants. Yet, Zinni, acting on behalf of Bush, still called Arafat the biggest liar he had ever met in his life and ascribed all the violence of the conflict to him. The Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* wrote that the Sharon government received an A+ from the Bush administration. Bennis, *Before and After*, 116-117, 203, 204, 206. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 137-138, 141-142. Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 140-141. Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 131-133. Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, 388-389.

[143] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 142.

[144] Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, 379, 388. Also: Edward W. Said, "Israel's Dead End," *Al Ahram Weekly On-Line*, 20-26 December 2001, http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/565/op1.htm.

the Israeli actions were now seen by Washington as the suppression of terrorism. Therefore, the
United States supported Israel at the United Nations in December 2001, by vetoing a resolution that
condemned Palestinian terrorism, but also violent Israeli actions like "imposing collective punishment
on civilian populations."[145]

Even though the policies were not coherent at the end of 2001, the Bush administration
preferred the approach of diplomacy and coalition-building. While this was in service of the American
intervention in Afghanistan, Bush did make extraordinary remarks on a Palestinian state. However, the
violence of the Israel-Palestine conflict was seen in light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the majority
was blamed on the Palestinians. The prism of the war on terrorism continued to influence the way in
which the conflict was seen; even during the pragmatic phase the Bush administration considered the
Palestinians as being primarily responsible for the violence while Israel was merely defending itself.
Powell said in 2005 that the events of 9/11 had "colored the administration's view of the Middle East."
In his mind, the general view within the administration was that it was hard to deal with Arafat and
that the Israelis "were able to use the terrorism card."[146]

The Downward Spiral

As noted above, Powell wanted a more diplomatic emphasis on the Israel-Palestine conflict after the
9/11 attacks since the conflict could not be separated from the rest of the Middle East. Yet, events on
the ground continued to affect the administration's views.

The January 2002 *Karine A* incident was an important event. Israel had captured a boat with
Iranian weapons. According to the Israelis, both the boat and it cargo were meant to be delivered to the
Palestinian Authority. While the Palestinians denied the claims by the Sharon government, the United
States fully accepted the Israeli findings. Arafat's negative image cemented and his stature sank even
further. The *Karine A* incident deepened Bush's belief that Arafat was not prepared to negotiate a
peaceful settlement and that he was hopeless to work with. Even though Bush was against the
expulsion of Arafat from the Occupied Territories, he preferred to keep him confined in his compound
in Ramallah.[147]

In March 2002, as part of the increasing American focus on Iraq, Dick Cheney visited the
Middle East. His mission was to "ensure Arab and broader regional […]support for a new strike
against Iraq."[148] Yet, "no Arab leader had any interest in talking about Iraq."[149] This was considered to
be a secondary issue by the Arab leaders. Also, rising anti-American attitudes in the Middle East were

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[145] Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 133. Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 29.

[146] By February 2002, Ha'aretz writer Gideon Samet observed that in "the current Bush-Sharon lexicon, the
source of evil is terrorism." Colin Powell quoted in: Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 136; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 145.

[147] Colin Powell referred to the *Karine A* incident as "a pretty big smoking gun." To Bush, exile would give
Arafat more opportunities to be heard by the outside world. Bennis, *Before and After*, 201; Quandt, *Peace
Process*, 397; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 142-145, 154, 211; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 322.

[148] Bennis, *Before and After*, 204.

[149] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*,132.

a setback. Therefore, Cheney hinted of a possible meeting between himself and Arafat. The immediate goal was to end the Palestinian uprising and to find a more suitable leadership. The vice-president set an important condition for a meeting between himself and the Palestinian leader; dismantle Palestinian terror. Both the view of the Bush administration and Arafat's insufficient actions canceled any chance of a meeting between the Palestinian leader and the American vice-president.[150]

March 2002 would be the worst month yet in the Second Intifada. Sharon told Bush there would be an escalation if there was no cease-fire. The decisive moment came with the Passover Seder. On March 26, 2002, 26 Israelis citizens were killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber. This would mean a departure from the already fading pragmatic approach and the rise of a hard-line stance on the conflict. After the suicide bombing, the Bush administration moved closer to Israel's point of view. Instead of working with Arafat, Bush would from then on require a new leadership for the Palestinians. Bush's reaction to the suicide bombing of March 26 was uncompromising; America would let Sharon react.[151]

Sharon unleashed Operation Defensive Shield on March 29, 2002. The assault was carefully planned by the Israeli military and was the largest operation that the IDF had undertaken since the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 which included the massacre in the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps.[152]

Critical Israeli scholar Tanya Reinhart writes that "the Bush administration allowed Sharon to order Israel's most massive offensive against the West Bank towns and villages."[153] According to fellow critic Phyllis Bennis, Sharon's military actions were "designed to punish the entire Palestinian population."[154]

As Sharon intensified his military actions in the West Bank, Middle East expert William B.

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[150] As opposed to hawks like Cheney and Rumsfeld, Powell was convinced that the United States should try to reach a settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. That way they could focus on the perceived threat of Saddam Hussein. At the same time, there was a also Saudi peace initiative floating around which offered Israel recognition on the 1967 borders, but was rejected by the Sharon government. Sharon considered the Saudi peace proposal unacceptable. According to Fisk, the Israelis rejected the Saudi peace plan and the Bush administration "showed no interest." Again, the Bush administration made its own agenda, rejecting offers by others and merely focusing on their own agenda. Fisk, *The Age of the Warrior*, 32-33; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 322-323; Feffer, "Introduction," 18; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 140; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 397; Bennis, *Before and After*, 204-205; Norman Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (London: Verso, 2003), xxi. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 397-398; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 156-158.

[151] The Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharonot* even reported that Ariel Sharon and Vice-president Cheney reached an agreement that, when there would be no results from retired General Anthony Zinni's new trip to the region, the United States would support Israeli actions thereafter. Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 146, 147, 148; Gregory, "Palestine and the War on Terror," 185; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 149, 150, 151, 153, 156-158, 162-164, 168, 170, 171, 173, 174-175, 176; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 323-324; Falk, "Epilogue: Ending the Death Dance," 225-226; Bennis, *Before and After*, 206; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 146.

[152] With Sharon's authorization, Christian Phalangists massacred hundreds of Palestinian refugees in the 1982 war. Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 147; Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, xxiii; Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 233, 359-390; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 607, 1036-1037.

[153] According to the Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery, the 2002 offensive was undertaken to "break the backbone of the Palestinian people." Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 146. Also: Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 147; Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, xxv-xxvi.

[154] Bennis, *Before and After*, 206.

Quandt writes that the Bush administration was " notably silent."[155]

During the escalating violence, there was some diplomatic action undertaken by the Bush administration. On April 4, in the midst of the Israeli incursion into the West Bank, Bush made a speech in which he announced that Powell would be sent to the region to seek a peaceful resolution. Both the speech and Powell's trip were also to make sure that the reputation of the United States in the Arab world would improve. The Bush administration was concerned over the perception in the Arab world that the United States was supporting Sharon's complete dismantling of the Palestinian Authority.[156] Bush again talked of a possible future establishment of a Palestinian state. "The outlines of a settlement are clear," Bush said, "two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, in peace and security."[157] In his speech, Bush also commented on Arafat. In the president's mind, the Palestinian leader had "betrayed the hopes of the people he's supposed to lead" and due to his "failure, the Israeli government feels it must strike at terrorist networks that are killing its citizens."[158]

In his April 4 speech, Bush demanded that the IDF should begin withdrawing. The green light given to Sharon was becoming counterproductive for America's larger concerns for the region, especially with fears that the situation could get out of hand and might provoke Iranian or Syrian meddling. Sharon continued his assault, reasoning that he had not heard from Bush himself and because the resolution did not call for the immediate withdrawal. The green light provided by Washington turned into a blinking yellow light, waiting to go red. When Bush finally called Sharon personally, the Israeli leader had its forces pull back from several Palestinian towns.[159]

The differences within the Bush administration were prominent; Powell was convinced that a meeting with the Palestinian leader was useful for establishing a cease-fire, while the hardliners in the Bush administration were against the idea of an Israeli retreat from the Occupied Territories. Pentagon officials like Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz saw the Israeli violence as a legitimate campaign against terror, thereby equating America's war on terror with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Powell was concerned of the Arab reactions and the rising anti-Americanism, especially in light of the administration's further plans in the Middle East, specifically Iraq.[160]

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[155] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 397.

[156] Bennis, *Before and After*, 206; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 324. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 182, 185-186.

[157] Bush indicated that the United States "is on record supporting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a Palestinian state." "President Bush's Speech on the Middle East," *PBS Online News Hour*, 4 April 2002, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/april02/bush_4-4.html.

[158] "President Bush on the Middle East," *PBS Online News Hour*, 4 April 2002, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/april02/bush_4-4.html.

[159] A former official said that Bush "was very reluctant to criticize or be critical of Sharon, even privately." The unnamed official also remarked that the president "wasn't engaged in this process fully. He was episodically engaged in it." The dovish Powell agrees as he thought that the White House had little interest in the Middle East peace process. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 188-191; Bennis, *Before and After*, 206, 207; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 129, 173; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 279, 291; Falk, "Epilogue: Ending the Death Dance," 230; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 208, 209, 210.

[160] Even though a pragmatic policy was undertaken by the Bush administration in the midst of Israeli-Palestinian violence, Powell's mandate was limited. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 324; Bennis, *Before and After*, 205, 206-207; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 132-133; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 188, 195-196.

By the time Powell left for the Middle East, nine days had passed since the beginning of the Israeli offensive. He did not immediately travelled to the region, but visited several other countries first. In all, Powell arrived in Israel one week after leaving from the United States. According to Robert Fisk, the strange detour Powell took before arriving in Jerusalem constituted another week-long green light from the Bush administration to the Israeli government.[161]

Unlike Dick Cheney, Powell did meet with Arafat. This was after the Palestinian leader agreed to Powell's demand of making a statement in Arabic that condemned the terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians. Yet, after his meeting with Yasser Arafat in his battered compound, Powell said that he too was disappointed with the Palestinian leader, stating that Arafat was not acting to combat terrorism.[162]

When Powell returned from his trip to the Middle East, he was welcomed by President Bush who regarded the trip a success in which the goals of the United States had been met.[163] Powell apparently disagreed on this since he later said that this trip was "ten of the most miserable days imaginable."[164] It also caused him, as one of the few pragmatists in the Bush administration, to become even more reluctant of reaching a settlement or even a cease-fire between the Israeli and the Palestinians. Powell's chief of staff, Lawrence Wilkerson, said that Powell felt he was a lone voice for diplomacy in the Bush administration.[165]

Bush publicly stated that in his mind Sharon was a "man of peace." However, the Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat reacted furiously to this statement, saying that "he has destroyed our way of life, and after the Jenin refugee camp, I don't know if this is not a reward for Israeli terrorism against the Palestinian people."[166]

Even though there were some diplomatic efforts, the United States failed in its 2002 mission to stabilize the region. Instead, there was a new atmosphere in Washington in which the hardliners saw their ideas become more dominant and Powell's diplomatic efforts were increasingly cast aside.[167]

The United States' hard-line policy became apparent when it blocked an investigation into the alleged Israeli massacre against Palestinians in refugee camps in Jenin. After reports of massacres, the United Nations wanted to send a fact-finding mission to investigate the accusations of war crimes.

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[161] While in the region, Powell refused to go to the refugee camps in Jenin to see the damage. According to Stephen Zunes, the Secretary of State even stated that no massacre that had taken place in Jenin. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 193; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 615-616; Bennis, *Before and After*, 208; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 31, 148-149.

[162] While Arafat had to make a statement condemning violence, no such statement was asked of Ariel Sharon. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 193, 197-199; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 324-325; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 31, 148-149.

[163] Operation Defensive Shield ended on 21 April. Bennis, *Before and After*, 208.

[164] Powell quoted in: Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 209.

[165] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 205.

[166] Peter Slevin and Mike Allen, "Bush: Sharon a 'Man of Peace,'" *Washington Post*, 19 April 2002, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A12206-2002Apr18?language=printer.

[167] The message that the Bush administration wanted to send to the Sharon government was that they did not need any of these distractions while they were preparing for the confrontation with Iraq. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 326; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 209-210; Bennis, *Before and After*, 213-214; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 206-207, 209.

However, the fact-finding mission that was supposed to investigate the events in Jenin was disbanded on May 1, 2002 under the threat of a veto by the Bush administration. Sharon publicly thanked both Bush and Powell for their influence in getting this mission disbanded.[168]

Six days later, on May 7, the United States voted against a resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations which condemned both Palestinian and Israeli crimes.[169]

In all, the policy of the United States during the first half of 2002 was confusing. On the one hand, Bush was making positive statements on a Palestinian state that could exist next to Israel, while on the other hand he placed the blame of all the violence with the Palestinians. According to Zunes, the Bush administration "focused almost exclusively on Palestinian terrorism as the cause of the crisis."[170] He writes that to the Bush administration, "the struggle in the occupied territories […] is not a matter of the military occupation of one country by another, but the suppression of terrorism."[171] The hard-line approach surfaced when the Bush administration gave a green light to Sharon to conduct his military incursion into the towns of the West Bank. Fearing a backlash from the Arab states, Bush decided to dispatch the pragmatic Secretary of State to the Middle East. Yet, Powell felt that his diplomatic effort stood alone in the administration.

The Rose Garden Speech, 24 June 2002

Even though the Bush administration gave mixed signals in its dealings with the Israel-Palestine conflict, the president did make a landmark speech in June 2002. In response to the catastrophic situation between Israel and the Palestinians, Bush appeared in the Rose Garden on June 24, 2002, to make an address on the conflict. The speech was a compromise between the moderates and the hawks, who did not want to reward Palestinian terrorism and for whom Iraq was the main priority. The fact that Bush was by both Powell and Rumsfeld showed that the hawks had a say in the drafting of the speech.[172]

The Rose Garden speech is considered to be the most important guide to the Bush administration's ideas for a settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Bush emphasized that any peace plan could only be implemented if Arafat was replaced. In the speech Bush pointed that the Palestinian Authority was encouraging terror and he agreed with Sharon that there was no partner for peace.[173]

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[168] In fact, Zunes writes that Condoleezza Rice privately assured Sharon in a personal message passed on by Bush that "we will be with you the entire way." Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 133; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 31-32, 148; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 156-157, 171, 172.

[169] The vote was 185-4, with the United States, Israel voting against. The other two negative votes were cast by the island states Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 31-32; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 272-274; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 204; Bennis, *Before and After*, 208-212; Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, xxiv.

[170] Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 132; Zunes, *Tinderbox*148.

[171] Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 132.

[172] Cockburn, *Rumsfeld*, 137-138; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 216-217.

[173] Apparently, the speech had gone through at least twenty-eight drafts. According to Matthews, Cheney even opposed the idea of a speech about a possible settlement. In effect, Bush gave the Palestinians explicit orders for whom they should and should not vote. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 132-133; Aruri, *Dishonest*

Zunes writes that Bush "made the most explicit statement […] to date affirming that peace requires the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel" in the Rose Garden speech.[174]

The Bush administration's plan called for heavy concessions of the Palestinians. They would have to "renounce terror, reform the corrupt Fatah government and should replace Yasser Arafat"[175]

By explicitly calling for a new Palestinian leadership, Bush demanded more of the Palestinians than of the Israeli government. Aruri argues that the demand to change the entire Palestinian state was virtually impossible. The conditions set by the Bush administration ensured that a peace process would take long to develop. Bush made several demands regarding settlements and an Israeli withdrawal once the situation in the territories improved according to the wishes of the United States. Yet, in the end Israel would only have to act once the Palestinians had done their part.[176] *New York Times* journalist Patrick Tyler comments that Bush "suspended any American consideration of returning to the negotiating table or putting pressure on Sharon."[177]

Because of the heavy demands on the already occupied Palestinians, Robert Fisk cynically commented if "Mr. Bush let Ariel Sharon run the White House press bureau?"[178]

As part of the Bush revolution in foreign policy, the president was setting his own rules and engaging in a different way on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Instead of time-consuming negotiations, Bush demanded action from both parties, albeit more from the Palestinians.[179] James Mann considers the Bush approach as "reshaping American policy toward Israel and the Palestinians in fundamental ways."[180]

Bush put the ball in the court of the Palestinians and the Israelis and would mostly practice a hands-off policy from the conflict for the rest of 2002. The Rose Garden speech made sure that the Bush administration would not have to deal with the Israel Palestine conflict for a while. The demands made of the Palestinians were almost impossible to reach. Powell's diplomatic efforts had failed and

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Broker, 206-207, 209, 244; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 326; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 214-215, 216, 218, 225; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 172; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 12.

[174] Zunes writes that the ideas the Bush administration had regarding a Palestinian state would resemble "the infamous Bantustans of apartheid South Africa, tiny noncontiguous parcels of land surrounded by Israeli settlements and military outposts." Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 134.

[175] *Ha'aretz* political commentator David Landau wrote that the Palestinian leader had been "politically assassinated" by the speech. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 108. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 211.

[176] The State Department's Aaron Miller said that the speech "created so many benchmarks that the Palestinians would have to commit to that they'd never get to where they wanted to go. The first half of the speech made it impossible to get to the second half." However, the United States did not let Israel completely off the hook since they would have to accept the reality of a Palestinian state once the changes had been made. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 226-227, 230; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 151; Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 135; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, xviii, 206-207.

[177] Regarding Arafat, Bush privately said to King Abdullah of Jordan that he was a "loser." Bush also made clear that he was still in "a war mode and the war is terrorism." Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 528.

[178] Robert Fisk quoted in: Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 209.

[179] Daalder and Lindsay write that Bush's war on terrorism was now used to sideline unpopular leaders such as Arafat who in Bush's mind was unfit to participate in anything in the future. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 132-133, 185; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 293, 372.

[180] Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 327.

were not supported by the majority of the Bush administration. There were more important priorities for the Bush administration and the main one was Iraq.[181]

Towards the Road Map

The Bush administration continued to condemn terrorism by the Palestinians during the interlude between the Rose Garden speech and the adoption of the Road Map to Peace in 2003. The Israeli actions were mostly interpreted as acts of self-defense.[182]

Also, the United States continued to offer Israel diplomatic support at the United Nations. In August 2002, the Bush administration voted against a resolution that called for an end to all terror and violence. As it had also done in December 2001, the United States again vetoed a United Nations resolution in December 2002 that condemned Israel for human rights abuses, including the killing of United Nations humanitarian workers and the bombing of a United Nations food warehouse.[183]

In September 2002, Bush signed a piece of legislation that "requires the administration to identify Jerusalem as the capital of Israel" which meant that the crucial issue of Jerusalem was considered to be undividable.[184]

There were some pragmatic policies during this time. According to Harvard researcher Sara Roy, the Bush administration did have indirect contacts with Hamas in September 2002. Yet, Israel made the talks impossible by arresting a Hamas official and launching an attack which caused another suicide bombing. This ended the talks between United States and Hamas talks and the situation deteriorated even further. After the suicide bombing, the Bush administration supported Sharon.[185]

Just before the beginning of the war against Iraq, the Palestinians had complied with one of Bush's conditions for renewed American engagement when Mahmoud Abbas was appointed Prime Minister. With one of his demands met, Bush pressed the Israelis to work with him.[186]

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[181] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 232; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 399; Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 108; "Text of Bush's West Point Speech," *New York Times*, 1 June 2002, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/01/international/02PTEX-WEB.html; "Full Text: Bush's National Security Strategy," *CommonDreams*, 20 September 2002, http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0920-05.htm.

[182] An important example is that of Salah Shehadeh, a Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, who was killed together with sixteen other Palestinians, among them nine children. When Hamas retaliated, Bush spoke furiously of the horrific suicide bombing that had killed seven Israelis in a Hebrew University cafeteria while not condemning the Palestinian victims. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, xxvi; Norman G. Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 105-106; Slater, "Muting the Alarm over the Israel-Palestine Conflict," 112-113.

[183] Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 629; Zunes, "The Archipelago of 'Evil': Middle East," 133.

[184] Even though the United States under George H. W. Bush had signed United Nations Resolution 694 in 1991, which stipulated that East Jerusalem was part of the Occupied Territories, George W. Bush signed into law legislation that considered Jerusalem as undividable. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 143, 144, 205, 211.

[185] By February 2003, Sharon said that there was a "deep friendship" and "a special closeness" between his government and the Bush administration. Roy, *Failing Peace*, 305, 306; Robert G. Kaiser, "Bush and Sharon Nearly Identical on Mideast Policy," *Washington Post*, 9 February 2003, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A45652-2003Feb8; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 207.

[186] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 401; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 237, 238, 239; Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, 108-109.

The Road Map to Peace

The Road Map to Peace was the result of the Bush speech of 24 June 2002. The fact that Abbas was made Prime Minister caused it to be presented, giving the impression that when Bush's orders were followed, there would be engagement.[187]

According to the text, the Road Map is "performance-based and goal-driven," complete with "timelines, target dates and benchmarks aiming at progress […] under the auspices of the Quartet."[188] The Road Map was comprised of three stages with the final goal of reaching a settlement by the year 2005. The first two stages of the Road Map called for an end to terrorist attacks, the reformation of the Palestinian Authority and the building of a functioning Palestinian state. According to Quandt, the three-phase timeline was totally unrealistic.[189]

According to Roy, the Road Map had flaws, including the fact that it maintained a structural imbalance of power between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Also, she criticizes three assumptions that were imbedded in the language; first, that Palestinian terror is the cause of the occupation. Second, that Israel's struggle is part of the war on terror and lastly, that democratization was essential in order to achieve peace.[190]

The former Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami writes that the American strategy involved "too many sticks and hardly any carrots"[191]

In June 2003, Bush, Sharon and Abbas met in Aqaba, Jordan to discuss the Road Map. Sharon was still opposed to a viable Palestinian state. According to Mearheimer and Walt, Elliott Abrams and Stephen Hadley apparently said to Sharon in private that he would not face pressure from the Bush administration on the Road Map. Still, in public both Sharon and Abbas made rhetorical concessions. The Israeli leader accepted the principle that this was a joint effort where there would be no unilateral

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[187] The Road Map was celebrated throughout much of the world as a historical landmark. First of all, it recognized and made reference to a Palestinian state. Secondly, there was an explicitly reference to the occupation. Sharon Otterman, "Middle East: the Road Map to Peace," *Council on foreign Relations*, 7 February 2005, http://www.cfr.org/publication/7738/; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 12; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 231, 243; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 228, 230.

[188] The Quartet is comprised of the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and Russia. "The Roadmap: Full Text," *BBC News*, 30 April 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/2989783.stm.

[189] The freezing of Israeli settlements in the West Bank would occur when there was a relevant period of calm by the Palestinians. In the end, Palestinians had no choice but to accept it while the Israelis only accepted the road map on 30 May after providing 14 amendments. The Bush administration promised the Israelis that their objections would be addressed in the implementation. Roy, *Failing Peace*, 228, 229; "A Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *UN News Center*, http://www.un.org/media/main/roadmap122002.html ; "The Roadmap: Full Text," *BBC News*, 30 April 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/2989783.stm; Sharon Otterman, "Middle East: the Road Map to Peace," *Council on foreign Relations*, 7 February 2005, http://www.cfr.org/publication/7738/; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 231; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 402.

[190] Edward W. Said describes the Road Map to Peace as one of mere pacification. He writes that it is about "putting an end to Palestine as a problem." Roy, *Failing Peace*, 229, 230; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 296; Edward Said, "The Road Map to Where?" *London Review of Books*, 19 June 2003, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n12/edward-said/a-road-map-to-where.

[191] Ben-ami writes that Sharon was focused on the destruction of Palestinian resistance, while Arafat was still at heart a revolutionary. At the Palestinian side there was little indignation to fully support the Road Map after four years of Intifada. Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 294, 295-296, 297-298, 301.

action. Bush referred to Abbas as a real player in creation a solution for the conflict.[192]

Unfortunately, the Road Map was doomed from the very beginning because of the continued cycle of violence. Matthews writes that by the fall of 2003, the Israel-Palestine conflict was an exchange of Israeli attacks and assassinations and Palestinian suicide bombings. This violent cycle already began in June 2003.[193]

There were other factors such as the wall and the expansion of settlements that were harming the implementation of the Road Map. Most crucially, the wall was important in driving the Israelis and Palestinians apart. According to the Israelis, it was designed to separate the settlers and the population within Israel from the Palestinian population of the West Bank while the Palestinians saw the wall as an annexation project which dismantled Palestinian society and divided them even more into separated enclaves.[194] On these issues, Bush was confusing matters; in July 2003, in a joint press conference with Abbas, Bush said that the wall "is a problem" and that it "is very difficult to develop confidence between the Palestinians and Israelis with a wall snaking through the West Bank,"[195] while a couple of days later, Bush stated in a joint press conference with Sharon that the key problem of the Israel-Palestine conflict was Palestinian terror.[196]

Due to all these factors, defeatism set in Washington and Bush made it clear that he would wait until the Palestinians would take serious actions against terrorism. The president felt that he had spent too much political capital on the peace process. The standoffish approach again took hold of the White House and there appeared to be little effort from the perspective of the Bush administration to restart the effort. While being supportive of Abbas, Bush again blamed Arafat for everything that went wrong. Also, he wanted the process to be over as quickly as possible since the American presidential elections were coming up. By September 2003, the situation in Iraq started to deteriorate and the Road Map was no longer a priority. The combination of violence and horror in Iraq and the upcoming

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[192] The Israeli prime minister occasionally paid lip-service to the Road Map, but nothing more. During the buildup to the Iraq War of 2003, Sharon said nothing on the subject. Sharon was also opposed to any cease-fire with Hamas, who had offered one before the summit. After the meeting in Aqaba, Jordan, Sharon moved to undermine the roadmap by continue assassination policies, even though Hamas had announced that it would be willing to enter into talks. This happened even before the Road Map was presented when Israel assassinated the Hamas leader and paraplegic Sheik Ahmed Yassin. Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 17-18, 19-21, 22-23, 25, 26, 27-28; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 247-249; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 212-213, 214-215, 218-219.

[193] Here too, Bush condemned Palestinian violence and said that he understood Israel's acts of self-defense. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 252-253, 257-258, 259-260, 276, 298-299, 337; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 403.

[194] Ben-Ami described the wall as a "pharaoic project of concrete."Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 1265; Gregory, "Palestine and the War on Terror," 187; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 227; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 254, 303-304; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 303.

[195] George W. Bush quoted in: Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 216.

[196] In June 2004, The International Court considered the annexation wall a violation of international law, thereby siding with the Palestinian argument. In the opinion of the court, the violated international law. Also, it considered the settlements illegal and referred to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank specifically as occupied territories. The Bush backed Israel in its opinion of the World Court ruling, but privately was concerned on the 'downright ugliness' of the wall. Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah*, xxi, 230-237, 269, 270; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 296-298, 322-325, 327, 339.

elections resulted in a new period of hands-off policy from Washington.[197]

By January 2004, the Road Map was considered to be over. The demise of the Road Map was described as a victory for Sharon, who was never interested in it. The Bush administration continued to talk about a two-state solution, but now more along the lines of a process of disengagement that was proposed by the Israeli Prime Minister.[198]

The revolution in American foreign policy meant a new kind of engagement on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Instead of acting as a mediator, Bush set the rules for others to follow. Only when his conditions were met, he would take action. The conditions that were set by the Bush administration did not mean more peace talks, but action on the ground by the participants. The Road Map to Peace never came off the ground during these years due to continued violence and factors such as the wall.

Gaza Disengagement

Already in the fall of 2003, Sharon planned to impose his own kind of settlement that bypassed the Road Map. He was against any negotiations or so-called final-status negotiations. While he paid lip-service to the Road Map in public, he loathed it in private. In February 2004, Sharon presented his unilateral plan of disengagement and made clear that he would only deal with the United States in implementing it. The Bush administration did not object to this controversial course.[199]

In April 2004, just three months after the demise of the Road Map, Bush praised Sharon's idea of disengagement and approved the unilateralist plan. This meant that the Road Map was now sidelined. Because Sharon also offered to dismantle four settlements in the West Bank, Bush said that his administration would back Israeli demands that the return of the refugees would not be allowed. Also, the Israelis would allowed to keep major settlements in the West Bank and would not be required to return to the 1967 borders. By supporting Sharon's plan, the Bush administration in effect

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[197] The 2004 presidential elections centered on fighting terrorism. This was not an election on peacemaking. The Palestinian government also collapsed and Abbas was replaced with Ahmed Qurei and created a new diplomatic vacuum. In the elections, Bush needed to cater to the Evangelical groups in the United States and other pro-Israel supporters. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 263-264, 305, 335-337, 352; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 404; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 27, 28; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 338-339; Ivo H. Daalder, "The Return of Bush's Pre 9/11 Policy," *Brookings Institution*, 3 May 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/0503forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx.

[198] Aluf Benn, "The Day the Road Map Died," *Ha'aretz*, 29 January 2004, http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/the-day-the-road-map-died-1.112342; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 404-405.

[199] At this time, Russian initiatives on the peace process surfaced and Sharon needed a way out of being cornered into peace talks. The Bush administration had sent Elliot Abrams to Israel to meet with Sharon and his ideas of disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Reinhart writes that Abrams was "one of Israel's staunchest supporters." Abrams basically echoed Sharon which showed the hard-line approach which was not good for the diplomatic efforts. Disengagement from the Gaza Strip was Sharon's golden ticket and coincided with his other goals; building both the illegal wall and expanding the settlements in the West Bank. Even with the appointment of Abbas as Prime Minister of the Palestinians, Sharon claimed thought that there was no reliable partner. Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 30, 33, 36-37, 99, 100, 157, 160, 161, 169; Sharon Otterman, "Middle East: The Disengagement Plan," Council on Foreign Relations, 1 March 2004, http://www.cfr.org/publication/7737/middle_east.html; Chomsky, *Failed States*, 193-194; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 217; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 342-343, 344-351; Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, 443, 445-446; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 405-406; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 305; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 350-351, 353, 368.

said yes to the settlements and the wall.[200] Sharon's policy adviser Dov Weisglass revealed that "this whole package that is called the Palestinian state […] has been removed from our agenda indefinitely. And all this with authority and permission. All this with a presidential blessing and the ratification of both houses of Congress."[201]

In November 2004, Bush was reelected. According to Daalder and Lindsay, the president himself was no different in his second term, even though his administration displayed a kinder rhetoric than in the first term. In their assessment, Bush was convinced that his confrontational policies in his first term had worked. According to Daalder, the foreign policy Bush practiced in his second term was undistinguishable from the first eight months in office before the 9/11 attacks. The only difference was that now, Bush was focused on international affairs. He did recognize that the United States had become isolated due to its controversial policies, but his unilateralism however did not waver one instance and his administration still consisted of hardliners.[202]

A week after Bush was reelected, Yasser Arafat died in a hospital in Paris on November 11, 2004. His death was greeted with renewed enthusiasm for a possible solution to the conflict. Arafat's death in November 2004 caused euphoria in the Western world regarding the possibilities this provided for the peace process. Abbas, favored by the Bush administration, had already been elected as the new Palestinian leader in January 2005.[203]

Powell had resigned from the Bush administration and with his departure, it was now comprised of a team that was even more united in hard-line views of the world. The members of Bush's second cabinet saw the Israel-Palestine conflict with great skepticism and had a favorable view of Israel. Still, there was a real effort to be taken in pushing forth the disengagement plan. Powell's

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[200] Again, Bush's was conducting unilateralist policies, bypassing international ideas and going with his own ideas. Bush was negotiating for the Palestinians who feared that Sharon's plan for disengagement was a distraction from further colonization in the West Bank. According to Quandt, this was also due to the upcoming elections in order to get support from the Evangelicals and the Jewish voters. On matters of Israel, both Bush and his Democratic counterpart John Kerry, were equally in their "all-out support for Israel." Quandt, *Peace Process*, 407; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 217-218; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 248; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 34, 42-43; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 40, 77; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 309; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 354-355, 370-371.

[201] Roy concludes of Weisglass' remarks that the Bush administration supported the Israelis to not return to any negotiations. Dov Weisglass quoted in: Roy, *Failing Peace*, 327, 328.

[202] Daalder and Lindsay write that Bush's tone had already softened at the end of 2003 when it became clear that there were no weapons of mass destruction. A good example is the appointment of John Bolton, a determined conservative who strongly support Israel, to the United Nations. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 15, 194-202; Ivo H. Daalder, "The Return of Bush's Pre 9/11 Policy," *Brookings Institution*, 3 May 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/0503forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx; Ivo H. Daalder, "Bush's Foreign Policy Strategy: Is the Revolution Over?" *Brookings Institution*, 14 October 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/1014forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx; Pressman, "Power Without Influence," 163-164; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 354; Fisk, "Duty Unto Death and the United Nations," 278; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 330-331, 332-333.

[203] While Abbas won the 2005 election with 62% of the vote, the increasingly popular Hamas boycotted the election. The Islamic movement was also developing itself as a solid political organization. Reinhart cites a Pentagon report from did not necessarily recommend a total change of policy, but a change of changing the perception of the world. Also, Reinhart writes, Hamas could not be accused of ever having worked with the Israelis. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 408. Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 66-67, 106-109, 110, 114, 143-144, 149, 150-151, 153-154; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 330, 361-362, 392-393, 406.

replacement was Condoleezza Rice, who traveled to the region in February 2005 in order to improve the image of the United States. Rice had separate meetings with Sharon and Abbas who were both willing to meet in Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt. Rice would not attend or participate in the summit, showcasing that the Bush administration was focusing solely on disengagement. This unilateral Israeli plan was so important that the Bush administration did not even want to think of behind the scenes talks.[204]

The Bush administration's unilateralist siding with Sharon on the disengagement plan alienated the Palestinians, Arab states and the European Union. In April 2005, Bush repeated his statements from the previous year that he would not force Israel on matters of settlements or the return to the 1967 borders. Bush cited "new realities" as reasons for this position and rubberstamped it this time by stating that this was now the American point of view.[205]

The hopes and expectations of disengagement were high in the administration. Bush needed something good to come out of the Middle East, because of the disastrous situation in Iraq and the image of the United States had been damaged. The administration hoped to improve its image through the Israel-Palestine conflict. Rice's goal was to make sure Gaza disengagement proceeded as scheduled. In fact, when Sharon threatened to back down from his promises, the Bush administration forced the Israelis to follow through with their plan for disengagement.[206]

Israeli scholar Tanya Reinhart provides a detailed description of this process. Two months before the scheduled removal of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip, plans were in the state of discussion. Sharon was purposefully stalling the process of disengagement. What he had not foreseen was that the second term of George W. Bush was different. Even though the administration was still hawkish, Bush expressed his support for Abbas and the continuation of disengagement. While the Bush administration did not press Sharon during the Road Map era, this would not be the case with disengagement. The Bush administration applied massive pressure on Israel behind the scenes in order for it to go ahead.[207]

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[204] Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 959; Ivo H. Daalder, "The Return of Bush's Pre 9/11 Policy," *Brookings Institution*, 3 May 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/0503forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx; Ivo H. Daalder, "Bush's Foreign Policy Strategy: Is the Revolution Over?" *Brookings Institution*, 14 October 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/1014forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 408, 412; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 77-79, 85, 88, 110-111; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 357-358, 363, 364-365; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 229-230, 231, 241, 244, 245-246, 265, 296-297, 305, 327, 331, 336, 365-366, 397-398, 431, 444-445; Slater, "Muting the Alarm over the Israel-Palestine Conflict" 119.

[205] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 366-367, 369, 370; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 44-45.

[206] In order to make sure that disengagement would succeed, the Bush administration also provided for the modernizing and training of Palestinian security forces. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 196; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 311; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 311; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 382, 384, 385-386; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 4, 8-9, 44-45, 46, 108, 110, 114, 126, 135; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 219.

[207] The sanctions that were imposed on Israel for a possible arms deal to China also helped to further apply the pressure for Sharon to proceed with Gaza disengagement. The sanctions were favored by high officials like Rumsfeld and Rice. Ultimately, Israel canceled the deal. Also, when Sharon again tried to provoke Hamas by means of targeted assassinations, Rice put an end to it. Pressure from the United States lessened after

After disengagement, the Gaza Strip turned into a prison, the economic situation deteriorated even further and the violence between Hamas and Israel continued. The Bush administration's pressure on Israel decreased after the pullout from Gaza. As far as the president was concerned, its pressure on the Sharon government resulted in the execution of Gaza disengagement. Apparently, they considered this to be enough thinking that Israel had fulfilled its part. The Bush administration was inclined to believe Israeli statements after the pullout from Gaza.[208]

On January 4, 2006, Sharon slipped into a coma and disappeared from public life. Bush praised Sharon, calling him a leader with a vision for peace.[209]

Abbas wanted Hamas to be able to participate in the election. Bush supported Abbas and wanted full elections. A real change in the confrontational hard-line policy did not occur, but a change of image was acceptable and supporting the Palestinian elections was an important part of it. Bush's popularity both abroad and at home was diminishing, therefore some success with Middle East peace was important. Yet, Hamas was elected in January 2006, clearly in part as a result of the corruption of Fatah.[210]

The pragmatic approach with regards to the Palestinian elections turned into a hard-line approach. Apparently, by voting for Hamas, the Palestinians "elected the wrong party to power."[211] In response to the election of Hamas, the United States, Israel and the European Union blocked the Gaza Strip and withdrew funds. As a result of the Second Intifada and the terrorist attacks of 9/11, conditions in both Gaza and the West Bank worsened which gave Hamas a new powerbase. Things

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disengagement was over. Yet, as Reinhart writes, "the story of the Gaza evacuation shows that international pressure can lead Israel to concessions." Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 93, 95-96, 101-102, 103, 116-117, 120-121, 122, 128-129, 130, 131.

[208] According to Reinhart, the Gaza Strip is dependent on the West Bank for its economic survival. However, the Israelis halted convoys from Jerusalem bound for the Gaza Strip. As a result of lessened pressure from the Bush administration after disengagement, Israel could continue with these practices. The reaction of the United States was mild in comparison with the period preceding disengagement and the Bush administration went back to their attitude before disengagement citing Israel's right to defend itself as a primary reason. The aftermath's violence included also other techniques of collective punishment like shutting off Gaza's electrical supply. While the situation in the Gaza Strip deteriorated, Sharon's policy adviser Dov Weisglass even said that the idea was to "put the Palestinians on a diet… The Palestinians will get a lot thinner, but won't die." In September 2005, Sharon told the United Nations General Assembly that Israel would continue to defend itself and would continue, in defiance of international law, to build the illegal wall. The United Nations and international law were a sideshow to the Israeli Prime Minister. "The Gaza Strip After Disengagement," *B'Tselem*, http://www.btselem.org/English/Gaza_Strip/. Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah*, xvii-xviii; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 58-59, 60-61, 132-133, 136-137, 138-139, 140, 142, 155-156, 166, 167, 169, 171-173; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 539; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 331-332, 387, 391-392, 401, 405.

[209] Where Arafat's death was received with much more bitter emotions from Washington, Sharon would be treated with respect. According to MIT scholar and dissident Noam Chomsky, Arafat's record "doesn't come close to Sharon's record of crimes and atrocities." Chomsky and Achcar, *Perilous Power*, 212; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 1283; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 405-407, 409-410; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 313.

[210] Roy, *Failing Peace*, 221; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 421; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 408, 426.

[211] Fisk, *The Age of the Warrior*, 228.

took a matter for the worse for both the Palestinians and the Israelis.[212] As Quandt writes that Bush was, together with former Presidents Johnson, Reagan and Clinton, the most pro-Israeli president. Yet, his "wholehearted backing of Sharon's tough policies had done little to bring Israel either peace or security."[213]

Conclusion

After 9/11, the Bush administration would be more engaging than the first eight months in office. Still, the conflict was considered to be a secondary stage in the war on terror. Yet, William B. Quandt's idea that there was virtually no engagement from the Bush administration is not true.

The Bush policies on the Israel-Palestinian conflict did not have a linear development from pragmatic to a hard-line stance. Instead, what the history from 2001 to 2006 shows is that the administration moved back and forth between these different approaches. The administration began undertaking a pragmatic policy on the conflict in order to acquire Arab support for the war on terrorism. Throughout the years 2001-2006 the Bush administration repeatedly returned to a pragmatic policy. Overall, the Bush approach was confusing.

The new black and white worldview of the war on terror favored the Israelis. When confronted with violence of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Bush would display a more hard-line policy, condemning the Palestinians while stressing the Israeli right of self-defense. Arafat was seen by the Bush administration as untrustworthy and unhelpful for creating a solution to the conflict. His death in November 2004 was greeted with great enthusiasm for the future.

Ariel Sharon proved to be a difficult ally in the war on terrorism as he repeatedly distorted diplomatic actions. However, when Israeli actions threatened to get in the way of American policy and harm its image, the Bush administration would be highly critical of Israel and in some cases applied enormous pressure to force Israel to comply.

The revolution in American foreign policy was also extended to the approach the Bush administration took on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Bush went further than any American president in history; he openly called for the creation of a Palestinian state. Also, Bush refused to act as mediator. In his mind, he would not repeat the engaging policy of negotiations that Clinton had practiced in his eight years in office. Instead, Bush made demands and set the rules for the Israelis and the Palestinians to follow. Yet, the conditions that Bush made of the Palestinians in the Rose Garden speech of 24 June, 2002 made sure the United States would not have to deal with it for some time. Also, the president easily cast the Road Map aside in favor of a unilateral plan for Gaza disengagement which ultimately, and predictably, did not create any change for the conflict.

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[212] Israel apparently had a "carte blanche" after the Hamas electoral victory. Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah*, xix-xx; Chomsky and Achcar, *Perilous Power*, 188, 189, 221, 222-223, 240-241; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 219-220, 221-222, 301; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 420, 421, 422, 424; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 145-146, 155.
[213] Quandt, *Peace Process*, 409, 410-411, 422, 428.

Chapter 4: Israel-Palestine and the War on Terrorism

Introduction

This chapter will examine the role Israel-Palestine conflict played in the Bush's war on terrorism. The war cabinet that was put together by the president will be examined, as well as its internal differences. Even though there were diplomatic phases in the war on terrorism, the Bush administration's main focus was to confront what in their idea constituted relevant threats. The role of the Israel-Palestine conflict during the buildup and the actual wars in Afghanistan and Iraq will be examined. What was the conflict's significance in the war on terrorism and what functions did it perform for the Bush administration?

The War on Terrorism

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001, President Bush put together a war council in order to take action against the nation's enemies. The most important members of this war cabinet were Cheney, Rumsfeld, Powell and Rice. The war on terrorism "became *the* priority for Bush."[214]

The goal of the war cabinet was to enhance the role of America in the world and to make it without any military competitor. A solid defense capability was not enough anymore; the United States had to go on the offensive. After the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration was responsible for the largest military buildup since the 1980s, thereby acknowledging that the Vulcans were truly the military generation.[215]

Tom Barry points out that the Bush policy, instead of multilateralism and cooperation, was cemented in aggressive anti-multilateralism which defied international standards and customs. Also, the Bush administration considered themselves as being on the moral high ground. In essence, peace was to be acquired through strength.[216]

James Mann writes that although pragmatist like Powell and Armitage "may have been doves in comparison with some of their colleagues," but in the realms of American foreign policy "they were

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[214] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 85. Emphasis in original.

[215] Robert Fisk remarks that the United States 'Soldiers Creed,' that focused on honorability, was updated by Rumsfeld to something called the Warrior Ethos which was much more towards brute force. According to Woodward, unlike any president before him, Bush wanted to reform societies. Thereby he was a combination of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 97, 99, 115; Fisk, *The Age of the Warrior*, 282-285; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xii, xiii, 163, 297; Feffer, "Introduction," 21-26, 27; Bennis, *Before and After*, 95; Hartung, "The Policies: Military," 61, 63-64, 71; Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 29, 32, 34-35, 38, 42, 85-86, 117, 121, 138.

[216] In a good versus evil struggle the American government tried to position itself on matters of moral absolutism, justifying their unilateral and often violent actions through the rhetorical language of democracy, freedom and liberal internationalism. The approach of the Bush administration went against the ideas of Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who focused on international cooperation and multinational institutions after both world wars. Barry, "How Things Have Changed," 30, 31-37; Barry and Lobe, "The People," 41; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 198; Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 25; Feffer, "Introduction," 16.

hardly doves and in fact shared much in common with the other Vulcans."[217] This meant that the pragmatists shared the same objectives as the hawks in the administration, but were convinced of a different path to get to the same goal. Unlike Cheney who was in regular contact with Bush and had a tremendous influence on the policies, Powell did not have a deep personal relationship with the president. Both Powell and his assistant secretary of state Richard Armitage felt that their strategy was often second place in the administration.[218]

According to critical scholar Phyllis Bennis, the inflammatory and polarizing rhetoric used by the Bush administration regarding terrorism made sure that no country "wanted to risk being tarred by the with-the-terrorist brush."[219]

According to Aruri, "Israel has successfully positioned itself to be a strategic asset beyond the Cold War."[220] In the war on terrorism, the United States military apparently enjoyed a solid working relation with the IDF and the Bush administration was eager to learn Israeli techniques to deal with terrorism.[221]

The Israel-Palestine conflict was certainly not at the top of the list of the Bush administration. Daalder and Lindsay write that in the wider war on terrorism, the Bush administration was more interested in the Iraq War. Still, the Bush administration focused on the Israel-Palestine conflict in light of the war on terror. As Mearsheimer and Walt observe, the United Sates tried to reduce anti-American sentiments in the Arab world after 9/11 by having the president making historic remarks towards the possibility of a Palestinian state. Also, the Bush administration tried to pressure Israel on halting expansionist goals and actions in the West Bank.[222]

First Stage: Afghanistan

Afghanistan became the first stage for the new and confrontational course in the Bush administration's foreign policy. The first months after the terrorist attacks proved to be the center for the pragmatic policies of Colin Powell. Even though the Israel-Palestine conflict was secondary in the Bush administration's foreign policy, it did serve as an opportunity to mend relations with the Arab states after eight months of hands-off approach from Washington. Engaging the Arab states in the war on terrorism was useful for several reasons; Arab support for the American military campaign could stifle

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[217] Even after Iraq became a quagmire for the United States, Powell and Armitage would also maintain that military intervention was the right choice. Here they echoed the president and the hardliners of the administration. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xvii. Also: Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 371-372, 378.

[218] Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 76-77, 119, 136-137.

[219] Bennis, *Before and After*, 89.

[220] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 47.

[221] According to Zunes, Israel has trained United States Special Forces in counterinsurgency techniques, as well as urban warfare. Ibid.; Stephen Zunes, "The Israel Lobby: How Powerful Is It Really?" *Foreign Policy In Focus*, 25 May 2006, http://www.zcommunications.org/the-israel-lobby-how-powerful-is-it-really-by-stephen-zunes; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 394; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 9; Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 32-33.

[222] The pragmatics thought was that this way the message of Islamic extremists could be undermined. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 95, 156-160, 160-183; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 204. Roy, *Failing Peace*, 233. Feffer, "Introduction," 15, 16. Bennis, *Before and After*, 205-206.

criticism of its confrontational policies. Yet, in the Bush administration's policies after 9/11, coalitions were considered convenient, but not essential.[223]

Even on Afghanistan there were disagreements between the doves and the hawks. Powell advocated that Afghanistan should be dealt with by means of a broad coalition while Rumsfeld advocated a much more extreme position by suggesting that the United States should immediately target Iraq. The intervention in Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001 under the name of Operation Enduring Freedom.[224]

As the United States intervened in Afghanistan, the Israelis made sure they would compare their actions to the war on terror with the explicit hope that "the Western world will be more open to buy the elimination of the Palestinian Authority when it is packaged with current images and comparisons."[225] Israel constantly used the war on terrorism as an analogy in order to justify their military actions in the Occupied Territories while constantly comparing Arafat with Bin Laden.[226] The Israeli goal was to be a full ally of the United States in the war on terrorism and Sharon repeatedly compared Palestinian violence against Israelis to the misery that Al Qaeda had inflicted upon America. Sharon's reason to compare the United States to Israel's suffering as a result of terrorism was obvious; to send the message to the Bush administration that "now you understand what we go through." This way Israel hoped to be perceived as the victim while the Palestinians were equated with Osama Bin Laden's fanatics; a comparison the White House did not appreciate.[227]

Despite the expectations of Israel and their supporters of an even more intimate relationship between both governments, a state of crisis and disagreements occurred between the Bush administration and the Israeli government in the first months after 9/11. For the American government, the war on terror was now the main focus, the new prism through which the Bush administration viewed the world and took action.[228]

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[223] There was much criticism directed at the foreign policy of the United States in the Middle East. The continued military, economic and diplomatic support for Israel was an important reason, as well as the continued sanctions against Iraq. A detailed description of these crippling sanctions can be found in: Geoff Simons, *Targeting Iraq: Sanctions & Bombing in US Policy* (London: Saqi Books, 2002). H.C. von Sponeck, *A Different Kind of War: The UN Sanctions Regime in Iraq* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006). Bennis, *Before and After*, 113, 203; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 302-303; Roy, *Failing Peace*, 223; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 201; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 123-124, 125; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 395, 416.

[224] Bennis, *Before and After*, 165; Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 30-31; Chomsky and Achcar, *Perilous Power*, 73-74, 86; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 308, 309; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 396.

[225] *Yediot Aharonot* journalist Alex Fishman quoted in: Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 105.

[226] Roy, *Failing Peace*, 224; Reinhart, *Israel/Palestine*, 105, 145, 179.

[227] Sharon was not alone in trying to be a faithful ally of the United States; Russia wanted to exercise their repression in Chechnya without question. The same was true for China in the Muslim regions of the country. Pakistan and India did the very same thing with regards to Kashmir. Saudi Arabia also wanted to be on the good side in the war on terrorism. Accordingly, Derek Gregory writes that Israeli attacks on the Palestinians were stepped up by the Sharon government. Gregory, "Palestine and the War on Terror," 183-184; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 125; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 121; Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 603, 1044; Bennis, *Before and After*, 88-89, 104, 116, 118, 120; Unger, *House of Bush, House of Saud*, 252; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 142-143.

[228] A more detailed discussion of the disagreements between the United States and Israel can be found in chapter 3, which deals with the specific policies of the Bush administration with regards to the conflict. The Bush

Bennis writes that the "need for maintaining Arab and Islamic government support in Bush's new 'anti-terrorism war' trumped the former warm and fuzzy embrace of Israel."[229] Bush even spoke of a Palestinian state which angered the Israelis even more.[230]

With the defeat of the Taliban at Kandahar on December 7, 2001, their rule over Afghanistan had effectively ended. What the victory in Afghanistan also provided was an opportunity for new rounds of diplomacy. During the Afghanistan campaign, the support of governments around the world was still high. That is when the United States focused more on the peace process and Anthony Zinni was sent to the region.[231] Phyllis Bennis writes that when the need for keeping a coalition in Afghanistan became less important at the end of 2001 as the Taliban was losing against the Americans and the Northern Alliance comprised of warlords, the Bush administration "returned to its more traditional public embrace of Israel and Sharon."[232]

Daalder and Lindsay make clear that the Israel-Palestine conflict was secondary in the war on terrorism. Yet, for image-building the conflict was useful and Bush chose to follow Powell's pragmatic course of coalition building and improving its image in the Arab world. Even though Bush's war on terrorism meant that no country wanted to be on Washington's blacklist, Israel was not the number one priority in the Middle East. The Israelis tried to equate the Palestinians with Al Qaeda, but this comparison went too far for the pragmatic course of the Bush administration in the end of 2001.[233] Instead, Bush even signaled that he would be in favor of the creation of a Palestinian state. The new course in American foreign policy meant that Bush made the rules and he was not afraid of confronting the hard-line Israeli Prime Minister.

The Ultimate Priority: Iraq

At the end of 2001, the United States had overthrown the Taliban in Afghanistan. At the same time, the violence in the Israel-Palestine conflict was spiraling out of control. However, the Bush administration had more important priorities than the Israel-Palestine conflict. Already in the first weeks after the 9/11 attacks, ideas and preparations for the campaign against Iraq were set in motion. On November 21, 2001, Bush apparently decided that Iraq should be looked into. This campaign

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administration pressed Sharon to withdraw some of his forces. Also, Bush made historical statements on a Palestinian state. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 120, 122-123.

[229] Bennis, *Before and After*, 202.

[230] This is described in detail in chapter 3. "Bush 'Endorses' Palestinian State," *BBC News*, 2 October 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1575090.stm; Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 205.

[231] The easy victory over the Taliban also brought the hawkish point of view to the forefront of American foreign policy. Apparently, this method worked. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 308-309; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 396; Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 195; Bennis, *Before and After*, 165, 203.

[232] Bennis, *Before and After*, 203.

[233] As is shown in chapter 3, the pragmatic approach of Powell would not last. At the end of 2001, the continued violence in the region and the way this was seen in Washington saw the pragmatic approach slowly replaced by the hard-line stance. Ibid., 202-203.

would be the main priority throughout Bush's presidency.[234]

Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward writes that Bush regarded the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein as a threat both before and after the terrorist attacks. In an interview with Woodward, Bush said that he was not happy with the manner Iraq was handled before 9/11.[235]

The hardliners of the Bush administration were crucial in the buildup to the Iraq war. In the process of going to war against Iraq, especially Vice-president Dick Cheney was a driving force. Some, including Powell, even thought that it bordered on an unhealthy obsession. Also, after the 9/11 attacks Rumsfeld was immediately trying to convince the president to bomb Iraq. At that time Bush made the decision to attack Afghanistan, but he was also making Iraq his priority. Already during the Afghanistan campaign there was already talk of a plan concerning Iraq, meaning that the confrontational militaristic policies would be continued. The reasoning of going to war from the administration's point of view was that Iraq allegedly possessed weapons of mass destruction, had perceived links with terrorist networks, including Al Qaeda, and that the country posed a danger to the surrounding states, primarily Israel.[236]

Cheney was convinced that in the new course in American foreign policy, the Bush administration could not be waiting for a "smoking gun." The United States should act preemptively to counter a possible threat in the future. In this strategy, a policy build on defense was not an option; instead, the United States should be on the attack.[237]

Still, as critical analyst Phyllis Bennis writes, in the first half of 2002 the Middle East crisis "crept closer to center stage."[238]

The Arab opposition to Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories and the rising tide of anti-Americanism contributed in compelling Bush to undertake a diplomatic offensive in order to calm events. Leftwing columnist Barbara Ehrenreich wrote that both the war in Afghanistan and the "Bush's meek stance toward Sharon […] convinced Muslims throughout the world that their lives have no value to America's leaders."[239]

Daalder and Lindsay write that at this time President Bush still feared being "sucked in and

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[234] Even though Bush had sent retired General Anthony Zinni to the region to create a cease-fire, the violence continued. Also, Bush made clear that he thought that Israel had the right of self-defense. Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 140. Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 9, 11; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 81-82.

[235] Vice-president Cheney knew that after the war in Afghanistan, Iraq would be next. Already in February 2002, the United States was bombing Iraqi radar posts and command centers. Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 19, 21, 351.

[236] Woodward writes that Paul Wolfowitz was the official who was mostly pointed towards war. Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 11-12, 14-15, 27, 30, 31, 44-45, 83, 122, 141, 158, 206, 259, 281-282; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 77, 90.

[237] Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 35.

[238] Bennis, *Before and After*, 165.

[239] Cheney's visit to the Middle East in March in order to get support for the upcoming intervention against Iraq was met with criticism from the Arab leaders. Barbara Ehrenreich, "Preface," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 12; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 132.

lose control of the situation."[240]

Eventually, the Bush administration decided to act on the violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians before they would move on to Iraq. Bush went with Powell's pragmatic course. Hawkish officials regarded a mediating role as meaningless and were in favor of fully supporting Sharon's actions. After the Israeli military incursion in March-April 2002, the hardliners became more dominant and diplomatic efforts were increasingly cast aside. Powell considered himself a lonely voice of diplomacy in the Bush administration.[241]

Bush decided to practice a hands-off policy and he put the ball in the court of the Israelis and the Palestinians. The June 24 Rose Garden speech made sure that the Bush administration would not have to deal with the Israel Palestine conflict for a while and could focus on Iraq. The president made time-consuming demands of the Palestinians. Only when they adhered to his conditions, the United States would reengage in the conflict. Bush, instead of mediating the conflict like his predecessors had done, set the conditions for renewed American engagement in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Bush administration's message was clear; when the conditions were met, the United States would take action on a solution to the conflict and the creation of a Palestinian state.[242]

According to Daalder and Lindsay, the first half of 2002 had "left the administration's Iraq policy adrift," but this "finally got under way in July."[243]

Former National Security Advisor Samuel Berger said that where all other presidents before George W. Bush saw the Israel-Palestine conflict as the central issue in the Middle East, "this administration sees Iraq as the central challenge."[244]

The Bush Doctrine had expanded the war on terrorism from battling Al Qaeda to a policy of confronting rogue states by means of preemptive warfare and regime change. The most important role that the Israel-Palestine conflict could play for the Bush administration was that it would not endanger or distract from their primary objectives in the Middle East.[245]

The second half of 2002 was reserved for the drumbeat to war. After the Iraq policy was put back on track, the Bush administration mostly focused on taking preemptive military action against

[240] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 132.

[241] Ibid., 132-133.

[242] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, xviii, 206-207; Bennis, *Before and After*, 199-200; Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*,132-133; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 399.

[243] Daalder and Lindsay write that "aside from military planning, which had moved steadily ahead since November 2001, the policy process on Iraq was at a standstill." Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 133, 144-150.

[244] Robert G. Kaiser, "Bush and Sharon Nearly Identical on Mideast Policy," *Washington Post*, 9 February 2003, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A45652-2003Feb8.

[245] The president did not want the Israelis to be a part of the Iraq War. This because he was already under much criticism from the Arab world. Also, his father had kept the Israelis out in the Gulf War. Bennis, *Before and After*, 201; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 397; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 142-145, 154, 211; Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 322; "Bush State of the Union Address," *CNN*, 29 January 2002, http://transcripts.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/01/29/bush.speech.txt/; "Text of Bush's West Point Speech," *New York Times*, 1 June 2002, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/01/international/02PTEX-WEB.html. "Full Text: Bush's National Security Strategy," *CommonDreams*, 20 September 2002, http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/0920-05.htm.

Saddam Hussein. The divisions between the two camps within the Bush administration also came to the forefront regarding the policy on Iraq; the diplomatic Powell was in favor of building a coalition while the hardliners were in favor of unilateral action.[246]

At first, Bush made the choice for the diplomatic route to try and acquire support for his plans. The president was the puppeteer within his own administration, dismissing Cheney's distrust of the institution and trying, at first, to engage through diplomacy. The speech Bush gave at the United Nations in September 2002 pleased both camps within his administration; Powell because of the fact the president was asking the international community for help and the hawks liked it because of Bush's harsh language.[247]

Yet, even in his diplomatic effort Bush was confrontational; he wanted to take action against Saddam Hussein. He did not have much patience with matters of diplomacy, international partners and weapons inspectors. He primarily wanted to act and would only ask the United Nations for support, not permission. The decision for preemptive intervention was already made.[248]

According to historian George C. Herring, the Bush administration was filled with hubris during the buildup to the intervention against Iraq, completely confident that their confrontational policies were just. Some of the neoconservatives had even argued that the road to a democratic Palestine had to be pursued through Iraq. The general idea among the hawks was that their toppling of Saddam Hussein would lead to the Wilsonian ideal that democracy would be spread throughout the Middle East, including Palestine. Yet, the policies of the Bush administration were also seen by large parts of the world as the arrogance of American power.[249]

According to Mearsheimer and Walt, the Bush administration's attention returned to the Israel-Palestine conflict when Yasser Arafat complied with the American demand to reform his government and nominated Mahmoud Abbas to be the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority on March 7, 2003. A week later, Bush suggested that he was ready to make serious efforts on the Road

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[246] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 133; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 399; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 949, 950.

[247] Next to diplomacy, Bush at first went along with new weapons inspections. The diplomatic route was successful at first, especially with the passing of the 1441 resolution. Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 15, 133; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 400-401; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 530-531; Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 142-143, 147, 165-166, 200, 202.

[248] The administration was bitterly divided on how it should achieve its goals. Cheney reviled the UN, while Powell wanted to repeat the diplomatic stage of the first Gulf War. Bush's dislike for diplomacy was embodied by the French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin. As the diplomatic effort took more time, Bush moved to the hawkish position of Cheney and Rumsfeld. Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 148-149, 163, 170-171, 198-199, 207-208, 209, 214, 222, 226, 242, 252, 263-264, 299, 317.

[249] Hubris was everywhere during the buildup to the Iraq War. According to Herring, one American official even said that the United States was now an empire "and when we act we create our own reality." The former Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami writes that the idea to bring democracy to the Middle East through means of war "was from the start a dangerous miscalculation." Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 946-947, 948; Tyler, *A World of Trouble*, 15; Seymour Hersh, *Chain of Command* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 323; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 120-121, 153; Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 291-292. Campbell and Kean, *American Cultural Studies*, 272.

Map to Peace.[250]

The Road Map to Peace was initiated after the United States had its quick victory in Iraq. According to Woodward, the policy was in part a concession to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair who had gone along with the United States in invading Iraq. Bush promised the British Prime Minister and the Arab states that some effort would be taken after the war in Iraq was over.[251]

Part of the Road Map was to show that the president was successful in conducting both war and peace. Yet, after Iraq became horrific and violent nightmare for the Bush administration, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be a possibility to achieve some success on peacemaking and democracy in the Middle East. Also, the image of America had diminished as a result of the disastrous consequences of the Iraq War.[252] The theories of the neoconservatives that the road to a democratic Palestine should be taken by first going through Bagdad did not occur in real life. Instead of Iraq becoming "an attractive model in the region, […]it has become an appalling model."[253]

According to Daalder, the Bush revolution in foreign policy ended with the invasion of Iraq. He considers this show of American military might to be the apex of Bush's actions in the first term and not without consequences for the rest of his presidency. According to Daalder, it also contributed to the revolution's ending. This venture became the primary reason for rising anti-Americanism and the diminishing of the possibilities to wield soft power were diminishing.[254]

Since the Bush administration was stuck in the quagmire that Iraq had become, it needed some improvement in their image. With the Road Map considered over, Sharon's plan for disengagement came along at the right time. Bush was highly receptive of the unilateral Israeli plan and wanted to make sure it was implemented. The new Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had two goals on the Israel-Palestine conflict; a successful Israeli pullout from Gaza and the Palestinian elections of 2006.[255]

By March 2005 however, there were still no Israeli plans ready for disengagement. On matters of negotiations, Sharon was structurally unhelpful. This time, however, the Bush administration was not going to put up with Sharon's stalling. At this time, it was essential that the Bush administration needed good news coming from the Middle East. Therefore, disengagement needed to go ahead as planned. The Bush administration forced the Sharon government to implement his plan for the

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[250] Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 238; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 401

[251] A detailed description of the Road Map can be found in chapter 3. Woodward, *Het Aanvalsplan*, 302; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 951.

[252] Apparently, nation-building was not a talent of the Bush administration. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 212; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 952, 953, 955-956, 957, 958; Pressman, "Power Without Influence," 164; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 240, 243, 245-246; Quandt, *Peace Process*, 403; Nye, *Soft Power*, 119.

[253] Chomsky and Achcar, *Perilous Power*, 51-52.

[254] Klare, "The Policies: Resources," 56; Ivo H. Daalder, "Bush's Foreign Policy Strategy: Is the Revolution Over?" *Brookings Institution*, 14 October 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/1014forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx; Nye, *Soft Power*, 127.

[255] Aluf Benn, "The Day the Road Map Died," *Ha'aretz*, 29 January 2004, http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/the-day-the-road-map-died-1.112342. Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 114; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 959.

disengagement of the Gaza Strip. This showed that the United States could have leverage over Israel and force Sharon to act when it applied a certain amount of pressure.[256]

Even though the Israeli government expressed its deep reservations, Bush wanted the elections to go ahead as planned and he wanted Hamas to participate. He did so over the strong objections of the Israelis. As his popularity both abroad and at home was declining some success with democracy promotion in the Middle East was highly welcome.[257]

The war on terrorism undertaken after the horrific terrorist attacks against the United States had "only enhanced Islamic terrorism," which had by that time become "a more potent enemy than ever."[258] Furthermore, the policy was not appreciated by the world's population, yet the Bush administration ignored most of these criticism. There was major discontent with the Bush approach of "Wilsonianism in boots" to international relations and policies of war. Instead of limiting America's involvement in the world, he overstretched the United States.[259] Bush was considered by most of the world to be "the most dangerous man on earth."[260]

Campbell and Kean write that this "revolution in American foreign policy [...] alarmed many of America's allies and antagonized international opinion."[261]

The Israel-Palestine conflict might seem miniscule in comparison to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the Bush administration did devote its attention to the conflict on several occasions. During the first phase of the war on terrorism, the Bush administration tried to engage the Arab world, in part by displaying a more forceful approach to Israel and making statements on a possible Palestinian state. In the first part of 2002, during the second phase which expanded the war on terrorism to confronting and dealing with rogue states, the administration considered it important to first deal with the Israel-Palestine conflict which was escalating. However, Bush cast the conflict aside in favor of confronting Iraq by making time-consuming demands of the Palestinians. He made clear that when they adhered to his conditions, the United States would reengage.

Even though Saddam Hussein's regime was quickly defeated, the situation turned into a nightmare and criticism and anti-Americanism were on the rise. The Bush administration tried to restore its image by means of Gaza disengagement and successful democratic elections.

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[256] Roy, *Failing Peace*, 305-306; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 8-9, 46, 93, 95-96, 101, 103, 104-105, 114, 117, 120, 121-122, 129, 130, 131; Chomsky and Achcar, *Perilous Power*, 63; Zunes, *Tinderbox*, 145.

[257] As is described in chapter 3, the violence flared up between Israel and the Palestinians after the election that brought Hamas to power. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 956; Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, 106-109, 110, 114, 143-144; Matthews, *The Lost Years*, 392-393, 406; Woodward, *State of Denial*, 421.

[258] Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*, 358.

[259] Bennis, *Before and After*, 109; Barry, "How Things Have Changed," 37; Miriam Pemberton and John Feffer, "How Things Should Change," *Power Trip: U.S. Unilateralism and Global Strategy after September 11* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 185; Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 303-304; Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy*, 587; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 944.

[260] This was also true in European countries like Germany, France and The Netherlands. John Pilger, *Freedom Next Time* (London: Bantam Press, 2006), 8. Also: Ivo H. Daalder, "Bush's Foreign Policy Strategy: Is the Revolution Over?" *Brookings Institution*, 14 October 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/1014forceandlegitimacy_daalder.aspx.

[261] Campbell and Kean, *American Cultural Studies*, 272.

Conclusion

In the Bush administration's war on terrorism, the Israel-Palestine conflict was a secondary issue. The main aspect of the Bush revolution in foreign policy was the confrontational approach the administration adopted against terrorism and eventually rogue states like Iraq.

Powell who wanted the administration to put effort in the peace process was a minority in the war cabinet. Unlike Cheney, he was not as close to the president. Yet, as part of the Bush administration, he was the one who requested most to have a certain type of diplomatic engagement in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Bush also did not let Israeli comparisons between Al Qaeda and the Palestinians get to him. While the view of his administration was certainly colored by 9/11, as Powell had said in 2005, the Israeli accusations were rejected. Bush was not about to let anyone, including Sharon, dictate to him how he should fight his war. As president, Bush did not partake in negotiations. He was distrustful of diplomacy. Instead, he set demands for both the Palestinians and Israelis to follow.

In the first term, the conflict was a secondary issue for the Bush administration. The 2002 Rose Garden speech made sure that they did not have to deal with peacemaking for a while, while preparing for the war with Iraq. The Road Map proved that the United States was no longer a mediator, but actively steering both the Palestinians and Israelis. The president initiated a new policy and made difficult, almost impossible, demands of the Palestinians.

The second term was different, albeit only in rhetoric and trying to change the image of the United States. Bush desperately needed success in one aspect of his Middle East policy and the plan for disengagement and the Palestinian elections were opportunities to display a different image. Bush continued to set the rules, forcing the Sharon government to go ahead with the withdrawal from Gaza, as well as making sure that Hamas could participate in the elections over Israeli objections.

In the war on terrorism, the military undertakings of the Bush administration were the priorities. Peacemaking and negotiations were secondary. Bush would be different from his predecessors; where other presidents saw the conflict as the primary issue in the Middle East, Bush diverted attention to preemptive military action in Iraq. When he was concerned with the process between the Israelis and the Palestinians, he would not be mediating; Bush set the rules.

Conclusion

The policy of the Bush administration towards the Israeli-Palestine conflict in the years 2001-2006 has been marked by confused policies and tragic setbacks in a time when the United States was primarily focused on the war on terrorism. It was a difficult time and many factors were involved, such as the escalating violence of the Second Intifada, the election of Likud hardliner Ariel Sharon as Israeli Prime Minister and, most crucially, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The president had little to no experience with the Middle East and in his mind, the United States was best off practicing a humble foreign policy and should not commit itself to overseas ventures or time-consuming negotiations like Bill Clinton had done. In the first eight months in office, Bush did just that. Here William B. Quandt's theory that Bush's policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict was virtually nonexistent is correct. Colin Powell said in a speech to AIPAC that the administration had ruled out putting pressure on Israel. As critical scholar Phyllis Bennis argues, the Bush administration practiced a hands-off policy towards the Middle East and the Israel-Palestine conflict was certainly not a priority. Middle East expert Stephen Zunes crucial assessment is that the statements of the Bush administration on the issue were contradictory and that the basic idea was to let the Israelis and Palestinians find a solution by themselves. The administration was distrustful of diplomacy and negotiations and the Bush policy became ABC—Anything But Clinton.

The Bush administration's mindset had its roots in the ideas of Bush's group of foreign policy advisors who called themselves the Vulcans and who had participated in the policies of various administrations. James Mann makes the compelling claim that these policymakers were convinced that America's military power should be restored and preserved. This makes clear that, as Daalder and Lindsay argue in their *America Unbound*, the unilateral and confrontational mindset was already prevalent before the 9/11 attacks. Critical scholar Phyllis Bennis agrees with this assessment as she writes that the Bush pursued "an aggressive brand of unilateralism" in the first eight months in office.[262]

Among the Vulcans there were disagreements; as Daalder and Lindsay write that Colin Powell was convinced of the limits of American power and was more reluctant on the use of military force than Dick Cheney. Powell showed more inclination towards building coalitions and practicing diplomacy and saw the Israel-Palestine conflict as a crucial aspect of the Middle East. Important to note is the fact that a dove in the administration of George W. Bush needs to be placed into context. As Mann has argued, the pragmatists in the Bush administration were hardly doves "within the spectrum of American foreign policy over the past three decades" and they shared many similarities with the hawks.[263] Still, the pragmatists in the Bush administration felt that their approach was not given enough time and they considered themselves outnumbered by the hawks. Powell was a lone voice of diplomacy in an administration that was mostly confrontational and where diplomacy and

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[262] Bennis, *Before and After*, 1.
[263] Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xvii.

negotiations were regarded as a weakness. Most of the other Vulcans were opposed to diplomacy and negotiations and favored unilateral action which they saw as weakness and appeasement. Yet, despite the differences of opinion between his advisors, Daalder and Lindsay make clear that Bush was "the puppeteer" of his administration.[264] this is also shown in Bob Woodward's multiple accounts of the Bush administration; Bush set the rules.

The September 11 attacks were the catalyst for the Bush revolution in American foreign policy. Bush's promise of a humble foreign policy transformed into a unilateralist policy in the region which he had previously avoided. Here Quandt's assessment falls short since the Bush administration was more involved than before the 9/11 attacks. Instead, as political scientists Mearsheimer and Walt argue, 9/11 forced the Bush administration to focus its attention on the region, even though the conflict remained secondary in the war on terrorism.

Daalder and Lindsay make the crucial argument that even though the goals of American foreign policy did not change, the methods on how to achieve these objectives did. The Bush administration pursued confrontational policies in two ways; by shedding international constraints and to use American military power to change the world's status quo. As Daalder has argued, the difference between the first and second term was mostly in terms of rhetoric. Since the United States needed something positive to come out of the Middle East in the midst of the nightmarish situation in Iraq and increased criticism of their policies in the region, the Bush administration wanted to improve its image and was adamant that Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip would succeed. Also, as Tanya Reinhart has documented, Bush supported the Palestinian elections over Israeli objections. Yet, these policies did not constitute a fundamental change in the ideology of the Bush administration and that of the president himself.

With regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict, the Bush administration was confusing in its policies. As described by journalist Mark Matthews, Bush continued Clinton's condemnation of Arafat who he blamed for the failure at Camp David in the summer of 2000. Zunes argues that Bush held the Palestinians responsible for most of the violence. Already before the 9/11 attacks, Bush said that he understood Israel's position and demanded of the Palestinian Authority to stop the violence. Whenever the violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians spiraled out of control, the Bush administration would practice a hard-line stance, seeing it as legitimate self-defense against terrorism and supporting Israel with vetoes at United Nations. Critical scholar Naseer H. Aruri agrees with this and writes that this "has been shaped and reinforced by a worldview derived from the horrors of September 11."[265]

The years of Ariel Sharon as Israeli Prime Minister posed problems for Washington as he proved himself to be a difficult ally. As described by Matthews, Sharon had a long and notorious military career and was not popular in Washington. Therefore, as Shlomo Ben-Ami points out, he decided to pursue warm relations with the Bush administration. Yet, his use of force generated more

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[264] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 15.
[265] Aruri, *Dishonest Broker*, 194.

conflict at a time when the United States was trying to win Arab support for Bush's war on terrorism and the White House was furious over comparisons Sharon had made between Bush and Neville Chamberlain. Critical Israeli scholar Tanya Reinhart's assessment is that Sharon was detrimentally opposed to any form of negotiations. His stalling of Gaza disengagement in 2005 was routine, but did not improve relations between him and the Bush administration who wanted a positive development coming out of the Middle East.

Bush approached the Israel-Palestine conflict in completely different ways; instead of playing a mediating role in the conflict, Bush set the rules for both parties to follow instead of relying on diplomacy. The primary example was the Rose Garden speech of June 24, 2002. As described by Aruri, the Palestinians had to reform their government and get rid of Yasser Arafat; Bush wanted a Palestinian leadership with whom he could do business. Once the Palestinians had done what Bush demanded of them, there would be further engagement from Washington, but not before. A Palestinian state could be possible, but only when his orders were followed.

The Bush administration's policy with regards to the conflict was plain confusing. It moved back and forth between pragmatic and hard-line approaches to the conflict. This needs to be seen in the context of the war on terrorism; pragmatic policies were pursued partly to acquire Arab support for Bush's war on terrorism and to stifle anti-Americanism in the region, but it did result in several diplomatic efforts on the conflict. Even according to critics like Zunes, Bush made historic remarks that there should be a Palestinian state and the term did enter official American discourse. Yet, these pragmatic policies and statements were confused by hard-line approaches. Next to the pragmatic and hawkish policies, Bush also practiced a hands-off policy after the Rose Garden speech in 2002 in order to focus on the most important priority which was Iraq. As Patrick Tyler describes, the speech made sure that the conflict was off the table for a while.

The Bush administration's diplomatic efforts were insufficient, imbalanced and failed due continued problems in the region. As Mark Matthews writes, The Rose Garden speech did lead to the implementation of the Road Map to Peace in 2003. However, the Palestinians had to make most concessions. Harvard researcher Sara Roy concluded that the Road Map to Peace kept a structural imbalance of power between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Also, continued violence between the both parties, the illegal wall and settlements made success impossible. This resulted in defeatism in Washington and the Road Map was considered to be over in less than a year after its inception.

In essence, the Bush administration's policies with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict were more confusing than they were monolithic. As part of the tradition of shaping the world in America's image, Wilsonian idealism was expressed through statements of a Palestinian state and the support of the Palestinian elections in 2006. As Tom Barry argues, the Bush administration also considered itself to be on the moral high ground in the war on terrorism. Yet, Wilsonian idealism was not the whole story since the Bush administration relied more on sticks than carrots, as Ben-Ami writes. Bush sometimes distanced himself from the conflict and with his support for disengagement he essentially

sidelined his own pragmatic policies of the Road Map. Also, as Daalder and Lindsay write, the political thoughts in the Bush administration are "best labeled hegemonic," because of the black and white worldview, self-interest in expanding American power, the willingness to use this power, the distaste of international institutions and being convinced that "the United States is a unique great power and others see it as such."[266]

Notions of empire are not useful with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Even though scholars like Andrew Bacevich have compared the United States to the Roman Empire, Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean point out that the Bush administration "may have acted in an imperial manner in the run-up to the Iraq war," but that it had "difficulty in persuading even some of its allies to join it against Saddam Hussein."[267] When the administration practiced its pragmatic policy during the buildup to the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, it needed to cater to the Arab states. This is also described by Bennis and Daalder and Lindsay. Critics like Zunes and Aruri do provide essential facts and useful analyses, but fall short in simplistic theories of empire. While recognizing that the United States was wielding its power after the 9/11 attacks in order to change the status quo of the world, the policies with regards to the Israel-Palestine conflict were too confusing to be put under one name. Neither Wilsonian idealism nor empire suffice to describe American foreign policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict.

In conclusion, the period between 2001 and 2006 was a tumultuous chapter for the United States and the Israel-Palestine conflict. The United States experienced pure horror on 9/11 and reacted with a revolutionary unilateral and confrontational policy in which too little attention was focused on diplomacy on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The main focus was combating terrorism and confronting rogue states. There certainly were diplomatic efforts in order to gain support for the war on terrorism and to improve the image of the United States in the region. As part of these diplomatic efforts Bush made historic remarks on Palestine. The years between 2001 and 2006 did not produce a historic peace settlement, but left the region in pieces.

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[266] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 40, 44.
[267] Campbell and Kean, *American Cultural Studies*, 277.

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