

**LEGON CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
AND DIPLOMACY**

**AN HONEST BROKER? THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT, APART FROM THE SOURCES CITED IN THIS WORK WHICH ARE DULY ACKNOWLEDGED, THIS STUDY IS THE RESULT OF AN ORIGINAL RESEARCH CONDUCTED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF DR. SEIDU ALIDU AND THAT THIS RESEARCH HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTED EITHER IN PART OR IN WHOLE FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.

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### **DEDICATION**

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO THE ALMIGHTY ALLAH FOR HIS BLESSINGS AND PROTECTION DURING MY ENTIRE STAY AT THE LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY. I ALSO DEDICATE THIS WORK TO MY PARENTS, ALHAJI ABDUL RAHMAN GOMDA AND TO MY MUM HAJIA HUMAIZA; MY GRANDMOTHERS, HAJIA AYISHETU ABDUL RAHMAN AND HAJIA FATIMATU PERIGRINO BRIMAH.

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#### **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

|        |   |   |
|--------|---|---|
| DOP    | - | DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES                     |
| PLO    | - | PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION             |
| US     | - | UNITED STATES                                 |
| POTUS  | - | PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES                |
| IR     | - | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS                       |
| IS     | - | INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM                          |
| UN     | - | UNITED NATIONS                                |
| UNSCOP | - | UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE |
| AIPC   | - | AMERICAN ISRAELI PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE     |
| AARP   | - | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS       |
| NRA    | - | NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION                    |
| IDF    | - | ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCE                          |
| JCPOA  | - | JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION            |
| DACA   | - | DEFERRED ACTIONS FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS       |
| PSOD   | - | PRINCIPLE OF SELF DETERMINATION               |
| MIT    | - | MASSACHUSSET INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY          |

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Abstract

The United States of America under the Trump administration has implemented the US Embassy Act of 1995 by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This decision was followed by the relocation of US’ Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. These moves were very much against the advice of Trump’s own national security team, including his Secretaries of Defense and State and attracted wide condemnation of its European allies and Arab counterparts. The actions of the US has triggered mass protest initiated by the Palestinians against the Israelis in what the Palestinians claim as unjust and US complete favorable and partial gesture towards Israel. This is in light of the fact that, as part of US global hegemonic status and its quest to remain

indispensable in the Middle East region, the US has cut itself an enviable position of an honest broker in the Middle East Process and specifically in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In light of this, this study sought as its main objective, to investigate, using qualitative research design, the extent to which the US remains truly an honest broker or a neutral arbiter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The study hypothesized that recent moves and decisions made by the Trump administration with regard to Jerusalem could compromise whatever credibility the US has as an honest broker. The study found that Jerusalem which has by international law been under *corpus separatum* is one of the thorniest issues in the conflict and that city's disposition would only be decided on in permanent-status negotiations between the parties. The traditional idea was for Jerusalem to be the shared capital between a future state of Palestine and the now "Jewish state of Israel". The study also found that over the past few decades in which the US has claimed the position of an honest broker, it has had a very soft spot for Israel and despite how sometimes the latter's actions are incongruous with the values of the US, the United States is unable or unwilling to bring the huge leverage it has on Israel to bear to compel it to change its course of aberration per international law. It was found that much of this is because of the Israel lobby and its most instrumental functionary (American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, AIPAC). The research findings also revealed that while this has been the case the Trump's presidency has also emboldened Israel in every step of the way with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the final analysis this study maintained that the actions of the Trump administration more than anything clearly reveals the US's partial and favourable posture towards Israel and that compromises its position as an honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

The background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study and the hypothesis are dealt with in this chapter. In addition, the scope, rationale and the study methodology are dealt with. The theoretical framework, literature review, study methodology as well as sources of data and the organization of the study are also presented.

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

The Middle East has a quite complicated political landscape with some part submerged into tension, insecurity and instability. One among such similar cases is the geographical space that harbors the Israelis and the Palestinians. The area has witnessed decades of conflict and instability that arguably began in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In all these years of conflicts one particular country has positioned or gestured itself as the "honest broker" in an attempt to resolve the impasse between the two parties and that country has predominantly remained the United States. It should not be difficult to comprehend the context within which, the once British influence and leverage in the region that came to be known as British Mandate of Palestine was suddenly lost and transferred to the Americans (this would be explored much later in the subsequent chapters).

Several attempts have been made to resolve the conflict amicably and in all instances the initiatives were engineered and controlled by the United States Government. The Camp David Agreements (Accords) and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process were the first of its kind. The presidents of the US, Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel were the main signatories to the accords in September 1978.

The Declaration of Principles (DOP) popularly known as Oslo I followed the Accord. It was during this period, in a ceremony hosted by Washington under President Clinton that a schedule for the Middle East peace process was initiated. It should be mentioned that Oslo I came to the limelight after series of secret meetings between the Israelis and Palestinians took place during the months of 1992 and 1993. Another agreement known as Oslo II, formally referred to as the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza, expanded on Oslo I. Oslo II put in place measures for the "complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from six West Bank cities and about 450 towns". In essence, the agreements suggested the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel (The Two State Solution).

The United States government has remained the "supposed" mediator of the conflicts between the two sides and the New York Times provides some plausible reasons to the leverage that it has traditionally had to be able to do that. Max Fischer of the New York Times explained that the

American dominance and control in the international system makes them an essential mediator (broker) whether biased or not. This is a very profound statement with respect to the substantial political and financial provisions that country makes to both Israel and the Palestine. The ability to provide the proverbial carrots to both parties enable it to bring the two sides to the negotiating tables. The United States government had leverage over the Palestinian leaders and this was very important to the Palestinians since they relied on such support to keep their administration funded and stable. The situation is even crucial when one examines America's support to Israel. Admittedly, the US government annual support to the Tel Aviv government till date makes America, Israel's life line. Take for instance the BBC statistics that revealed that by far, the US remains "the largest donor of financial aid to the Palestinians, with assistance touching nearly every aspect of life in the Palestinian Authority". Also important is the argument by Falk that the US would not allow any other diplomatic endeavors which would have represented a degradation of its duties and interests in the Peace Process.

It should be mentioned that at the center or heart of any peace process has always been the very pragmatic remedy of a Two State Solution where with time the creation and recognition of an Arabic state of Palestine would be accepted existing alongside the Jewish state of Israel. At least this was inherent in the Oslo Accords.

Another issue which remains at the core of any peace deal between the two countries is the issue of Jerusalem. For a very long time, the question of Jerusalem has remained within the ambit of international law and the international community have desisted from any move that disrupts the status of that city. It has largely been reserved to be resolved by the Israeli and the Palestinians, both of whom lay claim to the City (whilst Israel controls Western Jerusalem, the Palestinian Arabs also lay claims to Eastern Jerusalem). In international law the status of Jerusalem as designated by the UN General Assembly is *corpus separatum* or separate body. The Oslo Accords signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, specified that Jerusalem's disposition would only be decided on in permanent-status negotiations between the parties. Therefore although Israel has traditionally claimed Jerusalem as its united city, that has for a long time and until recently not been recognized by any other country and is essentially against international law.

## **1.2. Statement of the Research Problem.**

The Jerusalem question remains at the heart of any pragmatic efforts to bringing peace among the Israelis and Palestinian and any party that purports to play the role of an honest broker must ensure a neutral reflection as well on the Jerusalem question. As has already been mentioned, the United States has assumed the role of the honest broker in the peace negotiations among the two Middle East neighbors. Although some scholars and activist are of the opinion that the so-called position of the US as an honest broker is questionable, the latter has not relented on this role and has succeeded in making itself indispensable to the peace negotiations. The US has cut itself an enviable position in this regard by assuming a crucial role in its Middle East foreign policy.

What is particularly striking and the fulcrum of the problem statement is the dramatic turn of events, which is a significant shift in US foreign policy as it has happened under the Trump presidency. The Jerusalem question has largely been left under international law status to be resolved by both parties and this has until the presidency of Donald Trump been the situation. US foreign policy towards the Middle East and in the particular case towards the two countries under study has sought to project a neutral posture at least in the case of Jerusalem, regardless of Israel government's claim of that city as its complete and united capital and with the Israeli Parliament, the residence of the Prime Minister and headquarters of major Israeli ministries situated in that city. This is corroborated by the fact that from 1995 the United States Congress approved a law that required the relocation of the embassy to Jerusalem, yet the law allowed that within a six-month interval, the President could waive the requirement "to protect the national security interests of the United States". In this development all the successive presidents of the United States (POTUS), presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush Jnr., and Barack Obama have exercised this waver.

On December 6<sup>th</sup> 2017, the world woke up to the shocking news that made headlines in every international and local news outlet, when the POTUS (Donald Trump) announced a major shift in decades of US foreign policy in the Middle East. He announced that henceforth, US recognized Jerusalem as Israel's administrative capital, and that the American diplomatic mission would eventually be transferred from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This decision sent shivers down the spine of the international community. The utter disappointment even from America's closest ally (the UK) and Western liberal democracies (France, Germany, Canada, Australia was not inconspicuous), not to talk about the dismay and disappointment among the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Muslim world. It has become necessary that a closer study and analysis be conducted to find out how that affects the United States' role as an honest broker of the peace process and this constitutes the problem statement.

## **1.3. Research Questions**

The research questions which will serve as the guidelines or inform the study include the following:

- a. What are the underlying issues at the center of the Israel-Palestine fight?
- b. What roles have the United States Government played as an honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- c. Under what circumstance can the United States continue to be an honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process?

#### **1.4. Objectives of Study**

Generally, the study looks at the role of the United States as the honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The specific objectives however are to:

- a. Provide an overview of the underlying issues in the Israeli-Palestinians conflicts.
- b. Examine the roles of the US as an honest broker.
- c. Ascertain the extent to which the US can continue to play the role as an honest broker.

#### **1.5. Hypothesis**

The recent shift in US foreign policy under president Donald Trump in which US accepts Jerusalem as Israel's capital could damage the role of the United States as an honest mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

#### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

This study is very timely as Trump's decision was made barely a year ago. It is an intellectual analysis that examines the possible continued role of the US as an honest broker or not particularly under the Trump presidency and growing sentiment and opinion a pro-Israel foreign policy. Since the study does the above, the time frame is situated within the period of 1990 to 2016. The choice for choosing 1990 as the starting date is because it was this decade that saw the initiation of the Oslo Peace Accord which had embedded in it the promise of a two state solution. The year 2017 is also chosen as the terminal date because it was the year in which the POTUS made this paradigm shift in US foreign policy in this regard. The period also allows ample time to examine how credible the US claims to be as the honest broker.

#### **1.7. Rationale of the Study**

The study contributes to existing literature on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. It is envisaged that the findings of this study could provide an empirical standpoint on the possibility of the US as the honest broker or that other powers of the world will take that country's place. The findings of the study will also serve as a good academic resource on which future researchers could make reference in subsequent studies.

#### **1.8. Theoretical Framework**

This work is conducted within the theoretical framework of realism. As a theory, realism is the dominant and enduring theory of world politics and IR scholars explain that some of the reasons for this is that the theory sets itself as a no-nonsense practical science of IR. Also the central tenets of realism which would be explained soon are easy and clear to grasp. The theory seems to have great explanatory power. Put differently the way realists explain the forces that drive foreign policy seems to fit neatly with those aspects of world politics.

The focus of this study is the role of the US as an honest broker and as such the key word in the chosen topic is "honest broker" among the others. This therefore means that the theoretical framework chosen for this study must try to provide insight to the position assumed by the US as the honest broker. Under the circumstance realism as theory has been chosen to try to establish an understanding of the position the US has endeavored to cut itself in the Middle East peace negotiating process.

The term realism is employed in different disciplines for many other reasons and with different other meanings. The discipline of philosophy employs the term realism to mean an ontological theory opposed to idealism and nominalism. In literature and cinema also, the term realism is opposed to romanticism as well as escapist approaches. The semblance of the various utilization of the term in these aforementioned discipline is striking but also somehow relatively different as compared to the usage and meaning of the term in International relations (IR). In International Relations, political realism emphasizes the urgency states face with regards how to use and capture power in the national interest. In this meaning of realism in IR for instance one immediately notices that many political realists are also philosophical nominalist and empiricists. Emblematically, twentieth-century figures of the theoretical evolution of realism include George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr and Kenneth Waltz in the United States and E. H. Carr in Britain. In the history of Western political thought, Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes are usually considered realists. Thucydides is sometimes seen as a realist though, his work are however not read and used by a significant number of people in academia. It was Thomas Hobbes for instance who maintained that "covenant without the sword are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all". It was also Machiavelli in his seminal work "the Prince" who argued that "there can never be morality in politics and that it was better to be feared than to be respected". These are all symbolic representations of realism.

Generally speaking realists have a very pessimistic perception of mankind and “emphasize the constraints on politics imposed by human selfishness (‘egoism’) and the absence of international government (‘anarchy’), which require the primacy in all political life of power and security”. Rationality and state-centrism are frequently identified as core realist premises”. They represent what is instead of what ought to be and this explains their positivist opinions.

The core or specific tenets of realism are discussed. In the first instance realist are of the opinion that states are the dominant or key actors in the international system. This therefore comes as no surprise if one looks at the principles of non-interference, equal sovereignty and territorial integrity as enshrined in the Treaty of Westphalia in Osnerbrook in establishing the state as the dominant actor in IR and since then the Westphalia system has become the standard paradigm of modern of IR. Realist also believe that the international system is one in which there is no central authority which makes the IS anarchic and conflictual. The implication of this anarchic system is that every state must depend on their efforts and strengths to help them survive. It is for this reason that such phrases like “only the strong survive”, “survival of the fittest”, “might is right” are very commonly associated with realism. If there were any international government as a single order, Israel would not continue with its forceful settlement of Palestinian lands even after it had been ruled illegal by the UN according to international law. The race for survival means that all state must enforce or build up military capabilities, form up alliances to enhance their national security. This creates a competitive political atmosphere; one that is conflictual in nature and therefore a self-help system.

Another tenets of realism is that all states exists in a state of legal sovereignty, however, there are various levels of abilities with both powerful and less powerful states as actors. Also in the realist epistemological stance states are rational actors whose actions are characterized by decision making processes that in the end is always driven by the national interest. Finally, the most profound tenets of realism is that power is the most important concept in explaining and predicting the behaviour of states in the international system.

It is important to mention that there are different varieties of realism. There is for instance, classical realism which examines international politics based on the state and the international system levels of analysis. There are neo-realist or structural realist who contend that the structure of the international system is anarchic and that shapes the attitudes of states.

The applicability of a theory such as the current topic under study or specifically to the role of the United States as the honest broker is in myriad forms. It is the contention of scholars that liberalism, constructivism, Marxism and realism could be used to explain US foreign policy and for this reason this study has chosen to adopt realism as the theoretical lens of analysis. The United States foreign policy just like any other country’s foreign policy would be to primarily promote its national interest abroad. It goes without saying that it bolsters America’s foreign policy in the region to be able to call the shots in the peace process as in the end this adds up to their continued relevance there. As has already been noted by Falk the US would not permit any other diplomatic endeavors which would have represented an erosion of its role and interests in the Peace Process. The US has also always sought to project itself as a hegemon especially after the demise of the Cold War in which some realist optimist would like to call it the end of history and most arguably the era of Pax Americana.

Cox has not hidden this intent when he wrote that “this influential and very American notion combined in turn with another equally powerful set of ideas about American exceptionalism, a condition which described the obvious fact (at least obvious to most Americans) that the United States was both distinctive and superior to all other nations”. The implication is that power seeking whether through the carrot or stick approach remains fulcrum to US foreign policy everywhere including the Middle East. The theory of exceptionalism does not only renders US immune to criticism from abroad, it also provides that country the God-given duty (so it feels) to spread the dream and promise of America beyond its own shores. US foreign policy in the Middle East has therefore managed to carve out an indispensable special position for itself in the long Israeli-Palestinian peace process, much the same way realists argue Russia has done for itself in the Middle East with respect with the Syria civil war.

It is important for US to play that paternal role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process if Europe was not ready to call the shots. As it is known, the British have lost any moral right it has in this say because as some scholars contend they are the very source of the current instability between the two parties.

Realism as a theory of IR has come under criticism for many reasons. Professor Stephen Sestanovich for instance maintained that realism tells you everything you need to know about international politics if you do not want to know much. This is because of its straitjacket approach to understanding international politics. Constructivists who are dismissive of both realist and liberalist explained that whether anarchy is the permissive cause of war or cooperation is a state construct. It is not handed down like manna from heaven. This explains Nicholas Onuf’s work (Anarchy is what states make of It. the social construction of power politics). Therefore whilst there are other theories that expatiate developments of international politics, realism puts one in a restricted box.

This perhaps explains why even though realism did a fantastic job in explaining the origins of the Cold War it failed to predict how the Cold War ended. This notwithstanding, the realist paradigm continues to remain relevant in understanding, explaining and shaping international politics in

this 21<sup>st</sup> century as well as explaining the jealously guarded position of the US as the honest broker. This is very much reflected in the attempt of the Trump administration to use economic coercive means to force the Palestinian Authority to the negotiating table after the former's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

### 1.9. Literature Review

In reviewing the literature for this study, the whole concept of an honest broker would be discussed in order to put it into context and also to have an appreciation of the concept. The preceding chapters will then specifically examine the role of the US as an honest broker or not.

The historical contextualization of the term honest broker is in order. The term honest broker is often used in the geopolitical arena and is defined as "a person, group, or country that serves as a mediator to help other people reach an agreement. It was first employed, applied and attributed the German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck during the 1878 Congress of Berlin. In the Berlin Conference Bismarck sought the application of the term to establish the position of Germany as the honest broker in resolving the growing tensions that existed between Russia and Austria-Hungary. In this tension, both Russia and Austria-Hungary were both Germany's partner in what was known as the "Dreikaiserbund" or Three-Emperors League -- over the Balkans. Therefore, Germany had to be meticulously strategic in dealing with its equally important partners. In this development the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck referred to himself as an "ehrlicher Makler" (honest broker) as he brought together the representatives of various countries to settle the Balkan question.

What is relevant for a work such as this is not only the historical information on the concept of honest broker, but what was expected to be seen on the part of Germany as an honest broker. Put differently, how was an honest broker supposed to behave or what were some of the features an honest broker is supposed to display. The Economist continues that as the honest broker, Bismarck displayed impartiality for Germany in resolving the dispute. This is because his major interest as it were, was found in bringing an amicable solution to the deal that in the end preserved the tripartite alliance rather than in the substance of the dispute itself. In his work "Which side are you on? Bias, Credibility and Mediation", Kydd argued that those involved in mediation are often thought to be more useful and active if they portray neutrality or have no selective side over matters in dispute.

The imperativeness of the impartiality of that broker is found in the logic that the parties must believe that the mediator is telling the truth, especially if the mediator counsels one side to make a concession because their opponent has high resolve and will fight. The second feature of what is required of an honest broker is the fact that whoever or whichever state is performing that role should have appreciable and unique diplomatic profile in the region. The logical conclusion one could draw from this is that then it gives the honest broker the leverage and the ability to call the belligerent parties to the negotiation table and that the US is able to do that. The United States has ensured that it has cut itself an enviable position of an indispensable force not only in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, but substantially in the Middle East. From Iran, to Syria, to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East Peace process. Seemingly, its conspicuousness in South East Asia cannot be overemphasized.

What must be made clear is that impartiality according to the Economist does not mean indifferent or disinterest. This is because by performing the role of an honest broker Bismarck was protecting the national security interest of Germany itself and therefore had a significant stake in a resolution. If that is the case then the US even though claims to be an honest broker also does it in the total pursuit of its foreign policy. This explains how eventually as discussed in the next paragraph the US eventually finds an important role for itself in the Middle East and does not intent to relent on that role.

Before World War I, the US by its policy of non-interventionism steered away from this region, especially with the former colonial powers of Britain and France which were dominant in this geographical area. However, with the recession of the powers of the Ottoman and British Empire, the US after the termination of the Second World War, took eminence in the Middle East due to its varied interest. So that as has been established by Dodge, President Woodrow Wilson's twelfth point of his fourteen points' agenda directly led to the transformation of the Middle East. Dodge argued that in this speech Wilson demanded that the non-Turkish speaking nationalities who were ruled by the fallen Ottoman Empire should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely and unmolested opportunity of autonomous development. As it turned out this became a rallying call for Arab nationalist across the region. In essence, therefore, Dodge is of the opinion that even though the US purported to be largely non-interventionist during this period, its political gesture showed it could not forever stay aloof from Middle East politics and for that the author maintains that because Woodrow Wilson's twelfth point and the effects it had he could be known as the originator of the newly independent state in the Middle East.

The point is that whilst what president Wilson did could have incited Arab nationalism, it must also not be forgotten that the US had an immediate as well as a long term interest in advancing peace (which it claimed, but was done in the national interest of the United States government in the context of the Suez Canal) and had also established some credibility as a mediator with Egypt by saving that country from total defeat in the Suez Canal Crisis and had also enhanced credit with Israel with the enormous support it provided that country in the 1973 war.

One could establish a number of reasons for US involvement and eventually the leverage it has come to have to be able to play the role of an honest broker. First of all, the containment of Soviet influence in the bipolar international system led to the US establishing its dominance in the region with the signing of bilateral treaties. Secondly, the migration crisis arising from the Holocaust led to the US supporting the expatriation of the Jews to the 'Holy Land' and its subsequent leaning to the State of Israel. Thirdly, the emergence of oil as an important commodity for development entrenched the US's presence and interest in the region which jointly possess 64% of the world's oil reserves. "Driven by geostrategic, economic and domestic concerns", the policies of the various presidents of the United States, from President Woodrow Wilson to Obama have oscillated between protecting its national interest and the restoration of a semblance of peace and order in the murky and unstable region.

John P. Burke in his work *The Neutral/Honest Broker Role in Foreign-Policy Decision Making: A Reassessment* reveals how the seminal work Alexander George which establishes six tasks that are needed of the role of the managerial custodian. They include the following: "Balancing actor resources within the policymaking system; 2. Strengthening weaker advocates; 3. Bringing in new advisers to argue for unpopular options; 4. Setting up new channels of information so that the president and other advisers are not dependent upon a single channel; 5. Arranging for independent evaluation of decisional premises and options, when necessary; and 6. Monitoring the workings of the policymaking process to identify possibly dangerous malfunctions and instituting appropriate corrective action".

In his work, Rashid Khalidi maintains that the term honest broker was used in 1991 when the US in anticipation and preparation for the Madrid Conference sent letters of assurances to all the parties involved in which that government assured all the parties involved in the negotiations that "the US would act as an honest broker". Similarly, during the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that occurred in Washington in 2008, the then Secretary of State of the US, Condoleezza Rice told the Palestinian delegation, she wanted to meet with them privately "so I can tell you what I think of your position without hurting my role as the honest broker". The implication of this is that by this time the US had projected itself and in fact, has assumed the position of an honest broker in the peace process in the Middle East. Till date, whether contested or not, in or in practice, the US claims to continue to play this role. The third chapter analyzes the credibility of the position assumed by the US as well as its viability in the wake of Donald Trump's presidency.

#### **1.10. Research Methodology**

The study adopts the qualitative approach for its investigations. It is the main research design used in the investigations of this study as well as testing the validity or otherwise of the hypothesis. Qualitative research design seemed very suitable for this study as it seeks to conduct an interpretive study in which reference and emphasis is placed on *Verstehen* (understanding). This is a study that takes into consideration politics of identity including nationalism, the belief system of a people and the essence of land or territory in international politics which are brings a much more nuanced perspective to International Relations. Therefore an approach like qualitative is suitable in that regard. It is an approach that makes provision for symbolic interactionism (the symbolic meaning people attach to their behaviour)

#### **1.10. Sources of Data**

The main sources of data for the research is secondary. Secondary data was retrieved from books, journals articles, news reports, as well as multiple internet sources. News reports from international media outlets like the Washington Post, were relevant. Information from official websites sites and works of expert institutions on US foreign policies and world foreign policy like the Council on Foreign Relations, Brookings Institutions, Huffington's Post among others were consulted. Information from the international news outlet like the BBC, Aljazeera, CNN, the Guardian, and New York Times would also be consulted. Information gleaned from such sources were comprehensively analyzed using the qualitative methodology.

#### **1.11. Organization of Chapters**

The study is arranged into four chapters. Chapter one constitutes the the introduction. This is the chapter that provides the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions and the objectives of the study. The hypothesis, the scope, rationale as well as the study methodology are dealt with. The rest of chapter one deals with the theoretical framework, literature review, study methodology as well as sources of data collection, and the organization of the study.

Chapter two provides political trajectories of the conflicts and instability between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It also deals with the creation of the Jewish state of Israel and current status of land distribution, Israeli forceful settlement and the question of Jerusalem.

Chapter three examines the successive role the US government has played as an honest broker and how these roles have been meaningful or substantively honest. It ascertains whether or not the United States could continue to claim to be an honest broker.

Chapter four which is the final chapter comprises of the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## Endnotes

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## Chapter Two

### An Overview of the Political Trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

#### 2.0. Introduction

The mayhem between Israel and Palestine has raged on since the establishment of the Israeli state by the United Nations in 1948 after the former suffered political persecution inspired by Nazis' ideology and centuries of anti-Semitism. Animosity between these two parties have not been practically brought to an amicable solution regardless of attempts by the international community to do so. With special reference to nationalism and territory, this chapter critically examines the concepts of nationalism and territory and their relevance to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. It is followed by a discussion of the conflict between the two parties and the dynamics thereof.

#### 2.1.1. Nationalism

As a concept nationalism is a janus faced political tool with both detrimental and positive impacts. This concept is one that has assumed relevance in international politics in modern times and among other factors has contributed to certain conflictual developments in the international systems. Nationalism is related to the principle of nationhood. A nation is a group of people who view themselves as being linked to one another in a manner. The philosophical underpinnings of such groupings who eventually call themselves a nation is that they consider themselves to be culturally, ethnically and linguistically related. A nation therefore is more of a psychological fixation than anything else. The concept of nationhood is the driving force behind nationalism and at the heart of nationalism is a strong cultural identity. Nationalism is necessarily a strong feeling of personal identification with a group of people, places and patterns of behavior that make up a nation and its very way of life. Morgenthau for instance maintained that nationalism is achieved when members are defined in terms of language, culture, common origin, and race or in the decision of an individual to belong to a nation. Through everyday interaction, an individual grows genuine feelings of love, identity and commitment to their family, friends and eventually these feelings form the basis for their commitment to the nation and this in essence transforms into nationalism (a sense of nation).

In his seminal work, *the Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington maintained and assertively revealed the essence of the cultural drive in shaping post-Cold War international relations. He is of the conviction that ideologies provided explanations to the conflictual relationships of the world during the Cold War International system. The war also divided the world into various classes of the First World, Second World and Third World. However, what transpired after the Cold War is a world not informed by ideological leanings and classes, but by civilization and at the heart of civilization is culture (highest cultural groupings).

Huntington noted that at the end of the Cold War, ideologies have outlived its usefulness and increasingly, people define themselves on the basis of ancestry, language, religion, and customs manifested in a common culture. Nationalism essentially is the cultural element of unity that creates a sense of belongingness among a people so they feel motivated to act to protect their interest. Nationalism is group consciousness as well as a psychological and sociological fact. To Pfaltzgraf nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind and an act of consciousness. It may exist in its myriad forms including efforts to raise standard of living, to win more gold than other

nations at the Olympics and even in some instances, a motivation to conquer adjoining territories. From these few examples it is evident that depending on how it is used, nationalism could be constructive and helpful, benign and moderate or destructive and dangerous.

As a psychological tool that binds people who identify with one another, nationalism plays an immense role in international affairs. In its more extreme form, nationalism does more simply than psychologically bind people who identify with each other together, instill pride in them and make them assert self-rule. It has been revealed how nationalism along with economics (Capitalism) have led a people to ascribe greatness to themselves over others and create a desire to control and exploit other peoples, their territory and their wealth. The national rivalries that led to World War I as well as Nazism and Fascism territorial expansion that triggered the Second World War and in the particular case of Nazism the feelings of Aryan superiority over all other races which motivated the extermination of Jews in Germany in the 1940s are cases in point. It is under these sentimental feelings of identity and attachment that in the analysis of this study which serve as the combustion engine that drives the Zionist Movement of the Israelis and the Palestinian Nationalist Movement.

### 2.1.2. Territory

There is no doubt in international politics in modern times that the acquisition and consistent control of a territory is the essence of a state. As it stands there cannot be a state without a territory, but there can be a nation without a state (if a nation is perceived as a sentimental psychological fixation as Papp makes us know. Territory is therefore an indispensable element of statehood in both International law and International politics. It is therefore not astonishing that for the purposes of International Law the Montevideo Convention of 1933 in article 1, clearly establishes the essence of a territory as a prerequisite and a basic characteristic for statehood among the various features of statehood.

It should be noted that International law in its traditional sense according J.Briely and Malcom Shaw are laws that govern interstate relationships. International law came into being because of states, even though other entities have also acquired international legal personality in current times. It therefore follows that without the emergence of modern concept of states especially after the Treaty of Westphalia, there would not have been international Law. It is this quintessential status of a state which has led some scholars to assume the position that only states are subjects of International Law. Therefore, traditionally for a people to acquire international legal personality, they need to be within a state to be able to interact with the international community of states and in order to do this the starting point is to identify and consistently control an identifiable core of a territory among other features to gain recognition as a state. It follows therefore that there cannot be a state without a territory. Even though there is no hierarchy to the features embedded in the Montevideo Convention there is the maiden need for a territory to accommodate a permanent population or an effective government in order to have interstate relations (although some of these features are contested, Shaw). The primacy of territory in international politics is also revealed by the numerous clauses in the United Nations Charter, Articles 2(4), 2(7) and the 1970 Declaration of the Principle of International law that stress the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states which shall not be violated by the use of force or threats. Such is the importance of territory in international politics.

Motivated primarily by nationalism a group may lay claims over a territory either through legitimate and illegitimate means as a natural birth right in its attempt at state creation. According to Pfaltzgraf the most significant openly factor required for the creation of nationalities is a common territory or rather a state (the latter which still requires a territory). According to Morgenthau the preservation of the natural character and more particularly, the development of its creative faculties is the supreme task of nations. In order to fulfil this supreme task the nation needs power which will protect it against other nations and stimulate its own development. This can be overall achieved by the formation of state. In other words, every nation needs a state and as Morgenthau puts it *One nation-one state*. It is under such nationalistic sentiment and the necessity for survival of a nation that the formation of a state becomes urgent. Under the circumstance it makes the imperative need of territory very critical.

To put this in perspective, the actions of the Israelis and the Palestinians are both influenced by the binding ties of nationalism that make them feel unique, different and therefore pitted against each other. Again the need for the survival of a nation through the formation of a state makes the issue of territory very crucial. In fact, as Pfaltzgraf makes it known, the most important openly factor for the creation of nationalities is a common territory or rather a state (the latter which still requires a territory). Therefore, whilst the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is motivated and exacerbated by nationalist sentiments, the bone of contention is over territory. While the Zionist Movement is the nationalist bedrock of the Israel state, that of the Palestine is the Palestinian Nationalism which draws inspiration from Arab Nationalism that sprang up after World War I. Therefore, along its historic continuum, Palestine became the object of conflicting political and territorial claim. In time, this played an important part in the development of two separate but conflicting nationalisms: Arab nationalism and Zionism. Both forms of nationalism strove to gain control over a common territory.

Now that an appreciation of the immutable dynamics of nationalism and territory have been examined to contextualize our understanding of the conflict in the first place a chronological political trajectory of the conflict between the parties is in order.

## **2.2. Sowing the seeds of Discontent: The British and the Israeli-Palestine Conflicts**

It is an undeniable fact that any attempt at understanding the conflicts between the Israelis and the Palestinian must recognize the historical dimension which underscore the conflict. Discussions of the conflict is often replete with interpretations that attempt to explain it as a moral, psychological, legal or political case abstracted from history. Hammond has warned that “no serious discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict can take place without an understanding of its root causes. The ongoing violence in the Middle East must be understood in its historical context”.

A number of historical actors and development could be ascribed as the root cause of the conflict. The first is attributed to the British occupation of Palestine. After World War I the British under the League of Nations gained control over the geographical space of Palestine (a region today including Israel, the occupied West Bank, and the Gaza Strip) in what came to be known as the British Mandate of Palestine in 1922. It was the foreign activities of the British and their political maneuvers that would eventually sow the seeds for the conflict between the parties.

The British in a way had sown seeds of deceit in the period leading to its formal position of Palestine. The point is that in an attempt to overthrow the sick and weak power of the Ottoman empire whose repressive regimes and attempt of modernization were not in conformity with the significant Arab population, the British incited and promised the leaders of the Arab world full inheritance and political rights of the area known as Palestine once the latter led an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Turk. As it would turn out, this agreement which was signed in 1915 never saw the light of the day. In reality though it was part of a cynical and mischievous scheme established only to help ensure British control over the region. It was just constructed to enlist the support of the Arab world in revolting against the Ottoman Empire.

In the year that followed, the British in what came to be known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, promised the French the latter would be given control of the territory that today includes Lebanon and Syria. The biggest promise of the British that was alter the political landscape of the Middle East in what ensued as the Israeli-Palestinian was what took place in 1917 in the popular Balfour Declaration of 1917.

A letter written by the British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour, which popularly became known as the Balfour Declaration, to the British peer financier and representative of the Zionist movement, Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild contained an announcement that was approved by the British Cabinet. According to the announcement, the British Government had openly made it known it favored “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”, on the notion “that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”. In effect, the British government had promised the Palestine to themselves, the Arabs and the Jewish community. As it turned out the Balfour declaration was held by the Jews community as granting them legitimacy over the area of Palestine. The British had therefore legally committed themselves to the Jewish demand for a Jewish Palestinian homeland. The point is that the British promised to the Jews what they did not have and what was originally an Arab geographical space. This was undoubtedly expected to blow up as no people of traditional inhabitants of land will just let go and allow their lands to be occupied by outside invaders. This was the beginning of the land question or territory which lies at the bottom of the conflict. This has seldom happened.

## **2.3. The Rise of Jewish nationalism-Zionism**

Also very important as a historical cause of the Israeli-Palestine conflict was the presence of a growing Zionist movement with increasingly powerful lobbying capabilities in the 1800s. The late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was the Golden age of nationalism in Europe and one of such area where nationalist sentiment was strong was the Hapsburg Austria-Hungarian Empire at least in which ten different nations all wanted their own states. In that ultra-nationalistic empire was a Jewish reporter known as Theodore Herzl who had hoped that the Jews could integrate into European nations, but soon became convinced and that the Jews people needed to move out of Europe and settle in their own state. When the question of location came up, three places . They included Palestine, Argentina and Uganda. In the end Palestine was preferable since it was a “historic home” for the Jews. This Jewish nationalist sentiments as it became popular and hysterical across Europe among the Jews became known as Zionism. Therefore at the same time Britain was making promises in support of Arab independence, there was a growing movement among European Jews to establish a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, the historical location of the Biblical nations of Israel and Judea. This Jewish idea of a biblical homeland infused with the growing sense of Zionism created an entrenched sense among the Jewish nation of a natural birth right to the Palestine, not to talk about the fact that whilst denying the Arabs control over the Palestine as they were promised, the British had begun to honour the Balfour Declarations. The Jewish migration had actually begun before the declaration so that within the periods of 1881 and 1914 the Jewish population of Palestine, that was then a province of the Ottoman Empire, grew from twenty-four thousand to eighty-five thousand. From the end of World War I through 1932, Jewish immigrants averaged about 10,000 a year bringing the total Jewish population to 175,000 at the end of that year whilst the Arab population was 800,000.

Whilst all these developments were important, the international system level of analysis cannot

be overemphasized. What was to facilitate and intensify Zionism's call for a Jewish nationalist state as well as attract international sympathy for the Jewish community which as it were triggered violent response from the original inhabitants of the land now known as Palestine was Hitler's rise to power and the beginning of Nazi persecution of Jews. This development added 200,000 more Jews from Europe to the Jews population in five years and this brought the total number of Jews to 400,000 in 1937 and by 1938 they were 30% of the total Jewish population in the Palestine. The growing Jewish population adopted the strategy of buying settlements from absentees non-Arab land owners and dislodging Palestinian farmers who were working there. The point is that by taking custody of both the land and the labour the Palestine Jewish community sought to build a more secured community. In essence therefore, the Arab Palestine became victims of victims (Arab Palestine were victims to a people (Jewish) victimized under Hitler). The reality is that by this time the discontent among the Arabs was already crystalized.

As expected, Palestinians supported by the Arab world did not stand aloof. Inspired by Arab nationalism they also mounted a fierce response to Israel's forceful occupation of their territory. Palestinian Nationalism has its roots in Arab nationalism. Arab nationalism and consciousness on the other hand can be blamed on the effects of the First World War and the activities of Zionism. Arab nationalism was a direct response to Ottoman (Turkish) oppression and European colonialism and the Palestinians have always been part of the Arab World sharing with it many of the internal developments as well as some of its external influences. The seemingly increasing influx of Jewish immigrants converted the threats of the national home into a clear and present danger and triggered Arab resistance on a national scale for the first time in the form of a general strike throughout in 1935. Then from 1937 to 1939 the Palestinians launched a wholesale campaign of sabotage and terror against the British and the Jews when the former recommended partition of land among the two parties as a solution.

With the help of the Jewish militia the British brutally suppressed the Palestinian revolt, but also clearly got the message the Palestinian sent. The effect was the British administration in 1939 issued the White Paper which imposed strict restrictions on Jewish immigrations and land purchase and at the same time making preparations for one Palestine state controlled by the Arab majority, but with constitutional protection for the Jewish minority within a period of ten years. The position of the British left both parties unhappy. The Jews were disgruntled by their restricted mobility to the Palestine especially at a crucial time when they particularly needed to leave Europe because of persecution, yet the Arab-Palestinians were also unhappy about waiting for ten years for a prospect of a state and having to share with the Jews.

#### **2.4. The UN and the formation of the state of Israel**

It should be mentioned that after the World War II the British were economically weary from their significant involvement in both world wars. They therefore could not continue to maintain control over their vast oversea colonial territories. Internal pressures from such territories also meant the more that such controls were now under threat. It comes as no surprise that one of Britain's fruitful colonies in Asia (India) got independence in 1947, whilst in the same year the former solicited for the help of the Americans in supporting former British control areas of Turkey and Greece. The same was to happen to British Mandate over Palestine. By 1947 a number of factors had exacerbated the situation in the Palestine. British exhaustion coupled with resistance from the Zionist movement and the activities of its powerful lobbying machinery, world sympathy for Jews in the wake of the holocaust and importantly American pressure (a point which will be explored much later) compelled London to hand over the Palestinian question to the newly created United Nations.

The United Nations created the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) a special body tasked to investigate all issues pertaining to the problem of Palestine and recommended solutions to be considered by the General Assembly at its regular session in September 1947. The Jewish side was represented by the Jewish Agency for Palestine whilst the Arab Higher Committee spoke for the Palestinian Arabs. From the onset, the Arab Higher Authority refused to participate on the grounds that the whole process was one sided as the United Nations refused to look into the issue of independence and failed to separate the issue of European Jewish from the Palestinian question. Put differently if the UN wants to conduct investigations into the experience of tragedy of the European Jews under Nazism, that should not affect the relinquish of British mandate over Palestine and granting them independence as a state. In the end though in 1947, the UN adopted resolution 181(II) which was a partition plan that made provision for the ending of British control, the gradual withdrawal of British armed forces. The detailed plan included the following;

- a. The creation of the Arab and Jewish states, not later than 1 October 1948
- b. Division of Palestine into eight parts: three were allotted to the Arab State
- c. and three to the Jewish State, with the town of Jaffa forming an Arab enclave within Jewish territory, and
- d. An international regime for Jerusalem, the eighth division, to be administered by the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

This resolution was accepted by the Jewish Agency although not totally satisfied and swiftly started to make plans to consolidating the Jewish state of Palestine. The Arab Higher Authority

however, found this resolution unacceptable on the basis that it violated the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which granted people the right to decide their own destiny and that “they would oppose any scheme that provided for the dissection, segregation or partition of their country or which gave special and preferential rights and status to a minority”.

### **2.5. The Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949**

May 14<sup>th</sup> 1948 was the day the British surrendered its control over the Palestine and removed its army. On that same day the Jewish Agency swiftly declared the creation of the state of Israel on territory allotted to it by the partition plan. In May 1948, David Ben Gurion and the Jewish People’s Council single handedly declared the creation of Israel, “the Jewish State in Palestine”, while leaving Israel’s borders undefined. That was to the Arab Palestine the last straw that broke the camel’s back.

As was expected fierce conflicts broke out between the Arabs and the Jewish communities. The Arab state of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and then Iraq marched their armies against that of Israel. It is important to note that forceful acquisition of Arab territory by the Israelis and the change in the geopolitical landscape began from this period. Under the circumstance the Israelis perceived this war as the beginning of their nation whilst to the Palestinians on the other hand it was the Nakba, the catastrophe as they would become stateless if they did not fight to the last drop of blood in them. Israel was able to turn the war in its favour and by the time the war came to an end they were in control of more territory (including West Jerusalem) than were allotted to it by according to the partition plan. What was left of the Palestine fell under the effective control of Jordan (what is today known as the West Bank which included East Jerusalem, whilst Egypt controlled the Gaza strip. In this development about 750,000 Palestinians were taken out from their homelands and became refugees as their lands were expropriated. Ceasefire agreements were signed in 1949, and the borders agreed upon here became the only recognized borders of Israel. These borders are known as the Green Line.

Close to two decades after the 1949, the unresolved Palestinian question created an insecure peace, punctuated by violence and acts of force, until 1967, when Israel came to occupy the entire area of the former British Mandate of Palestine. The third part of the conflict started in June 1967 after Israel’s victory in the Six-Day War. The victory of Israel enabled that country to “annex East Jerusalem and begin the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Golan Heights and Sinai, adding about 1.5 million Arabs to the area under its control”. Israel wanted to expand its territory while “concurrently avoiding annexing the Palestinian population i.e. the Allon Plan”.

In the end the UN passed Resolution 242 outlining a “basic framework for achieving peace including Israel withdrawing from the territory acquired in the war and all participants recognizing the rights of both Palestinians and Israelis state to exist in their own state which of course did not happen”. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Israeli government had begun the establishment in what had been Palestinian territory including the East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

One of the hardest fought wars of all in the Middle East in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was when in 1973 Arab nations led by Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur War. This was a very sensitive political development that nearly resulted in a nuclear War between the two Superpowers, USA and the Soviet Union. It is worth noting that at the heart of this war was territory acquisition inspired by Arab nationalism. In the view of the Arab soldiers of Egypt and Syria it was a battle for Arab territory forcefully occupied by Israel, whilst from the view point of Israel, it was a fight for their country’s survival. The Israeli troops were taken unaware as Egyptian forces swept deep into the Sinai Peninsula, whereas Syria also struggled to defeat Israeli forces in the Golan Heights that would have eventually driven them out. Israel eventually counterattacked and recaptured the Golan Heights.

### **2.6. The First Intifada of 1987 to 1993**

In the timespan since 1973, there have been two violent Palestinian uprisings against Israel’s settlements. The Palestinian uprisings became known as Intifada literally meaning “to shake off”. It was the effects of the Intifada that would trigger the first formal peace talks between the two parties aimed at resolving the conflict. The peace talks were first the Camp David Accords and later the Oslo Accords. Developments of this period led to the formation of the Palestinian National Authority. The first of these uprisings occurred in the late 1987 and 1993 when Palestinians took to the streets in protest, and boycotted Israeli products and services while deliberately avoiding to pay Israeli taxes. There have also been many violent acts, and allegations that the Israeli forces had been given commands to carry out brutal punishments. The Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza also retaliated by forming the Hamas movement, which rapidly turns to violence against Israel. It should be mentioned that Hamas gained support not only because of its militancy and fighting for the defenseless Palestinians, but also because of the public appeal it made to its people by constructing clinics, schools, mosques and a range of other social welfare projects.

The first Intifada was significant to the extent that, in the Israeli perspective that was the first time their authority had been seriously challenged and this led to the realization that their settlements could not continue without a permanent solution. The Intifada also served as a turning point for the PLO leadership that were in hiding and in exile whose leader, Yasser Arafat,

finally saw the need to find a permanent two state solution; a state for an independent Palestine and an independent Israel. Consequently, the Intifada laid the foundation for emergence of formal talks between the Israeli and the Palestine in what came to be known as the Camp David Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process. The Camp David Accords was signed by President Jimmy Carter, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in September 1978. This was to be followed by the Oslo Accords which formally became known as the Declaration of Principles (DOP). These processes are thoroughly examined to ascertain the role of the US as an honest broker and whether not the peace process was mutually beneficial to all parties all singularly beneficial.

### **2.7. The Second Intifada (2000-2005)**

The second intifada which began in 2000 just some few years after the Oslo Accords was concluded was even more devastating than the first leading to severe material and human damages to all the parties involved. Ariel Sharon's visitation of the Temple Mount with over a thousand armed guards in the Old City of Jerusalem marked the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000. Muslims regard the al-aqsa as the third holiest site in Islam after the Ka'bah in Mecca and the Holy prophet's mosque in Medina. The temple is also the holiest site in Judaism. The action therefore was perceived as by Palestinians as very provocative and this sparked demonstrations by the Palestinians that eventually culminated into the second intifada. The Israeli army dispersed the protesters using tear gas and rubber bullets. The second Intifada which lasted for five years led to the death of 3000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis. In 2002 the Israeli claiming to act in defense of civilians began to build a wall around the West Bank. However, instead of following the barriers it had forcefully captured during the 1967 war, the barrier was built to include many Israeli settlement on the Israeli side. The fatal impasse between the parties would continue until February 2005 when during a summit at the Egyptian resort of Sharm al-Sheikh, Mahmoud Abbas and Ariel Sharon declared a truce. Both leaders expressed hope that the informal ceasefire will lead to a new era of hope for the region.

Nearly two decades after the end of the second Intifada, Hamas has frequently launched rockets attacks into Israel and Israel has responded with extended and extremely violent invasions of Palestinian territories that have seen thousands and thousands of Palestinians killed including militants and civilians. Israel's response has been catastrophic. The Israeli targeted Killing Case is a case in point. There are now about 550,000 Israeli settlers living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and these settlement are illegal under international law.

Whilst this geographic hotspot has seen conflict and land claims for a significant part of history, the modern-day Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not based on thousand-year-old historical or biblical conflict between the two populations. Nor is it a historically deep-rooted religious struggle between Judaism and Islam. Rather, its context is predominantly rooted in territorial claims, complex modern politics, and issues regarding sovereignty of the nation-state entity, but most importantly the inconspicuous, yet, ubiquitous nationalists' sentiments.

## **ENDNOTES**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE AND POSITION OF THE US AS AN HONEST BROKER**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is an analysis of the role and position of the US as an honest broker in the Middle East Peace Process. In doing this, the chapter examines US special relationship with Israel as a background to the analysis. This is followed by the various Peace process held, the specific role the US has played in it and whether the US has been a neutral arbiter or an honest broker or not. It analyses by investigating whether the US maintains credibility as the honest broker in the wake of the Jerusalem question. The approach to the peace process by the Obama and the Trump

administration are also examined to explore the sharp contrast between the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45 Presidents of the US in relation to the Middle East Peace Process and the Iran deal in general.

### 3.1. U.S and Israel: an Anatomy of a Special Relationship

The United States of America has assumed a posture of a neutral arbiter in the Middle East peace process. However the crucial role of this position, and the huge responsibilities that are birthed with it, the US seems to have a very close relationship with one of the sides to the conflict (Israel) that has merited a description of such a relationship in international relations as “special”. Noam Chomsky, John Meirsheimer and Stephen Walt among other notable IR experts have expended significant intellectual energy into demystifying such a relationship and its implication on the role the US play as an honest broker and on the peace process as a whole. Such scholarly opinion are worth visiting for the purpose of this chapter.

While it is tempting to delve straight to the unprecedented diverse support systems the US provides for the Israeli government, an anatomy of the reason behind such aid would be useful to explicate the logic and motivation behind such special relationship. This done first from a constructivist approach and as is recalled constructivism as is known does not take matters as it is and accepted as given.

The relationship from a constructivist perspective is by no cast of doubt rooted in historical and cultural affinity. In the first instance, the murder and suffering of the Jewish population of Israel in Europe provided the solid foundation of the relationship between the two parties herein. The empathy generated by such atrocities is in the opinion of Dodge is the bedrock upon which the American-Israeli relationship was constructed. Those who espouse this argument argue that because Jews suffered from persecution and can only be safe in a Jewish state, they deserve some special treatment of a sort from the United States.

It is also argued that there is some perceived similarities between the history of the US and the Israelis in that the former like the latter is a Settler nation which was created by scores of migrants from Europe some of whom fled from their different kinds of persecution. One could outright established the connection like Dodge has done that the self-perception of building a state and a society from scratch is closely related to Israel’s myth of formation. This is also against the background that the democratic tenets of the US which is purported to be that country’s pride is shared significantly by Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East surrounded by hostile dictatorships. Israel is therefore first and foremost according to the pro-Israel elements a democracy and it is a weak country surrounded hostile Arab states.

Then as part of the constructivist causality of the special relationship between the two is the religions dimension. There is seemingly a strong Christian factor in the American society that demonstrate some strong affinity with the idea of the Jewish returning to the holy land; an idea that seems to resonate with their biblical knowledge. There is also the realist explanation of the US-Israeli relations which is much more straightforward and simplified. This is very much situated within the period of the Cold War and its aftermath. Within the Cold War international system, Israel served as the most significant ally of the US in the Middle East which was then surrounded by Arab regimes with ties to the Soviet Union. This was in essence a geopolitical argument explaining the strong alliance between the two states. The Cold War has ended, but America continues to maintain a permanent interest in the region especially when it was the victor of the War, yet faces threat of being overtaken economically by China. The interest of the US is therefore continually furthered by the strategic, diplomatic and economic interest of the US in the Middle East.

In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and especially after the 9/11 incidence the basis of US support for Israel also emanates from the realist point of view that both states are threatened by terrorist originating from the Arab world. The point is that in this calculations, Israel is seen as a crucial ally because its enemies are also the enemies of the US.

The final argument according to Dodge that seeks to explain the longevity and strength of the alliance between Israel and the US would reveal domestic political calculations in what has constituted as the Israel Lobby. There is a very well organized lobby in the US designed to ensure US foreign policy is always very supportive of Israel. As a term that according to Noam Chomsky was coined by Seth Tillman, the Israel Lobby is a designation of the powerful and unavoidable American Jewish opinion in American governance who make significant efforts in their daily lives to bend US foreign policy so that it advances Israel’s interest. Mearsheimer says it better when he argued that “Israel is not part of American foreign policy, Israel is a domestic policy”.

Mearsheimer and Walts have been ardent critics of the Israel lobby and in their opinion the negative impact it cast on US foreign policy in the Middle East. The activities of the lobby goes beyond just ensuring that the Jewish community votes for a pro-Israel American president, but also include raising funds, writing letters and rallying behind pro-Israel organizations. American born Jews have formed various remarkable large organizations and the most notable and powerful of them all is the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPC) which has a membership of 100,000 and an annual budget of 47 million dollars. AIPC has been so successful by deploying both constructivist and realist arguments in mobilizing American public opinion in support of Israel.

The powerful status of this organization was demonstrated in the work of Mearsheimer and Walt who revealed that a 1997 *Fortune* Magazine inquiry asked Congress and their staff to list the most powerful lobby in Washington. In the end the Israel Lobby came second to American Association of Retired Person (AARP), but certainly ahead and before other powerful organizations like the AFL-CIO and the National Rifle Association (NRA). A similar conclusion was reached in 2005 when a *National Journal* study was carried out.

It is a mixture of the above reasons that compelled Harry Truman the US President in 1948 to set a precedence for future American Presidents to deal with Israel. Truman was the main American influence that pushed for the emigration of the people of Israel to the Palestine as a response to the horrors of the Holocaust. The huge diplomatic pressure he brought to bear at the UN was partly responsible for the division of the Palestine between an Arab and Jewish states. He was one of the few world leaders to grant immediate statutory declaration to Israel as a state the moment it was formed on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1948. Since then majority of American foreign policy opinion have gravitated in favour of Israel. The various ways America's foreign policy are lenient, moderate and special towards Israel are examined from the diplomatic and political and economic circles.

### **3.2. Levels of Support of the US Government to Israel**

Noam Chomsky has described the Israeli-American relationship as rather unique and that he made that remarks speaks directly to the specific handouts from the US to Israel that also speaks voluminously of the special relationship between the two. It is for this reason that an analysis of the validity of the reasons for such unique relationship is of the essence here and is discussed in the subsequent section. This analysis is however, preceded by the various levels of support for Israel which could be classified as diplomatic and material in nature.

The diplomatic support US provide to Israel is unwavering. Too many a time the US had stood alone in vetoing UN resolutions mostly against the forceful settlements of Israel in Jerusalem or the human rights violations of the Palestine. Since 1982 the US government has blocked 33 UN Security Council resolutions that were vital to the interests Israel. This is a number greater than the combined total of vetoes cast by all the other Security Council members. Many of the efforts by the Arab states to put Israel's nuclear arsenal on the International Atomic Energy Agency's agenda has been vehemently opposed by US.

Noam Chomsky is of the opinion that the special relationship between the two countries is more concretely expressed in the military and economic aid US provides Israel. Chomsky continues that it is difficult to predict when the special relationship started, but prior to 1967 even before the relationship had matured Israel was the highest recipient of per capita aid from the U.S. than any other country. Since 1967 Israel has been the largest annual recipient of direct economic and military aid from the US. The record is that the US provides Israel with about \$3 billion in direct foreign assistance annually and that is tantamount to roughly one-fifth of America's foreign-aid budget. The implication is that the United States gives each Israeli a direct subsidy worth about \$500 per year in per capita terms. Chomsky even believes that the amount in per capita terms is even on the low-side. It is the opinion of Chomsky that if all other things are taken into accounts the amount per capita income for every Israeli citizen from the US government in recent times is something like 1000 dollars. This is particularly striking especially when Israel is now an industrial formidable state with per capita income along the lines of South Korea and Spain.

The special deals Israel gets from Washington are mouthwatering if one considers the fact that while other aid recipients gets their monies in quarterly instalments Israel receives their at the beginning of every fiscal year. The implication is that Israel earns extra income on its aid than others. Most importantly, the state of Israel is the sole country that does not have to give details with regard to the aid given to it by the US.

The US has significantly contributed to the military advancement and sophistication of Israel with nearly \$3 billion to develop weapons systems like the *Lavi* aircraft that the Pentagon did not want or need, while giving Israel access to top-drawer U.S. weaponry like Blackhawk helicopters and F-16 jets. It is known that although Israel is not a member of the NATO, the US ensures that Israel has unfettered access to its intelligence which it denies NATO. Finally, the United States has turned a blind eye toward Israel's making of nuclear weapons whereas ensuring that other powerful Arab rivals are denied of such nuclear capabilities. This has been one of America's greatest support to the state of Israel. As a result of the above discussed relationship, the US has ensured that Israel remains the most formidable force in the region. It has done this by clipping the potential economic and military capabilities of states like Iran which it sees as a threat to America and Israel.

### **3.3. Turning the Special Relationship Arguments on its Head; Realities on the Ground.**

Through critical analysis and investigations it has been revealed that much of how Israel was and is portrayed are highly contested. It must be mentioned here that much of what is used in this section is borrowed from the intellectual analysis of Mearsheimer and Stephen (*Is It Love or The Lobby? Explaining America's Special Relationship with Israel*)

In the first instance, the fact that Israel has been portrayed as a vulnerable (a David pursued by Goliath) and weak country and needs the unprecedented support of the US is fallacious. In fact, during the 1947-49 War of Independence, Israel's army was much larger, better equipped than their Arab opponent. The Israeli Defense Force quickly and easily won against Egypt in 1956

and against Egypt, Jordan and Syria in 1967. All of these even happened before huge US aid began flowing. What this means is that the Israelis were formidable before large scale aid from the US began to flow in. As it stands now Israel has mightiest military power in the Middle East. It has far more powerful conventional forces compared to its neighbours and most importantly it is the only state in the region with nuclear weaponry.

Egypt and Jordan have signed peace treaties with it, and Saudi Arabia has offered to do so. Syria is now in tatters over close to a decade of civil strife, Iraq has been destroyed and subdued by three very bad wars and Iran is hundreds of miles away with prohibitions on its nuclear development and damaging sanctions from the Trump administration. The Palestinians on the other hand barely possess an effective police force, let alone an army that could pose a threat to Israel. Therefore if supporting the weak and the vulnerable were the reasons for US huge aid intervention to Israel, then the former should rather be supporting the Israel's opponent. In the very recent attempt of the Palestine to press for their refugees to return to their displaced lands in Israel which manifested through the Israel/Palestine border clash, while the former used unconventional methods like tire burning and stone throwing, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) met such protests with well-armed and sophisticated weapons that recorded a death toll of over 70 Palestinians. It is clearer that Israel is now the biblical Goliath.

The other compelling constructive argument that tries to explain US special relationship with Israel is the democracy argument (which is that Israel is a democracy encircled by rogue and aggressive states). This argument is rather paradoxical as there are many same kind of democracies around the world and none of them receives the kind of lavish support the US gives to Israel. The democratic credentials of the US is even questionable when it is public knowledge that the US some time ago (during the Cold War) sacrificed democracy on alter for political expediency and still maintains good relationship with a number of dictators. In fact, the US itself is under intense pressure for racial profiling and police brutality against the country's Blacks. The UN in 2015 passed some recommendations advising the US government on dealing with discrimination pertaining to race, racial profiling and the use of excessive force by police officers, as well as addressing racial disparities in the use of the death penalty.

Besides, some of the so-called democratic tenets of Israel is highly contestable and it is at odds with core American democratic values. The point is that the Zionist sentiment is still very much popular in Israel and they highly see themselves as the "we" versus "them". Under the circumstance there are almost 1.5 million Arabs who are treated as second-class citizens, and in a recent Israeli government commission of inquiry, it was found that Israel behaves in a 'neglectful and discriminatory' manner towards them. Israel's democratic status is also undermined by its refusal to grant the Palestinians a viable state of their own or full political rights.

Then there is also the argument of the unspeakable horrors against the Jewish in the Christian West in what has ensued as the Holocaust. The point already made is that because of the Jewish persecution and the fact that a Jewish home in Palestine is a necessary compensation that needs some kind of a sustaining support system, some pro-Israelis argue that Israel deserves special treatment from the United States. There is no doubt the horrors meted out against them was barbaric and the formation of the state of Israel was a step in the right direction. One should also calculate that what was very pleasant for the Israelis was a great source of discomfort and displeasure for the Palestine as it launched fresh crimes against a party which was totally innocent.

The last attempt at justification of the special relationship between Israel and the US is the argument that both of them are pursued by a common terrorist threat. On the ground however, according to Mearshiermer, "the US has a terrorism problem in good part because it is so closely allied with Israel, not the other way around". "Support for Israel is not the only source of anti-American terrorism, but it is an important one, and it makes winning the war on terror more difficult. There is no question that many al-Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden, are motivated by Israel's presence in Jerusalem and the plight of the Palestinians. Unconditional support for Israel makes it easier for extremists to rally popular support and to attract recruits". These were the words of IR expert on how it is America's close relationship with Israel that in part serves as an impetus for terrorist attacks against that country. It is therefore not practical in the national interest of the US to continue the close relationship it has with Israel. Thus far, these are some of the critical assistance the US government provides Israel and as has been discussed, the US government is closer to Israel than any other ally.

One crucial question that comes to mind is how honest can the US be as a broker in the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict if the former is this close with the latter to such an extent to warrant terms that have been coined to describe the relationship between the two. This therefore leads to an examination of the peace processes between the Israeli and the Palestinians and the role of the US in it. This is not as critical to this work as there is preponderant information on that, but rather to find out whether the soft spot the US has for Israel has compromised the latter's ability to act as an honest broker and conspicuously in favour of Israel to the disadvantage of the Palestinians.

### **3.4. The US and the Middle East Peace Process.**

#### **3.4.1. The Madrid Peace Conference**

As has already been established in the first chapter, the US came to be associated with the term

honest broker when it was first used it in the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991. The date of the Conference is significant of the immediate post-Cold War era and the triumph of the US and so its dominance in the Middle East. The protracting conflicts that plagued the Israelis and the Palestinians did not seem to be approaching any amicable solution at the end of the Cold War. The Bush administration of the day mounted pressure on an unwilling and intransigent Israel to begin negotiations with the Arab states in the area. In this regard, the Bush administration adopted measures like withholding \$10 billion loan guarantee provided to Israel to compel the latter to the table. Even with that, while the Israelis refused to recognize the Palestinian Authority, the latter also refused to recognize Israel as a state. Although the Peace Conference achieved nothing significant its importance lies in the fact that it broke the taboo of open discussion between the two neighboring people of Israel and Palestinian Conflict where both adversaries for the first time in the history of the conflict met face to face.

The conference was organized under the joint chairmanship of U.S. President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev, but it was largely the efforts from President Bush and Secretary Baker that brought both sides to the table. As such by this time, the US as discussed in the first chapter had assumed the posture of a mediator. The symbolic significance of this conference was an achievement to the Bush administration. Recommendation for a two track bilateral negotiations were established at Madrid and they included an Israeli-Arab track and Israeli-Palestinian track. The Bush administration in the end failed as it was unable to pressure Israel to unbearable limits to halts its actions that aggravated the conflicts. In fact, pundits are of the opinion that the attempt by the Bush administration to forcing Israelis to choose between US aid and continuing colonization of the West Bank was a major contributor towards the defeat of President George Bush in the presidential elections later that same year. In this calculation, the lobby was proactively involved in the campaign to remove Bush out of power. The Peace Conference however, laid the grounds work and envisaged a future negotiation deal among the two parties.

#### **3.4.2. The Oslo Accords and the Two State Solution**

The attempt by the Bush administration to compel the Israeli government to make some concession and how the lobby in response lobbied to unseat him from the presidency perhaps sent a clear message to whoever replaced him that pushing Israel to the corner by any incumbent US administration was dangerous to the incumbency's security. Therefore in the next major round of talks that ensued between the two parties the US side gravitated towards moves and actions that demonstrated signs of sympathy to the Israeli government. The president who took over from the Bush administration was Bill Clinton. With this high level of support and sympathy from US to Israel one wonders how the former could be an honest broker in the ensuing Middle East Peace Process. This situation was not lost to Dodge when he remarked that the presidency of Clinton proved to be pro-Israel just as the presidencies of Bush and Regan before him.

On 13 September 1993 the world woke up to a new form of agreement called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP), signed by the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at the White House. It had earlier on being arranged and signed directly between the two parties in the Norwegian capital of Oslo and so it became known as the Oslo Accords. This was without the direct participation of the US in the negotiations except in the words of one scholar the role of a master of ceremony when the Accord was signed on the White House lawn in Washington. It is Dodge's opinion that, the negotiations were tellingly hosted by the Norwegians who were judged as moral neutral arbiter than the US even at that stage in the eyes of both main protagonist. This was perhaps a calculated attempt on the side of the US when it realized that public opinion in Israel would be resentful to the deal.

The Accords however, represented the most significant step yet in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Israel recognized for the first time the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and began to put in place mechanism to transfer to the Palestinians jurisdiction over Gaza and parts of the West Bank. What was not directly stipulated was an acknowledgement of the Palestinians' right to independent nationhood. The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza known as Oslo II, expanded on Oslo I. It put in place measures for the complete removal of Israeli troops from six West Bank cities and about 450 towns. In essence the accords did not stipulate, but implied the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel (The Two State Solution).

Accepting the two-state vision would mean that Israel would have put a stop to its denial of Palestinian claims to national sovereignty, and Palestinians were in turn supposed to accept that such claims would be limited to only a small part of the entire territory of historic Palestine for which the PLO had been fighting, recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the remainder.

As promising as it looked the accord did not stand the test of time as both parties violated the agreements stipulated in the accord. In general though the various provisions stipulated in both Oslo Accords and that of Camp David were highly regarded as partial that put the Palestine at a great disadvantage. This was a colossal failure on the part of President Clinton. Take for instance, the fact that between the seven year period from September 1993 when the Oslo Peace Accord was signed under the Clinton administration till the start of the of the al-Aqsa intifada in September 2000, Israel confiscated 40,000 acres (16,200 hectares) of Palestinian land, built 250

miles (400 kilometers) of connector and by-pass roads, doubled the number of settlers and built 30 new settlements. The Clinton administration did nothing to stop that.

### **3.4.3. The Camp David Accord**

The stalemate in the Peace Process was even more evident in during the tenure of Clinton and just like his predecessors, he was still bonded to the special relationship with Israel. On assuming the seat of President, Bill Clinton didn't hide his pro-Israeli sentiments and sympathy. During the second term of his office, President Clinton decided to adopt traditional summit diplomacy to reach a conclusive deal between the two major parties in what ensued as the Camp David Accord as it was signed at Camp David in the US. Issues of borders, security, settlements, and the right of return of Palestinian refugees to Israel were up for discussion. While it is true that President Clinton put forward a proposal for borders and settlement withdrawal that seemed palatable to both parties, the intractable impasse over Jerusalem still persisted. While Arafat claimed Palestinian sovereignty over all of East Jerusalem, Barak remained unwilling to relinquish certain areas. In the words of the Palestinian leader (Arafat), to have accepted the deal would have warranted his death back home in the Palestine.

An analysis of the Clinton West Asia Policy is of essence here. The US claims it was an honest broker in this deal negotiations, but this was hardly the case if one considers the special relationship it had with Israel. The point is that the compromised position of the US during the Clinton's administration was manifested in his West Asia foreign policy. Instead of representing the role of an honest broker, or an arbitrator, he gestured towards a favorable disposition to Israel. He stated to the glaring view of the international community that his West Asia Policy would include "a reaffirmation of America's strong commitment to maintain Israeli's qualitative military edge over its potential adversaries and also support the right of Israel to have Jerusalem serve as its capital". He insisted that the Arabs should put a stop the illegal economic boycott of Israel while the Arabs were not guaranteed any substantial gain in return. He also did not support the creation of an independent state of Palestine. With this in mind it was hardly ever realistic for the US government to ever unconditionally compel Israel to fulfil their side of the bargain particularly on the position of Jerusalem.

### **3.5. Obama's Presidency and the Middle East Peace Process**

The inauguration of Barack Obama as US President in January brought some kind of hope, especially in the Middle East and Europe as it was perceived that a new impetus would be given to the peace process. It should also be mentioned here that just a month after Obama's inauguration, Benjamin Netanyahu, the very ideologically conservative candidate of the Likud Party was also elected as Prime Minister of Israel. Obama on the other hand was a liberal progressive and so both were on the different side of the political spectrum. It should be stated categorically clear that the Obama administration did not sever the aid package to Israel, but it set off to practicalize a viable two state solution as envisaged in the Annapolis conference. He insisted on breaking very much away from the Bush legacy, the Iraq war and America's estrangement from the Muslim world as in his inaugural speech he reached out to the Arab world inviting a relationship of mutual respect and respect.

Obama had a vision of an idealized Israel where he thinks there is the need to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a progressive way. In fact, in his first day in office his first phone call was to the Palestinian leader Mahmood Abass. Obama also realized that with a hardliner conservative like Netanyahu in power some form of pressure would have to be applied to Israel for the latter to accept a peace deal that seems practical and acceptable to the Palestinians.

On a visit to Washington in May by the Israeli Prime Minister among growing concern that the relationship between the two was becoming more distant, Obama pulled an act that was unexpected and untraditional to the relationship between the two at least in the opinion of the Israeli's. He publicly urged (demanded not request) the Israeli PM to stop construction of settlements on lands captured in the 1967 war which are also claimed by the Palestinians. This was obviously a deal breaker for Netanyahu who felt he had walked into a trap. Just a month after the May visit Obama decided to demonstrate his position that the US was not anti-Muslim and that it could be tough on Israel. With the Netanyahu meeting he had tried to show he could get tough with Israel and in May 2009 when he visited Egypt, he personally reiterated that position when he reached out to the world's one and a half billion Muslims. He categorically sympathized with the Palestinian people in a speech he delivered at Cairo. In the words of Obama "the situation of the Palestinian people is intolerable. The US did not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement. It is time for this settlement to stop". To demonstrate that the US could be symbolically tough on Israel, Obama left Egypt which was just forty five minutes plane fly to Israel without passing through the latter for a visit while he visited Turkey and Saudi Arabia. This was a huge embarrassment to Israel and a clear message to them as well. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring Obama remarked that "the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps". This was a familiar demand, but never publicly endorsed by the president of the US. In response to this move by Obama, the Israeli PM flew to the US the following day in near anger and to the glaring view of the media insisted that the demands by the Obama administration was not going to happen in what was almost a near lecture to President Obama. By this time the relationship between the two was one

of tension. In fact, it is recalled that in the last days of Obama's presidency when president Trump was then president elect the US representative to the UN abstained from a UN vote that allowed a resolution of condemnation to be passed against Israel for its forceful settlements in the occupied territories. In the end though, the Obama administration just like past presidents was unable to push Israel to do anything the latter did not want to do and so could not achieve anything pragmatically as far as the peace process is concerned. President Obama only showed signs but could not transform them to concrete results.

### **3.6. Obama, the Iran Deal and the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action).**

Another issue that complicated the relationship between Obama and Netanyahu is Iran nuclear capabilities. Israel's intelligence was convinced that Iran had nuclear capabilities and felt threatened by it. The PM as such had plans of going to war and destroying them before Israel was decimated. It needed to go to war, but could not act unilaterally and so needed America's support. This Netanyahu asked Obama, but reluctantly, yet Obama would not budge. Netanyahu then employed some tactical moves during the election years in the US to get America to support its design against Iran and the Palestinian questions. He did this by supporting the Republicans whom he thought shared his conservativeness and would support his designs if they came to power in 2012 as against Obama.

Two things should be made clear here. The Obama administration demanded Israel to freeze settlements in the contested territory and would not support Israel's intended belligerent position against Iran. After winning his second tenure in office, Obama brought his liberal progressive ideology to bare when he decided to use diplomacy to curtail the Iranians nuclear capabilities than Netanyahu's conservative thought of war. The Obama administration went to the American people to sell a deal that will impose limits on Iran's nuclear program and allow international inspections in exchange for lifting sanctions on Iran if the latter agreed. This was one of Obama's legacy in the Middle East. This culminated very much to the dislike of Netanyahu who felt lifting international sanctions on Iran would boost the latter's economy while Iran could secretly keep stock pile of uranium for nuclear weaponry purposes. Netanyahu was therefore fumed over US decision to sign the Iranian deal than for the US Israel's design to attack Iran. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA); a long term deal was signed between Iran on one side and the US, UK, Germany, France, Russia and China; a group usually referred to as P5+1. Not surprisingly, the Trump administration as would be found soon would pull out of the deal.

### **3.7. The Trump Presidency and the Middle East Peace Process.**

It is widely known and accepted that Donald Trump is anti-establishment and more of a business tycoon than a politician. His ideological leanings to the right is inferable and nationalist sentiments have fed very much into the controversial mantra of "Make America Great Again". Trump's ideological leanings according to some analysts has provided a motivating environment for the resurgence of alt-right nationalist in the US. Trump unlike the liberal democratic views of Obama is a staunch conservative. A combination of Trump's conservativeness and his anti-establishment position has informed most of his foreign policies. Ever since he came to power, he has blamed the Obama administration for many wrongful deals that are in his opinion not in the interest of the US. These he has promised to overturn them. They include the Obama Care, DACA (Deferred Actions for Childhood Arrivals) and two of his actions which concerns us are the Iranian deal and the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

One wonders whether it is the strong conservative posture of president Trump or his utmost dislike for the Obama administration that makes him want to undo most of the things the latter did during his tenure. Whatever, be the case one thing is assured. It is the fact that the special relationship between the US and Israel seems to be a strong factor for Trump's seemingly conspicuous sympathy and favoritism towards Israel as would soon be discussed. The relationship between Israel and the US has doubled back up with the incumbency of Trump and the Israel and American relationship that seemed to have fallen on rocky grounds under the Obama administration seems to have been revamped. All these happened against the background that Trump's in law (Jared Kushner) is Jew and the President's Senior Advisor. Candidate Trump made a lot of promises during the campaign to the US presidential elections, but while in the Oval office of the White House, a lot seem different than he had expected and so president Trump had to make several quick U-turn to some of the promises he made. As far as the Middle East Peace Process is concerned the Trump government shares in the strong conservative opinions of the Likud Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu.

### **3.8. Trump and the Jerusalem Question**

Jerusalem remains one of the thorniest issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is a powerful religious and political symbol for billions of people around the world. The area has long been seen as the key to a final peace settlement. Jerusalem is the most important and holiest site for the religions of Christianity and Judaism and the third most holy site for the worlds one and a half billion Muslims.

While the Israelis have claimed Jerusalem as their complete capital, the Palestine on the other hand have sought Palestinian sovereignty over all of East Jerusalem. Diplomats and experts are of the conviction that once the recognized triumphant method for peace in Jerusalem is found it would be a *necessary condition* creating the pace for peace in the wider Arab-Israeli conflict.

With regards to international law, the UN has passed resolution 181 which suggested the partitioning of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state, however, the question of Jerusalem came up and the UN designated the place as *corpus separatum* or “separated body” under international administration because of its religious significance.

It is also recalled that the Palestinians and Israelis strived to achieve this formula when they undertook Track II negotiations on Jerusalem as part of the Oslo process. The peace process was not ideal, but in the end it offered the best hope there was for a negotiated solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. One of the most important issues in the negotiations was the recognition and acceptance of a two-state solution (where Jerusalem was envisaged to be a shared capital for Jewish state of Israel and the Palestine state.) This has always been one of the crux of the many demands of the Palestinian Authority. The Oslo Accords signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, stipulated that Jerusalem’s disposition would only be decided on in permanent-status negotiations between the parties.

The Annapolis Conference which was held in 2007 under the auspices of President W. Bush and attended by both the Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and the Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas also deliberated on the issue of Jerusalem. Even though the joint declaration produced in this conference was more symbolic than realistic just like in a manner similar to the Madrid Conference “it was agreed that Israel was to recognize an independent Palestinian state under the pre-1967 border with land swaps, forego its claim to the Temple Mount, international control, and allow for the absorption of 5,000 Palestinian refugees into Israel and as far the issue of Jerusalem was concerned Israel would surrender Jerusalem’s Old City to international control while East Jerusalem might be ceded to the Palestinians”.

This is the legal status of Jerusalem in international law and although Israel has traditionally claimed Jerusalem as its united city that has for a long time and until recently not been recognized by any other country as doing so would be in contravention of international law and for that matter against the principle of collective recognition and jettison any possibility of a peace process. The US which is Israel’s closest ally has paid lip service commitment to a shared Jerusalem between the two main protagonists while accommodating resentful Israel opinions to frustrating such attempts.

Even as this is an open secret, the position of the US towards Jerusalem from 1947 has been a recognition of that city under a separate body as per international law. It is even more insightful to realize that there is a law implemented in 1995 that requires the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem, but allowed for presidents to waive the requirement in six-month intervals and the waiver is “to safeguard the national security interests of the United States. However, all the successive Presidents of the United States (POTUS), Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama have exercised this waiver. It is only one president in the political history of US who has derailed almost seventy years of US foreign policy by recognizing not only Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, but has for the first time as well implemented the Embassy Act of 1995 by moving the Embassy of the US from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. This was President Donald J. Trump who on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2017, made this declaration. His actions have not only smashed seven decades of US policy, but also international law and many of UN resolutions.

This is not the only thing President Trump has done to show greater favoritism towards the Israelis. It is recalled that the fervent opposition and request of Netanyahu during Obama’s tenure to the JCPOA deal was granted by the Trump’s presidency. Thus, to the admiration of Israel and to the disappointment of its European allies the US left the Iranian deal. It is also recalled that under his leadership the US pulled out of the UN Human Rights Commission and the reason was because of Israel. The US argued that an avalanche of criticism is always mounted on Israel as though it was the only country in the world that violates human rights, while other countries with very poor human rights record are left undiscussed. This was indeed a response to the international condemnation of Israel extreme defensive measures that recorded scores of death of Palestinians. It is surprising that Israel itself did not bother to antagonize the UN human rights commission, yet the US saw the need to fight on behalf of Israel. This act which was actually needless confirms the position of some experts that Israel has made a religiously faithful and credible attorney out of the US.

### **3.9. The Principle of Self-Determination and the Palestinian People**

On several occasions the Palestine people have been denied the rights of Self-determination. It is a principle in international law which gives a people the legal rights to determine their political status as well as freely pursue their social, cultural and economic development. It is clearly stated in Article 1 and Article 55 of the Charter of the UN Charter. The 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights is also an example of Principle of Self-determination (PoSD). In the name of PoSD, Kosovo was accepted by the whole international community as a state, so was Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina even at a time when it did not have an effective government.

This same principle facilitated the creation of an Israeli state in the Palestine. It becomes difficult to comprehend why Palestine would be denied the same principle granted others especially in their situation. For three decades during the Mandate period when the British were in charge of the whole of Palestine, the latter were denied the right of self-determination, ignored for two decades by the United Nations. While the PoSD has a character of Jus Cogen (peremptory norm of international law accepted by the international community as a whole), the Palestinian people

are yet to recognize it. Yet the principle continues to inspire the Palestine to press forward their demands as it provide them with a legitimate ground in International law.

The inability of the international community to resolve these political albatross of the Palestinian has motivated recourse to other brutal methods the likes of which include terrorism and other horrible mechanisms. It is of no surprise that notable Israeli government figures have averred that they would have done same as the Palestinians are doing if they were denied such rights. As has already been argued the supposed position of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which has been portrayed as one of a Goliath and David respectively is now a myth and the contrary is true. The Palestinian have in most cases suffered more fatal casualties than the Israelis who are mostly equipped with sophisticated weapons.

It is often argued that it is the violent protest and demonstrations of the Palestinians that necessitated and triggered the even handedness tactics of the Israeli government. The question that needs to be asked is what then triggers the protest and demonstrations in the first place and what has been the nature of Israel's response? The point is that the "violent" protest and demonstrations of the Palestinian people emanates from decades of suppression, persecution and denial of their self-determination. Besides Israel has always applied increasingly disproportionate use of force in responding to such protest and the Tel-Aviv government has always claimed to act in the name of national security. Such use of disproportionate force by the Israeli government against the Palestinians which again is a clear violation of international humanitarian law was the targeted killing case.

Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the Jewish capital of Israel has triggered massive protest and clashes between the Palestinians and the Israelis'. Recent protest from the Palestinians also coincided with what they called "Nakba" meaning the "Great March of Return" which are efforts to mark the right of about 5000 Palestinian refugees to return to the land they were forced to abandon when Israel was created in 1948. In this clash while the death toll on the side of the Palestinians run into hundreds, that of the Israeli is a stunning low figure. While the Palestinian protesters like most times agitate and protest by burning car tires and catapulting along their shared borders with Israel, the latter has responded with heavily armed sophisticated weapons that have killed scores of vulnerable protestors among them children and reporters. This has attracted international condemnation from the UN and some members of the EU who accuse Israel of violating international law by not abiding to the law of proportionality and the use of force. The point I would like to makes is that to every action taken by the Palestinians, there is something that pushes them to do so. Put differently, the Palestinians do not dance unless there is a music.

Take for instance, a recent development in which as is if to add insult to injury, the Knesset passed a controversial law called the Basic law that characterized Israel as a fundamental Jewish state. The fundamental premise of the eleven provisions law is that Jews have a unique right to national self-determination there and puts Hebrew above Arabic as the official language. The implication of this is that Arabic which has for decades been recognized as an official language alongside Hebrew is now relegated and also only Jews have right to self-determination in that country. What about the Palestinians and Arabic language. Controversially, though expected, the law also unequivocally, proclaimed and reiterated "the status of Jerusalem under Israeli law, which defines the city - part of which is claimed by the Palestinians as the capital of a future state - as the "complete and united... capital of Israel".

This move was sure to warrant a profusely unwelcome response from the Palestine who have been denied the very same Self-determination the Israeli profess for themselves. This law was an aberration for the Arab minority in the Knesset who were angered by it. International condemnation have come from the EU which together with Israeli Arab political leaders, Israeli opposition, politicians and liberal Jewish groups in the US have criticized the law as amounting to "apartheid".

### **3.10. The US as an Honest Broker in the Middle East Process; an Illusion or Reality?**

The position of the US as the honest broker in the Middle East peace process has been challenged by several scholars and writers alike. In this regard, names like Rashidi Khalid readily comes to mind. His work *Brokers of Deceit* has already been introduced to this work in the first chapter. He has not minced words in his overt intellectual criticism of the role of the US in the Camp David Accord of 1978, the two-year period following the 1991 peace conference in Madrid, as well as President Barack Obama's failure to act on his earlier calls for Israel to put an end to the expansion of illegal settlements expansion in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. In a very critical analysis, Khalidi shows how the US has acted otherwise as an honest broker and argued that "the U.S. role since taking leadership in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in 1978 has essentially been — as acknowledged by a former chief U.S. negotiator — that of "Israel's lawyer".

In fact, none of the POTUS have been able to use America's considerable leverage to push the Israeli government to recognize an independent Palestinian state under the pre-1967 border with land swaps, forego its claim to the Temple Mount, international control, and allow for the absorption of 5,000 Palestinian refugees into Israel and as far the issue of Jerusalem was concerned Israel would surrender Jerusalem's Old City to international control while East Jerusalem might be ceded to the Palestinians. The glaring public sympathy the US provides for the Israeli government even when the latter's attitude is intolerable and attracts international

condemnation is one to emphasize.

Washington has provided Israel with enough room in dealing with the Occupied Territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), and now Jerusalem even when its actions were incompatible with stated U.S. policy. Washington continues to support Israel with the all necessary political, military and economic support that country needs without recourse to accountability. It is known that the state of Israel is the sole country in the world that does not have to give details of how it spends aid given to her by the US. The implication is that this makes it virtually impossible to prevent such aids or monies from being used for purposes that are at odds with US policy, like building settlements in the West Bank and the continued Israeli military reign of terror launched on the Palestinians.

It is against this same background of the special relationship between Israel and the US and the huge aid the latter offers to the former that compelled the MIT Academic Noam Chomsky to remark that it is absolute hypocrisy to condemn Israel for forcibly establishing settlements, expanding them and constantly violating the basic human rights of the Palestinian people, while at the same time the US government continues to provide the necessary tacit financial, military and diplomatic support that enable the state of Israel to conduct such unacceptable acts. Therefore, as long as the US government continues to provide the wherewithal, Israel will continue to utilize them to advance its purpose. While this study recognizes the relative lack of cooperation from both Israel and the Palestine, the inability to broker a meaningful and realistic deal amongst the two could in part be attributed to America's partial position in favor of Israel. The unprecedented interventions the US makes in favour of Israel in the peace process pushed one US participant in Camp David in 2000 to remark that far too often America has functioned as Israel's Lawyer than an honest broker. These facts, as are bare on the ground, compromises and in the end questions the credibility of the US as an honest broker.

While the prospects of an American-brokered peace deal were already contested in the analysis made above with America's palpable and pampering attitude towards Israel, it is Trump's implementation of the Embassy Act of 1995 and US recognition of Jerusalem as the Jewish capital of Israel that more than anything was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Whatever glimmer of hope there was for a resolution to this conflict and the position of the US as the honest broker in that process under the circumstance is shattered. The point is that by making these declaration and actually implementing them, President Trump has effectively accepted Israel's annexation of vast swaths of the occupied West Bank into greater Jerusalem, and its declaration of this entire zone as its "eternal undivided capital". American policy makers for generation to come would now have to invest precious resources into dealing with the mess president Trump has created.

Trump's decision is deliberate and partisan one that swings the political pendulum in favor of Israel and its claims over Jerusalem and also legitimates this decision through the powerful principle of "recognition" and as such jeopardized hopes of a two-state solution in the Palestine. Trump's posture does not reflect a neutral one and does not in any way suggest any desire to act as an honest broker of a peace process which has for decades been underpinned by the United States firm loyalty towards a two state solution. He took the decision even against his own national security team which included his Secretaries of State and Defense. Palestinian leaders have come to realize that they have more to lose than to gain by staying in an American dominated peace process than from walking away and the fiction of the US as an honest broker has been exposed for all. Once again one could sense the visible hands of the pro-Israel lobby that is seen as key supporters for the president and America's powerful Christian Evangelical Movement.

The international condemnation and criticism of the US on this move speaks volume of how Donald Trump's action was seen to trigger unrest not only among the Palestinians, but the larger Arab world in consolidation with Palestine and importantly in the end endanger the peace process in the region. The 15 member council of the Security Council except the US voted to condemn the US President's decision. In a similar fashion, the diplomatic missions of the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, Italy, and France stated that the action was "not in line with Security Council resolutions and was unhelpful in terms of prospect for peace in the region." No least person than the Secretary-General of the UN also condemn the act. Trump's decision derails visions of a U.S.-mediated peace virtually moribund for the foreseeable future. He may have however, in the words of Khalidi "done this whole peace process some good by sending to the grave a one sided status quo of US peace processing that has only entrenched and legitimize Israel's military occupation and colonization of Palestinian land for a quarter-century". This is a system which has made more difficult a just, lasting peace between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

It suffices to mention that it high time an alternative to the US as a neutral arbiter or honest broker to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was found. As it is now, a more convincing impression is created by the US that it is Israel's most fervently partisan supporter (diplomatically) and supplier of money and arms and as such it is cannot be a mediator. The actions of the US no matter how expatiated by the Trump administration makes the US appear as though it a party to the conflict fully on the side of Israel and that does not auger well for the image of the US and for that matter the role of an honest broker in search of a peaceful solution in a volatile region. The point is that Trump's decision is a rubber stamp approval of Israel's claim that all of

Jerusalem belongs exclusively to Israel and no Palestinian leader worth of a sort can accept anything like this and retain a shred of self-respect or the support of his or her own people. It absolutely an aberration to the Palestine.

Every step either made directly or supported by the Trump administration of Israel's actions or inactions have indirectly complicated and is jeopardizing the possibilities of a two state solution which has been the preferred traditional solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at least in the perspective of the Palestinians. Every step Trump has taken has emboldened Israelis resolve and stupefied the Palestinians and this chapter has demonstrated with practical examples this assertion.

## Endnotes

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.0. Introduction

It is said that as far as US foreign policy is concerned, that country coughs and the world catches cold. For almost three decades the US has gestured itself as the honest broker or a neutral arbiter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This study assess the credibility and viability of the US as an honest broker especially as some scholars have contradictory opinions to that. It became necessary especially under the Trump presidency when the US derailed almost seventy decades of US foreign policy and recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. President Trump affirmed that decision by relocating the US embassy in Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. Since the US has exerted efforts into ensuring that it is indispensable to the Middle East Peace Process ( in that way it protects its interest in the region) and the Trump presidency claims to have been motivated by US national interest, Realism provided the theoretical foundations within which this study was conducted. The study proceeded on the alternative hypothesis that the recent shift in US foreign policy under president Donald Trump in which US recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital could damage the role of the United States as an honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. This chapter provides the summary of findings of the study, the conclusion and recommendations.

#### 4.1. Summary of Findings

In order to substantiate or nullify the hypothesis of the study, the research questions and the main objectives of the study was situated in both historical and contemporary events related to the two groups (Israel and Palestine) and the involvement of the US in their peace process. Historically, it was found that at the heart of the conflict between the two parties (Israel and Palestine) are the immutable dynamics concept of territory and nationalism (Jewish nationalism, Zionism and Arab nationalism). These two concepts and their relationship to the conflict were necessary in complementing and completing an understanding of the conflict in what I would like to call herein as precipitating forces. All other motivating or invisible hands not helpful in ending the conflicts or adding more fuel to the already volatile situation are what I would like to call inflaming forces.

It was found as it is already known that legally, the place now known as Israel was originally inhabited by Arab Palestine after it was taken away from the Ottoman Turks. The seeds of discontent and deceit that will lay down the foundations for the conflicts between Israel and Palestine was sown by the British who budging to the huge Zionist influence, issued the Balfour Declaration of 1917. This declaration granted legitimacy to "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". This Jewish idea of a biblical homeland infused with the growing sense of Zionism created an entrenched sense among the Jewish nation of a natural birth right to the Palestine and by 1932, the Jewish population in Palestine was 175,000. The Jewish persecution by the Hitler regime intensified the migration of the Jewish community in Palestine so that by the end of Hitler's regime they were 30% of the total Jewish population in the Palestine. In all these developments the Arab-Palestine also responded through numerous revolts, but were brutally suppressed by the Jewish militia with the help of the British.

It was found that in 1948, with the help of the UN and with the significant support of the US the Jewish People's Council unilaterally declared the establishment of Israel, "the Jewish State in Palestine". However anticipating the possible outcome of an Israel dominated position the UN

passed Resolution 181(II) that highlighted the creation of the Arab and Jewish states, not later than 1 October 1948 and an international regime for Jerusalem, the eighth division, to be administered by the United Nations Trusteeship Council. This has legally been the position on Jerusalem in the eyes of the international community. The study found that the process leading to the actual settling of the Jewish community uprooted about 750,000 Palestinians from their homelands. They became refugees as their lands were expropriated.

The response of the Arab world in solidarity with the Palestine manifested in a fully blown war in what came to be known as the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949 and the Six Day war of 1967 which ended in favour of Israel when it annexed East Jerusalem and began the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Golan Heights and Sinai. There is also the Yom Kippur war of 1973 Arab nations led by Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur War. On the part of the Palestinians they have demonstrated their resentment through various intifada (from 1987 and 1993, 2000-2005)

It was also found that the US has strove to couch for itself an enviable position of an honest broker in an attempt to resolve the political impasse between the two nations and the Middle East Peace process in general. Right from the Camp David Accord of 1987, the Madrid Peace Conference, the Oslo Accords and the birth of the two state solution, to Presidents Clinton's Camp David's Accord through to the Annapolis conference, the US has gestured itself as the only capable broker in the peace process. It was found in the course of investigations that the agreements in most of these attempts at peace have largely been to the interest of the Israelis and much to the disadvantage of the Palestine. However, the study found that at the same time that the US positions itself as the honest broker in Israeli-Palestinian peace conference, the US has always demonstrated a very soft spot for Israel in diverse ways. In fact, in ways that make it very obvious for any observer to confirm without doubt that it is not an honest broker, but is a party to the conflict on the side of Israel. The study has demonstrated the various levels of support the US has unprecedentedly provided for Israel which the latter often use to the disadvantage of the Palestine. They are diplomatic, military, economic and political aid.

The study found that most importantly, the powerful machinery of the Israel lobby in congress and a favorable opinion from a certain part of the American citizenry compel and persuade every government of the day in US to be soft on Israel and as such are unable to push the latter to agree to possible solutions to the conflict. Scholars like Chomsky have argued that it is hypocritical on the part of the US to condemn any inactions of the Israelis when it gives the former the very weapons and aid it needs to act without questioning them. The US has stood by as the Israeli Defense Force uses significantly disproportionate force against Palestinians protesters. It has stood aloof as the Israelis violate international law and continues with it settlements of Palestinian lands. The US has vetoed UN sanctions intended to exert pressure on Israel to respect international law.

The study also revealed that on the contrary none of the argument experts on US foreign policy have raised as warranting the support the US provides to Israel is credible. The study demonstrated that as a matter of fact, the enmity and hatred the US draws from Islam fundamentalist that manifest as terrorism from the Middle East is partly because of the close ties the US has with the Israel. As such strictly speaking, it is not in the national interest of the US to continue closely courting the Israelis.

It was found that the relationship between the Israeli and the US under the Obama administration hit rock bottom than ever as the latter tried to put pressure on Israel for it to halt its settlements expansion. President Obama's intention of implementing the two state solution based on the pre 1967 lines brought the relationship between the two countries to very low levels. Relationship between the two countries was strained further when the Obama administration signed the JCPOA agreement with the Iran much to the dismay of Israel. What however, was to demonstrate Obama's intention to try pressurize Israel was when in his last days as president, the US abstained from a UN vote that allowed a resolution of condemnation to be passed against Israel for its forceful settlements in the occupied territories. Regardless of this background it was found the one leverage the US has over Israel which is the significant aid the latter provides the former was still provided by the Obama administration. This is what has been described as sheer hypocrisy on the part of the part of the US as maintained by Chomsky (putting up a supposed strong attitude towards Israel while providing it with the necessary aid and equipment to do the same things it does).

The study also discovered more than anything else that at the heart of the resolving the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestine is the issue of Jerusalem. It has always been within the framework of international law that Jerusalem shall be under the maintained as *corpus separatum* or "separated body" under the international administration of the UN. It is the preferred intention of the Palestinians that Jerusalem shall be a divided city where East Jerusalem would be capital of the future state of Palestine while West Jerusalem remains the capital of Israel. It is recalled that The Oslo Accords signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, stipulated that Jerusalem's disposition would only be decided on in permanent-status negotiations between the parties. This has been largely accepted by the international community and even though Israel claims Jerusalem as its complete and united capital, against international law, no country including the US has granted political recognition to that effect.

It was found that regardless of the special relationship the US has with Israel that compromises the ability of the latter to be an honest broker the US has maintained and respected the position of international law on Jerusalem and even though there is the Embassy Law Act that allows presidents of the US to move its embassy to Jerusalem since 1995, all presidents have postponed such move. This is because of how sensitive doing that could have consequences on the already volatile peace process. It was found that President Donald Trump of the US claiming to act in the national interest of the US implemented the Embassy Act of 1995 and have relocated US embassy to Jerusalem. The US under his administration has gone ahead to pull out of the Human Rights Commission of the UN much in solidarity with Israel over criticism of the latter's forceful continued settlement, disproportionate use of force against the Palestine. It is also recalled that the then president elect Trump tweeted in response to the resolution the Obama administration allowed to be passed against Israel that "from now on things will be different". Perhaps this was to say that none of that would ever happen during this tenure. Putting words to action, the US has pulled out of JCPOA a decision which was greeted with elation in Israel as they envisaged the plan to enrich Iran over Israel and therefore jeopardize national interest of the latter. Israel had always wanted the US to abandon the deal and impose stiffer and tougher sanctions on Iran and the Trump administration wholeheartedly just dance the Israeli shampoolah and did just that.

The Trump administration has derailed decades of US foreign policy and has provided a motivating environment for the Likyud right wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel as a whole.

#### 4.2. Conclusion

For all practical intent and purpose every step either made directly or supported by the Trump administration of Israel's actions or inactions have indirectly complicated and is jeopardizing the possibilities of a two state solution which has been the preferred traditional solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at least in the perspective of the Palestinians. Thus far, the US has proven unwilling or unable to transform the huge leverage it has on Israel into pressure to bring the Israeli government to check. This has largely been the position of most US presidents, but the Trump administration has made such special relationship with Israel and how its compromises the position of the US as credible broker in the conflict conspicuous. The US has shown greater disposition towards Israel much to the dislike and disappointment of the Palestinians who without a shred of doubt confirm that Trump's Jerusalem decision is an affirmation that the US is Israel's most fervently partisan supporter (diplomatically) and supplier of money and arms and as such it is cannot be a mediator. The Trump presidency has emboldened Israel's intransigence as is evident in the recent passage of the Basic Law. This is to such an extent that significant European and Arab allies of the US have sung a single chorus in condemning Trumps favoritism towards Israel. These new actions taken by the US weakens the position of the US as an honest broker. Against this background the hypothesis of the study is validated. The objectives set out to be achieved in Chapters two and three in the end validated the hypothesis stated in the first chapter.

#### 4.3. Recommendations

This study is not unique, but rather timely. There is abundant literature on the Middle East Peace process, particularly that of the Israel and Palestine and the role of the US as an honest broker or as others like to call it neutral arbiter. This study in adding to the burgeoning literature in the subject sought to examine the credibility of the US as honest broker in the sudden change of US foreign policy under the Trump presidency. It came out with a conclusion that Trump's actions which has transformed decades of US foreign policy damages the position and credibility of the US as an honest broker. The following recommendations are therefore made after thorough investigations into the study.

- The United State should terminate the special relationship it has with the Israel. It is in the best national interest of the US to do so. The US should take practical steps to treat Israel the way it treats other democracies like it longest ally, Britain, India, Germany, Canada, France among others. There are two things the US stands to benefit from this. In the first place, doing this will do some if not significant good in repairing the damages and bad reputation the US has engendered for itself as the supplier of money and arms to Israel for them to use such aid to doing the very things that violate international law and norms of the international community as a whole. Once the US ends the special relationship with Israel, and the latter is treated normally like other democracies, the US should distant itself from the latter, condemn that country and use it considerable leverage it has to get Israel to change it behavior, when Israel pursue misguided policies that are inconsistent with the values and interest of the US. Indeed the US has huge leverage on Israel. When US does this, then only *could it maybe*, be seen or considered then by the Palestinians as an honest broker. Once it is accepted as the broker, then it is able to maintain its very jealously guided position of making itself relevant in the peace process and ultimately indispensable in the region. The second thing the US stands to get from ending the special relationship with Israel is that the hatred and anger transformed into terrorist act from Islamist fundamentalist whose reasons ( among others) is the special relationship the US has with Israel would have been minimized.

- Regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the actions of the U.S. should necessarily reflect act as an honest broker if it want to attempt to repair the damage (which some claim is irreparable) it has caused. In other words, Washington should pursue an even-handed policy towards the two sides. The U.S. in particular should make not mince words in clearly putting it across to Israel that it must put a stop to the occupied territories and allow for the establishment of a viable Palestinian state on those lands (the two state solution). The US should indicate to Israel that it will disagree and not tolerate, Israel's expansion in the West Bank.
- Then there is also the question of Jerusalem. Whatever internal political motivations cloaked in the political language of national interest that motivated President Trump to make that Jerusalem move was plainly unhelpful to the cause of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Jerusalem should have been left as it was under corpus separatum and to be the capital of the future state of Palestine as well as the capital of Israel (East and West Jerusalem respectively).
- The reality is also that as it is now the damages the Trump administration has caused is to some experts irreparable and irreversible and that makes the US not an “honest broker” any longer. Trump and for that matter the US’ bias has been laid bare. It is high time the European allies and the larger international community woke up to this reality and to shoulder their global responsibilities and begin engaging forcefully with the Middle East. As has been stated by Federica Mogherini, the European Union’s foreign policy chief Europe will strive for deeper involvement under a framework where “the only realistic solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine is based on two states with Jerusalem as the capital of both.” The US does not want it hegemonic status to go unchallenged in the process and region in general as it has long stymied Arab, U.N., E.U., and other initiatives to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Regardless, now is the time for the European Union and the Arab world to make it known they do not need U.S. authorization to undertake the international agreements for peace in the Middle East. It is time to move from words to deeds.

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