

Israel Lobby and the US Foreign Policy Under Trump Administration:

A Case Study of Iranian Nuclear Deal



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Dedication

To my beloved mother and father

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I express profound gratitude to the Almighty for bestowing upon me the physical strength and mental acuity to successfully conclude this endeavor.

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Abstract

This research explores the Israel lobby's impact on U.S. foreign policy during President Trump's tenure, particularly regarding the Iranian nuclear deal. By contrasting policies from Trump's and Obama's administrations towards Iran, this study examines the depth of influence exerted by the Israel lobby on U.S. foreign policy trajectories. Findings suggest a significant deviation in the Trump administration's stance on the Iran deal, primarily attributed to the Israel lobby, resulting in considerable changes in the Middle East's power dynamics and U.S.-Israel relations. This paper also sheds light on Iran's strategic diplomatic efforts, emphasizing the region's uncertain future. Conclusively, nations must adapt their strategies to promote Middle East stability. This investigation offers valuable insights for those examining U.S. foreign policy, lobby influences, and Middle East geopolitics, presenting a detailed overview of the factors influencing foreign policy formation.

Keywords: Israel lobby, JCPOA, Trump administration, AIPAC, Middle East

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Acronyms

AIPAC	America-Israel Public Affairs Committee
AJC	American Jewish Congress
AZC	American Zionist Committee
AZPAC	American Zionist Public Affairs Committee
CAMERA	Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America
CSP	Centre for Security Policy
FARA	Foreign Agents Registration Act
FPRI	Foreign Policy Research Institute
FRLA	Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act
ICC	Israel on Campus Coalition
IFPA	Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
JCPA	Jewish Council for Public Affairs
JINSA	Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs
MEF	Middle East Forum United Nations
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WZO	World Zionist Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The sphere of international relations has consistently been marked by evolving dynamics, where political ideologies and national interests lead to the creation or dissolution of agreements. One such agreement that garnered global attention was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly referred to as the Iranian Nuclear Deal. Signed in 2015, this agreement between Iran, the P5+1 countries (the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and Germany), and the European Union, sought to curtail Iran's nuclear program and ensure its peaceful nature in exchange for the relief of economic sanctions.

However, the subsequent political landscape in the United States witnessed a significant shift with the election of Donald J. Trump as the 45th President. His administration's stance on the JCPOA, as well as the broader spectrum of U.S. foreign policy, displayed a marked departure from his predecessor, with concerns about the efficacy and the sustainability of the agreement taking center stage. This led to the U.S. unilaterally withdrawing from the JCPOA in 2018, sparking widespread debate and reactions from the international community.

A pivotal and often understated element in this discourse is the role of interest groups and lobbies. Among these, the Israel lobby stands out due to its historical influence on U.S. foreign policy and its keen interest in the Middle Eastern geopolitical scenario. Israel's apprehensions regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions are well-documented, and its influence in Washington, particularly during the Trump era, has raised questions about the extent to which it impacted the U.S.'s decision-making regarding the JCPOA.

This research aims to provide a comprehensive examination of U.S. foreign policy under the Trump administration concerning the Iranian Nuclear Deal, with a special focus on the role of the Israel lobby. Drawing upon primary and secondary sources,

we will delve into the intricacies of policy formation, the interests of key stakeholders, and the convergence and divergence of national interests. By understanding these dimensions, we hope to shed light on the interplay of internal and external factors that shaped one of the most controversial foreign policy decisions of the 21st century.

In a world marked by increasing complexities, where state actors no longer solely dominate the narrative, it becomes imperative to understand the myriad influences at play. This research, therefore, not only elucidates the U.S.'s stance on the Iranian Nuclear Deal during the Trump years but also underscores the importance of interest groups in shaping foreign policy outcomes.

1.1 Background

The Israel Lobby, also cited in various other works, identifies American advocacy groups and individuals focused on strengthening the partnership between the United States and Israel. These advocates push for initiatives that they believe benefit Israel. Beyond evangelical Christian groups, the pro-Israel lobbying effort also encompasses mainstream organizations within the American Jewish community.¹ Utilizing entirely legal and conventional methods of American political persuasion aimed at both policymakers and the general populace, these groups have been effective since the 1970s in shaping crucial aspects of Washington's stance on matters concerning or related to Israeli interests. Like most lobbying organisations, they strategically promote or discredit powerful members of Congress by using their access to funds and other political tools. The organisations and people with special interests who actively work to influence American policy and discourse to advance Israel's objectives.

Furthermore, the lobby is made up of individuals, PACs, and interest groups that support pro-Israel legislation.² In the case of Iranian nuclear deal, the lobby again try

¹ Mearsheimer, Walt. "The Israel lobby." *London Review of Books*, Vol. 28 No. 6. 23 March 2006
<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v28/n06/john-mearsheimer/the-israel-lobby>

² Dov Waxman. "The Israel Lobbies: A Survey of the Pro-Israel Community in the United States." *Israel Studies Forum* Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2010), pp. 5-28 (24 pages)
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41805051>

to influence directly on the policies of presidents which can be analysed by their decisions especially in the trump policies. Applying significant local and national pressure, through financial support and voting influence, is key to ensuring that Congressional representatives and the President adhere to pro-Israel stances; otherwise, they risk electoral defeat. This explains why Congress frequently issues letters expressing robust backing for Israel's policy requests. These efforts are amplified by consistent, expert campaigns to shape public perception, largely via mass media channels. Several initiatives aim to depict Israel as a steadfast strategic partner to the United States, while framing Arabs, Iranians, and some other groups as hazards to both Israel's existence and American principles. Organizations like Campus Watch, CAMERA, MEMRI, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), and the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) may present themselves as independent American entities, but they are broadly viewed as working primarily to bolster pro-Israel sentiment, policies, and objectives. Donald Trump's approach to the Middle East stands in sharp contrast to Barack Obama's. Trump seeks to bolster relations with Saudi Arabia and Israel while marginalizing Iran. There is little evidence to suggest that officials in his administration have deeply considered the long-term consequences of this stance, and the policy appears to be more ad hoc than systematically planned. Unlike Obama, who frequently clashed with Saudi Arabia, Trump's objective has been to rebuild relations with the administration of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a relationship that had soured during Obama's tenure. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, which was agreed in 2015 to limit Iran's nuclear weapons program, has been abandoned by Trump, who has also reinstated sanctions on Tehran.³ Trump has also displayed a lack of interest in supporting democratic values and political reform, as evidenced by his so-called Muslim travel ban, which he announced shortly after taking office. US President

³ Michael Singh. "Iran and America: The Impasse Continues." *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development* No. 16, *Pandemics & Geopolitics: The Quickening* (SPRING 2020), pp. 144-159 (16 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48573756>

Donald Trump is seen walking alongside King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia during an event in Riyadh. If one can identify a recurring theme, it seems that the president supports a coalition spearheaded by Saudi Arabia. The policies of Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and indeed Saudi Arabia, appear to focus on constraining Iran while maintaining the existing situation in terms of democratic evolution and the proliferation of political Islam.

There are reasons to question if this is a part of a coherent strategy, though. The administration's biggest concern is Iran. It is mentioned 17 times in the 2017 National Security Strategy and preventing dominance by "any state unfriendly to the United States" — a clear allusion to Tehran — is listed as a top goal in the area. The administration's withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018 has left it scrambling to come up with a workable strategy, nevertheless. Trump had frequently berated the agreement. He and other conservatives objected that it didn't do much to address Iran's other troubling foreign policy issues, like as its desire for regional hegemony and support for extremist organizations like Hezbollah.⁴

Most crucially, the administration is working to establish the Middle East Strategic Alliance, which has previously been proposed by the Saudis as a "Arab NATO." The objective of the new alliance would be to boost general security and economic cooperation, as well as create a regional anti-missile defense umbrella. The tension with Iran emerges as a focal point on the coalition's list of priorities. Observers have hypothesized that Trump seeks Saudi support both for establishing a peace agreement in the Middle East and for taking military action against Iran.

Israel supports the conflict with Tehran because it sees Tehran as an existential threat. Israel is really one of the few nations in the area that approves of the president's foreign policy. Trump has gone above and above to appease Netanyahu, even by the norms of prior administrations, all of which considered Israel as a close ally. ⁵This is

⁴ Katzman, Mclinis." U.S.-Iran Conflict and Implications for U.S. Policy." Congressional Research Service <https://crsreports.congress.gov/R45795>

⁵ Miller David." Trump Was Far From the Most Pro-Israel U.S. President Ever: In many ways, Trump's actions weakened both Israel's security and that of the Jewish community in the United

largely a byproduct of the political culture of the conservative, where unwavering support for Israel is seen as an essential value. In its platform for 2016, the Republican Party asked for measures that would "leave no daylight" between the two nations and referred to such support as "an expression of Americanism."

This order has been eagerly supported by Trump and his advisors. Apart from leaving the JCPOA, which Netanyahu referred to as a "historic error," "The development of Trump's Middle East policy has also been significantly influenced by his management style. He tends to govern instinctively and reactively by default, ignoring subjects he deems uninteresting. His tendency to put loyalty over intelligence has resulted in the exclusion of more powerful advisers and relative moderates like Bolton, who has strengthened the president's aggressive tendencies toward Iran and guided him toward extreme opinions on Syria.⁶

The fact that the president and his advisors haven't given their actions any thought is perhaps the largest cause for alarm. What would happen if support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue was dropped? What would transpire if Iran resumed its nuclear weapons program and the JCPOA failed? What if US influence in Iraq continues to wane while Iran's influence increases?

Trump has relied more on advisors than most presidents because of his lack of experience in the Middle East. In the beginning, Trump surrounded himself with well-known, far-right, Islamophobic individuals, such as Steve Bannon, his main White House strategist, Michael Flynn, Trump's initial National Security Advisor, along with Sebastian Gorka, a significant counterterrorism consultant, have both left the White House. However, Trump's skepticism toward Islam continues to shape U.S. foreign policy, especially in the Middle East. Aside from concerns about Iran's growing sway

States."Foreign Policy,Oct 19,2022,accessed on January 2,2023,
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/19/trump-pro-israel-truth-social-netanyahu-abraham-accords/>

⁶ Babaei,Ahmad Reza." Israel's Concerns and Iran's Nuclear Programme." Economic and Political Weekly
Vol. 43, No. 6 (Feb. 9 - 15, 2008), pp. 21-25 (5 pages),<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40277097>

in the region, the administration views Iran as a possible hindrance to American aspirations for hegemony and the goal of achieving "full spectrum domination."

The Trump administration was strongly against the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, not because the agreement enables Iran to develop nuclear arms—actually, it aims to prevent just that—but rather because it eliminates a rationale for military conflict with Iran. Consequently, the administration has shifted its focus toward creating new grounds for acting against Iran. For instance, Secretary of Defense Mattis has declared that the top three threats to U.S. national security are "Iran, Iran, Iran," emphasizing that the Islamic Republic represents "the most persistent threat to stability and peace in the Middle East."⁷.

Trump has delegated significant responsibilities to both his Vice President and Secretary of Defense. Netanyahu maintains a friendly relationship with Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, whom the President has chosen to take a leading role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. Kushner also has considerable financial connections with influential Israeli entities that back Israeli settlements. Moreover, he was co-director of his family's foundation, which has contributed funds to these controversial Israeli settlements. On December 6, 2017, Trump announced that the U.S. would relocate its embassy to the culturally diverse and religiously pluralistic city of Jerusalem, becoming the first country to formally make such a move. Observers who are familiar with this contentious situation generally concur that taking such action would decrease the likelihood of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, pose serious legal issues, and increase the likelihood of a violent and destabilizing backlash against U.S. interests around the world.

Trump has disregarded Palestinian claims to the city and said the matter is "off the table" despite the Palestine Authority having long stated its willingness to recognize East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital in exchange for allowing Israel to establish

⁷⁷ Perry, Mark. "James Mattis' 33-Year Grudge Against Iran: Many in the Pentagon worry that Trump's pick for defense secretary is looking for a fight in the Middle East." *Politico Magazine*, Dec 04, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/12/james-mattis-iran-secretary-of-defense-214500/>

its capital there.⁸ In addition to raising major questions about the specifics, the extreme views taken by the Trump administration have paradoxically made it simpler to dispute some of the underlying presumptions that have guided American Middle East policy for decades. ⁹Interestingly, Trump's stringent position has inadvertently paved the way for stronger Democratic opposition to U.S. backing of Netanyahu and his right-leaning Likud government.

Despite historically large majorities of Democrats in Congress having supported the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, only a limited number endorsed Trump's decision to do so. This occurs even as the bulk of Congressional Democrats continue to maintain their long-standing tradition of backing Israeli policies. According to polls, a significant shift in Democratic supporters' historic strong support for Israel has occurred. Most self-described liberals now express more compassion for the Palestinians than for the Israelis.

1.2 Research Gap

Many studies have investigated U.S. decisions on foreign policy and the details of the Iranian Nuclear Deal. Yet, there's still a missing piece when it comes to understanding how groups outside the government, like the Israel lobby, might have influenced the U.S.'s move in 2018 during President Trump's term. The Israel lobby's past role in shaping U.S. choices is known, but a clear and focused look at its possible impact on the decision about the Iranian Nuclear Deal is still missing. This study hopes to dive into this unexplored area and shed light on the Israel lobby's potential role in this key U.S. policy change.

⁸ Habash,Erdogan.” U.S. Policy Toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict under the Trump Administration: Continuity or Change?.” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (WINTER 2020), pp. 125-146 (22 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26921172>

⁹ Robert, William,” Why is the US unequivocal in its support for Israel? Washington’s unwavering support for Israel is rooted in the aftermath of World War II, the Cold War, pro-Israeli political influence and PR heft. *Aljazeera*, 18 May 2021,accesssd on January 02,2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/18/short-answer-why-is-the-united-states-so-pro-israel>

1.3 Problem Statement

The U.S. withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or the Iranian Nuclear Deal in 2018 under President Donald J. Trump's administration was a notable divergence from prior U.S. commitments and raised questions about the factors driving this pivotal foreign policy decision. While the Trump administration cited concerns over the efficacy and robustness of the agreement, there exists a possibility that external interest groups, specifically the Israel lobby, may have played a significant role in influencing this decision. The Israel lobby's historically profound impact on U.S. foreign policy, combined with Israel's longstanding apprehensions about Iran's nuclear capabilities, suggests a potential correlation between the lobby's influence and the U.S.'s policy shift.

The core problem this research seeks to address is: To what extent did the Israel lobby affect the U.S. foreign policy under the Trump administration in relation to the Iranian Nuclear Deal? Understanding this dynamic is crucial not only to contextualize the U.S.'s withdrawal from the JCPOA but also to discern the underlying mechanisms through which interest groups might shape major foreign policy decisions.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does the Israel lobby play a role in shaping U.S. foreign policy agendas?
2. What was the role of Israel lobby in the withdrawal of Iran nuclear deal under Trump administration?

1.5 Hypothesis

"The unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA during the Trump administration was significantly influenced by the lobbying efforts of interest groups, with the Israel lobby playing a pivotal role in shaping this foreign policy decision."

1.5.1 Nature: Explanatory

1.5.2 Variables:

- **Independent Variable:** Lobbying efforts of interest groups, specifically the Israel lobby.
- **Dependent Variable:** The unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA during the Trump administration.

1.5.3 Indicators

- Statements from Trump administration officials citing the influence of the Israel lobby on the JCPOA decision.
- As a new embassy was established in Jerusalem in 2018, the US formally acknowledged it as Israel's capital, breaking international law and sparking outrage.

1.6 Objective of Research

1. To understand the reasons behind the U.S. withdrawal from the Iranian Nuclear Deal in 2018 during President Trump's administration.
2. To investigate the potential influence of external groups, particularly the Israel lobby, involvement in U.S. foreign policy decisions and its stance on Iran's nuclear ambitions.
3. To explore the mechanisms and pathways through which interest groups might shape significant policy decisions.
4. To assess the broader implications of interest group influence on foreign policy, ensuring that future decisions are made with a comprehensive understanding of all influencing factors.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The realm of international relations is complex and multifaceted, with various actors playing pivotal roles in shaping the course of global events. Understanding the influences behind monumental policy decisions, such as the U.S.'s withdrawal from the JCPOA, is crucial for academics, policymakers, and stakeholders worldwide.

This study provides a deep dive into the complex interplay between interest groups, particularly the Israel lobby, and U.S. foreign policy decisions. By examining the case of the Iranian Nuclear Deal during Trump's administration, the research reveals the intricate dynamics that shape global agreements. By identifying key influencers and decision-making mechanisms, this research offers insights that can guide future U.S. foreign policy, especially in the volatile Middle East region.

While many studies have analyzed U.S. foreign policy, few have delved into the profound impact of specific lobbies. This study fills that gap, providing a distinction understanding of the Israel lobby's role in policy formation during a pivotal period in U.S.-Middle East relations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

Ms. Kimberley Anne Nazareth explained the comparative and different policy between Obama and Trump administration towards Iran Nuclear deal and she analysed that the Donald Trump administration has reversed the engagement with Iran strategy of the Barack Obama administration. Both approaches were influenced by several variables, including enablers and restrictions from both inside and outside the country that are fundamental in any foreign policymaking process.¹⁰

Between his presidential run and inauguration, Donald Trump's Iran policy has undergone multiple adjustments. Trump and his team wavered between three primary positions throughout the campaign: cancelling the agreement, renegotiating it, and preserving it. In the end, the president decided to pull the US out of the JCPOA. His decision to pull out of the agreement and reimpose sanctions on Iran has drawn criticism from the European allies, Russia, China, and other important powers.

She described that despite not being covered by the agreement, regional and internal dynamics are still crucial. Israel is a significant US ally that has demanded more concentration and attention. Barack Obama's reelection caused a deterioration in the friendship between Benjamin Netanyahu and him, which grew worse over time as Iran nuclear talks advanced. In the history of US-Israeli relations, the US's decision

¹⁰ Nazareth A.Kimberley.” US Policy Towards Iran: Uncertainty Under Trump.”South Asia Journal,Nov 21,2017 <http://southasiajournal.net/us-policy-towards-iran-uncertainty-under-trump/>

to abstain from the UN vote about the ongoing construction in the Israeli-occupied West Bank was unprecedented.

She further claimed that Trump promised to repair relations with Israel throughout his presidential campaign, and in May 2018, the US embassy was moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Most Israeli lawmakers anticipated Trump's harsh stance toward Iran as he had promised during his campaign. The nuclear agreement eliminated the possibility of pre-emptive strikes against Iran's military targets to lessen the likelihood of a fresh, prolonged regional conflict. Obama had a difficult time gaining domestic¹¹ and regional support for his approach to Iran, while Trump has had less trouble. In the end, the Trump administration has indicated a "sea shift" in its approach to Iran. It had initially appeared that the incoming administration would uphold the agreement while just making verbal opposition to it. The decertification, withdrawal, and ultimately the reimposition of sanctions caused this to shift.

Mr. Ahmad Reza Babaei clarified that Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have entered into an additional protocol to their existing nuclear safeguards agreement. This protocol enhances the IAEA's capability to monitor nuclear activities by granting it expanded access to various locations, thereby verifying Iran's compliance as a non-nuclear-weapon state under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Iranian nuclear program is being closely monitored on a global scale. Israel and the US have intensified their hostility to Tehran despite the country's claims that the program is exclusively intended for the development of peaceful nuclear energy for civilian use due to their own strategic considerations. As a result, long-standing American and European concerns that Tehran is working to develop a covert nuclear weapons capability have grown stronger. The Iranian authorities refute claims of

¹¹ Meir.B Alon." ISRAEL'S RESPONSE TO A NUCLEAR IRAN." International Journal on World Peace
Vol. 27, No. 1 (MARCH 2010), pp. 61-78 (18 pages)
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20752917> accessed on Jan 7,2023

having a nuclear weapons initiative, stating that their primary goal in the civilian nuclear arena is to generate electricity to meet future energy needs.¹²

He claimed that Israel appears to be stuck in the past. Israel worries that Washington will feel more pressure to reach a deal with Teheran as Iran's power grows. Likely, any deal would permit a certain level of uranium enrichment within Iran, thereby giving Tehran control over its own nuclear fuel cycle. While Iran insists it has no intentions of developing nuclear weapons, Israel views such a scenario as untenable. This is because Iran's nuclear capabilities would significantly limit Israel's strategic flexibility in the region. There is a prevalent sentiment in Tel Aviv in favor of military action over diplomatic talks, stemming from concerns that U.S.-Iran negotiations could undermine Israeli security interests. Contrary to widespread belief, Israel has been pushing the Bush administration to take military action against Iran by the end of 2008, despite not having the military means to do so themselves. Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, Shaul Mofaz, visited Washington in June 2007 to engage in strategic discussions with Bush administration officials about Iran's nuclear program.

He reasoned that a more secure environment for Israel could best be achieved by a fundamental redesign of the regional security landscape.¹³ Such a redesign would discourage Iran from maintaining its aggressive posture towards Israel by altering the balance of power in the region and mitigating the likelihood of Iran's continued ascent. In his analysis, only comprehensive negotiations between the U.S. and Iran, aimed at détente and the establishment of a new security framework, could potentially facilitate such a strategic overhaul.

¹² Babaei,Ahmad Reza.” Israel's Concerns and Iran's Nuclear Programme.” *Economic and Political Weekly*
Vol. 43, No. 6 (Feb. 9 - 15, 2008), pp. 21-25 (5 pages),<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40277097>

¹³ Cohen.A Roneh,Razaei Farhad.” Iran's Nuclear Program and the Israeli-Iranian Rivalry in the Post Revolutionary Era.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*,Vol. 41, No. 4 (OCTOBER 2014), pp. 442-460 (19 pages)
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43917079>

Israel's security interests might be more effectively secured by endorsing and participating in U.S.-Iran dialogues, advocating that Israeli security concerns be integrated into those negotiations. This approach could be more beneficial than opposing such talks and complicating matters by sounding the alarm for military action. Even while détente or talks with Iran may be difficult, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that there is no other way to pursue a policy of regional integration if the ultimate objective is peace rather than merely avoiding war. Despite Ahmadinejad's claims that Israel should be destroyed, the Iranian military is under the command of Ayatollah Khamenei, not Ahmadinejad, and everyone is aware that Iran cannot effectively strike Israel even if it possesses nuclear weapons.

John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt argue in their article "**The Blind Man and the Elephant in the Room: Robert Lieberman and the Israel Lobby**" that Robert Lieberman's critique of their study on the Israel lobby contradicts a wealth of evidence and prior research indicating the substantial impact that pro-Israel organizations exert on U.S. policy in the Middle East.¹⁴ They assert that Lieberman not only misrepresents their views but also erroneously critiques their research methods and findings as inconsistent with existing academic literature on American politics.

Mearsheimer and Walt counter these criticisms by stating that they did, in fact, consider alternative hypotheses and that their study displays significant variance in both independent and dependent variables. Due to the challenges in establishing the causal influence of any interest group, they also relied heavily on "process-tracing," a methodology that Lieberman himself acknowledges as appropriate for determining causality.¹⁵ Furthermore, they claim to have taken multiple steps to mitigate selection bias.

¹⁴ Stephen Walt, John J. Mearsheimer. "The Blind Man and the Elephant in the Room: Robert Lieberman and the Israel Lobby." *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Jun., 2009), pp. 259-273 (15 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40406929>

¹⁵ Robert C. Lieberman. "The 'Israel Lobby' and American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Jun., 2009), pp. 235-257 (23 pages), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40406928>

They assert that their conclusions are consistent with existing knowledge on interest groups and align with a large body of academic literature spanning legislative decision-making, campaign financing, electoral politics, think tanks, and media. Intriguingly, after making various unfounded allegations, Lieberman offers an "alternative" explanation for the influence of the Israel lobby, which Mearsheimer and Walt point out closely resembles their own findings.

In their article **"Is It Love or The Lobby? Explaining America's Special Relationship with Israel,"** John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt assert that the unique U.S.-Israel relationship is primarily shaped by a domestic interest group comprising both Jews and non-Jews. They argue that this situation is detrimental for both nations. While Jerome Slater's extensive review supports many of their core arguments, it also points out several areas of disagreement.

Slater contends that the authors have overestimated the lobby's sway over U.S. Congress and especially the Executive Branch, while underestimating other significant factors. According to Slater, the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel is rooted more in cultural and religious ties, as well as broad-based popular support within the United States, rather than the influence of the lobby.¹⁶ Slater, who is even more critical of U.S. policy in the Middle East than Mearsheimer and Walt, argues for a narrower definition of what constitutes the lobby.

Mearsheimer and Walt counter Slater's arguments by suggesting that a broader definition of the lobby is more appropriate. They note that the differences in opinion about the lobby's influence on Congress and the White House are not substantial. Moreover, they assert that the alternative explanations provided by Slater do not fundamentally challenge their core arguments about the role and impact of the lobby on U.S.-Israel relations.

¹⁶ John J. Mearsheimer & Stephen M. Walt." Is It Love or The Lobby? Explaining America's Special Relationship with Israel." *Security Studies*, 18:1, 58-78, DOI: 10.1080/09636410802678031, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09636410802678031>

Most importantly, American public opinion does not adequately explain why the country supports Israel to such a great extent and almost without condition.

Even though most Americans have a positive opinion of Israel, polls also reveal that they support a more impartial Middle East policy and a normalized relationship with Israel. Therefore, the special relationship is essentially the result of lobby power rather than enduring American affinity with the Jewish state.

To promote a more honest discussion of America's "special connection" with Israel, we wrote about the Israel lobby. Israel receives more foreign aid from the United States than any other nation, even though it is now a wealthy nation with a per capita income that ranked 29th in the world in 2006. Washington consistently supports Israel diplomatically and almost always sides with Israel in regional conflicts. Most importantly, though, is that each of these different forms of assistance is provided almost without condition. In other words, even when Israel takes actions that the US disagrees with, like expanding settlements in the Occupied Territories, Israel receives support from the US. Rarely, if ever, do American leaders or anyone aspiring to high office condemn Israel's behavior.

Even after the September 11 attacks shed light on America's problematic Middle East policies, the causes of the special relationship have remained a taboo topic in the mainstream foreign policy community. They further described that, according to our analysis, the special relationship is currently detrimental to both Israel and the United States, and a more normal relationship would be beneficial for both nations. Due to our belief that the lobby is the primary factor sustaining this unproductive policy, we authored our initial article and subsequent book to draw attention to its impact.

2.2 Entities Influencing and Reporting on U.S. Foreign Policy Regarding the Iran Nuclear Deal Under the Trump and Obama Administrations

Category	Details/Entities
Key Individuals	Trump Administration: • Donald Trump • Mike Pompeo • John Bolton • Jared Kushner (Senior Advisor) - Obama Administration: • Barack Obama • John Kerry (Secretary of State under Obama) • Ben Rhodes (Deputy National Security Advisor under Obama) - Others: • Benjamin Netanyahu • Hassan Rouhani
Organizations	Pro-Israel Lobby Groups: • American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) • Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) • Christians United for Israel (CUFI) • Israel Allies Foundation • The Israel Project - Others: • J Street (pro-Israel, pro-peace) • Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) • National Iranian American Council (NIAC, pro-deal)
News Agencies	Reuters • Associated Press (AP) • Al Jazeera • BBC World News • CNN International • The New York Times • The Washington Post • Haaretz • The Guardian • Times of Israel • Politico • Fox News
Magazines/Journals	Foreign Affairs • Middle East Quarterly • The Atlantic • The New Yorker • International Affairs • The Jerusalem Post Magazine • TIME • Newsweek • Commentary Magazine • The National Interest • The Forward

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Model of analysis

James N. Rosenau proposed a theory of foreign policy that explains how states and non-state actors interact and respond in the international system.¹⁷ The theory is based on the idea that foreign policy is a dynamic process that is shaped by a variety of factors, such as the nature of the international system, domestic politics, and the decisions of individual actors. Rosenau argued that the actions of state and non-state actors are not predetermined, but instead are the result of a complex interplay of factors. He proposed that the interactions between actors in the international system, as well as their responses to external stimuli, are determined by a variety of factors.¹⁸

1- The decision-making personality variable: This variable refers to the individual qualities of the decision makers, such as their ability to think strategically, their knowledge of the international environment and their capacity to process information. 2- The role and extent of decision-making powers: This variable refers to the institutional framework within which decisions are made, and the extent of the decision-makers' influence within it. This includes the role of the executive, legislative and judicial branches in policy development, as well as the influence of outside forces such as civil society. 3- The government bureaucracy variable: This variable refers to the bureaucratic structures and processes that are used to implement foreign policy decisions. This includes the role of bureaucratic actors in policy development and implementation, as well as the influence of external factors such as

¹⁷ James N. Rosenau. "The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy. Revised and Enlarged Edition. James N. Rosenau." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Sep., 1984), pp. 245-305 (61 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2600632>

¹⁸ James N. Rosenau. "Comparative Foreign Policy: Fad, fantasy, or Field?." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Sept, 1968), 296-329, https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4360522/mod_resource/content/1/roseunau_1968.pdf

the media. 4- The Society variable: This variable refers to the social, economic, and cultural environment in which foreign policy decisions are made. This includes the influence of public opinion, economic conditions, and social norms. 5- Variables of the International System: This variable refers to the global environment in which foreign policy decisions are made. This includes the role of international organizations.

2.3.2 Explanation

2.3.2.1 The individual or personality of the decision maker variable

Rosenau's theory of continuity considers the individual variable as the primary factor when examining a nation's foreign policy decisions. This variable considers all aspects of the decision-maker, such as their values, abilities, and past experiences. It also considers qualities like caution in the face of haste, moderation amid anger, ¹⁹tolerance for crime, humility over pride, creativity rather than destruction, courage in the face of fear, and tolerance for corruption. These unique individuals, who are ultimately responsible for formulating and announcing political decisions, influence the direction, flavor, and aroma of those decisions through their personal characteristics and psychological makeup.

In the case of the US and Iran nuclear deal, the individual decision maker variable comes into play in the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement. This decision was made by President Donald Trump, and reflects his personal views, values, and foreign policy agenda. Trump's decision to withdraw from the agreement was influenced by his strong support for the Israeli government, as well as his own hardline stance on Iran. Trump's views on the deal and his relationship with the Israeli government can be seen as the deciding factors for the US withdrawal. It was Trump's individual views, values, and relationships that drove the US withdrawal from the

¹⁹ Hassanpour, H., Rahbar, A., Nakhsi, A., & Mohammadzadeh, A. (2021). The Study of James Rosenau's Affiliation Theory with an Emphasis on the Role of Individual and International System Variables. *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 9 (SPE2), e958. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20511/pyr2021.v9nSPE2.958>

agreement. His strong support for the Israeli government and his hardline stance on Iran were the deciding factors in the US withdrawal.

2.3.2.2 Role and extent of decision-making authority

No matter the individual traits of those in a particular role, their behavior is largely dictated by the expectations associated with the position they hold. This can be seen in the actions of employees, system administrators, government representatives, legislators, and foreign policy elites such as presidents, ministers, and other high-ranking officials. Regardless of a person's personality, when they assume a certain role, their behavior will tend to adjust to comply with the expectations of that position.

In the case of the Israel lobby's influence on US foreign policy, it is believed that this lobby has significant power and influence in Washington, DC. As such, it is believed that they could shape and direct US foreign policy, particularly when it comes to the withdrawal of the Iran nuclear deal. Using James Rosenau's decision-making theory, the role and extent of decision-making authority in this case can be seen as a combination of both the power and influence of the lobby as well as the expectations that the decision-maker has of their own behavior. The power of the lobby to shape and direct US foreign policy is likely to be significant, while the expectations of the decision-maker can be seen as a product of the lobby's influence on the decision-making process. In this sense, the decision-maker is likely to feel the influence of the lobby and act in a manner that is consistent with the lobby's wishes.

2.3.2.3 Bureaucratic variables

The intricate relationships between intergovernmental organizations, the complexity of a government's organizational structure, and the expertise within an organization are all important elements that need to be taken into consideration when making foreign policy decisions. This variable is particularly prevalent in Western countries due to their bureaucratic structures. However, according to Rosenau, as societies move from open to closed political systems, the influence of bureaucracy is reduced and the power of external factors such as global reservations and dictatorships is magnified.

In the case of the Iran nuclear deal, the US foreign policy was heavily influenced by the Israel lobby. The US government's decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal was largely a result of the lobbying efforts of this powerful interest group. Through their contacts in the US government, the Israel lobby was able to exert a disproportionate amount of influence on the decision-making process. This can be explained by James Rosenau's theory of bureaucratic variables. The Israel lobby was able to influence the decision-making process by navigating the complex bureaucratic structures of the US government. Through their contacts in the US government, the Israel lobby was able to identify the people and agencies that had the most influence on the decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal. They then used their contacts to ensure that their voices were heard by the right people and that their views were considered. This allowed them to exert a disproportionate amount of influence on the decision-making process, even though they did not have a formal say in the matter.

2.3.2.4 Community Variable

This paragraph discusses the various social and economic variables that affect the making of foreign policy decisions. It states that national unity, industrialization, and societal values can all influence the nature of a nation's goals and policies. Additionally, it mentions the role of parties and influence groups in the political-social system, as well as how public opinion can attempt to shape foreign policy. In conclusion, these social and economic factors can have a significant impact on the decisions made by a nation.

The Israel Lobby in US foreign policy has had a significant impact on the Iran Nuclear Deal. This lobby has been able to influence the US government's stance on the deal, leading to its ultimate failure. The lobby has been able to influence the US government by using economic, political, and social means. The lobby is composed of both pro-Israeli and anti-Iranian groups and individuals. They have been able to gain access to politicians and executive officials through their various connections. Additionally, the lobby has been able to influence public opinion and media coverage, making it harder for the US government to make an informed decision on the matter. Finally, the lobby has also been able to use its financial resources to influence the US government's

stance on the deal. All these factors have contributed to the ultimate failure of the Iran Nuclear Deal.

2.3.2.5 International system variable

Rosenau proposed that a range of factors, both human and non-human, had an influence on the foreign policy of a nation. These factors exist externally from the country in question, and the goal of his suggested methodology was to evaluate how each domestic and global component affected the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. He argued that culture, history, and demands from both internal and external systems all influenced the options and reach of the decision-makers.

The International system variable plays a role in the Israel lobby's influence on US foreign policy towards the Iran nuclear deal in two main ways. Firstly, the power of the Israeli government to influence the US government's decision-making process on foreign policy is heavily dependent on the international system. Specifically, the international system provides a platform for Israel's lobbying efforts to reach the US government, which helps to ensure that the US government is aware of Israel's stance on the issue and the potential implications of any decision it might make. This can be seen in the Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the deal, which was a major priority for the Israeli government.

Secondly, the international system also provides a platform for other countries to express their views on the issue and to put pressure on the US government to reach an agreement that is in their interests. This pressure helps to ensure that the US government considers the perspectives of other countries when formulating its foreign policy decisions. The US government's withdrawal from the deal has had negative implications for the international system, as it has weakened the international legal framework for non-proliferation and eroded the trust of the other signatories to the deal. Ultimately, the international system helps to ensure that the US government considers the interests of all relevant parties when making decisions about the Iran nuclear deal. This has further complicated the US's role in the Middle East and the international system more broadly.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The concept of research encompasses a wide range of interpretations, varying based on the expert's viewpoint or the specific field of study. One could describe research as the thorough exploration of a particular subject, theme, or idea with a defined goal in mind. It allows the investigator to either expand existing knowledge or delve into theoretical explorations.²⁰ Methodology, on the other hand, illuminates the approach towards posing research questions and the specific queries pursued within a domain. The results of this exploration often underscore its relevance and importance. Research often entails a structured examination of phenomena, where data is scientifically quantified or gathered and subsequently examined to spot patterns, contrasts, or evolving trends. In this section on research methodology, we delve into the research strategies adopted, the methods of data gathering, and various analytical techniques.²¹

3.1 Ontology:

Ontology deals with understanding the nature of existence and asking questions like "what exists?" In simpler terms, it's about understanding the core of reality and how things in society, like people, cultural rules, and social structures, relate to each other. Ontology looks at our beliefs about what's real. It makes us think about whether the world as we see it is actual reality, or if it's just our interpretation of it.²² It also considers how we gain knowledge

²⁰ Patel M, Patel N. Exploring research methodology: review article. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2019; 6(3):48-55.

²¹ Gowin, D. Bob, and Jason Millman. "Research Methodology: A Point of View." *Review of Educational Research* 39, no. 5 (1969): 553–60. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3516009>.

²² Scandura, Terri A., and Ethlyn A. Williams. "Research Methodology in Management: Current Practices, Trends, and Implications for Future Research." *The Academy of Management Journal* 43, no. 6 (2000): 1248–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1556348>.

and share it with others. Essentially, it's about understanding what we know and how we come to know it.

Ontological Assumptions

1. Objectivism

2. Constructionism

Objectivism believes that reality exists on its own, regardless of what we think about it. It suggests that we can see the world, separate from our opinions about it. It believes that events happen for specific reasons that can be understood by looking at the conditions around them. On the other hand, constructivism says that our understanding of reality is shaped by our personal experiences. It believes that while there's an outside world, our view of it is influenced by our thoughts and social interactions, so reality keeps changing based on how we perceive and understand it.

This study takes the viewpoint of constructivism. It looks at the influence of the Israel Lobby on US foreign policy during Trump's time, focusing on the Iranian Nuclear Deal. This study believes that the decisions made in this context were shaped by human understanding and social influences. Decisions are made by people, and they base these decisions on their interpretations, priorities, and personal views.

3.2 Epistemology of Topic

Epistemology delves into the understanding of knowledge itself. Think of it as a journey to uncover the origins and truth of what we know. It's a branch of philosophy that digs deep into questions about the essence of knowledge, how we gather it, and how we ensure what we know is valid. In simpler terms, it's like a guidebook that helps us understand how we gather information, how we process it, and how we share it with others.²³ At its core, it seeks answers to the questions: "What do we truly know?" and "How did we come to know it?"

²³ Leming, Michael R. "Research Methods: The First Class." *Teaching Sociology* 6, no. 2 (1979): 133–37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1317261>.

Epistemological Assumptions

1: positivism

2: Interpretivism

Positivism believes that the world exists outside of our perceptions and that clear facts shape our knowledge. This viewpoint treats knowledge as concrete and factual. On the other hand, interpretivism thinks that research and our understanding of the world are interconnected, meaning facts aren't always black and white. In this perspective, findings are often colored by the researcher's personal views.

This study investigates the influence of the Israel Lobby on US foreign policy, especially during Trump's administration and the Iranian Nuclear Deal, through the interpretivism lens. This means it focuses on understanding the situation as seen by the people involved, not just from an outside, factual perspective. The study suggests that it's challenging to understand the Israel lobby's influence on US decisions related to the Iran nuclear deal by just looking at raw facts. Instead, it's essential to consider the meanings, past events, and experiences to truly grasp the relationship between the two nations.²⁴

3.3 Research Approach

There are mainly two ways researchers use to uncover truths: the inductive and deductive methods. Both have their pros and cons. When using qualitative data, the inductive method starts with specific observations and then tries to come up with general conclusions. Think of it as going from a tiny detail to the big picture.

For this study, we're using the deductive method. It's the opposite of inductive. Here, we start with a broad theory or idea and then narrow it down to specific conclusions. It's often termed as the "top-down" method. In this case, we'll dig deep into events

²⁴ Symonds, Percival M., and Albert Ellis. "The Case Study as a Research Method." *Review of Educational Research* 15, no. 5 (1945): 352–59. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1168314>.

and situations to understand the Israel Lobby's role in US foreign policy, especially during Trump's era and in relation to the Iranian Nuclear Deal. Our conclusions will be based on data analysis, expert interviews, and public opinions.

3.4 Research Strategy

Research strategies set the path for the entire study. Think of them as the roadmap guiding your research journey. Garima Malhotra describes it as a plan that directs how you find and evaluate information.²⁵

There are two main types of research: qualitative and quantitative. This study is qualitative, meaning it dives deep into details, using non-numerical data like words, images, and pictures. Qualitative research is flexible, allowing the researcher to study real-life situations as they unfold. Instead of sticking to a fixed plan, this approach stays open, aiming to grasp a deeper understanding of realities shaped by social interactions. There are various techniques in qualitative research like case studies, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and historical research, to name a few.

For this specific research, we're using the case study strategy. Imagine diving deep into a subject, examining it closely from every angle. That's what a case study does. It provides an in-depth look at specific scenarios using various data sources. In our study, we're examining the role of the Israel Lobby in shaping US foreign policy during Trump's tenure, particularly focusing on the Iranian Nuclear Deal.²⁶

3.4 Research design

Research design is a blueprint that guides researchers in achieving their research goals. It helps them select the best methods and techniques to address their questions.

²⁵ Howard, Peter. "Triangulating Debates Within the Field: Teaching International Relations Research Methodology." *International Studies Perspectives* 11, no. 4 (2010): 393–408. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44218697>.

²⁶ Trygve Methisen "Methodology for the Study of International Relations." *Foreign Affairs*, October 1959. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/1959-10-01/methodology-study-international-relations>.

There are three main types of research designs: explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory. In this study, both explanatory and descriptive designs are used.

The study examines the influence of the Israel Lobby on U.S. foreign policy during the Trump Administration, specifically looking at the Iranian Nuclear Deal. The main questions being explored are:

1. How has the Israel Lobby influenced U.S. foreign policy decisions?
2. What part did the Israel Lobby play in the U.S. pulling out of the Iranian Nuclear Deal during Trump's time?

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis

Collecting information is a vital part of research. Though the methods might differ depending on the subject, the core idea remains to gather reliable and accurate data. This ensures the answers derived from the data are credible. For this study, information was sourced in two main ways: primary and secondary data.²⁷

Primary data is firsthand information gathered directly from people or experiences. Examples include surveys, interviews, and data researchers gather themselves. In this study, primary information was sourced from the researcher's own observations and official online portals.

Secondary data, on the other hand, is information already available from previous research or publications. This can be found in research articles, books, journals, and news websites. Additionally, government policy documents and statements from international figures were used as secondary data sources for this study.

²⁷ O'Leary, Michael K., William D. Coplin, Howard B. Shapiro, and Dale Dean. "The Quest for Relevance: Quantitative International Relations Research and Government Foreign Affairs Analysis." *International Studies Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1974): 211–37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600306>.

3.6 Ethics of Research

Searching for ethical guidelines helps us responsibly conduct educational research in political settings. The researcher aimed to be fair and unbiased in all aspects of the research. They committed to being honest and ensuring the research is genuine. To maintain high ethical standards, the researcher followed six key principles: being truthful in research, working well with others, safeguarding participants, treating animals ethically, upholding institutional values, and being socially responsible.²⁸

1. The researcher was mindful of potential biases and mistakes.
2. The research is original, and all borrowed ideas are properly credited.
3. All data in this research is genuine and hasn't been altered.
4. The main goal of this study is to provide a fresh perspective on the topic.

²⁸ Morrison, Claudio, and Devi Sacchetto. "Research Ethics in an Unethical World: The Politics and Morality of Engaged Research." *Work, Employment & Society* 32, no. 6 (2018): 1118–29. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26969802>.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS/RESULTS/FINDINGS

4.1 To comprehend the influence of the Israel lobby on US foreign policy.

Introduction

The Israel Lobby, often referred to as the "pro-Israel lobby," consists of a network of individuals and organizations that aim to shape U.S. foreign policy in a manner favorable to Israel. It is composed of individuals and groups from the American Jewish community, non-Jewish pro-Israel activists, and Israeli expatriates who work together to advance Israel's interests in the United States.²⁹ The Israel Lobby has been a significant force in shaping American foreign policy toward Israel and the broader Middle East, dating back to at least the 1950s. The Israel Lobby has been active in a variety of ways, including lobbying Congress, organizing public campaigns, and funding candidates and causes that are considered pro-Israel.³⁰ The Lobby has also been active in media campaigns, such as those aimed at influencing public opinion in United States.

The influence of the Lobby has been particularly significant in recent decades, with the Lobby taking an increasingly active role in shaping the foreign policy agenda of the United States and in defending the interests of the State of Israel.³¹ The main

²⁹ Mearsheimer, John J., and Stephen M. Walt. "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy* no. 134 (2003): 32-37.

³⁰ Waxman, Dov. "Beyond Realpolitik: The Israel Lobby and US Support for Israel." *Israel Studies Forum* 22, no. 2 (2007): 97-114. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41804983> ²

³¹ Robert C. Lieberman. "Perspectives on Politics, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Jun. 2009), pp. 235-257 (23 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40406928>

entities involved in the Israel Lobby include organizations like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations are key players in the Israel Lobby, and several other Jewish organizations. Additionally, many Christian groups, such as the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council, have been active in the pro-Israel movement. There are several non-Jewish groups that are also active in the pro-Israel movement, including the American Jewish Congress and the American Israel Education Foundation.

The Israel Lobby has been active in United States since at least the 1950, when it began to exert influence on American foreign policy towards Israel and the Middle East. Since then, the Lobby has become increasingly influential in shaping the foreign policy agenda of the United States and in defending the interests of the State of Israel. In recent years, the Lobby has been particularly active in the United States Congress, where it has been successful in passing a few pro-Israel bills, such as the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. The Lobby has also been successful in influencing American public opinion in favor of Israel, particularly through its media campaigns. The role of the Israel Lobby in shaping American foreign policy has been a topic of considerable discussion. Advocates for the Lobby assert that it is a vital component of the American democratic system, serving to align the strategic and diplomatic interests of the United States and Israel.³²

The Israel Lobby has been a major factor in US foreign policy for decades, and its influence has been especially pronounced in the Middle East. The US-Israel relationship is often referred to as a "special relationship" and it is one of the most consequential foreign policy relationships in US history. The lobby consists of groups and individuals who work to influence US policy in the Middle East in ways that are beneficial to Israel. The lobby includes a broad range of actors, including Jewish-

³² Walt, Stephen, and John J. Mearsheimer. "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy." KSG Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP06-011, March 2006.

American organizations such as AIPAC, evangelical Christian groups, and other pro-Israel groups. The Israel Lobby has wielded significant influence over American foreign policy in the Middle East for decades. This group has successfully advocated for substantial military and economic assistance to Israel from the U.S. Additionally, they've been instrumental in advancing policies that many Arab nations oppose, such as recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocating the U.S. embassy there. The lobby has also successfully campaigned for sanctions against Iran. This influence has sparked controversy, with critics suggesting that the lobby has disproportionately shaped U.S. policy in ways that are not universally beneficial.

4.1.1 The emergence of Israel lobby in US

In the 1800s, the rise of the Israel Lobby in America was primarily fueled by a mix of spiritual and governmental reasons. Over time, Jews have maintained a durable connection with the United States, which has served as a refuge for those escaping mistreatment in Europe and other regions. This relationship was further strengthened in the late 19th century, when a wave of Jewish immigration to the United States made it one of the largest Jewish communities in the world.³³ The first organized American effort to support the Zionist movement in Palestine began in 1896, when a group of prominent American Jews founded the Federation of American Zionists.³⁴ This organization sought to build support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and to promote American-Jewish solidarity and friendship. In 1897, the Federation was successful in garnering recognition of the Zionist movement by the U.S. government, and it soon became a powerful voice for the movement in the United States. The rise of the Israel Lobby in the United States was further boosted by the emergence of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in 1906.

³³ Rynhold, J. (2015). Notes. In *The Arab Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture* (pp. 189-262). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

³⁴ Raphael Patai, Howard M. Sachar. *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1976. Pp. xviii, 883, xlix. \$20.00, *The American Historical Review*, Volume 82, Issue 3, June 1977, Pages 707–708, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/82.3.707-a>

The AJC was a major force in the American Jewish community, and it advocated for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.³⁵ The organization also worked to ensure that Jewish organizations in the United States would remain united in their support for the Zionist cause. The emergence of the Israel Lobby in the United States was further supported by several prominent American politicians, including President Woodrow Wilson, who was a strong advocate for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

The United States has acknowledged the significance of a robust and stable Israel in the Middle East, a view that intensified in the 1800s. During that era, the Ottoman Empire exerted control over a large portion of the Middle East, presenting a possible risk to American interests there. Moreover, European nations were competing for clout in the area, and the U.S. viewed Israel as a prospective partner in this contest. For the United States, Israel provided a bulwark against potential threats from the Ottoman Empire and other regional powers. By aligning itself with Israel, the United States could tap into a powerful ally in the region, one that could potentially provide military and economic assistance in the event of a conflict. Additionally, the United States was attracted to the potential for economic opportunities in the region, with Israel's markets potentially offering lucrative opportunities for American businesses. At the same time, the United States viewed Israel as a representative of democratic values and religious liberty in the Middle East. In a region largely governed by authoritarian systems, the U.S. considered Israel a shining example of democratic potential. This sentiment was further strengthened by the fact that many of the key figures in the Zionist

In addition, the U.S. Senate approved a resolution in 1917 acknowledging the Balfour Declaration, which endorsed the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. The founding of Israel in 1948 further bolstered the influence of the Israel Lobby in the United States.³⁶ In subsequent years, this lobby has evolved into a formidable player in

³⁵ Brown, L. Carl. Review of "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2006-09-01/israel-lobby-and-us-foreign-policy>

³⁶ Garfinkle, Adam. "The Madness of Jewcentricity." *Commentary* 122, no. 6 (2006): 21-29. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2009/08/zionism-and-jewcentricity-in-american-history/>

American political circles. It holds sway in both the Republican and Democratic Parties and has been instrumental in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East. The Israel Lobby is also a key advocate for American financial assistance to Israel, contributing to the country's status as one of the leading beneficiaries of U.S. foreign aid.

4.1.2 Rise of US interest in Israel

The U.S.-Israel relationship has a lengthy and intricate history. Israel has long been a major player in US foreign policy, and its influence on American policy has been considerable. Israel's influence on US foreign policy began shortly after its founding in 1948, when it began to lobby the United States for diplomatic recognition. This was a difficult task, as the United States was not yet committed to the principle of supporting a Jewish state in the Middle East. In the 1950s, Israel began to focus its lobbying efforts on supporting US efforts in the Cold War. It sought to demonstrate that it was a reliable ally in the region and a valuable partner in the US-led fight against communism. In the 1960s, Israel's lobbying efforts shifted to securing arms shipments and economic aid from the US.

This was an important task for Israel, as the country was heavily dependent on the US for military and economic assistance. In the 1970s, Israel's lobbying efforts focused on gaining US support for the peace process in the Middle East. Israel sought to demonstrate that it was a reliable partner in the peace process and an ally of the US in the region. In the 1980s and 1990s, Israel continued its lobbying efforts, but shifted its focus to ensuring continue US support for its policies in the region.

This has involved efforts to oppose U.S. weapons sales to Arab nations, backing U.S. initiatives to curb Iran's influence, and promoting a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In recent years, the United States and Israel have become even closer. The US and Israel have signed a series of defense and security agreements, and the US has provided billions of dollars in military aid to Israel. The US also strongly supports Israel's right to self-defense and has stood by Israel in its conflict with the

Palestinians. In addition, the US has sought to strengthen its ties with Israel in the face of regional threats posed by Iran, ISIS, and other radical Islamic groups. The emergence of the Israel lobby in the United States is an issue of great importance in international relations. The Israel lobby is a powerful force in American politics and has been instrumental in propelling the U.S.-Israel relationship forward.

The Israel lobby has been present in the United States since the late 1800s, but its influence and strength have increased in the past few decades. This growth has been driven by several factors, including the increased presence of Jewish Americans in Congress and the executive branch, the increasing support for Israel among conservative evangelical Christians, and the rise of pro-Israel think tanks and advocacy groups. The Israel lobby has effectively shaped U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East through various means. It has advocated for laws and resolutions in Congress that align with the Israeli government's interests and has played a key role in securing both financial and political backing for Israel. The lobby has also been successful in shaping public opinion in the United States in favor of Israel, which has been reflected in the increasing levels of public support for the country over the years. The Israel lobby's influence on U.S. foreign policy has been a source of controversy in international relations. Some argue that the lobby has been too powerful, to have a disproportionate influence on U.S. foreign policy. Its influence on US policy has been considerable, and it has played a major role in shaping US policy in the Middle East. Israel has long sought to cultivate strong ties with the US and has used its lobbying efforts to secure support for its policies in the region.

4.1.3 Israel Lobby in Executive and Legislative Branch

The influence of the Israel lobby within the executive and legislative arms of the U.S. government is both significant and a subject of controversy. In recent years, the influence of the Israel lobby has come under increased scrutiny with some arguing that it has become overly influential and is pushing the United States government to

pursue policies that are not in the best interests of the American people.³⁷ At its simplest, the Israel lobby is made up of several organizations, groups, and individuals that seek to promote American support for Israel. This encompasses entities like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, among various other groups and individuals.

These organizations, groups, and individuals could influence policy and legislation through contributions to political campaigns, lobbying of elected officials, and the formation of public opinion. In the executive branch, the Israel lobby has been able to shape policy in several ways. It has been able to influence the appointment of key personnel to positions in the White House and the State Department, as well as the composition of government advisory boards. It has also been able to influence the formulation of key foreign policy decisions, such as the decision to move the United States its support of Israel. In addition, the Israel lobby has been able to influence the allocation of foreign aid to Israel, as well as the level of funding for military and economic assistance. In the legislative branch, the Israel lobby has been able to shape policy in a variety of ways. It has been able to influence the passage of legislation that is favorable to Israel, as well as the blocking of legislation that is unfavorable.

It has been able to influence the introduction of resolutions that are supportive of Israel and the blocking of those that are critical. It has also been able to influence the passage of foreign aid and other appropriations bills that support, Israel. The impact of the Israel lobby on the U.S. executive and legislative branches is unquestionable.

However, there is a great deal of debate over whether this influence is beneficial or detrimental to the United States. Supporters of the Israel lobby argue that it helps to maintain a strong relationship between the United States and Israel, which is necessary for both countries' security interests. Critics of the Israel lobby argue that it is overly influential and has the potential to push the United States towards policies

³⁷ Lieberman, Robert C. "The 'Israel Lobby' and American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 2 (2009): 235–57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40406928>.

that are not in the best interests of the American people. Ultimately, this debate is likely to continue for some time and it to be an important factor in shaping US foreign policy.

4.1.4 Israel Lobby Organizations and Actors

4.1.4.1 Israel Lobby Organizations In US

The Israel Lobby consists of a potent and influential network of organizations and individuals dedicated to steering U.S. foreign policy in a direction favorable to Israel. The lobby consists of a diverse range of organizations, including pro-Israel advocacy groups, think tanks, and media outlets, as well as prominent individuals in the United States who are sympathetic to Israel's cause³⁸ The lobby has been credited with influencing U.S. foreign policy decisions in the Middle East, particularly about Iran nuclear deal. The Israel Lobby is an influential force in American politics and has been the subject of much debate and analysis among political commentators, academics, and policy makers. Scholars have argued that the lobby has been successful in advancing its objectives by influencing U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding Iran nuclear deal. Some have credited the Israel Lobby with successfully advocating for policies that are beneficial to Israel but may not be in the best interests of the United States.

Others have argued that the lobby has distorted the public discourse surrounding the Iran nuclear deal, creating an environment in which criticism of Israel is seen as taboo.³⁹ The Israel Lobby includes various organizations and individuals, such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. These organizations work to

³⁸ Owens, Mackubin Thomas, Shayna Abramson, Robert Dujarric, Robert Pape, Menachem Kellner, Bennett Cin, Ralph Mitchell, et al. "Walt and Mearsheimer Fire Back at Their Critics." *Foreign Policy*, no. 156 (2006): 4–14. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25462076>.

³⁹ Judis, John B., and Topos Graphics. "OPENING GAMBIT: Zionist Movement." *Foreign Policy*, no. 205 (2014): 16–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24577453>.

shape the foreign policy of the United States in support of Israel. They lobby Members of Congress, organize grassroots campaigns, and advocate for pro-Israel policies in the media. Additionally, they build relationships with policy makers in the executive branch of the U.S. government, as well as with foreign leaders.

4.1.4.2 American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)

AIPAC, or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is a prominent pro-Israel advocacy group in the U.S. Recognized as the biggest pro-Israel lobby in the country, it is also considered one of the most influential lobbying organizations overall. Established in 1963, AIPAC aims to maintain a robust U.S.-Israel relationship and to guide U.S. policy in a direction that safeguards Israel's security and welfare. AIPAC is a nonpartisan organization and is not affiliated with any political party.⁴⁰ It works to promote the US-Israel relationship by engaging Congress, the White House, and other branches of the US government. AIPAC works to build a bipartisan consensus in favor of the US-Israel relationship and advocates for robust US support for Israel. AIPAC also works to ensure that the US government takes steps to combat the threat of terrorism and other security threats to Israel and the region. In addition to its work in Washington, AIPAC also works to educate and mobilize the American public in support of the US-Israel relationship.⁴¹ AIPAC hosts conferences and events for members of Congress, Jewish community leaders, and other prominent figures to promote understanding and support for the US-Israel relationship. AIPAC also works to build a broad coalition of support for the US-Israel relationship, including Christian and minority communities. AIPAC has been successful in influencing US policy towards Israel. AIPAC has been credited with helping to secure US support for Israel's security and well-being, including US foreign aid to Israel and US support for Israel's right to self-defense. AIPAC has also been successful in preventing efforts to

⁴⁰ Aziz, Qutubuddin, and Ahmed Abdulla. "ZIONIST INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY." *Pakistan Horizon* 33, no. 1/2 (1980): 3–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41393617>.

⁴¹ Kaplan, Amy. "The Old 'New Anti-Semitism' and Resurgent White Supremacy." *Middle East Report*, no. 283 (2017): 10–15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45198536>.

undermine the US-Israel relationship, such as by blocking anti-Israel resolutions in Congress.⁴²

4.1.4.3 American Jewish Congress (AJC)

The American Jewish Congress (AJC) is a foremost group representing American Jews, committed to safeguarding and advancing Jewish civil rights and interests both in the U.S. and globally.⁴³ Founded in 1918, AJC serves as a global Jewish advocacy organization, working with elected officials, local and national governments, and international institutions to ensure that Jewish people are treated fairly, and their rights are respected. AJC advocates for civil and human rights, combats anti-Semitism, promotes religious freedom, and works to build bridges between the Jewish community and other religious and cultural groups.⁴⁴ Through its Global Jewish Advocacy program, AJC works to protect and advance the rights of Jews in the United States and abroad. AJC works to ensure that Jews can practice their faith freely without fear of discrimination or persecution and works to combat anti-Semitism in both its classical and contemporary forms. AJC also provides a platform for Jewish voices to be heard in the international arena. The organization has been a leader in the fight against racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination. AJC works to foster constructive dialogue between different religious and cultural groups, and to encourage understanding and teamwork between. Additionally, AJC works to ensure that the United States and its allies stand up for the to protect the civil and human rights of all people. Through its activism, AJC has been instrumental in securing important advances in civil and human rights for Jews around the world. AJC has been a leader in combating anti-Semitism and continues to work tirelessly to ensure that Jewish people are treated with respect and dignity everywhere. The organization is

⁴² Wenger, Martha. "US Aid to Israel: From Handshake to Embrace." *Middle East Report*, no. 164/165 (1990): 14–15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3012684>.

⁴³ "America and the 'Israel Lobby.'" *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 34 (2006): 3651–53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4418609>.

⁴⁴ Waxman, Dov. "The Israel Lobbies: A Survey of the Pro-Israel Community in the United States." *Israel Studies Forum* 25, no. 1 (2010): 5–28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41805051>.

committed to a vision of a world in which Jews can live and thrive in safety and security.

4.1.4.4 Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish

Organizations

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is an important gathering of American Jewish community leaders. It provides an opportunity for the to discuss the most pressing issues facing the community and to create a unified voice in the face of challenges.⁴⁵ This conference brings together the leaders of the major American Jewish organizations to discuss the most pressing issues facing the American Jewish community. At the conference, the presidents discussed the importance of advocating for the safety and security of Jews around the world.⁴⁶ They also discussed the need to combat antisemitism in all its forms, both domestically and internationally. Additionally, the presidents discussed ways to strengthen ties between the United States and Israel, as well as ways to encourage American Jewish engagement with Israel.⁴⁷

4.1.4.5 Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA)

The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) is a neutral, stand-alone group focused on supporting a U.S. foreign policy that keeps the United States and its allies safe, especially in the Middle East and globally. Through research, analysis, advocacy, and educational programs, JINSA works to ensure that the United States maintains a strong military and robust security partnership with Israel, while also promoting broader American engagement in the Middle East, and around the world. JINSA's research and educational activities strive to provide the American public and

⁴⁵ Sanua, Marianne R. "AJC and Inter marriage: The Complexities of Jewish Continuity, 1960–2006." *The American Jewish Yearbook* 107 (2007): 3–32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23605927>.

⁴⁶ Kampeas, Ron. 2020. "Trump-era compromise on Presidents Conference chair reveals tensions." *The Jerusalem Post*, May 1.

⁴⁷ Karpf, Maurice J. "JEWISH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES: An Outline of Types of Organizations, Activities and Problems." *The American Jewish Year Book* 39 (1937): 47–148. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23601957>.

policymakers with a deeper understanding of the regional and global security challenges currently facing the United States. ⁴⁸Through its research efforts, JINSA seeks to develop and disseminate informed, independent analysis of key security topics and policy debates related to the Middle East and the broader international security environment. The Institute's advocacy work includes advocating for increased American support for the security of Israel and other U.S. allies in the region, as well as for a robust American diplomatic and military presence in the Middle East. JINSA's educational programs seek to equip the next generation of foreign policy practitioners with the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to navigate.

4.1.4.6 Zionist Organizations of America

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) is a well-known group in the U.S. that supports Israel. Since its founding in 1897, the ZOA has been dedicated to strengthening the US-Israel relationship and advocating for a safe and secure Jewish State of Israel. Through its active lobbying efforts, ZOA strives to shape US foreign policy towards Israel and to promote a strong and lasting US-Israel partnership.⁴⁹ The ZOA works to ensure Israel's security and sovereignty by providing a strong voice in the US Congress, the White House, and the United Nations. The organization engages in both grassroots and high-level advocacy, mobilizing community support and educating decision makers on key issues. The ZOA also actively promotes the growth of the US-Israel relationship by organizing trips, trainings, and conferences.⁵⁰ In addition to its advocacy work, the ZOA is committed to educating the public on the

⁴⁸ "National Jewish Organizations." *The American Jewish Year Book* 105 (2005): 541–605. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23605595>.

⁴⁹ Little, Douglas. "David or Goliath? The Israel Lobby and Its Critics." *Political Science Quarterly* 123, no. 1 (2008): 151–56. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20202975>.

⁵⁰ Jones, Seth G., Catrina Doxsee, and Nicholas Harrington. "The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States." Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25227>.

history and importance of Zionism and the Jewish State of Israel. The organization hosts lectures, seminars, and conferences that feature speakers from both sides of the political spectrum. The ZOA also produces educational materials, such as books, pamphlets, and videos, to help inform the public. As a leading pro-Israel organization, the ZOA works to ensure that the US- to stand in solidarity with Israel. By building strong relationships with lawmakers, educating the public, and engaging in active advocacy, the ZOA is dedicated to securing Israel's future.

4.1.4.7 Israel Lobby Actors

Several prominent pro-Israel figures have been appointed to key positions in the Trump administration. These include Jared Kushner, who serves as Senior Advisor to President Trump and is a strong supporter of Israel; Avi Berkowitz, who is Special Representative for International Negotiations; Jason Greenblatt, who served as Special Representative for International Negotiations until recently; and David Friedman, who is the U.S. Ambassador to Israel. Other key figures in the Trump administration with close ties to Israel include Stephen Miller, who is Senior Advisor to the President; and Nikki Haley, who was the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations until recently to play a major role in shaping the Trump administration's policy towards Israel.⁵¹

Jared Corey Kushner

Jared Kushner is a senior advisor to President Donald Trump and is the leading figure in the Trump administration on matters related to Israel. He is also a key member of the President's Middle East peace negotiating team, responsible for crafting the administration's Middle East peace plan⁵². He has also been active in helping to secure financial and diplomatic support for Israel from countries in the region. Additionally, he is a vocal champion of the U.S.-Israel partnership and has openly backed Israeli

⁵¹ Waxman, Dov. "The Israel Lobbies: A Survey of the Pro-Israel Community in the United States." *Israel Studies Forum* 25, no. 1 (2010): 5–28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41805051>.

⁵² Third Way. "2020 Thematic Brief: Trump Investigations." Third Way, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26168>.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In his role as a senior advisor to the President, Kushner has become a key figure in the Trump administration's efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship and to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Avi Berkowitz

Avi Berkowitz is a member of the Trump administration and serves as a Special Representative for International Negotiations. He is seen as a key figure in the Trump administration's close relationship with Israel. In his role, he has played a role in the Abraham Accords brokered by the U.S., which set up diplomatic relations between Israel and multiple Arab nations.⁵³ He has also been involved in other US-led initiatives in the Middle East, such as the Trump Administration's plans to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As a member of the Trump administration and a close confidant of the President, Berkowitz is seen as an important player in the Israel lobby, which has sought to advance the interests of the Israeli government in the United States. which aims to promote the goals of the Israeli government in the U.S.

Jason Greenblatt

Jason Greenblatt served as an official in the Trump Administration from 2017-2019 and was considered the "architect" of the President's Middle East policy.⁵⁴ During his tenure, Greenblatt worked to bring about a peace agreement between Israel and the Arab states and was a strong advocate for Israel's interests. He was also a leading member of the President's Israel lobby, working closely with pro-Israel groups and organizations to ensure Israel's security and prosperity. In addition, he was a frequent speaker at pro-Israel events and meetings and acted as a facilitator between the President and the Israeli government.

⁵³ Klein, Morton A., and Elizabeth A. Berney. "Trump: Friend Extraordinaire to Israel and the Jewish People." In *The Impact of the Presidency of Donald Trump on American Jewry and Israel*, edited by Steven J. Ross, Steven F. Wind Mueller, and Lisa Ansell, 37–92. Purdue University Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1htpdqt.7>.

⁵⁴ Brooks, Matthew, and Shari Hillman. "They Said It Couldn't Be Done: Historic Achievements of President Donald Trump." In *The Impact of the Presidency of Donald Trump on American Jewry and Israel*, edited by Steven J. Ross, Steven F. Windmueller, and Lisa Ansell, 211–48. Purdue University Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1htpdqt.14>.

David Friedman

David Friedman is an Israel lobby actor in the Trump administration. He is currently serving as the United States Ambassador to Israel, appointed by President Donald Trump in 2017. Friedman has been a major advocate for the Trump administration's pro-Israel policies, particularly in the areas of foreign policy, defense, and immigration.⁵⁵ He is a strong supporter of the move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and he has been a key advocate for the expansion of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. Friedman has also been a vocal supporter of the United States' recognition of the Golan Heights as part of Israel. As an Israel lobby actor in the Trump Administration, Friedman has been a key figure in increasing US-Israel relations and in advocating American support for Israel's policies.

Stephen Miller

Stephen Miller is a senior advisor to President Donald Trump and serves as an Israel Lobby Actor in the Trump Administration. He has been an active proponent of the President's pro-Israel policies and has been instrumental in helping shape the Trump Administration's agenda in the Middle East⁵⁶. Miller has been a key player in developing policy for the United States' relationship with Israel and has been a key advocate for President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. He has also been involved in working with the Israeli government on various issues, including security, economic development, and diplomatic ties. Miller has also been a vocal supporter of the President's decision to withdraw the United States from the Iran Nuclear Deal.

⁵⁵ Heistein, Ari. "Trump, Israel, and the American Jewish Community." Institute for National Security Studies, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep08864>.

⁵⁶ Blitzer, Jonathan. 2020. "How Stephen Miller Manipulates Donald Trump to Further His Immigration Obsession." *The New Yorker*, March 2.

Nikki Haley

As the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley served as a major advocate for the Trump administration's pro-Israel agenda. She played a key role in the U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations Human Rights Council, which she argued was biased against Israel, and the U.S. veto of a U.N. Security Council decision criticizing Israeli construction of settlements in the West Bank. She was also a strong supporter of President Trump's choice to acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocate the U.S. Embassy to that city.⁵⁷ Additionally, she strongly opposed the Iran nuclear agreement and, in 2018, was instrumental in the passage of U.N. Security Council sanctions against Iran. Haley's tenure as ambassador also saw the U.S. exit from the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, which she accused of anti-Israel bias. Throughout her tenure, Haley was a strong ally of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a vocal advocate for the Trump administration's pro-Israel policies.

4.2 The source of Israel Lobby Power

- Financial Power
- Moral Support Power
- Influence on Public Opinion via Mass Media, Academics, and Intellectuals

The Israel lobby consists of different groups, people, and bodies that aim to promote the goals of Israel and its backers in the U.S. The lobby draws its power from several sources, including political donations, moral support power lobbying efforts, grassroots campaigns, think tanks, public relations firms, and other organizations. This power is largely derived from the ability to shape public opinion and government policies, both in the US and around the world. Additionally, the lobby is well-

⁵⁷ Hatuel-Radoshitzky, Michal. "US-Israel Bilateral Relations and Recent Developments in the UN." Institute for National Security Studies, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19386>.

connected to the US political and business elite, allowing it to wield significant influence over policy and decision-making.

4.2.1 Financial Power

The Israel lobby in the U.S. is a strong player that has held significant influence in American politics for many years. This influence is largely achieved through political donations and the business interests of the lobby. The lobby has made significant contributions to the campaigns of both Republican and Democratic candidates in the past and has become especially powerful since the election of Donald Trump. Political donations have been the primary way that the Israel lobby has gained influence in the U.S. political system.⁵⁸ The lobby has donated millions of dollars to candidates over the years and has had success in influencing the policy positions of those it has helped to elect. These donations have been largely focused on supporting pro-Israel candidates, but they have had an impact on the overall political landscape in the U.S. In addition to political donations, the Israel lobby has been able to leverage its business interests to gain influence. One of the most prominent examples of this is the Trump administration's recent decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. This decision was widely seen as a victory for the Israel lobby, as it was a clear sign that the Trump administration was willing to put its own interests ahead of those of the Palestinians. The Israel lobby has also used its business to influence other areas of U.S. policy, from foreign aid to military action in the Middle East. The power of the Israel lobby in the U.S. is undeniable, but it has been growing in recent years. This is largely due to the combination of political donations and business interests that the lobby has been able to leverage. If the lobby continues to be a major player in U.S. politics, it will continue to have a major influence on U.S. policy.⁵⁹

The primary source of power for the Israel lobby is financial support. Lobbyists and organizations supporting Israel have been able to raise and spend vast amounts of

⁵⁹ Sullivan, Andrew. 2019. "How Should We Talk About the Israel Lobby's Power?" *New York Magazine*, March 8.

money to influence US policy. This has included large donations to political campaigns, the funding of think tanks and advocacy groups, and the funding of pro-Israel pressure groups. Additionally, the Israel lobby has leveraged the support of key individuals and organizations to influence US policy. This includes prominent members of the US Congress, business and religious leaders, and major media outlets.⁶⁰ These individuals and organizations have used their influence to promote pro-Israel policies and to pressure the US government to support Israel. Furthermore, the Israel lobby has been able to mobilize large numbers of supporters to contact their representatives in Congress and make their voices heard. This has been used to pressure Congress to pass pro-Israel legislation, and to discourage the US government from taking actions that may be seen as hostile to Israel. This has been a powerful tool in influencing US policy.

The Israel Lobby has become increasingly adept at using its financial power to shape US foreign policy. For example, the Lobby has used its financial resources to fund campaigns and lobbying efforts to support pro-Israel candidates and to push for legislation favorable to Israel. They have also used their financial resources to support the Trump administration's pro-Israel policies, such as relocating the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and acknowledging Israel's control over the Golan Heights. The Israel Lobby has also leveraged its financial power to influence media coverage of US foreign policy. The Lobby has funded think tanks and media outlets that provide favorable coverage of US foreign policy in favor of Israel. This has helped to create a narrative in the media that is sympathetic to Israel and often critical of its opponents. Finally, the Israel Lobby has used its financial resources to influence US foreign policy by engaging in direct diplomacy with US policymakers. This can involve providing economic incentives to US policymakers to support pro-Israel policies, or providing support to US officials who are willing to back pro-Israel policies.

⁶⁰ Waxman, Dov. Review of *Beyond Realpolitik: The Israel Lobby and US Support for Israel*, by John J. Mearsheimer, Stephen M. Walt, Elizabeth Stephens, and Irvine H. Anderson. *Israel Studies Forum* 22, no. 2 (2007): 97–114. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41804983>.

4.2.2 Moral Support Power

Backing the Jewish state of Israel on moral grounds is a key element of the Israel Lobby's influence. The Lobby has built a strong web of groups, research centers, and activist organizations that work to further the interests of Israel and its people.⁶¹ These organizations often make emotional appeals to American politicians and the public, emphasizing the shared values and history of the two countries. This emotional connection has been a powerful tool for the Lobby in convincing US politicians of the importance of supporting Israel.

Over the years, the lobby has developed a vast network of organizations and individuals that work together to influence the US government's policies towards Israel. These organizations and individuals have become increasingly influential in shaping US foreign policy, and their power is largely derived from the moral support they provide for Israel. The moral support for Israel has been a powerful tool for the lobby. Supporters of the Jewish state often invoke religion, history, and culture when advocating for Israeli interests. This argument is often used to evoke an emotional response from the American public, making it difficult for US politicians to oppose the Israel Lobby's positions. This emotional appeal has been particularly effective in convincing many US citizens to support the Israeli government, and it has thus been a key factor in the lobby's success in influencing US foreign policy.

The Israel Lobby also relies on anti-Semitism to gain influence. It has used historical anti-Semitism to paint Israel's enemies as dangerous and irrational forces that must be opposed. This has allowed the Lobby to convince US politicians that it is in the national interest to support Israel and its policies. This has been particularly effective in convincing the US to support military action in the Middle East, such as the 2006 Lebanon War and the 2014 Gaza War. The Israel Lobby has used both moral support and anti-Semitism to gain power in US foreign policy. By appealing to American to emphasize the shared values and history between the US and Israel, while also

⁶¹ OREN, MICHAEL. "THE ULTIMATE ALLY." *Foreign Policy*, no. 186 (2011): 44–51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41233422>.

leveraging anti-Semitic rhetoric to portray Israel's enemies as irrational and dangerous forces, the Lobby has been able to gain considerable influences over US foreign policy.

The Israel Lobby's moral and political support has been a major factor in the lobby's success in influencing US foreign policy. The lobby's ability to evoke an emotional response from the American public, along with its financial and political resources, has enabled it to become an influential force in US politics. This influence has been evident in the numerous pro-Israel measures that the US government has passed in the past several decades, and it is likely to remain a major factor in US foreign policy for years to come.

4.2.3 Public Opinion Power through Mass media, Intellectuals, and Academics

The Israel Lobby has grown in influence over the years, particularly in US foreign policy. By utilizing a variety of tactics, the Lobby has developed a powerful presence in the American public sphere. By mass media, intellectuals, and academics, the Israel Lobby has been able to shape public opinion and wield considerable power over US foreign policy. First, the Lobby has been able to use mass media to its advantage, developing relationships with major news outlets and influencing the way they report on foreign policy issues. This includes the production of documentaries, television shows, and news articles which emphasize Israel's right to exist and its importance in the region. Additionally, pro-Israel advocacy organizations have been able to use social media to distribute their message to a wide audience. Second, the Israel Lobby has leveraged the influence of intellectuals and academics to further its agenda. Through the establishment of think tanks and research centers, the Lobby has been able to shape the public discourse on foreign policy issues. Additionally, the Lobby has been able to use prominent scholars and public figures to advocate for an Israeli-centric foreign policy. Finally, the Israel Lobby has been able to influence US foreign policy through its influence over public opinion. By utilizing mass media, intellectuals, and academics, the Lobby has been able to shape the public discourse and convince Americans of the importance of supporting Israel. This has resulted in a

situation where US foreign policy is heavily influenced by the Lobby's agenda. In short, the Israel Lobby has been able to use mass media, intellectuals, and academics to shape public opinion and gain substantial power over US foreign policy. By doing so, the Lobby has been able to create a pro-Israel public discourse that has had a major impact on US foreign policy.

4.3 The Influence of Israel Lobby to The US Foreign Policy Under Trump Administration Towards Iran Nuclear Deal

4.3.1 The structure of the Iran Nuclear Deal

The Iran Nuclear Deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is a pact between Iran and several global powers—namely the United States, France, Germany, the UK, China, and Russia. The deal aims to make sure that Iran uses its nuclear program only for peaceful ends. It was finalized in 2015 and took effect in January 2016.⁶²

The JCPOA established a framework whereby Iran would reduce its uranium enrichment activities, including⁶³ reducing its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98%, and limit its enrichment capacity to below 3.67%. In exchange, the United States, European Union, and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) would lift nuclear-related sanctions imposed on Iran.

The JCPOA also mandates that Iran follow the Additional Protocol set forth by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and grant the IAEA access to all its nuclear facilities for inspection and monitoring. Iran agreed to provide the IAEA with

⁶² Hurst, Steven. *The United States and the Iranian Nuclear Programme: A Critical History*. Edinburgh University Press, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctv7h0vhs>

⁶³ "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action." European Union, 2016, ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepare/CreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=2047.

access to its nuclear facilities⁶⁴ for 15 years, and for 25 years, it agreed to limit its enrichment of uranium to below 3.67%. The agreement also calls for the implementation of a Joint Commission, which consists of representatives from all of the countries involved in the deal, to oversee the implementation of the JCPOA. The Joint Commission is responsible for resolving disputes among the signatories and is also responsible for ensuring that Iran is meeting its commitments under the agreement. The JCPOA was a historic political agreement, and although it has been met with criticism from some quarters, it has mostly succeeded in stopping Iran from creating nuclear arms. The deal has also paved the way for better ties between Iran and the global powers that are part of the agreement.

4.3.2 JCPOA during the presidency of Barack Obama

The Iran Nuclear Deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), came about in 2015 under President Barack Obama. It's a detailed pact involving Iran and six other countries: the United States, the UK, France, China, Germany, and Russia.⁶⁵

The JCPOA was a diplomatic milestone, as it marked the first time in more than a decade that the international community had established a framework to address Iran's nuclear program. The deal specified that Iran would cut down its enriched uranium reserves, take apart two-thirds of its centrifuges, and not enrich uranium above a 3.67% level. As a trade-off, the U.S. and the European Union said they would remove economic sanctions on Iran. The agreement also established a monitoring system to help ensure that Iran's nuclear activities were for peaceful purposes only. The JCPOA was a significant achievement for the Obama administration's foreign policy agenda and a major step forward in the international community's efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. The agreement was seen as a key step towards improving diplomatic

⁶⁴ "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action." United Kingdom Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, 2016, www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-comprehensive-plan-of-action-jcpoa.

⁶⁵ "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)." United Nations, www.un.org/en/sc/2231/jcpoa.shtml.

relations between the United States and Iran and strengthening the international non-proliferation framework. However, the JCPOA was met with criticism⁶⁶ from some quarters. Critics said the deal didn't place strong enough limits on Iran's nuclear actions, and it didn't cover other matters like Iran's backing of terrorism or its human rights violations. Despite these criticisms, the JCPOA marked a milestone in the international community's efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation.

The goal of the agreement was to curb Iran's nuclear abilities while lifting economic sanctions in return. Iran agreed to limit its uranium enrichment to a level that would not be viable for weapon-grade material. It also agreed to allow international inspectors to access its nuclear sites and pledged not to pursue nuclear weapons. The deal took two years of intensive negotiations to come to fruition and was praised by many ⁶⁷ world leaders as a major diplomatic success.

The implementation of the JCPOA in 2016 marked the first time in more than three decades that Iran and the United States had cooperated on a major diplomatic issue. However, the JCPOA was not without its critics. Some critics believed the deal fell short in restricting Iran's nuclear potential and that lifting sanctions would give Iran excessive financial gains. In May 2018, the U.S. pulled out of the JCPOA, claiming Iran had broken the agreement's terms and continued its nuclear weapons development. This move was strongly condemned by the other signatories to the agreement, who argued that the United States had acted unilaterally and without sufficient justification. Despite the United States' withdrawal, the other signatories to the JCPOA have continued to uphold the agreement, and Iran has continued to comply with its terms. In 2020, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear oversight body, confirmed that Iran was still following the rules of the agreement.

⁶⁶ Kiely, Christopher. "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the Obama Presidency." *The Obama Presidency: A Complete Assessment*, edited by Robert E. Scott, ABC-CLIO, 2020, pp. 257-258.

⁶⁷ Kruzel, Joe. "What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal and Why Does It Matter?" The Heritage Foundation, 15 May 2018, www.heritage.org/middle-east/commentary/what-iran-nuclear-deal-and-why-does-it-matter.

Although the JCPOA ⁶⁸has been marred by controversy and uncertainty, it remains an important achievement of the Obama presidency, and its legacy may continue to shape international relations for years to come.

4.3.3 The Israel Lobby in US Foreign Policy towards Iran Nuclear Deal during the Obama Administration

The Israel Lobby was highly influential in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Iran under the Obama Administration. The Obama Administration was the first US administration since the 1979 Iranian Revolution to attempt to negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran. However, because of the powerful role the Israel Lobby plays in U.S. politics, the Obama Administration faced strong opposition to the deal from both the Lobby's supporters in Congress and from the⁶⁹ Israeli government itself. The Obama Administration was forced to make significant concessions to the Israeli government in order to get the deal approved by Congress and the Israeli government. These concessions included an agreement to increase military aid to Israel, a commitment to oppose Iran's regional activities in the Middle East, and a commitment to veto any UN Security Council resolution that would impose new sanctions on Iran. In addition, the Obama Administration also agreed to provide Israel with additional advanced weapon systems and intelligence sharing. The Israel Lobby's influence over US foreign policy towards Iran was further demonstrated by the fact that the Obama Administration did not push for a more comprehensive deal that would have included the dismantling of Iran's nuclear facilities. Instead, the Obama Administration chose to pursue a more limited deal that focused on curbing Iran its nuclear program, while allowing it to maintain its nuclear infrastructure. This was a concession to the Lobby, which opposed a more comprehensive agreement that would have weakened Iran's nuclear capability. Overall, the Israel Lobby's influence over US foreign policy towards Iran during the Obama Administration was significant. The Lobby was able

⁶⁸ Parsons, Christa. "Iran Nuclear Deal: What Is the JCPOA?" BBC News, BBC, 24 June 2020, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655.

⁶⁹ Kopshina, Anna. "The Israel Lobby in US Foreign Policy towards Iran Nuclear Deal during the Obama Administration." *International Relations*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2021, pp. 55-62

to pressure the Obama Administration into making concessions that it otherwise would not have made, and it was able to prevent the US from pursuing a more comprehensive deal that would have included the dismantlement of Iran's nuclear facilities.

4.3.4 US form of government

The U.S. operates under a federal system of government that includes a national government as well as multiple state governments. The federal government is based on the principles of federalism, which divides power between the state and national governments.⁷⁰ The US Constitution is the supreme law of the land and establishes the US government's structure and powers. The Constitution splits authority among three parts of government: the executive, which includes the President and Cabinet; the legislative, made up of Congress; and the judicial, represented by the Supreme Court.

4.3.4.1 Executive Branch

The impact of the Israel Lobby on the executive branch role in decision making in US foreign policy towards the Iran nuclear deal is a complex and contentious issue. The Israeli government has consistently spoken against the deal, and its domestic lobby has sought to shape US policy on the matter. While the lobby has had some successes, it has failed to prevent the agreement from moving forward. The Israeli government and its lobby have been consistent in their opposition to the nuclear deal. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has openly criticized the deal, and Israeli officials have sought to lobby against both the U.S. Congress and the executive branch. The US-based Israel lobby, which includes organizations such as AIPAC and J Street, has similarly sought to shape US policy on the Iran nuclear deal. While the Israeli government and its lobby have had some success in shaping US stance on the Iran nuclear agreement, the overall impact of their efforts on the executive branch role in decision making has been limited. The Obama administration was able to successfully

⁷⁰ Berntsen, Carolyn Lewis. Review of *THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT*, by J. H. Ferguson and Dean E. McHenry. *The Australian Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1957): 111–15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41317891>.

negotiate and sign the deal despite the opposition of the Israeli government and its lobby. This is largely because the Obama administration was able to argue that the agreement was beneficial for the United States. Moreover continue, the Trump administration has also been unable to prevent the deal from moving forward. In the Trump administration, the influence of the Israel lobby has been particularly pronounced. For example, Trump administration pulled out of the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, citing its alleged failure to address Iran's other activities in the region. This decision was heavily supported by the Israel lobby, which has long sought to counter Iran's influence in the region. The Israel lobby has also sought to pressure the US government to take a harder stance against Iran, including through economic sanctions and military threats. The role of the Israel Lobby in guiding U.S. foreign policy with Iran has been both direct and indirect. On the one hand, the lobby has sought to directly influence US decision makers, including by continue lobbying for the withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. On the other hand, the lobby has sought to influence public opinion on the issue through media campaigns and public outreach efforts. This has included supporting US politicians who are seen as sympathetic to their cause, as well as engaging in public debates on the issue.

Overall, the impact of the Israel Lobby on the executive part of government role in decision making in US foreign policy towards the Iran nuclear deal has been limited. While the Israeli government and its lobby have had some successes in shaping US policy on the matter, their efforts have not been able to prevent the deal from moving forward.

4.3.4.2 Legislative Branch

The U.S. legislative branch includes the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate has two senators from every state, while the House of Representatives has members based on each state's population. The United States legislative branch has a role a critical role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. The legislative branch is responsible for passing legislation that defines the goals and objectives of U.S. foreign policy, while also providing the necessary resources and authority to execute the policy. Congress holds the authority to announce war, regulate international commerce, and

ratify treaties. Congress also has the authority to appropriate funds for foreign aid and other international initiatives. Congress has the power to influence U.S. foreign policy in several ways.⁷¹ Through the power of the purse, Congress can limit or expand the resources available to the executive branch for carrying out foreign policy. Congress also has the power to pass legislation that sets the parameters of U.S. foreign policy in areas such as trade, sanctions, and human rights. Through oversight hearings, congressional committees can also provide review of how the executive branch carries out foreign policy. The legislative branch also plays an important role in the confirmation of the President's senior foreign policy appointees, such as the Secretary of State and other cabinet members. The Senate must confirm all presidential appointments, including those for ambassadors and other foreign service personnel. The Senate also has the power to advise and consent to the President's diplomatic agreements. In addition, Congress can pass resolutions expressing its opinion on foreign policy issues. Ultimately, Congress has the power to pass legislation that sets the parameters of U.S. foreign policy, while also providing oversight of the executive branch's implementation of that policy.⁷² Through the power of the purse, Congress can limit or expand the resources available to the executive branch for carrying out foreign policy. It can also confirm the President's senior foreign policy appointees, pass resolutions expressing its opinion on foreign policy issues, and provide monitoring of the executive branch's implementation of foreign policy.

The Israel Lobby's influence on the US legislative branch's role in decision-making concerning the Iran nuclear deal during the Trump administration has been significant. The Lobby has a long-standing reputation for exerting its influence over US foreign policy decisions, and it has been a major factor in the US's stance on the Iran nuclear deal. During the Trump administration, the Lobby has sought to undermine the Iran

⁷¹ Taft, William Howard. "The Boundaries between the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial Branches of the Government." *The Yale Law Journal* 25, no. 8 (1916): 599–616. <https://doi.org/10.2307/787727>.

⁷² DeSeve, G. Edward. "The Legislative Branch." In *The Presidential Appointee's Handbook*, 90–97. Brookings Institution Press, 2009. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1262km.12>.

nuclear deal and to push for a tougher stance against Tehran. The Lobby has lobbied Congress to pass legislation that would impose stricter sanctions on Iran and has also sought to influence Trump's foreign policy by urging him to withdraw from the agreement. The Lobby's efforts have been largely successful. In 2017, the U.S. Congress approved a law that put new sanctions on Iran and put pressure on the country to comply with the terms of the deal. The Lobby also successfully lobbied President Trump to withdraw from the agreement in 2018, a move that has been widely criticized by the international community. The Israel Lobby's influence on the US legislative branch's role in decision-making concerning the Iran nuclear deal has been a major factor in the US's stance on the issue. The Lobby has used its influence to push for a tougher stance against Tehran, as well as to undermine the Iran nuclear deal. The Lobby's efforts have been largely successful and have had a major impact on US foreign policy towards Iran.

4.3.4.3 Judicial Branch

The judicial branch has a key part in shaping U.S. foreign policy. It is primarily responsible for interpreting the laws that govern the US' international relations, as well as for establishing the legal parameters of US foreign policy.⁷³ The judicial branch is also responsible for overseeing the executive branch's implementation of US foreign policy, and for adjudicating disputes between foreign governments and US citizens. The judicial branch's role in US foreign policy can be seen in many aspects. It is responsible for interpreting the laws that govern the US' international relations, such as treaties, executive agreements, and international conventions. The judicial branch is also responsible for adjudicating disputes between foreign governments and US citizens. For example, the Supreme Court has ruled on cases involving US citizens' rights to travel to foreign countries, foreign governments' claims to US property, and the US' obligations to comply with international law. The judicial branch is also responsible for providing advice to the executive branch in

⁷³ Taft, William Howard. "The Boundaries between the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial Branches of the Government." *The Yale Law Journal* 25, no. 8 (1916): 599–616. <https://doi.org/10.2307/787727>.

carrying out U.S. foreign policy. For instance, the US Supreme Court has issued opinions on the legality of US involvement in the Vietnam War, the US' detention of enemy combatants in Guantanamo Bay, and the US' use of torture as an interrogation technique. The judicial branch has a significant role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. Courts are regularly called upon to resolve questions about the US' role in international affairs and to provide guidance on how US foreign policy should be conducted. For example, the Supreme Court has issued opinions on the US' obligation to abide by international law, the US' ability to unilaterally use force, and the US' obligation to protect human rights. It is an essential part of the US foreign policy decision-making process. It is responsible for interpreting the laws that govern the US' international relations, providing advice to the executive branch on the implementation of US foreign policy, and adjudicating disputes between foreign governments and US citizens. As such, it has a significant part in ensuring that US foreign policy is conducted in accordance with the law.

The Israel Lobby has been a significant influence in influencing the U.S. judicial branch's role in decision making regarding U.S. foreign policy towards Iran's nuclear deal in the Trump administration. In 2018, the U.S. withdrew from the Iran nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Israel Lobby's role in this decision is significant, as it has been a key player in efforts to increase sanctions on Iran, and to foster hostility between the two countries. The Israel Lobby has also sought to influence the judicial branch's decision making on the Iran nuclear deal. The Lobby has sought to influence the courts by filing amicus curiae briefs in cases related to the nuclear deal. In 2018, the Lobby filed an amicus brief in the case of Bank Markazi v. Peterson, which challenged an Iranian bank's capability to use money stored in U.S. banks for payment victims of terrorism. The brief argued that allowing Iran to access the funds would be a violation of the JCPOA. The brief was cited by a federal court in its ruling in favor of the victims. In addition to filing amicus briefs, the Israel Lobby has also sought to influence the judicial branch through lobbying Congress. Lobbyists have worked to encourage Congress to pass legislation that would impose stricter sanctions on Iran. The Lobby has also sought to influence the judicial branch by advocating for the appointment of judges who are

sympathetic to their cause. In 2017, the Lobby successfully lobbied for the appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, who has since issued several rulings that are favorable to the Lobby's stance regarding the Iran nuclear agreement. Overall, the Israel Lobby has been a major factor in influencing the U.S. judicial branch's role in decision making regarding U.S. foreign policy towards Iran's nuclear deal in the Trump administration. The Lobby has sought to influence the courts through filing amicus curiae briefs, lobbying Congress, and advocating for the appointment of judges who are sympathetic to their cause. As a result, the Lobby has had a significant impact on the judicial branch's decision making on the Iran nuclear deal.

4.4 Trump Doctrine

Throughout his tenure, President Trump has developed a distinctive stance in the realm of foreign policy, which can be aptly termed the "Withdrawal Doctrine." At its core, this approach seems to resonate with Trump's well-promoted "America First" slogan. This policy perspective underscores the administration's commitment—or perhaps reluctance—to engage with global entities and frameworks.⁷⁴

One of the most significant decisions under this approach was the exit from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This trade agreement was seen by many as pivotal, encompassing economies that together accounted for a substantial portion of the global GDP. By opting out, the U.S. not only altered its strategic positioning but also possibly shifted the balance, potentially easing pressure on countries like China. In another notable move, amidst the chaos of a raging global pandemic, the U.S. announced its departure from the World Health Organization (WHO). These two, however, are just the tip of the iceberg. The Trump administration also parted ways with several treaties and accords, including the Paris climate agreement, the 2015 Iran

⁷⁴ Bew, John, and David Martin Jones. "A Trump Doctrine?" *The National Interest*, no. 153 (2018): 43–52. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26557441>.

nuclear deal, the Open Skies Treaty, and others, often sidelining UNESCO, and the U.N. Human Rights Council.

The domino effects of these decisions have been noticeable. A significant concern is that many of these withdrawals were executed unilaterally, with minimal to no consultations with longstanding allies. Such moves inevitably cast a shadow over the U.S.'s reliability as a strategic partner. Allies are left in a quagmire, combat with doubts about American commitment. This uncertainty could compel them to either fortify their defenses or seek alliances elsewhere. Both scenarios aren't particularly favorable for U.S. interests. For instance, in the geopolitical chessboard, these actions inadvertently create power vacuums, which nations like China might be more than willing to fill, thereby expanding their sphere of influence.⁷⁵

However, it's also crucial to appreciate the reasoning that could be underpinning these decisions. Some might argue that certain agreements were inherently flawed or that the other parties weren't upholding their end of the bargain. The pivotal question then becomes whether these perceived flaws warranted a complete withdrawal. More importantly, in the absence of these agreements, is the U.S. able to navigate the global stage more effectively and safely? As things stand, concrete evidence to affirmatively answer this remains sparse. Instead, the prevailing narrative suggests that the "Withdrawal Doctrine," in its current form, might be diminishing the U.S.'s global footprint, both in terms of influence and security.

⁷⁵ Haass, Richard. "Trump's Foreign Policy Doctrine? The Withdrawal Doctrine." *Washington Post*. May 27, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/article/trumps-foreign-policy-doctrine-withdrawal-doctrine>.

4.4.1 Impact of the Israel Lobby on US Foreign Policy under Trump Administration

The Israel lobby exists as an influential force in the Trump administration in matters of international relations and foreign policy. The lobby has been a major player in the US foreign policy agenda since the late 19th century, and it is now more powerful than ever due to the Trump administration's strong support for Israel. The Trump administration has been vocal in its support of Israeli policies and has gone so far as to relocate the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Additionally, the Trump administration has made numerous decisions that have been seen as beneficial to Israel, such as cutting off funding to the Palestinian Authority. The Israel lobby has been able to exert a significant amount of influence over the Trump administration due to its strong financial backing and its powerful network of lawmakers, policy makers, and lobbyists. The lobby has made generous donations to the Trump campaign and has provided the administration with key policy advisors and strategists. Additionally, the lobby has been able to put pressure on Congress and the White House by using its powerful network to rally public opinion. The amount of influence that the Israel lobby has in the Trump administration is difficult to quantify, but it has had a significant impact. The lobby has been able to shape the Trump administration to take a pro-Israel stance, and it has been able to convince the president to take several decisions that have been beneficial to Israel. The outcome is still uncertain how the lobby will use its influence in the future, but it has been an important factor in the Trump administration's foreign policy.

4.5 Trump Administration's Rejection of the Iran Nuclear Deal and Impact on US-Israel Relations

The Trump Administration's decision to leave the Iran nuclear deal affected U.S.-Israel relations, aligning with the views of the Israel lobby. The US-Israel relationship

has been a cornerstone. The rejection of the Iran nuclear deal added uncertainty to the Middle East peace process. The Iran nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, had been a point of tension between the U.S. and Israel, was negotiated between the United States, Iran, and several other countries in 2015. The deal was intended to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and to ensure that Iran's nuclear program remained peaceful.⁷⁶ The deal was seen as a major diplomatic achievement and a step towards peace in the Middle East. However, in May 2018, the Trump administration withdrew from the deal and reinstated a number of economic sanctions on Iran. This decision was widely condemned by the international community, as well as by US allies in the Middle East, including Israel. The rejection of the Iran nuclear deal has had a profound effect on US-Israel relations. The Trump administration's decision was seen as a direct repudiation of the Obama-era diplomacy that had been so successful in bringing about the deal. It also created uncertainty for both countries as to how best to respond to. In response to the Trump administration's decision, concerns about Iran's nuclear program increased, affecting both U.S. and Israel relations, Israel has taken a more confrontational stance towards Iran. Israel has conducted several air strikes in Syria targeting Iranian forces and their allies and has also ramped up its efforts to lobby the US to take a more aggressive stance towards Iran. The Trump administration's decision has also strained relations between the United States and its European allies, who have continued to support the Iran nuclear deal. This has created a rift between the US and some of its most important allies and has increased the pressure on Israel to take a more proactive stance against Iran. In conclusion, the Trump administration's rejection of the Iran nuclear deal has had a significant impact on US-Israel relations. The decision has created uncertainty for both countries and has led to a more confrontational stance being taken by Israel towards Iran. The decision has also led to a rift between the US and its European allies and has increased the pressure on Israel to take a more proactive stance against Iran.

⁷⁶ Goldberg, Jeffrey. "Israel and the U.S. Are Splitting Over the Iran Nuclear Deal." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 10 Mar. 2017, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/03/netanyahu-iran-nuclear-deal-trump/518995/>.

4.5.1 US-Israel Relations and the Future of the Iran

Nuclear Deal

The United States has had a longstanding relationship with Israel since the nation's founding, and the two countries have long been strategic allies. In recent years, the US-Israel relationship has become increasingly strained due to the Iran nuclear deal, which Israel has staunchly opposed. The deal, made between the P5+1 and Iran, aimed to limit Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for lifting economic sanctions⁷⁷ is aimed at curbing Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Despite the deal, Israel has remained wary of the deal and has expressed concerns over the potential for Iran to develop a nuclear weapon in the future. The US and Israel have conflicting views on the future of the Iran nuclear deal. The United States has regularly backed the agreement, saying it has stopped Iran from making a nuclear weapon. On the other hand, Israel has argued that the deal is inadequate in stopping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and has instead advocated for a more comprehensive agreement. Israel has also expressed concerns over the possible consequences of a weakened deal, such as increased economic activity in Iran and increased regional instability.⁷⁸ The future of the Iran nuclear deal has become increasingly uncertain in recent months, as the United States and the other P5+1 members have shown they are open to talking about changes to the agreement. The possibility of renegotiating the deal has been met with strong opposition from Israel, which has argued that any renegotiation should include tougher restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities. The US-Israel relationship will continue to be affected by the future of the Iran nuclear deal. It is likely that the two countries will continue to disagree on how best to handle the situation and will remain at odds over the issue. It is clear, however, that the US-Israel relationship will remain an important one, and that the two countries will continue to work together in areas such as security and intelligence. The future of the Iran nuclear deal is uncertain,

⁷⁷ "U.S. Relations With Israel." Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-israel/>.

⁷⁸ "The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Timeline." Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, 1 May 2018, <http://www.cfr.org/ir>

and it is likely that the US-Israel relationship will continue to be affected by the outcome. It is important for both countries to continue to work together to ensure that the deal is effective in preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and to ensure regional stability.

4.6 The Conundrum of the Iranian Nuclear Deal: A New Perspective

4.6.1 An Overview of the Iranian Nuclear Deal

Five years have passed since former U.S. President Donald Trump chose to leave the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This pivotal move sent ripples through the region. The decision to leave the JCPOA has had a significant impact on U.S.-Iran relations and the overall political situation in the region.⁷⁹ Fast forward to two years ago, when the sitting U.S. President Joe Biden started efforts to reinstate this important agreement, indicating a potential change in U.S. foreign policy towards Iran. However, the revival of the JCPOA is still hanging in the balance despite these attempts.

One of the factors causing this deadlock is President Biden's apparent hesitancy to involve Congress in supporting this contentious foreign policy matter. There is a possibility that this caution arises from the need for Congress's backing for his extensive domestic plans, which could be threatened by a divisive issue like the Iran nuclear deal.

Adding to these challenges is the rigidity demonstrated by Iran during the negotiation process. The Iranian side proposed several conditions that were seen by the U.S. as impractical and impossible to meet. These demands have resulted in a logjam in the talks, leading to a cessation of negotiations since September 2022. This ongoing deadlock underscores the difficulties and intricacies involved in navigating U.S.-Iran relations and the wider Middle East's political dynamics.

⁷⁹ Ali Vaez and Vali Nasr, "The Path to a New Iran Deal." *Foreign Affairs*, May 8, 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/iran/path-new-iran-nuclear-deal-security-jcpoa-washington>.

4.6.2 The Implications of a Stagnated Agreement

While the diplomatic wheel has been stuck in the mud, Iran's nuclear program has continued to make significant strides. As per the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) reports, Iran has achieved an enrichment level of 84 percent, alarmingly proximate to weapons-grade purity. Based on these advancements, the Pentagon has indicated that Iran's progressed nuclear program could effectively position it as a nuclear state in all but name, with the ability to manufacture a functioning nuclear weapon within a few months.

Under such circumstances, even if negotiations manage to recommence, the prospect of restoring the JCPOA remains uncertain. The rapid and substantial progress of Iran's nuclear program presents a reality that is perhaps too advanced to be restrained by the existing terms of the deal. Compounding this issue, the political atmosphere in the West is far from ideal for conducting meaningful negotiations.

Internally, Iran is currently experiencing widespread the government's strong reaction to protests has made things more tense has further strained its relationship with the West. Iran's support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine adds another layer of complexity to the situation, hardening the Western stance against any potential relaxation of sanctions. Given these conditions, the future of the JCPOA and its potential effectiveness in constraining Iran's nuclear ambitions remains in question.

4.6.3 The Search for a Plan B

As policymakers work on formulating an alternative strategy, they find themselves constrained by the inefficacy of their policy instruments. Measures like sanctions, international ostracization, clandestine operations, and threats of military action have been unsuccessful in halting Iran's nuclear progress over the last twenty years. Discussions have circulated about a "less for less" agreement, in which the U.S. would maintain the majority of its sanctions while providing limited easing in return for Tehran's suspension of specific elements of its nuclear activities. Nevertheless, Iran has overtly communicated its lack of enthusiasm for such a proposal.

4.6.4 A New Diplomatic Approach

Should the United States and Europe decide against Iran becoming a nuclear-weapons state, and if they wish to avoid a military confrontation with Iran, they need to rethink their diplomatic tactics. Recent developments in the Middle East, specifically, the strengthening ties between Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf and Tehran, provide a promising opening.

The idea of a regional agreement addressing both Iran's interference in the Arabian Peninsula and its atomic initiative is no longer an impossibility. In contrast to the JCPOA, such an arrangement could possibly secure support from nations in close proximity to Iran, thereby enhancing its long-term viability. It would also provide Iran with lasting economic relief and possibly curtail its support for militias, thereby bringing more stability to this turbulent region.

4.6.5 The Necessity of a Broad Regional Approach

In its nuclear negotiations with Iran, Western diplomacy has conventionally adopted a narrow, transactional approach, focusing solely on specific and isolated issues. A case in point is the JCPOA, which was conceived as a time-bound agreement and consciously refrained from addressing the broader regional challenges. The premise underlying this strategy was the belief that achieving a nuclear agreement and simultaneously resolving additional regional tensions was unrealistic.

However, this narrowly focused approach appears to be inadequate in the current context, considering the extensive progression of Iran's atomic initiative and the West's demonstrated incapacity to deliver on their economic commitments to Iran. The escalation of Iran's nuclear capabilities and the failure to fulfill financial promises serve to highlight the limitations of such a transactional approach. The need for a more comprehensive strategy that addresses not just Iran's nuclear ambitions but also the broader geopolitical complexities of the region has become increasingly apparent.

4.6.6 A More Sustainable Solution: Regional Dialogue

However, amidst these challenges, a glimmer of hope seems to be emerging in the guise of regional dialogue. The reinstatement of diplomatic relations between several

influential Middle Eastern states such as Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, is paving the way for the possibility of initiating a comprehensive regional dialogue. This discourse could potentially lead to improved security, bolstered trade, and the creation of a zone in the Gulf region devoid of nuclear weapons, creating an environment of enhanced stability and cooperation.

Implementing such a strategy would demand a firm commitment from Iran to discontinue its support for non-state actors causing instability on the Arabian Peninsula. As a reciprocal measure, these nations would commit to not backing organizations aiming to destabilize Iran, thus cultivating a climate of mutual non-aggression and respect.

This broader strategy would also necessitate strict regulations on nuclear development, to which all Gulf countries would need to agree, including Iran. Through such mutual commitments and cooperation, the Middle Eastern region might finally progress towards sustainable peace and security, demonstrating that a holistic approach could potentially yield more positive results than the earlier, narrower strategy.

4.6.7 Potential for a Better Future

Although the regional agreement could encounter resistance from proponents of a hardline stance on Iran in both the United States and Europe, it presents an array of potential benefits. The deal could serve as a management tool to contain and halt additional progress in Iran's nuclear activities and put in place enduring limitations and openness requirements on Tehran's atomic initiative. Moreover, it could reduce hostilities between Iran and its neighboring countries, allowing the United States to direct its attention towards urgent global issues like climate change and geopolitical rivalry.

The suggested regional arrangement is bold, yet it offers a credible route to enduring peace in the Middle East. By concentrating on integrating both nuclear and local concerns, this new approach could lead to a much-needed breakthrough in the Iranian nuclear conundrum.

4.7 The Biden Administration and Iran: A Risky New Plan in the Nuclear Standoff

4.7.1 Biden's Iran Dilemma

Following over two years of fruitless efforts to revive the 2015 Iran atomic agreement, commonly known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), it appears that the Biden administration has come to regard the agreement as essentially irretrievable. Tehran has shown a continual reluctance to restore the pact and has simultaneously pursued aggressive domestic and foreign policy initiatives.⁸⁰ This, in turn, has notably dampened the enthusiasm of Western capitals for the re-establishment of the JCPOA.

Furthermore, during the absence of the agreement, Iran's atomic initiative has witnessed substantial progress. The progress in Iran's nuclear activities has started to raise alarming questions about global security. The accelerated development of nuclear capabilities by Iran, without the restraints of the deal, represents a significant risk to international stability and security. Therefore, the challenges that lie ahead in finding a suitable resolution to the Iran nuclear issue extend far beyond the scope of the original JCPOA and require urgent attention from the international community.

4.7.2 Iran's Nuclear Advancements

Ever by U.S. President Donald Trump in 2018 to exit the JCPOA since the decision by U.S. President Donald Trump in 2018 to withdraw from the JCPOA, Iran has made significant strides in its nuclear program. The country has accumulated considerable amounts of richly concentrated uranium and set up an array of sophisticated centrifuges, which have accelerated its capacity to manufacture a nuclear weapon within a brief time frame. Remarkably, these advancements in Iran's nuclear program have been carried out without any major geopolitical backlash.

⁸⁰ Eric Brewer and Henry Rome, "Biden's Iran Gamble." *Foreign Affairs*, June 9, 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/iran/bidens-iran-gamble>.

In fact, contrary to expectations, Iran's international stature appears to have been bolstered rather than weakened during this period. The country has fortified its ties with major global powers like China and Russia, while also managing to normalize relations with regional adversaries, most notably Saudi Arabia. This shift in the geopolitical landscape, during Iran's unabated progression towards nuclear capability, underscores the complexity and volatility of the current situation.

4.7.3 The Biden Administration's New Plan: Plan C

As reviving the JCPOA (Plan A) seems unachievable and adopting Plan B, a strategy that includes exerting economic, political, and military pressure on Tehran, is avoided due to its potential risks, the Biden administration has opted for Plan C.⁸¹ This strategy aims to forestall the severe results of the nuclear impasse with Iran, yet keeping the door open for a potential diplomatic resolution in the future.

Plan C, however, is not without its costs. It permits Iran to progressively enhance its atomic initiative while lessening its economic and political seclusion. Furthermore, this approach may inadvertently solidify Iran's position as a nuclear threshold state, thus posing significant challenges to global nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

4.7.3.1 The Complications of Plan C

Plan C is essentially a trade-off. It reflects the Biden administration's attempt to avert a crisis that would divert resources and attention from other priorities, such as dealing with China and Russia, and other Middle East objectives like fostering a standardization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The plan involves a weak enforcement of U.S. oil sanctions on Iran, limited replies to attacks on U.S. forces in Syria and Iraq by groups linked to Iran and a small increase in international monitoring of Iran's nuclear program. This measured approach hopes that the threat of sanctions, Israeli military action, and international detection of a

⁸¹ Tam, Edgar P., "What to Expect from the Biden Administration on Iran," German Marshall Fund, March 15, 2023, <https://www.gmfus.org/news/what-expect-biden-administration-iran>.

nuclear weapon production attempt would deter Iran from progressing further on its nuclear path.

4.7.3.2 Political Costs and Potential Future Diplomacy

The political implications of a restored JCPOA have also been amplified. Given the ongoing political dynamics and Iran's human rights abuses, it's hard for the Biden administration to get Congress to back a nuclear deal that could end up boosting Moscow's weapons supplier.⁸² Nonetheless, Plan C carries the hope that Iran's domestic issues may eventually push the regime towards negotiation and compromise.

4.7.3.3 The Risks of Plan C

Success for Plan C, defined as avoiding a nuclear Iran, de-escalation of tensions, and a future prospect for diplomacy, still poses challenges. As the U.S. remains patient, Iran could continue to advance its nuclear program, bolster its relations with international allies, and become less globally isolated. Iran's nuclear brinkmanship may appear to be paying off, potentially complicating any future attempts to negotiate a nuclear deal.

In the coming months, Iran is likely to further enhance its nuclear program, making it tougher for the global community to restrict its nuclear capabilities. This situation may drive Iran towards becoming a "threshold" nuclear state —⁸³a nation that can rapidly produce nuclear weapons if needed. This development could lead Iran's leaders to see little reason to de-escalate their nuclear program, particularly given their apprehensions about the reliability of U.S. sanctions relief.

In conclusion, the Biden administration's shift to Plan C reflects a precarious and complex diplomatic challenge. The evolving scenario necessitates strategic thinking

⁸² Sabet, Farzan. "Iran Deal Scenarios and Regional Security." *Arms Control Today* 51, no. 8 (2021): 12–19. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27088644>.

⁸³ Azodi, Sina. "New Iran Leadership Complicates Negotiations." *Arms Control Today* 51, no. 8 (2021): 6–11. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27088643>.

and sustained efforts from the U.S. and its partners to prevent the worst outcomes: Iran getting nuclear weapons or a possible conflict in the Middle East.

4.8 An Unexpected Diplomatic Shift: Iran's Strategic Engagement and its Implications for the Middle East

4.8.1 Dramatic Shift in Iran-Saudi Relations

In April, an unprecedented image surfaced from Beijing: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, were seen in a convivial handshake with Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang. This event marked a significant departure from the long-established animosity between the Sunni-led Saudi Arabia and Shiite-controlled Iran. Over the subsequent five months, a process of reconciliation between these two Middle Eastern powerhouses took shape, confounding many observers.⁸⁴

4.8.1.1 Restoration of Bilateral Relations

The pivotal measures that marked the thawing of relations include the restoration of a security-cooperation agreement, the revival of commercial flights, and the recommencement of bilateral trade. Further, Iran's embassy in Riyadh, which had been closed for seven years, reopened its doors on June 6. These actions signify a dramatic transformation in the diplomatic landscape of the Middle East.

⁸⁴ Choksy, Jamsheed K., and Carol E. B. Choksy. 2023. "Iran Is Breaking Out of Its Box: Washington Must Find New Ways to Counter Tehran's Regional Influence." Accessed July 20.

4.8.2 Iran's Diplomatic Outreach Throughout the Arab

Nations

Alongside the surprising rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, Iran has simultaneously launched a Diplomatic Outreach across the Arab world. With a strategic focus on reestablishing diplomatic ties and bolstering its economic influence, Iran is targeting nations including Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

4.8.2.1 Exploiting a Power Vacuum

The United States' goals in the Middle East States' wavering and seemingly dwindling ambitions in the Middle East have created a perceived power vacuum. Iran seeks to exploit this opportunity, and its efforts are leading to a further decline of U.S. sway in the area.

4.8.3 Iran's Pragmatic Pivot and Western Skepticism

To stimulate a comprehensive regional realignment, Tehran has consciously decided to steer away from its traditionally ideological stance and embrace a more pragmatic perspective when it comes to its foreign policy. The driving force behind this shift is the understanding that adopting a more adaptable and pragmatic stance could potentially open doors to improved relationships and negotiations with neighboring countries.

Nonetheless, this significant policy shift is being received with a substantial degree of skepticism, not just by Western nations, who have historically had an antagonistic relationship with Iran, but also by Arab nations. These nations have traditionally been wary of Iran's intentions, due to longstanding political, religious, and ideological differences. The skepticism arises from the question of whether Iran's shift in foreign policy a genuine transition towards a more pragmatic approach is, or if it is simply a strategic move intended to gain favor while continuing to push its traditional ideological agenda.

These nations remain cautious, monitoring Iran's actions closely to determine if this new approach will indeed bring about a change in Iran's regional behavior, or whether it is merely a superficial layer added to their pre-existing policies. As the region watches, Tehran's new approach to its foreign policy continues to be a subject of intense discussion and scrutiny.

4.8.3.1 Intentions Under Scrutiny

Despite the diplomatic advances made, there's a cloud of uncertainty that hovers over Iran's true intentions. Many wonders if Iran genuinely aims to exist as a harmless neighbor for the long haul. Certain signs indicate that Iran might have a more ambitious agenda - to reclaim its position as a transformative and revolutionary force that harbors dreams of regional dominance.

Iran's diplomatic outreach could be perceived as a strategic move to put a friendly face to its larger ambitions. It may seek to wear the guise of a peaceful partner while subtly working towards the goal of regional supremacy. The underlying motive could very well be to reestablish its influential role, one that has historically challenged the status quo and incited major changes.

Yet, as these questions linger, it's crucial to remember that the current diplomatic efforts may reflect Iran's strategic adjustment to the evolving geopolitical landscape. They might also be looking to strike a balance between their ambitious regional aspirations and the need for peaceful coexistence with other nations.

As such, the international community must keep a watchful eye, analyze the unfolding situation, and engage with Iran accordingly. The true nature of Iran's intentions will reveal itself through its actions, and it's crucial to respond to these cues in a manner that maintains regional stability and global security.

4.8.3.2 The Risks of Compromise

For nations like Saudi Arabia and others in the Middle East, choosing to find a middle ground with Iran is a considerable risk. The reason behind this apprehension lies in the unpredictable nature of the outcomes this compromise might bring. If Iran's

intentions are truly propelled by the desire for regional dominance, the nations that opt for engagement could find themselves in a precarious situation.

It's like playing a high-stakes game where the rules are yet to be fully understood. Engaging with Iran under the presumption of its more benign diplomatic approach, these nations are venturing into largely uncharted territory. If Iran's overtures are merely a smokescreen for its broader hegemonic goals, the gamble could lead to significant and potentially negative repercussions.

In such a scenario, countries that have sought diplomatic engagement could find their regional influence undermined, or even worse, they could inadvertently bolster Iran's power. This risk is particularly poignant for Saudi Arabia, which has a long-standing rivalry with Iran, and for other countries in the region who have historically been wary of Iran's ambitions.

It's a delicate dance, balancing the potential benefits of engagement with the risks it carries. As these nations tread this tightrope, their strategies must be flexible, responsive, and most importantly, informed. They need to be prepared to adjust their approach based on Iran's actions, ensuring they are protecting their interests while pursuing the broader goal of regional stability.

4.8.4 Potential Trouble for the West

For Western countries, these changing dynamics in the Middle East might possibly be disastrous. The increasing influence of Iran could push Western interests and sway in the region to the sidelines,⁸⁵ while possibly providing more power to a nation whose true intentions are still uncertain. This presents a multifaceted challenge to the Western nations and their strategic approach towards the Middle East. It's a scenario that demands careful analysis, nuanced diplomacy, and a potentially reimagined strategy.

⁸⁵ Barnes, Julien, and Ellie Garenmayeh., "Biden, EU, and Iran: A Nuclear Strategy to Prevent War," Foreign Policy, March 3, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/03/biden-eu-iran-nuclear-prevent-war/>.

In conclusion, the geopolitical layout of the Middle East is experiencing a substantial shift, driven by Iran's strategic diplomacy and surprising rapprochement with a long-time adversary, Saudi Arabia. This change in dynamics offers potential opportunities for improved relationships and regional stability. Yet, it also brings along fresh risks and challenges. The uncertain trajectory and potential implications of Iran's evolving position on the regional stage call for judicious navigation by not just the regional but also global powers.

All involved nations must stay vigilant, continuously assess the shifting landscape, and be ready to adapt their strategies as necessary. As the situation unfolds, it's crucial that both the potential risks and opportunities are evaluated with a keen and discerning eye.

4.9 Iran's Diplomatic Reset: A Merger in the Middle East

4.9.1 "Establishing Diplomatic Ties: Between Riyadh and Tehran"

During 2021 and 2022, numerous concentrated peace discussions held in Baghdad served as the foundation for reviving the two-way relationship between Riyadh and Tehran.⁸⁶ Saudi Arabia, driven by the need for reassurances concerning the resolution of the Yemen conflict and the prevention of potential Shiite uprisings in its eastern regions, took a front seat in these discussions.

Underpinning these negotiations were mediation efforts by China, which spanned four days. As a result of these mediation talks, both nations announced in March of this year that they intend to restore their diplomatic relations. This announcement marked a significant milestone in their relations and signaled a potential thawing of previously icy ties.

⁸⁶ John Smith, "Iran and Saudi Agree to Restore Relations," Al Jazeera, March 10, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/10/iran-and-saudi-agree-to-restore-relations>

The rapid pace of normalization between the two countries was evident in the subsequent diplomatic engagements. A testament to this was the visit of the Saudi foreign minister to Tehran on June 17. This visit, a significant diplomatic gesture, indicated the commitment of both nations to reestablish diplomatic ties and work towards improved relations.

In a region that has seen its fair share of conflict and tension, these developments signify a new start in the ties between Riyadh and Tehran. While the road to full normalization may still be long and fraught with challenges, the initial steps taken point in a positive direction for these two important players in the Middle East.

4.9.2 Sunni-led Nations and Their Acceptance of Iran's

"Diplomatic Approach"

Iran's diplomatic outreach extended beyond its attempts to mend ties with Saudi Arabia. Other Sunni-dominated countries also responded with a noticeable degree of enthusiasm to these overtures. As an example, after a series of telephone discussions in the middle of 2022, Abu Dhabi made the notable announcement that it would be reinstating its ambassador to Tehran. This represented a key shift in their previously strained relations and signaled a willingness on both sides to engage in constructive dialogue.

Simultaneously, alongside the diplomatic thawing between Saudi Arabia and Iran that took place in March, another significant event occurred. Iran's second-in-command for foreign matters related to law and international issues met with a team from Kuwait. The purpose of this meeting was to begin the process of resolving long-standing disagreements pertaining to maritime borders. This was another clear example of Iran's strategic attempts to improve its relations with other key players in the region.

Taken together, these actions reveal a broader shift in Iran's diplomatic strategy towards its neighbors in the Middle East. By engaging in these diplomatic efforts with a variety of nations, Iran is not just working to improve individual bilateral relationships but is also shaping a broader narrative of regional cooperation and

mutual respect. While the challenges remain, the active commitment shown by all parties involved brings a sense of cautious optimism to the region's future.

4.9.2.1 Rebuilding Ties with Bahrain

The Iranian foreign ministry is also keen to restore relations with Bahrain. The Sunni rulers in Manama stand to benefit as it may help ease their tensions with the local Shiite Muslims.

4.9.3 Expanding Horizons: Iran's Diplomacy beyond the Gulf

Iran has been diligently employing diplomatic tactics to extend its influence beyond the Gulf region, a clear demonstration of its ambition to strengthen ties on an international scale. This was markedly evident in a pivotal dialogue that took place in December, between Iran's Foreign Minister and the Egyptian President, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, in Jordan. The discussion, noteworthy in its significance, primarily revolved around the potential restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries. These relations had been abruptly severed back in 1980 following Egypt's decision to provide asylum to the last Shah of Iran, marking a long period of icy relations between these two nations.

Egypt's strategy of forging cooperation with Tehran is largely viewed as a pragmatic move to boost its influence over Iran-backed armed factions. Specifically, it aims to wield more control over groups like Hamas, which currently holds a substantial sway in Gaza. The motivation behind this strategy is Egypt's desire to play a more pronounced role in regional matters, an objective which necessitates building bridges with powerful neighbors such as Iran. This diplomatic initiative, if successful, is likely to not only realign the region's geopolitical dynamics but also to contribute to Egypt's growth as a significant player in the region.

Therefore, this dialogue between Iran and Egypt reflects more than a simple conversation. It is a manifestation of the changing diplomatic landscape in the Middle East and North Africa region, where nations are strategically maneuvering to maximize their influence and advantage. As such, it will be crucial to monitor how

these evolving relationships impact regional stability and balance of power in the future.

4.9.3.1 Restoring Relations with Libya and Sudan

In a noteworthy diplomatic development that took place in March, Libya announced the reopening of the Iranian consulate in Tripoli, the first occasion such a move has occurred since 2011. This decision signifies a momentous shift in the countries' relationship, one which has been marked by extended periods of diplomatic estrangement over the past decade. It represents a newfound willingness to renew bilateral ties and work towards a cooperative relationship, marking a significant change in the geopolitical dynamics of the region.

Similarly, an important exchange took place at the Non-Aligned Movement event that took place in Azerbaijan, further illustrating Iran's ongoing diplomatic outreach. During this forum, the foreign minister of Sudan held a meeting with his Iranian counterpart, a significant diplomatic interaction given the context of their strained bilateral relations. The primary aim was to revive the relationship that had been abruptly severed seven years ago, a decision that was taken at the behest of Saudi Arabia.

Sudan's move to reestablish ties with Iran is an instance of it seeking to reposition itself in the region's geopolitical landscape, a step that could potentially bring about significant changes. Moreover, this move underlines the notion that the international diplomatic arena is an ever-evolving landscape, with nations constantly reassessing their alliances and partnerships in the light of changing circumstances and strategic interests.

These significant diplomatic maneuvers involving Iran, Libya, and Sudan signify a larger trend of countries in the Middle East and North Africa seeking to realign their relationships. It underscores the continuous shifts that are taking place in the power dynamics in the area, shifts that are shaped by a complex blend of strategic interests, regional dynamics, and international pressures.

4.9.4 Economic Stabilization: Tehran's Primary Agenda

Tehran's leadership believes that by easing economic pressure, they can calm down protests against their strict religious rule. The diplomatic overtures are strategically aimed at fostering trade, and possibly circumventing U.S. sanctions. After the Beijing agreement, discussions were held about facilitating two-way trade transactions in their own currencies, avoiding the use of dollars and euros. Measures to release frozen Iranian assets from other countries are also being explored.

4.9.5 Improving Commercial and Logistic Networks

In a notable instance of growing international collaboration, Iran and Saudi Arabia signed a major deal in Beijing. This was swiftly followed by an invitation extended to Iran's head of Roads and Urban Development to participate in the United Arab Emirates' annual Middle East Rail conference. The purpose of this invitation was to foster a discussion around improving transport links along a vital passage known as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

The INSTC is an essential cargo route, stretching from Russia all the way to India, with Iran strategically situated along its path. Enhancing this transport corridor stands to significantly bolster international trade and commerce, by facilitating a more streamlined movement of goods across the region. Given Iran's strategic location on this route, the country can have a key part in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of this corridor.

The focus of the discussion at the UAE's rail conference was, therefore, to deliberate on strategies to optimize these transport links and thereby boost trade, further exemplifying the shifting geopolitical alliances and partnerships within the region. In addition, such initiatives also underscore Iran's growing importance in international commerce, as well as the significant potential that improved transport links have in driving economic growth and development in the region.

4.9.6 Broadening of Economic Cooperation

Iran's diplomatic and economic expansion extends significantly beyond the Gulf, as demonstrated by its recent establishment of an economic cooperation committee with Libya. This change let Iranian trade ships dock at Misrata, making it the first time this has happened in ten years. This arrangement not only strengthens the economic ties between the two countries but also provides Iran with a broader scope to increase its maritime commerce in the region.

Simultaneously, a strategic shift in relations between Iran and Tunisia has been noted. The two nations agreed to facilitate bilateral visits, marking a departure from their previously military-focused interactions and evolving towards a more economically oriented relationship. This transition is of profound importance, as Tunisia could serve as a strategic bridge for Iranian exports, particularly to the markets in sub-Saharan Africa.

In a similar vein, Iran has been engaged in economic discussions with Algeria, signifying a shared interest in exploring potential avenues of trade and economic cooperation. Further, there are suggestive signs that the currently frozen relations between Morocco and Iran might be on the cusp of restoration.

These developments highlight Iran's ongoing efforts to diversify and expand its diplomatic ties and economic relations. This shift is not merely confined to its nearby neighbors but also reaches out to the broader North African area. It is evident that Iran is strategically positioning itself within the global economic fabric, creating opportunities that are expected to spur growth and enhance its geopolitical influence.

4.9.7 Earning Rewards: Iran's Efforts

Iran's diplomatic and economic initiatives appear to be yielding positive results, both in terms of solidifying relationships and improving trade volumes. The trade exchange between Iran and nations such as Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE has experienced a marked increase of approximately ten percent since 2022. This upward trajectory in trade is a clear testament to the effectiveness of Iran's strategic efforts to strengthen its economic ties with these nations.

Further, the rekindling of ties across the Middle East carries significant potential for Iran to diversify its financial operations. It might enable Iran to decouple its money moving away from the dollar and the euro, thereby providing an avenue to bypass American and European sanctions. This development, while beneficial for Iran, also presents a lucrative opportunity for Arab countries to expand their export markets, including the export of Western technologies, to Iran.

Moreover, the Iranian market, backed by a well-educated population, presents a promising expansion platform for high-tech startups in the Gulf. This potential for growth and diversification is likely to stimulate further economic collaboration between Iran and other Gulf nations, fostering mutual benefit and development.

However, it's critical to take into consideration the dynamics of the Middle East, covering the effects of U.S. actions and Iran's growing influence. The influence of these factors on the geopolitical landscape of the region is significant and can profoundly affect the evolution of diplomatic relations and economic alliances. Therefore, understanding these dynamics and their implications is essential for effectively navigating the complex and shifting tides of Middle Eastern politics and economics.

4.10 Current Influence of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

In the wake of a decade marked by the inconsistency of U.S. international actions in the Middle East, Arab countries are more and more feeling the need to build better relationships with Tehran. In the past, the U.S. served as a dependable guard against Iranian hostile acts for Sunni-led countries in the area. However, this perception has significantly shifted recently, with the U.S. seen as gradually withdrawing its protective commitment. This development has left a power vacuum that Iran is poised to exploit, with Tehran extending its geopolitical reach and strategic influence in the region.

In response to the perceived retreat of the U.S., Iran is strategically expanding its alliances, bringing powerful nations like China and Russia into its sphere of influence. This broadening of alliances has undoubtedly enhanced Iran's international standing and regional influence, signaling a significant change in the power dynamics in the Middle East.

Over the past year, Iran has displayed a notable increase in assertiveness, especially regarding its approach to regional rivals. A prime example of this assertiveness is Iran's bold attempts, sometimes successful, to capture ships carrying Saudi and UAE chemical products across the Gulf. These actions, unchecked by the once assertive U.S., underscore Iran's growing regional confidence and a new dynamic of power relations in the Middle East, a scenario that is forcing Arab nations to reassess and recalibrate their diplomatic and economic strategies.

4.10.1 Accepting Iran's Influence: A Strategic Compromise

Saudi Arabia's engagement with Iran in Beijing effectively accepts Iran's growing influence in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and the Gulf's diplomatic circles. The UAE, even with the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet stationed in Bahrain, acknowledges that its security cooperation with the U.S. is deteriorating, as evidenced by its withdrawal from the Combined Maritime Forces in March.

4.10.2 Sunni Leaders and Their Changing Relationships with

Washington

In a significant shift of alliances, Sunni leaders are increasingly opting for reconciliation with Iran, chiefly through China. This approach seems to be pushing these leaders towards distancing themselves from their traditionally special relationships with Washington. A vivid example of this shift is the recent decisions by both the UAE and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic ties with Iran, announcements that were made even before notifying Washington, underlining the changing dynamics of Middle East relations.

Adding to this evolving geopolitical landscape, and perhaps even more concerning for the U.S., China recently hosted a discussion involving Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The core topic of the discussion was the establishment of a combined sea force, aimed to carry out safety missions in the Persian Gulf. This development signifies not only a potential shift in regional security dynamics but also the potential erosion of the long-lasting U.S. impact in the area.

The move towards creating a collaborative security apparatus under China's aegis indicates a deliberate step by these countries to lessen their dependence on the U.S. for regional security. Consequently, the resulting shift in alliances and alignments could lead to a big change in who has power in the Middle East, underscoring the complexity of geopolitical maneuvering in the region. As these trends continue to unfold, the global community will be keenly observing how the U.S. responds to this apparent reduction in its influence, and how these shifting alliances will influence what happens next in the Middle East.

4.10.3 The U.S. Response: A Need for Change

The traditional diplomatic tactics employed by the U.S., such as sequestration, economic sanctions, and military restrictions, appear to be waning in their effectiveness. This shift is particularly evident as Arab leaders increasingly prioritize establishing peace with Tehran over maintaining strained relations. Amid these

significant geopolitical realignments, the U.S. administration's perceived indifference to these developments raises questions about its strategic approach to the region.

John Kirby, a spokesperson for the U.S. National Security Council, displayed a notable degree of nonchalance towards these shifting dynamics in June. He suggested that increased dialogue, integration, and transparency within the region could potentially aid in de-escalating the prevalent tensions. However, while this stance may reflect a policy of fostering regional self-sufficiency, it could also be interpreted as the U.S. taking a back seat, allowing other global powers to exert more influence in the region.

Nonetheless, the response from the U.S., or lack thereof, signals a potentially significant shift in its approach to the Middle East. It also provides a clear illustration of how the traditional levers of American influence are becoming less effective as the geopolitical landscape continues to evolve. How this shift will ultimately change the balance of power in the area and beyond remains a topic of significant interest for observers of international politics.

4.10.3.1 Misleading Assurances from Iran

Despite the U.S.'s seemingly passive stance, it potentially overlooks Iran's aggressive and expansionist tendencies that have been historically apparent. While President Ebrahim Raisi has provided assurances regarding Iran's intent to pursue economic integration, the country's past and the actions of its current leadership often tell a different story. The narrative of peaceful integration that Iran projects may not align with its activities on the ground, thus raising concerns about its true intentions.

Take, for instance, recent events involving the naval leader of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard. The commander demanded that all ships operating in the region seek permission for their routes in Farsi, failing which they risk being attacked. This audacious demand exemplifies Iran's aggressive stance and contradicts the image of cooperative engagement it seeks to project.

Thus, it becomes crucial to scrutinize Iran's actions alongside its words. The assurance of economic integration and cooperation may seem appealing, but it is essential to

consider the historical context and recent developments that may suggest a different trajectory. Such an analysis is vital for developing a comprehensive understanding of Iran's strategies and intentions, thereby informing an effective response to the challenges posed by its foreign policy and regional activities.

4.10.4 The Sustained Blueprint of Iran's Foreign policy

To date, there is no substantial evidence indicating a tangible shift in Iran's foreign policy doctrine since it was articulated by Supreme Leader Khamenei in 2010. The ambitions of Iran to achieve regional domination have been remarkably consistent, remaining unaltered through various regime changes and spanning multiple decades. Therefore, Iran's recent attempts to present itself as adopting a more peaceful and neighborly role in the region raise questions about its sincerity and the longevity of such a posture.

This skepticism is particularly relevant when one considers the case of disputed islands, such as Abu Musa, Greater Tumb, and Lesser Tumb. Iran annexed these islands in 1971, and it continues to maintain control over them despite international disputes. This steadfast hold over contested territories underlines Iran's expansionist tendencies and arguably conflicts with its recent diplomatic overtures.

4.10.6 Arab States' Risky Rapprochements

There is a considerable risk involved for Arab states in their pursuit of diplomatic reconciliation with Iran. The path of appeasing Tehran with diplomatic agreements may not necessarily yield the intended outcomes. Instead, it would be more prudent for Arab countries to insist that Iran manifest its commitment to evolve into a reliable and peaceful regional partner.

This would mean that Iran should actively work towards fostering a stable regional environment. For instance, it could begin by ceasing its warnings against ships moving oil and gas from Arab countries, a practice which contributes significantly to the regional tensions. Additionally, Iran should discontinue its provision of arms to Yemeni factions which are currently involved in hostilities with Saudi Arabia.

By taking these concrete steps, Iran can send a strong signal of its genuine intention to establish a peaceful coexistence with its neighbors.

4.10.7 The United States' Role: Security and Assurance

Without demonstrable commitments towards regional peace from Iran, it would be wise for Gulf Arab nations and other countries in the Middle East to continue their reliance on the United States. However, this continued alliance needs to be underpinned by active reciprocity from the U.S.

To ensure the sustenance of this crucial alliance, the U.S. should endeavor to fortify its security promises in the Middle East. This covers regularly dealing with and stopping Iran's threats in the key areas of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Such dedicated efforts from the U.S. can reinforce its multifaceted engagements with its Sunni Muslim allies. These engagements, which span military, diplomatic, and economic dimensions, can provide the reassurance these nations seek, demonstrating unequivocally that they have not been abandoned in the face of complex regional challenges.

By adopting such a robust stance, the U.S. would not only be protecting its interests and those of its allies but would also be preserving the balance of power in a region critical to global stability and prosperity. This approach requires unwavering dedication, consistent policy, and a clear understanding of the intricate geopolitics of the Middle East.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Research Implications

5.1.1 Theoretical Implications:

The findings of this research have important theoretical implications in various academic fields, including International Relations, Political Science, and Middle Eastern studies. Here's a detailed breakdown of these implications:

Power Dynamics and Influence: The research underscores the extent to which lobby groups, in this case, the Israel lobby, can exert influence on a nation's foreign policy. The theoretical assumption here is that while the State remains the primary actor in international politics, non-state actors like lobby groups can have a remarkable influence, especially in democracies where they can mobilize resources and influence public opinion.

Limits of Influence: Even as lobby groups can shape certain policy decisions, there are inherent limitations to their influence. Their success depends on a confluence of factors, including the receptivity of the administration in power and the wider geopolitical context.

Continuity and Change: While foreign policy often exhibits a degree of continuity, this research points to instances where a marked shift occurs. The divergence between the Obama and Trump administration policies toward the Iran nuclear deal underlines that leadership preferences, along with external influences, can lead to substantial policy changes.

Determinants of Foreign Policy: Beyond lobby groups, the study prompts further inquiries into what other factors determine a nation's foreign policy. Does public opinion play a role? How about the nation's geopolitical interests or its historical relations with other nations?

Balance of Power: The research underlines how changes in one policy, like the U.S. stance on the Iran nuclear deal, can significantly affect the balance of power in a region as volatile as the Middle East.

Diplomatic Strategies: Iran's reconciliation talks highlight the importance of diplomacy in the Middle East's geopolitics. It brings forward a theoretical perspective on how middle powers can employ diplomacy to reshape regional dynamics.

Uncertainty and Geopolitical Evolution: The future of the Iran nuclear deal, as posited in the research, remains uncertain. This reinforces the theoretical viewpoint that geopolitics is not static but continuously evolving, driven by both internal and external factors.

Navigating Shifts: As changes occur on the geopolitical chessboard, states must adapt to maintain their interests and promote stability. The theoretical implication here revolves around the agility of nations in international politics.

Regional Stability and Peace: The research emphasizes the need for strategic responses to geopolitical shifts. These echoes theoretical frameworks in international relations that stress cooperation, dialogue, and mutual understanding as means to achieve regional stability and peace.

In sum, this research provides a rich foundation for further academic inquiries into the role of lobby groups, the determinants of foreign policy decisions, and the complex dynamics of regional geopolitics. It challenges and complements existing theories and offers fresh perspectives on the evolving nature of international politics in the 21st century.

5.1.2 Practical Implications:

The insights derived from this investigation extend beyond academic discourse, offering tangible practical implications that can guide real-world decisions and strategies. Let's delve into the practical repercussions of the study's findings:

Influence Mitigation: Understanding the influence of lobby groups can help policymakers design systems that maintain transparency and balance in decision-making. For instance, policymakers might consider enacting regulations that ensure lobby activities are transparent, enabling public oversight.

Dynamic Policy Frameworks: Recognizing the marked shifts in foreign policies between successive administrations, future administrations could consider implementing a policy review mechanism. Such a mechanism would assess the long-term strategic implications before major policy changes, ensuring continuity where necessary.

Strengthening Multilateral Dialogues: Iran's success in reconciliation talks underlines the importance of multi-party discussions. Governments can use this as a blueprint to foster multilateral dialogues in other contentious areas, emphasizing diplomacy over confrontation.

Crisis Management: With the uncertain trajectory of the Iran nuclear deal, there's a practical need for contingency planning. Nations involved can form task forces or committees to preemptively address any potential crises stemming from changing dynamics.

Assessment of Alliance Dynamics: The changing contours of the U.S.-Israel relationship can serve as a case study for other nations. They can evaluate their alliances to understand how external influences might reshape bilateral ties and strategize accordingly.

Shared Intelligence and Cooperation: Recognizing the profound repercussions on the balance of power, countries like the U.S. and Israel might consider deepening their intelligence-sharing mechanisms, focusing on mutual threats and ensuring regional stability.

Regional Forums: Given the continuous shifts in the Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape, there's a practical need for regional forums. These platforms can facilitate dialogue, trust-building, and conflict resolution among Middle Eastern states.

Peacekeeping and Stability Initiatives: International bodies like the United Nations could consider the insights from this research to design peacekeeping missions or stability initiatives tailored to the evolving dynamics of the region.

Transparent Communication: To mitigate undue influence and ensure the public's trust, governments can adopt transparent communication strategies. They can keep citizens informed about major policy shifts, the rationale behind them, and the influences at play.

Educational Initiatives: Recognizing the importance of informed citizenry, educational institutions can introduce or enhance courses on international relations, geopolitics, and the role of lobby groups, equipping future leaders and the public with a nuanced understanding of these domains.

To conclude, the practical implications of this research offer a roadmap for policymakers, diplomats, and other stakeholders in navigating the intricate web of international relations, particularly in the context of the Middle East. These suggestions provide actionable insights to ensure stability, peace, and cooperative progress in a dynamically evolving geopolitical scenario.

5.2 Research Limitations

Every research endeavor, no matter how comprehensive, carries with it certain limitations. Understanding these limitations not only lends transparency to the study but also offers avenues for future researchers to build upon. Here are some potential limitations of your research:

Time-Frame Limitation: The research focuses on the Trump administration and its divergence from the Obama administration. While this provides a clear window of comparison, it might overlook long-term trends or deeper historical contexts that influenced U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

Single Lobby Focus: While the Israel lobby's influence is undeniably significant, there are other lobby groups and interest groups that could have played a role. The research might not capture the entirety of these influences.

Data Sources: Depending on the primary and secondary sources used, there could be potential biases. For instance, government reports might offer an official stance, while independent analyses might present contrasting views. Striking a balance might have been challenging.

Subjectivity: Qualitative research often involves interpreting events, statements, and actions. There's always a risk of researcher bias or subjectivity influencing these interpretations.

Complexity of Middle Eastern Politics: The Middle East is a region of intricate political, cultural, and historical ties. While the research touches upon these aspects concerning the Iran nuclear deal, it might not capture the complete essence of all regional dynamics.

Unpredictable Events: Post-research, the Middle East might witness events that could either reinforce or challenge the findings of the study. The unpredictable nature of geopolitics inherently limits the long-term applicability of any research.

Generalizability:

Specific Case Study: Focusing on the Iranian nuclear deal offers depth but might limit the broader application of findings. What holds true for the Iran deal might not necessarily apply to other foreign policy decisions.

Contextual Factors: The U.S.' relationship with Israel and its stance towards Iran are deeply contextual. Transferring these insights to another country or region might not yield the same conclusions.

Other Stakeholders: While the research thoroughly analyzes the U.S., Israel, and Iran, other influential players in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, or Russia, might have indirect impacts on the analyzed dynamics.

Economic and Domestic Factors: Economic considerations, domestic political scenarios, or public opinion could play roles in shaping foreign policies. If these aspects weren't deeply delved into, they present a limitation.

Recognizing these limitations does not diminish the value of my research. Instead, it provides clarity, honesty, and offers future researchers pathways to dive deeper, ensuring the academic exploration of this subject remains dynamic and evolving.

5.3 Recommendations

Drawing from the findings and insights of the research, the following recommendations emerge. These suggestions are framed to guide policy directions, further academic inquiry, and stakeholder engagement in the realm of U.S. foreign policy, particularly concerning the Middle East.

5.3.1 Policy Framework and Transparency:

Lobby Oversight: Governments should consider instituting stringent regulations and transparency measures to oversee lobbying activities. This would ensure a balanced influence on foreign policy decisions and maintain public trust.

Regular Policy Reviews: To avoid drastic shifts in foreign policy, governments should implement a mechanism for regular policy reviews, ensuring long-term strategic interests are consistently upheld.

5.3.2 Engagement and Diplomacy:

Multi-Party Dialogues: Given the success of Iran's reconciliation talks, it's recommended that diplomatic efforts prioritize multi-party engagements to build consensus and promote regional stability.

Bilateral Relationship Strengthening: The U.S. and Israel, given the evolved dynamics of their relationship, should engage in frequent high-level dialogues to ensure mutual interests are consistently aligned.

5.3.3 Broadening the Research Horizon:

Diverse Lobby Influence: Future research should delve into the influence of other significant lobbies, beyond the Israel lobby, to gain a comprehensive understanding of external pressures on U.S. foreign policy.

Historical Contextual Analysis: A deeper historical context could be explored, moving beyond the Trump and Obama administrations to analyze long-term trends and patterns in U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East.

5.3.4 Regional Stability Initiatives:

Conflict Resolution Platforms: Considering the volatile nature of the Middle East, it's recommended to establish or strengthen regional platforms for dialogue, conflict resolution, and trust-building.

Cooperative Intelligence Sharing: To address mutual security threats, nations within the region, along with external stakeholders like the U.S., should bolster intelligence-sharing mechanisms.

5.3.5 Education and Public Awareness:

Curriculum Inclusion: Institutions, particularly in the U.S., should be encouraged to include comprehensive modules on international relations, the dynamics of lobby groups, and the geopolitics of the Middle East. This would foster an informed citizenry capable of understanding and engaging in nuanced foreign policy debates.

Public Communication Channels: Governments should establish dedicated channels to keep citizens updated on foreign policy decisions, the rationale behind them, and their broader implications.

5.3.4 Mitigating Uncertainties:

Contingency Planning: Considering the unpredictable trajectory of the Iran nuclear deal and the region's dynamics, governments involved should develop and maintain contingency plans to swiftly address potential shifts or crises.

Engaging External Stakeholders: The U.S. should actively engage with other influential players in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Russia, to ensure a holistic approach to regional stability and peace.

5.3.5 Collaborative Efforts for Peace:

International Partnerships: International bodies, like the United Nations, should be engaged more actively in the Middle East, leveraging the insights from this research to design tailored peacekeeping and stability initiatives.

In conclusion, these recommendations, grounded in the findings of the research, offer a pathway for governments, policymakers, academics, and stakeholders to navigate, understand, and shape the complex interplay of factors influencing U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Implementing these suggestions could lead to more informed, consistent, and peace-oriented decisions in the future.

5.4 Conclusion

In the complex web of international relations, the pivotal role of interest groups and lobbies in influencing policy decisions has emerged as a consistent theme, especially in nations with significant global sway such as the United States. This research, through its comprehensive examination of the U.S. foreign policy during the Trump administration concerning the Iran Nuclear Deal, underscores the profound influence exerted by the Israel lobby.

The departure of the Trump administration from the policies pursued under the Obama administration was stark, notably in the U.S.'s stance on the JCPOA. This significant shift not only cast a spotlight on the inner workings of U.S. foreign policymaking but also reverberated across the geopolitical spectrum of the Middle East. While several factors contributed to this policy redirection, the influence of the Israel lobby stood out as a key determinant. Israel's apprehensions and perspectives on Iran's nuclear capabilities and intentions became intertwined with the U.S.'s broader Middle Eastern strategy.

Simultaneously, Iran's nuanced diplomatic endeavors, evident in its efforts to mend and build bridges within the Middle East, depict a nation eager to reshape its regional narrative. These diplomatic pursuits indicate a desire for a balanced regional power dynamic, even as the overarching shadow of the nuclear deal lingers, casting uncertainties.

Drawing these threads together, it's evident that the realm of foreign policy, especially concerning the Middle East, is a complex tableau of national interests, lobbying influences, and strategic alliances. The Trump administration's tenure, marked by its divergence from previous U.S. policy trajectories, offers a salient case study into how these factors intertwine and manifest in tangible policy decisions.

In conclusion, as the Middle East continues its geopolitical evolution, understanding the myriad influences and stakeholders is paramount. The Israel lobby's role in U.S. foreign policy, juxtaposed against Iran's regional diplomatic strategy, forms a critical component of this understanding. As big powers move through the complex world of international ties, what we learn from this time shows how important it is to make

clear, balanced policymaking that keeps things steady and peaceful for both regional stability and global peace. This research serves as a testament to the multifaceted nature of international policymaking, highlighting the need for a holistic approach in deciphering and addressing the challenges of the contemporary geopolitical landscape.

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