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## **Understanding the US-Israeli Alliance**

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The United States and Israel are close allies. It is one of the few US alliances often characterized as a special relationship, with top leaders on both sides regularly praising the strength, importance, and durability of the alliance.<sup>2</sup> The relations, President Bill Clinton (1998) said, are “not just an alliance but a profound friendship.” President George W. Bush (2004) explained, “The United States is strongly committed, and I am strongly committed, to the security of Israel as a vibrant Jewish state.” To President Barack Obama (2011): “Our commitment to Israel’s security is unshakeable.” President Donald J. Trump (2017) called ties to Israel, “our unbreakable bond with our cherished ally, Israel.” On the Israeli side, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (2001) called the United States “our great friend and ally.” Standing next to President Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called it a “remarkable alliance” (Trump, 2017).

What explains the origins and maintenance of this relationship? Why does Israel want a close alliance with the United States? Why does the United States want a close alliance with Israel? What one finds is an important difference between the two countries. Israel has little choice in its great power partner; there have only been one or two great powers at any time since 1948. In contrast, the United States may choose from many different potential regional partners in the Middle East. Israel is one option, but the United States also has or has had close alliance ties with Egypt, Iran, Jordan, and Saudi

Arabia to name a few examples. The US alliance with Israel is usually explained based on one of three ideas: Israel is a strategic asset; domestic interest groups in the United States pressure the US government to have the alliance; or the two countries share values (e.g. democratic values, biblical values). That said, each explanation faces certain shortcomings. In 2017, US policy on many issues is undergoing significant change under President Donald Trump, but the US-Israeli reliance remains important to both parties and thus does not appear subject to reconsideration.

### **Israeli National Security**

Israel is a small country with a small population of 8.7 million that sits in the midst of a contentious region.<sup>3</sup> Three of Israel's neighbors have had civil wars – Jordan (1970-71), Lebanon (1975-1990), and Syria (2011-present) – and external powers like the United States and the Soviet Union or Russia have been deeply involved militarily in the region. While Israel has the most powerful armed forces in the region and the only cache of nuclear weapons, other countries like Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia have aspired for regional leadership at different times since World War II.

Israel's primary national security problem has been its conflict with the Palestinians and the Arab states. Since independence in 1948, the State of Israel fought inter-state wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1969-70, 1973, 1982, and 2006. It faced two Palestinian uprisings (1987-1993 and 2000-2005), terrorist attacks, and major military confrontations with Hamas, the Palestinian Islamists, in Gaza in 2008-09, 2012, and 2014. The Israeli occupation since 1967 of millions of Palestinians who live in the West

Bank (2.7 mn Palestinians) and Gaza Strip (1.8 mn) creates tremendous security problems, compounded by Israel's settlement project in the West Bank.<sup>4</sup>

In this difficult region and as party to a long-running internal and external conflict, Israel has long sought external allies and patrons. A patron could provide arms and aid; it could give access to military intelligence and advanced military technology; it could balance against the patron of Israel's Arab enemies, the Soviet Union; and it could provide diplomatic protection by blunting Soviet pressure or providing cover at the UN Security Council and in other international settings.

Two countries in particular have played the largest role. First, Israel had a strong security partnership with France, including crucial cooperation for Israel's nuclear weapons program (Cohen 1999). Second, starting in the 1960s and intensifying after 1967 when the Israeli-French relationship broke down, Israel partnered with the United States.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1960s, Israel did not have many options for its great power ally. France and the United Kingdom were faded empires. The Soviet Union, one of the world's only two superpowers, had allied itself with Israel's Arab rivals in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. The only other great power was the United States so the development of the US-Israeli link was as good as things could have gone for Israel. In sum, Israel needed a great power ally; it did not have many choices (really only one if it wanted a genuine superpower); and it worked out with a now decades-long alliance with the United States. Let me now turn to the other side of the ledger, US alliance needs.

## **US National Security**

During the Cold War, the United States had three fundamental national interests in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup> In the strategic realm, it sought to prevent Soviet penetration of the region. Once the Soviets had allies, the United States sought to limit the Soviet ability to benefit from those allies and keep US allies stronger. The Middle East was like much of the rest of the world; it became an arena for US-Soviet competition.

One of the great US triumphs in this regard was bringing Egypt into the US orbit in the 1970s. Egypt saw itself as the leader of the Arab world and felt its economic and strategic position would benefit from allying with Washington instead of Moscow. Through warming Egyptian-US ties and through the Egyptian-Israeli peace process of the late 1970s, the United States was able to cement Egypt's shifting alliance.

The second US national interest was maintaining the flow of energy resources – oil and natural gas – from the Middle East at a reasonable price. These energy resources were vital to the functioning of the US-led global capitalist economy. Even when US dependence on Middle East, and especially Persian Gulf, oil declined in recent decades, US economic partners and military allies in Western Europe and Japan remained deeply dependent upon the smooth flow of these energy resources.

The third national interest, developing in the 1960s and fully formed by the 1970s, was the US commitment to Israel's survival. The United States would not let Israel be destroyed by Arab armies. This was not only a theoretical commitment but led to specific US actions. In 1967, when Israel feared Arab militaries might attack, the United States first tried to resolve the situation with US-led action, an international regatta to reopen the Straits of Tiran. But when that failed, the United States did not stop Israel from taking matters into its own hands and launching a conventional first strike

against its Arab neighbors (Pressman, 2008). In 1973, when Egypt and Syria's surprise military attack had Israel burning through its stocks of arms, the United States authorized and implemented an emergency military resupply even before the war had ended (Quandt, 2001).<sup>7</sup> As President Clinton (1998) phrased the point, "Let us in the United States say that we will stand by Israel, always foursquare for its security." A "secure Israel," Obama (2011) said, must be one basis of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Two events in the 1970s demonstrated some of the benefits and shortcomings of a US alliance with Israel. To put it another way, they showed how US national interests in the Middle East might be compatible or might be in conflict. These two events also act as a useful transition into the question of whether the Israeli-US alliance is based on positive strategic gains for Washington.

On the one hand, in September 1970, Israel, at the request of the United States, deterred Syria, a Soviet client, from invading Jordan and possibly toppling the Hashemite regime, a monarchy the United States favored. According to Yitzhak Rabin, at the time Israeli ambassador to the United States and later prime minister, "a US Navy plane carrying squadron leaders from the Sixth Fleet flew to Tel Aviv to coordinate military plans with the Israelis." Israel and the United States knew that the Soviet Union would detect the flight and other maneuvers and thereby 'hear' the deterrent signal the United States and Israel were trying to send. (Washington Institute, 1986, p. 1) The US Government first asked Israel to fly a reconnaissance mission to get a better sense of the Syrian moves. The Government of Israel saw intervening on Jordan's behalf as a chance to better Israeli ties with the United States (Rubinovitz, 2010). Israel and the United

States agreed that Israel could launch ground and aerial strikes to dislodge Syria from Irbid, Jordan. But Quandt (2001, p. 82) writes that Jordan, knowing it was now backed by Israel and the United States, attacked Syrian forces; Syria began to withdraw. The need for Israeli military intervention ended. That the 1970 episode came on the heels of the 1967 war when Israel had demonstrated its regional military prowess added to the argument that Israel could provide significant strategic benefits to the United States.

On the other hand, just a few years later, the oil crisis of 1973-1974 suggested that the flow of resources was not guaranteed and could be endangered, as it was in that case, by Arab-Israeli conflict. As a result of US support for Israel during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Arab oil-exporting countries cut oil production and cut oil exports to the United States and a few other countries. The cuts had a negative impact on the US economy. The US commitment to Israel's security and the capitalist system's massive thirst for oil might not go hand in hand. After the war, the Nixon administration launched Arab-Israeli peace talks, in part to address this tension between major US interests. The negotiations helped lead to an end to the oil embargo in March 1974.<sup>8</sup>

With the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US interest in undermining Soviet policy disappeared. Within a decade, that strategic interest had been replaced by the battle with al-Qaeda and later the Islamic State. The new US strategic interest in the Middle East was defeating al-Qaeda and other violent, anti-US Islamist organizations with regional and global aspirations.

In the context of these US national interests, why has the alliance lasted as long as it has? Scholars have traditionally resorted to three categories of explanations for the

origins and maintenance of the alliance: strategic, domestic, and ideational. The answer could be a combination of factors, and the driver could change over time.

The first explanation is that Israel is *strategic asset* for the United States.<sup>9</sup> The two countries share intelligence and counter-terrorism tactics. During the Cold War, the United States learned how its weapons would perform against Soviet and other East Bloc weapons wielded by Arab states in wars with Israel. Israel battled, and usually defeated, Soviet client states, a victory by proxy for the United States. In a region with many states hostile toward the United States, as well as many unstable states that cannot be relied upon, Israel is a bastion of stability and strategic commitment. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, some Israeli leaders have also emphasized that the two countries share a common, anti-terrorism agenda. As President George W. Bush (2004) stated, “Our nation is stronger and safer because we have a true and dependable ally in Israel.” Once allied with the United States, Israel has not wavered.

That said, the strategic argument for explaining the origins of the alliance raises a number of questions, all of which derive from Israel’s conflict with the Arab side. Many Arab parties will not act in concert with Israel for ideological reasons: Israel’s occupation of Arab land broadly construed (Israel’s existence since 1948) or more narrowly construed (Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan since 1967) and the absence of a State of Palestine. While Israel has sought open relations and normal ties, the Arab world, with some notable exceptions, has not, instead seeing normalcy as something that should result from an Arab-Israeli resolution. Israel’s very pursuit of normalcy has probably fueled the common Arab rejection of normalcy.

In practice, for example, this ideological divide complicates the fact that the US commitment to Israel's survival exists side-by-side with US energy interests, another vital US national interest. In other words the US-Israeli alliance and need for US-Arab ties for energy, at a minimum, complicate those energy relations. Arab states are uncomfortable to hostile about US support for Israel, sometimes making for unsettled economic relations. The classic example is the 1973-74 oil crisis already mentioned.

Furthermore, Israel, unlike other close US allies such as Australia or the United Kingdom, is often limited in what it can contribute to US military operations and ultimately, in its ability to suffer casualties in tandem with US forces. Ben-Ephraim (2017) notes that Israel did not help the Carter administration achieve the Carter Doctrine.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, under George H.W. Bush, Israel could not contribute arms or personnel to the 1991 US-led Gulf War to reverse the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Iraq, aware of Israel's dual status as Arab adversary and US ally, fired missiles at Israel in order to try to peel Arab allies of the United States away from the anti-Iraq military coalition by forcing the Israel issue to the fore. The United States would not allow Israel to go after Iraq's missile launchers, again fearing Israeli aerial involvement would upset its Arab military partners like Saudi Arabia and Syria (Pressman, 2008, pp. 109-114). It was not the result of a limit in Israel's capabilities but rather ideological constraints based on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In recent years, the question of Palestine also obstructs what otherwise might be natural security cooperation between Israel and some Arab states such as Saudi Arabia. Why it is hard for Israel and Saudi Arabia to naturally balance against their mutual enemy, Iran, in the 2010s? Most Arab states do not want normalization with Israel,

including on military matters, until the Palestinian national movement is satisfied. In 2016-2017, the Netanyahu government in Israel talked about the possibility of a regional pact that would subsume security issues and lead to a resolution of the Palestinian problem, but it is highly doubtful Saudi Arabia would dramatically and publicly increase cooperation toward Israel before an independent State of Palestine emerged (See Gause, 2015). Ideological tension obstructs strategic necessity.

Israel and the United States have also disagreed over US arms sales to Arab countries. Under the Reagan administration, for example, Israel strongly objected to US AWACS sales to Saudi Arabia (Bard 1988). But Reagan prevailed and the sale went through.

A final strategic problem is that US support for Israel may stoke support for al-Qaeda and other radical, violent Islamists. Whether US support has this effect has been a long-running debate inside the US political and national security establishment, with prominent figures on both sides. For example, General David Petraeus, then head of US Central Command, publicly warned of “a certain spillover effect” from the Arab-Israeli conflict to other issues in the region. While his language was cautious, he noted that the continued Israeli-Palestinian conflict “does make situations more challenging, particularly for moderate [Arab] leaders” in the Middle East (Duss, 2010).

These tensions explain much of the appeal to the United States of the Arab-Israeli peace process. If Israel and the Palestinian national movement could settle their differences, along with Israel and Syria, these contradictions would fade away. The ideological barrier to cooperation or normalization would disappear. Israel could work militarily with the United States and Washington’s Arab military allies in public fashion.

The quiet nature of current cooperation, which likely limits the nature and extent of that cooperation, would no longer be necessary.

The second explanation is that certain US *domestic interest groups* pushed for the US alliance with Israel. This explanation is based on the general idea that US foreign policy is not simply a rational, unitary response to fixed national interests. Instead, US foreign policy is an amalgamation of pressures from constituents and organizations in the United States. The US government does not formulate policy based on what is best for the United States as a whole but rather based on the desires and demands of certain organized and vocal groups or sub-sets of the population (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007). To illustrate with similar examples from domestic policy, the National Rifle Association (NRA) causes deviations in gun control policy that bend toward NRA demands, or the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) does the same for, say, retiree medical care and the Social Security program.

In the case of US-Israeli ties, the interest group supporting strong relations is usually described as the Jewish Lobby or the Israel Lobby. The best-known organization is the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) but other lobbying and policy organizations include the Israel Policy Forum, J Street, the Zionist Organization of America, and Christians United for Israel. What these organizations share is being part of the American body politic and supporting the idea of the State of Israel and its continued existence. In some cases, like AIPAC, they also almost always support the policies of the Israeli government.

The argument is that the Israel lobby shapes US policy. According to critics of US policy, despite negative strategic impacts from allying with Israel, the two countries have

a special relationship. Despite the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, the expansion of the Israeli settlement project, and Israeli rejection of many concessions that would be necessary for a two-state solution – if not a wholesale rejection of the idea of a Palestinian state alongside Israel – the United States allies with Israel because of successful interest group pressure. Mearsheimer and Walt (2007) go further, arguing that the Israeli lobby drives much of US policy not only in the Arab-Israeli arena but also in the wider Middle East, e.g. the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The domestic argument for explaining the origins of the US-Israeli alliance faces a number of challenges as well (Mead 2007). The United States has always been and remains far stronger than Israel. When US administrations want to squeeze Israel and go against Israeli policy and domestic interest groups acting in Israel's interest, they do so. Presidents Gerald Ford (reassessment), Ronald Reagan (arms sales to Saudi Arabia), George H. W. Bush (Madrid peace conference), and Barack Obama (Iran nuclear agreement) all had prominent moments when they went against Israel and supportive US-based interest groups and prevailed.<sup>11</sup> The lobby has limited options in the face of a major presidential policy push.

To put it another way, who really makes US foreign policy? Is it outside interest groups or is it the executive branch of the United States government? Critics of this domestic explanation for the alliance would suggest the latter much more than the former. And for the sake of argument, let's say interest groups do drive US foreign policy. In that case, one would need to take account of other lobbies as well, including those funded by the oil industry or by Arab states. They might counteract the Israel lobby. Also, defining

this lobby is difficult. Is it a certain list of organizations? Is it American Jews only or does it include all American supporters of Israeli policy? (See Waxman 2010)

It is worth noting that interest groups supportive of Israel will utilize the first and third explanations to justify the alliance. Because they do not want the alliance to be seen as based primarily on lobbying, and possibly contrary to general US interests and values, the interest groups will often argue that Israel is a strategic asset for the United States, and Israel and the United States have shared values. Under the “US & Israel” tab on the AIPAC website, visitors have seven options, including “Fighting Terrorism,” “Military Partnership,” “Shared Values,” and “Strong Allies.”<sup>12</sup>

The third explanation, then, is that the alliance between Israel and the United States is based on *shared values*.<sup>13</sup> Exactly what values are shared varies depending on the argument. In some cases, the emphasis is on shared political values and, in particular, the fact that both countries are democracies (Barnett, 1996, pp. 434, 436). A different emphasis is on the shared religious tradition of the bible, sometimes referred to as the Judeo-Christian tradition. President George W. Bush (2004) told an AIPAC gathering that, “We have both built vibrant democracies, built on the rule of law and market economies. And we're both countries founded on certain basic beliefs: that God watches over the affairs of men, and values every life.” Obama (2011) explained, “our friendship is rooted deeply in a shared history and shared values.” Trump (2017) argued that, “The partnership between our two countries built on our shared values has advanced the cause of human freedom, dignity, and peace. These are the building blocks of democracy.” AIPAC’s website agreed: “The two countries have developed a resilient friendship, based in large part on an unshakable dedication to common values. Commitment to democracy,

the rule of law, freedom of religion and speech and human rights are all core values shared between the United States and Israel.”<sup>14</sup>

On the political side, the notion that the United States picks allies based solely on regime type is not supported by the empirical record. The United States has had alliances with both democracies and dictatorships. Washington has been perfectly willing to ally with countries that are monarchies, military regimes, or other forms of authoritarian systems, including in Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia or, pre-1979, in the Shah’s Iran.

The shared religious heritage reason seems questionable as a key driver of the military alliance. Much is made of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the two religions do share a holy book, the Torah or Old Testament. However, the theology and practices of the two religions also embody many differences. While I would not discount the rhetorical flourish of politicians citing this tradition, private evidence from internal government deliberations of how said factors affect US policy decisions would be useful. Also, the Judeo-Christian tradition pre-dates the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948; the argument would predict a special relationship from Israel’s founding, and that did not happen. The argument may have some background impact but it is hard to sustain the claim that it is the (or a) primary factor driving the close alliance ties.

### **Policy Disagreement**

Despite the special relationship, points of US-Israeli policy contention are common (Quandt, 2001; Reich, 2007; Spiegel, 1985; Pressman, 2008, pp. 78-119). Going back to the formation of the alliance in the 1960s, every US administration has had differences with Israeli governments. Sometimes, as was clearly the case with Obama and

Netanyahu, there are personality differences. But Israeli and US chief executives who get along well also have some core differences on important Middle East and Arab-Israeli policies even as the underlying alliance relationship and billions in US aid since the 1970s has stayed tight.<sup>15</sup>

The peace process is the central sticking point as the United States has often, though not always, wanted Israel to make concessions to bring about peaceful relations.<sup>16</sup> Whether on Israeli policy in Jerusalem, settlements (Neff, 1994), or other issues, the United States and Israel have often disagreed. Carter pressed Israeli Prime Minister Begin for a settlement freeze and interpreting their agreement on the matter led to a near crisis after the Camp David Accords of 1978. In his peace plan, Reagan (1982) spoke out strongly against settlements: “Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlement freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in these talks. Further settlement activity is in no way necessary for the security of Israel and only diminishes the confidence of the Arabs and a final outcome can be freely and fairly negotiated.” George W. Bush (2012) said, “Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories must stop.” Obama sought a settlement freeze in his first term.

The obvious point is that if the United States is going to act as the primary mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is going to need to secure concessions from all the different parties involved, including Israel. In 2002, the George W. Bush administration adopted the Israeli government’s favored approach at the time. Unlike in the Rabin era, terrorism had to stop before negotiations could commence. In other words, the sequencing put the onus on the Palestinians. But if/when they did, Bush (2002) still

expected Israel to withdraw military forces to pre-intifada II positions; stop Israeli settlement activity; help the Palestinian economy; restore Palestinian freedom of movement; and release frozen Palestinian revenue. Ultimately, he said, the Israeli occupation would have to end. By the time of the Annapolis process in 2007-08, Bush officials were also facilitating Israeli-Palestinian negotiations about the core issues like land, settlements, and Jerusalem.

While the United States usually defends the Israeli position at the United Nations Security Council, every US administration has occasionally supported or abstained – and thereby not exercised its veto power – on resolutions the Israelis disliked. Already under President Nixon, the United States voted with the majority to censure Israel over Israeli moves in occupied Jerusalem. Similar US votes have occurred periodically across administrations (Friedman, 2016).<sup>17</sup>

Lastly, the United States and Israel do not always have similar estimates about threats or, to put it another way, who the enemy is and what should be done about it. In 1981, the United States criticized Israel after Israel bombed an Iraqi nuclear facility at Osiraq. The Israel government thought preventive action was necessary, and it acted (See Feldman 1982). In 2015, the Government of Israel, and some supportive interest groups, vociferously criticized the Obama administration for its diplomatic agreement to curtail the Iranian nuclear program. Both saw the Iranian program as dangerous but differed deeply about the best approach for controlling it (Xu and Rees 2016, 9-10).

## **Conclusion**

Could the alliance weaken in the next few years? In the short term, it seems unlikely. [NEW ENDNOTE: For the contrary argument that the alliance could experience more turbulence in the coming years, see Allin and Simon 2016 and Waxman 2016.] Although President Trump has expressed some general isolationist sentiments, he has spoken strongly in favor of this alliance. The US Congress remains strongly in favor of the alliance. Polls suggest the US public remains decidedly more sympathetic to Israel than to the Palestinian cause (Pew 2016). Israeli-US military and intelligence cooperation, including US aid and arms sales, seems likely to continue, especially given the \$38 bn/ten-year agreement signed late in the Obama presidency. There does not appear to be growing support for arguments that Israel is a strategic liability to the United States.

Israel is a much wealthier country than when the alliance started. It has less need for US military aid because it generates more wealth and technology on its own. But access to advanced US military technology and US diplomatic cover cannot be replaced by anyone else at this time. Israel has been able to maintain different policy stances than the United States on some important issues while protecting the underlying alliance.

Both the United States and Israel are in rough spots with regard to their commitment to liberal democratic values. The occupation undermines Israel's democratic claims, as do illiberal statements and legislation from Israel's government. Trump's harsh attacks on the press, the judiciary, and his political opponents strike at pillars of the US system. If shared democratic values were the sole basis of the alliance, it might at least be time to ask some questions. Yet with both countries moving in the same political direction, any impact on the alliance will be minimal.

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Brent Sasley and Mira Sucharov for helpful feedback. Any errors are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier works on the alliance include Bar Siman Tov, 1998; Chomsky, 1999; Druks, 2001; Lewis, 1999; and Reich, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> To learn more about Israel itself, see Sasley and Waller (2017). The 8.7 million figure does not include Palestinians who live in Gaza and the West Bank, with the exception of Palestinians who live in East Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> Israel contends the Gaza Strip is no longer occupied since the withdrawal of Israeli settlers in 2005.

<sup>5</sup> For details on the development of the US-Israeli alliance in the 1960s and thereafter, see Pressman (2008, pp.81-87).

<sup>6</sup> For a review of policy toward Israel in each US administration, see Reich (2007), Spiegel (1985), and Quandt (2001).

<sup>7</sup> This tripartite depiction of US interests in the region leaves some possibilities out. Contrast my argument with this statement by President Barack H. Obama (2011): “For decades, the United States has pursued a set of core interests in the region: countering terrorism and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons; securing the free flow of commerce and safe-guarding the security of the region; standing up for Israel’s security and pursuing Arab-Israeli peace.” Others might emphasize the spread of democracy, human rights, or liberalism, e.g. Bush (2004): “And so across that vital region, America is standing for the expansion of human liberty.”

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Historian, “Oil Embargo, 1973-1974,” <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/oil-embargo>.

<sup>9</sup> For example, see Oren (2011). Interestingly, prominent critics of the US-Israeli alliance, like Chomsky (See Wells, 2010), also argue that strategic factors, including US hegemonic aspirations and the need for oil, drive the relationship. Of course, such critics use a different tone when talking about Israel’s strategic utility to the United States.

<sup>10</sup> Carter (1980) stated: “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”

<sup>11</sup> In 1975, the Ford administration re-evaluated relations with Israel after US dissatisfaction with Israeli policies in political negotiations with Egypt. The Israeli government opposed US arms sales to Saudi Arabia in the early 1980s. Later, the Bush (41) administration had to press a reluctant Israeli government to attend the 1991 Arab-Israeli peace conference at Madrid. And most recently, the Israeli government opposed the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – negotiated by the Obama administration and others – meant to control Iran’s nuclear program.

<sup>12</sup> “US & Israel” was under the top-line tab “LEARN.” Visited <http://www.aipac.org/> on September 1, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Oren (2011).

<sup>14</sup> “Shared Values,” <http://www.aipac.org/learn/us-and-israel/shared-values>, accessed on September 1, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> On the history and amounts of US aid, see Sharp (2016).

<sup>16</sup> For a study of the success and failure of the US negotiating efforts, see Pressman (2014). See also Eisenberg and Caplan (1998), Kurtzer et al (2013), and Kurtzer and Lasensky (2008).

<sup>17</sup> Friedman (2016) was published before the Obama administration abstained on a UNSC resolution addressing Israeli settlements in December 2016.

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