The close relationship of the “neo-cons” and AIPAC and their influence on US foreign policy in the Middle East

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Abstract
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The purpose of this study is to present an argument for the position that a close affinity between the "neo-cons" and Israel exists thus, this thesis will explore Bush’s neo-conservative administration’s role in triggering, planning and permitting the Iraqi invasion via the neo-cons' influence.

By taking Iraq and Iran as case studies of US involvement in the Middle East, this study will elaborate on the role of the aforementioned two actors, especially under the policies of the Georges W. Bush administration.

The Obama administration's policies of engagement and multilateralism, a clear departure from the policies of the previous administration, must have weighed heavily against the influential role played by the neo-cons and AIPAC in the Bush Administration. What are the neo-cons prospects under the current Obama administration and what are the means available for AIPAC in hindering Obama’s diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East are the main concerns of the thesis too. Indeed, one can argue within reason that in operating at the level of non-state actors, the Israeli Lobby and supporters of the Israeli state were pivotal in driving the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.
The chief protagonists orchestrating U.S. policy are the neo-conservatives and AIPAC, which can be considered the backbone of the Israeli Lobby.

At present, one is uncertain what can be done given the lobby’s power. While success remains far from being guaranteed, the real challenge will be a balanced approach, especially when it comes to incorporating Israel’s interests within the realm of U.S. foreign policy in the region. Although Obama’s approach shows a clear departure from that under Bush, with a tendency toward multilateralism and engagement as echoed in his Cairo speech, many fear the new president will remain subject and victim to the Israeli Lobby’s pressure. The current debate around whether or not to exert new sanctions on Iran should be telling of what is left to come.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The day two commercial airlines crashed into the famous New York City Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, history changed. The event that is so infamously known as the 9/11 attacks triggered the "war on terror" and transformed US foreign policy under the Georges W. Bush administration, in a supposed aim to "spread democracy in the Middle East", as stated by secretary of state Condoleezza Rice.¹

Indeed, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld held that Washington now viewed the world "through the prism of September 11".² Since then, the war on terror has claimed Afghanistan and Iraq as new terrorist regimes in a new era, whose reality depicts the Middle East and the Arab World as the most unstable parts of the world.

One might argue, however, this is not a mere coincidence, and many claim 9/11 could have been avoided. Some even speculate the attack was orchestrated by the Bush Administration to cater to its own hidden neoconservative foreign policy agenda.³

Through an analysis of the close affinity between the "neo-cons" and Israel, this thesis will explore Bush's neo-conservative administration's role in triggering, planning and permitting the Iraqi invasion via the neo-cons’ influence. The thesis will first tackle the

identity, status and role of the prominent neo-conservative figures in the US. The preliminary acquaintance with the “neo-cons” will help understand the Jewish Diaspora in the US, and more specifically, the Israeli lobby and its influence on US foreign policy in the Middle East. The phenomenon will be further illustrated by examples of individuals who deeply infiltrated the Bush administration and promoted Zionism. Neo-conservatism is generally described as a deep, complex professional network where the ideology is difficult to label. One of its founders was the US intellectual and writer Irving Kristol. Under Georges W. Bush’s neo-conservative figures gain more power, “9/11 and the war on terror gave them their cause”.  

As such, neo-conservatism is considered a branch of the highly effective pro-Israeli lobby, comprised of organizations and institutions that work to promote Israeli interests via US policy in the Middle East.

This thesis will then explore how and why the neo-cons wanted to preserve Israeli interests and leave the Jewish state (as they argue) as the sole democracy in the Middle East. The coordination between the neo-cons and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the main Israeli lobby in the U.S, is of important concern to this thesis. Then we will examine the strategies employed by non-state actors, namely AIPAC,

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the neo-cons and their think tanks like the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and many others, in influencing U.S foreign policy in the Middle East.

By taking Iraq and Iran as case studies of US involvement in the Middle East, this thesis, will elaborate on the role of the aforementioned two actors, especially under the policies of the Georges W. Bush administration of fighting terrorism and launching preemptive wars in the wake of 9/11.

President Barak Obama's policies of engagement and multilateralism show a clear departure from the policies of the previous administration. The neo-cons prospects under the current Obama administration and AIPAC's available means to hinder Obama's diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East are the main concerns of the final chapter through the exploration of the in-depth study of International relations theories in Paul Viotti and Mark Kauppi's "International Relations Theory, Realism, Pluralism and Globalism and Beyond" as well as through a guide to leading theoretical perspective. Joseph S. Nye Jr. in "Soft Power" stresses the ability of a nation's culture (U.S) to attract and influence in order to prevent terrorism.

John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt in "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" write down an extensive exposition of the Israel lobby. They go further describing the Israel lobby's responsibility for general U.S foreign policy in the Middle East from the Iraq war to tensed relations with Syria and Iran.
Michael Lind in "The American Way Of Strategy" explores the link between U.S culture, its foreign policy and its engagement with the world. The author argues that democracy is best promoted by examples not by force.

Francis Fukuyama in "After the Neocons, America at the Crossroads" sheds light on the intellectual inconsistence and biasness behind US response to 9/11. On top of that, Fukuyama’s book assures the reader that the Bush administration twisted interpretation of the terrorist threat. Fukuyama’s analysis assures that Bush’s hostility to multilateralism has led to threat U.S national security.

Dennis Ross in "Statecraft and How to Restore America’s Standing in the World" describes how U.S. foreign policy is not working and how America is losing its diplomatic touch. Ross offers guidance on how to deal with today’s challenges.

Deniss Ross and David Makovsky objectives in their book "Myths, Illusions and Peace" are to find diplomatic means in this challenging decade. Both authors criticized the neoconservatives thinking and the realists’ viewpoints of engagement. The authors stressed the idea of linkage which harmed U.S. interests in the region. Before going any further, we will begin by examining the overall state of US foreign policy following the 9/11 attacks. The above books comprise the principal guidelines as they express the theoretical and practical foundation on which this thesis is based. Through thorough examination of both US foreign policy after 9/11 as well as the relationship between AIPAC, the
neo-cons and Israel, this thesis will explore the internal US intricacies that guide the country's acts in the Middle East. The preemptive war in Iraq as well as the US approach with Iran will serve as examples in this thesis to demonstrate the role of neo-cons as well as of AIPAC in influencing US foreign policy, noting the fact that the September 11 attacks provided adequate reason for the US to harshen its policy with the Arab/Muslim World.
Chapter 2

U.S Foreign policy after 9/11 in the Middle East

The 9/11 events changed history. For the first time, the U.S. felt vulnerable, under attack, and limited in its territorial control. Pointing to Islamic terrorism as responsible for the offensive paved the way for the US’ arguably aggressive policy with countries from the Arab World, which since 2001 has dominated the global political arena. The following chapter offers an overview of US foreign policy in the Middle East and assesses the role of the September 11th attacks in making US policy abroad arguably more strict and aggressive.

Foreign policy consists in the overall relations between an independent actor, typically a state, and its relations in the international arena. The US or France for example are independent state actors. The European Union or United Nations can be considered non-state actors. Foreign policy is the medium by which a state conducts its external relations, and studying the field is a means to see a state’s action, reaction and interaction with its external surrounding, notably in times of international change.

The concepts of advocacy networks and non-state actors are nothing new given they have long held a pivotal responsibility within international relations. Since the Cold War, they have grown to become a

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5 Christopher Hill, “The changing politics of Foreign Policy”. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p.3
6 Ibid., p.4
topic of debate; however, non-states actors are distinguished by their operating environment because they do not need the government to operate across state boundaries. After the Cold War, the phenomenon of globalization rendered political, financial and technical resources more generally accessible around the world. Furthermore, technology and the expansion of a global popular culture created space for rallying support and getting messages across more efficiently.

AIPAC illustrates such a phenomenon quite perfectly, given the strength of its advocacy and lobbying for Israel from within the US. Its emergence came naturally given that non-state actors typically develop when political entrepreneurs and think tanks believe that networking through conferences, international networking and contact will further their mission. Also, given the pluralist nature of the American political system, particularly the foreign policy creation arena, the rise of influential non-state actors is practically guaranteed.\(^8\)

AIPAC's main objective is furthering Israel's security by guaranteeing that American support remains strong. Originally a small pro-Israel public affairs boutique in the 1950s, AIPAC today counts more than 100,000 members and has become a national grassroots movement which The New York Times considers "the most important organization affecting America's relationship with Israel".\(^9\)

AIPAC’s major means of achieving its political goals is through political advocacy. Indeed, AIPAC, according to its official website engages in over 100 legislative and policy initiatives that not only pertain to Middle East policy but also general US foreign policy.\(^\text{10}\) All of their actions however aim to ensure Israel’s protection and success, via talks and extensive panels in Washington DC. AIPAC also ensures Israel appears in a positive light.

According to Christopher Hill, in his book *The Changing Politics in Foreign Policy* (2003), “changes in the whole are thus real and of great significance for the parts. Conversely, changes in a particularly important part may lead to upheaval in the system as a whole”.\(^\text{11}\) Careful examination of events leading up to 9/11, a study of its aftermath as well as Bush’s subsequent new foreign policy under the influence of pro-neoconservative administration reflects the major effect of a single happening on an actor’s entire foreign policy, namely on the US and its approach with regards to the Middle East.

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2.1 Definition of actors

Hill (2003) defines actors as "entities capable of the exercise of independent will and decision making".\textsuperscript{12} He argues they are easily identifiable and believes that globalization continues to have a very large impact on the study of foreign policy. To him, it has led to a transnationalization of relations in which new states have appeared. The transnational relations take place at both internal and external levels, namely between NGOs and a state or between different states and international NGOs.\textsuperscript{13} Transnational relations between the Israeli lobby based in the US and the state of Israel, for example, take place at both the US and international contexts. For more understanding of the role of transnational actors in foreign policy, it is important to mention Keohane and Nye's (2004) definition of transnational relations. They define transnational relations as "contacts, coalitions and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of government".\textsuperscript{14} As such, the external policy carried out outside a country's national borders of certain groups is the aspect that is uncontrolled by the government, namely the U.S. based lobby AIPAC's relationship with the state of Israel.

According to Esman (2004) transnational actors are private groups or individuals who use physical facilities within a given country, but do not require the government's official endorsement. Relations between AIPAC

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.17
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p.189
\textsuperscript{14} Mark Kauppi and Paul Viotti, "International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism. Viacom, 1993, p.7
and the US are transnational, because they affect both US domestic and foreign policy.\textsuperscript{15}

Examining the contributions of the pluralist school on the importance of non-state actors in the international arena is essential when addressing the role of non-state actors within their hosting country’s foreign policy.

**Pluralism, non-state actors and the American society**

**Pluralism**

The pluralist school highlights the significance of individuals or groups as units of analysis within foreign policy. Indeed, these individuals, either representatives of governments, countries or organizations, are behind major decisions that impact both bilateral relations between two actors and their overall external undertakings. The theory of pluralism relies on four assumptions, and this thesis will solely focus on the first two.

First, non-state actors’ role cannot be ignored given their significant impact in shaping global policy.\textsuperscript{16} One cannot understand US external behavior without understanding the beliefs objectives and intentions of those who orchestrate the country’s foreign policy.

The second assumption is that “the state is not a unitary actor”\textsuperscript{17} and consists in separate bureaucracies, interest groups and individuals

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\textsuperscript{16} Mark Kauppi and Paul Viotti,“International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism”. Viacom, 1993, p.7

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p.7
with key decision making and influencing power. According to pluralists, the different components of the state, their internal clashes and interactions are responsible for the outcome of the foreign policy. These components gain ground through their capacity to manipulate and enhance a state’s global international relations. Within the US, AIPAC (American Israel Public Affair Committee) and the prominent neoconservatives are those specific groups and individuals in regards to US foreign policy toward the Middle East.

**Non-state actors**

AIPAC does it work through various organizations, summits and conferences with the main role of shaping US foreign policy in Israel’s favor.

Walt and Mearsheimer (2006) argue that the backbone of the Israeli Lobby consists of Jewish Americans who arduously work to create US foreign policy decisions in Israel’s favor.\(^{18}\)

The *New York Times* describes AIPAC as “the most powerful, best-run and effective foreign policy interest group in Washington”.\(^{19}\) Some even say AIPAC is often aware of private conversations of congressmen on issues related to the Middle East. McCloskey, a former congressman says it more bluntly: “Congress is terrorized by AIPAC”.\(^{20}\)

\(^{20}\) Paul Findley, “They Dare to Speak Out”. Chicago Review Press, 1989, p.25
An Ohio congressman describes AIPAC as the most influential lobby on Capitol Hill. To him, the Israeli lobby is unremitting, has a lucid objective and uses its cause to the fullest, by urging and manipulating sympathy from Americans, and gaining significant financial support.\textsuperscript{21}

The Israeli lobby is closely associated to the neoconservative movement, which is also a non-state actor involved in shaping US foreign policy and emerged in the US towards the end of the 1950's as an anti-liberal movement. Many neo-conservative figures are members of the Israeli lobby. They are known to have aspired to supposedly modernize the state, because they were doubtful of the government's strategies and pragmatism.\textsuperscript{22}

The neo-conservative movement was mainly composed of Jewish intellectuals that began to tackle Jewish problems all over the world and to recognize the importance of Israel, the Jewish state.\textsuperscript{23}

Irving Kristol, neo-conservatism's founding father claimed that with respect to its foreign policy, the US should expand its horizons, and avoid a narrow and definition of national security.\textsuperscript{24} He used this idea to justify neo conservatives’ participation and call for the 2003 US invasion of Iraq.

The “neo-cons”, since 2000, were indeed fundamental in designing and orchestrating US foreign policy. Lobbying and influencing US governmental institutions, departments and agencies, neo-conservatives

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Friedman Murray: “The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish Intellectuals and The Shaping of Public Policy.” Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.120
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p.121
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
figures and prominent Jewish organizations all had a direct and unquestionable impact on the U.S. foreign policy and shaping it in a pro-Israel direction as Walt and Mearsheimer described in their book.\textsuperscript{25}

The nature of American society is pluralistic. As such, it encompasses different communities and cultural/ethnic groups. The latter is defined as a group of people that claims and shares common features such as blood relations as well as common beliefs, customs, traditions and the same religion. Given the number of different ethnicities in American society, as Milton J. Esman affirms in his book \textit{An Introduction to Ethnic Conflict} managing their opinions and diverging aspirations makes for a competitive and challenging environment.\textsuperscript{26}

According to Esman, a state is to assume three stances vis-à-vis an ethnic community, the third of which is the most relevant.\textsuperscript{27} He explains they have a common goal to control the state while minimizing expenses. As such, the US apparatus and political institutions are being manipulated by different lobbies, individuals and ethnic groups in order to promote and advance their respective political, economic and social interests.\textsuperscript{28}

More specifically, one can note AIPAC’s powerful influence within the legislative and executive branches especially during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq; this issue will be later developed in the thesis.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p.104
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p.99
Many argue that good portion of the active Jewish Diaspora within the US attempts to influence foreign policy in the Middle East to further drag Washington into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Jewish Diaspora's intervention is two-fold, the first, being a direct effect on the US administration. The second being that the Israeli state affects the Jewish Diaspora, which in turn affects US institutions, can also operate by supplying their hosting country with weaponry supplies as well as by providing their enemies "with money weapons, fighters and even public officials" as explained by Esman.

The US intervention in the Arab-Israeli conflict dates back to 1967. Since, over the course of time, it has become noticeable that Americans have taken a clear stance by supporting Israel through military and financial aid. Through the Jewish Diaspora's undertakings and the influence of prominent Jewish figures and organizations on American policymaking, the US involvement in this particular conflict takes place across the spectrum, ranging from moral to material support.

The reasons behind US' 2003 invasion of Iraq will be later explored. However, as described by Esman, such intervention is typically triggered by real politic and meticulous calculations of national self-interest. As such, neoconservative figures and the Israeli lobby played a key role both prior to and during the Iraqi invasion, and the U.S. intervened for several reasons, namely to secure Iraqi oil and other natural resources, to benefit

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29 Ibid., p.105
30 Ibid., p.107
of Iraq's geo-strategic position and to get rid of Saddam's nuclear weaponry.

Thus, it is obvious that within the US' pluralistic society, there is a significant Jewish Diaspora which acts powerfully within the American executive branch. An important portion of the Diaspora is closely affiliated with neo-cons, who over time, have successfully vouched for the Israeli cause and manipulated foreign policy to protect and benefit Israel, notably through events such as the Iraqi invasion. The following chapter will examine the religious and political commonalities between these neo-cons and the AIPAC lobby group.
Chapter 3

The relationship between AIPAC and Israel:

Identity and religious ties, moral and cultural link and the common terrorist threat:

The upcoming chapter explores the relationship between Israel, the neo cons and AIPAC. Starting with a religious commonality that goes back to the Old Testament that both Israelis and Christians follow, we will observe the proximity of thinking between Christian Zionists and their Israeli counterparts. We will then examine the moral and strategic aspect of their ties, namely the fact that rightists in the US and Israelis in general share the same fear of the “Evil Arab”, thus rendering them tactical partners. Finally, culturally speaking, Israel is particularly close to the US through its values as well as its official language given that most Israelis speak English.

3.1 Identity and Religious ties

In addition for the oil and the relationship between the US and the Gulf, U.S foreign policy under Georges W. Bush in the Middle East is also forged by a neoconservative-Jewish alliance that relies on an identity link between both parties. The identity link that exists between American/Christian Zionists, Jews and Israel first emanates from religious convictions and interpretations of the Christian New Testament. Non-Jewish Americans’ widespread support for Israel and identification as one
of the most powerful political forces in U.S. foreign policy is critical, especially under Bush, time at which their bolstering was the strongest.\textsuperscript{31}

William Dale states that the philosophical grounds on which Christian Zionism is based dates back to ancient times. They are affiliated with the age old conviction in an heroic struggle between forces of good and evil and the intuition that the world would come to its end shortly.\textsuperscript{32}

As such, Christian Zionists, mostly Protestants/Evangelists clearly distinguish between good and evil. And religion is the foundation of conservative Christian thinking. Their beliefs are largely based on the Old Testament and on God's revelations. Dale believes that the most salient ideas within Christian Zionism are Israel's chief importance, and the thought that Jews will ultimately convert that humanity's future will leave no space for compromise or siding with the enemy Christian Zionists support the return of the Jews to God's promised land, and believe that God will solely return following the creation of full Jewish power over all of biblical Israel.\textsuperscript{33} The 1948 establishment of the Jewish state and the 1967 Israeli triumph over the Arabs fortified Christian Zionists. To them, such happenings were a partial completion of God's words or promise, and Israel's Six Day War success was synonymous with the victory of good over evil forces. They also reject all criticisms of practices in the Old

\textsuperscript{31} Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking National Interest: American Realism for a new World", \textit{Foreign Affairs}, July/ August 2008, p.20
\textsuperscript{32} William N. Dale, "The Impact Of Christian Zionism on American Policy". \textit{American Diplomacy}, 2004, p.1
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p.2
Testament. Dale also states that their attention is on the territory of greater Israel and Jerusalem.

These abovementioned objectives must be fulfilled in preparation to God's return to earth. David Raab in *Understanding American Christian Attitudes towards Jerusalem* describes four doctrines that play a major role in influencing and changing relationship between the American church, the American Jews and the state of Israel. These doctrines are: replacement theology, Salvation through conversion, witnessing and proselytizing Jews' centrality in Jesus' second coming.

The first doctrine, that of replacement theology, asserts that Christians have served as substitutes to Jews and that all of God's promises to the Jews, namely that pertaining to the land of Israel, are to be inherited by Christianity. Which begs the question: why are the Jews fighting for the sake of Israel if it's to be inherited by Christianity? We can clearly state the link which has been established between both religions; still the doctrine asserts that beliefs have been transcended from one religion to another.

Doctrine two, salvation through conversion solely, states that Jews ought to convert to Christianity to be saved once the world comes to an end. Such a doctrine relates issues on the end of one's life, life after death and heaven. But how can God's chosen people convert to another religion?

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34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
The third doctrine that of witnessing and proselytizing which brings Christians to "actively bear witness and proclaim the gospel of Jesus to all people in order for them to have the opportunity (but not be coerced) to embrace Jesus".\textsuperscript{37} Doing so will facilitate conversion. Proclaiming the gospel will attract believers from other religions—especially Jews—to endorse Christianity and rand benefit from salvation once the world comes to an end.

Jews' centrality in Jesus' second coming is the name of the fourth doctrine, which focuses on the crucial task of restoring territories of biblical Israel, including Jerusalem to ensure God's final judgment and salvation takes place.\textsuperscript{38} Jews must also reconstruct the temple in Jerusalem in preparation for God's return and their salvation. It is very clear to mention that all these doctrines highlight on Christianity as a starting point and calls for the religion to be embraced to enjoy the eternal life or life after death.

Christian Zionists political influence started in the 1980's as they realized the need to shape the U.S.'s internal and external policy to achieve their religious end. They further believe that President Bush's "Road map" to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict confined the notion of good vs. evil and risked forsaking territory that lawfully belongs to Israel.\textsuperscript{39} In the context of the return of the Christ through the vanquishing of Israel's enemies, the Arab-Israeli conflict is viewed as a conflict of evil against

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p.3
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
good and so, no settlement should be proposed or taken into consideration because good has to win the battle over evil. In an interview diffused on January 4, 2007, on Inside Edition—an ABC channel program—Pat Robertson, a prominent neo-conservative figure, claimed that God spoke to him in 2006 telling him that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will suffer from a stroke because he gave away some Israeli territories to the Palestinian people. Robertson further claimed this would happen to any Israeli prime minister that intends to give away a “piece of God's promised territory to the evil Arabs”. President Bush himself is a Christian Zionist with the belief that “God endorses the American way of life”.

These people are convinced that God picked him to show the way in the crusade against evil. Bernard Hamm, states that many who are in the know state that strategies were presented to the president by those who support war to translate the text into article of faith. Hamm goes as far as saying that some of the Bush administration members even considered recent events as “celestial signs that God has ordained Bush to lead America through the final hour of his divine plan”. Moreover, neo-conservative leader work extensively on increasing the Jewish population and the flow in Israel in order to secure a Jewish victory over the Arabs. How? Definitely through financing new settlements. And that’s what we are witnessing today. Parallel to this, they do their best in the U.S. capital

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40 Bernd Hamm (Ed), "Devastating Society: The Neo-conservative assault on democracy and justice". Pluto Press, 2005, p.60
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
to execute any peace process. Because of the religious link, Christian Zionists and different Jewish organizations have won and accomplished a huge influence and impact in the US. Religion is a major character in differentiating ethnic people from each other, paradoxically, here we have two ethnic groups integrated religiously.

Furthermore, both the US and Israel hold a status of "settler states", powerfully shaped by a history of conflict and confrontation with those populations they displaced. Both the Americans (Christians) and Israelis turned primarily to the Old Testament. Roosevelt himself was a Christian Zionist and wrote in 1918 that starting a Zionist State around Jerusalem was perfectly normal and appropriate.\textsuperscript{43}

3.2 Moral link

In addition to the aforementioned religious link, a moral link exists between Christian Zionists and Jews centered on four different allegations, namely Israel’s geopolitical situation, its intentions of becoming the sole most powerful democracy in the Middle East, the posthumous effects of the Holocaust, and Israel’s position on peace.

Israel is frequently portrayed by its proponents as weak and besieged by its Arab neighbors and enemies whose main role is to put an end to Israel’s existence. Israel is pictured as such in order to increase the American moral support and to legitimize Tel Aviv’s actions.

Tel Aviv University’s Jaffee Center for strategic studies conducted a survey in 2005, showing the strategic balance favors Israel, and continues

\textsuperscript{43} Walter Russel Mead, "The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State". \textit{Foreign Affairs}, July/ August 2008, p.37
to increase the qualitative gap between its deterrence and military power and that of its neighbors.\textsuperscript{44} Israel is the strongest military force in the Middle East and it is also the only nuclear power in the region. But Israeli Defense Forces were proven vulnerable by Hezbollah in the late 2006 July war. Israel's weapons and artillery proved inefficient next to Hezbollah's guerrilla warfare. The Israeli army till present showed a huge weakness in its structure. There is a clear crisis in Israel's military and political institutions. The army's strategy failed and there was a lack of confidence in the army and in Kadima's (the centrist political party in Israel) political rule after the 2006 War.

Still, we cannot claim Israel was beaten. Technically speaking, it remains the strongest military power in the region. It has signed formal peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and has engaged itself in an informal—under the table treaty—with Syria calling for a perpetual cease of hostilities. As such, the first moral allegation leaves room for interpretation as to who is really regionally weak and besieged. Moreover Israel is portrayed as the only democracy in the Middle East as well as by a democracy surrounded by dangerous regimes and dictatorships,\textsuperscript{45} hence justifying American backing especially in light of the pretext that democracies are less vulnerable to war. Still, one should assert that the U.S. does not only support democracies. In fact it has, and still is, supporting some hostile dictatorships that surround the Israeli state.

\textsuperscript{44} Jhon J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M.Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy". March 2006, p.8
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.9
namely Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and other gulf states. Up until the 2005 assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the US showed full support and sympathy to Syria's dictatorship. The U.S. also claims it supports the current Lebanese government and a sovereign Lebanese state which ironically survived a month of Israeli attacks. Is in it ironic to defend two countries in a state of war against each other? Does Israeli democracy stress on the notion of all citizens' equality? Surely not, a prominent example is the Arab-Israelis citizens whom are treated as second class citizens, where their civil rights are removed.

The significance of western compensation for earlier bigotry against the Jews as well as the holocaust are at the core of the third moral link. Because of previous discrimination, countless Jews feel they not only need to deserve access to favoritism and privileges from the U.S. 46

After being regularly prohibited from the right to own property and businesses, they also suffered from religious persecution, sometime even deemed sub-humans. Such a mistreatment ended with the Nazi holocaust whereby Jews, gypsies, and the handicapped and all those who were qualified by the Nazis as second class citizens were exterminated. Refuting the veracity of the Jewish agony is unreasonable, but acknowledging Israel’s formation was behind further crimes, specifically against the Palestinians, is essential. Just as a moral crime occurred against the Jews, a moral crime occurs daily against the Palestinians by

46 Ibid.
the Israelis. Of course, there are those who argue that even if the U.S.
did not partake in holocaust, it was inactive in stopping it, therefore
morally responsible for the Europeans’ actions. As such, the U.S. is victim
of western society’s guilt.

As a country, the Jewish State, tried its best to find peace and
avoided confrontation during moments of provocation, a phenomenon
that constitutes the fourth moral link between Israel and the US. Such an
argument is at first religious, given Israel from within is thus seen as
righteous and good in contrast with the “evil Arab”. Supporting Israel and
its peaceful attitude in the Middle East means the U.S. is acting
responsibly. However, what is one to say about the 2006 July war about
Israel caring for peace? Actually, if Israel makes peace with its enemy
neighbors, its foremost moral arguments—its vulnerability amidst a world
of Arab enemies—is no longer valid because Israel will thus be at peace
with its surrounding. In fact Israel is still occupying Arab territories,
building settlements and encouraging Jewish immigration to Israel.
Remaining the sole democracy in the Middle East and at war with Arab
states is in Israel’s favor to attract unconditional American support.

47 Ibid.
3.3 Cultural link

Comparing Arabs to Israelis shows that the Israeli officials and legislative body are fluent in English, capable of addressing a crowd persuasively and efficiently. There cause and vulnerability always come through and once can argue their culture is very western, unlike Arabs who are constantly assessed with fundamentalism and extremism. As such, Christian Zionists, American Jews, and Israelis are somewhat linked through their culture: speaking English and having western values and it is within reason to state that Arabs cannot plea the international community as efficiently as Israelis. Their abilities, excellency in language, charisma as well as notable political and cultural connections to woo the people because Jews are much more similar to the Western world than are Arabs.

3.4 Common terrorist threat

The American–Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) website claims the United States and Israel work together against terrorism, a common threat to both entities.\(^{48}\) Israel is thus not only a party but also a tactical partner in the battle against terrorism. After all, Israel is subject to terrorism on a daily basis.

In fact, both authors Walt and Mearsheimer explain that officials in Israel, and representatives of AIPAC frequently noted no real differences between Yasser Arafat and Osama Bin Laden.\(^{49}\) This appropriation of the common enemy was further developed by Steven Windmueller in his

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\(^{48}\) Ibid., p.3

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p.27
article “September 11: Its Implications for American Jewry”, whereby he
underlines the significant affect of the attacks on Americans and Jews.\textsuperscript{50} On
September 11, Jews in the US better realized and felt the insecurity and
instability that threatens the Jews of Israel. At the same time other
Jewish scholars, such as Steven Windmueller, realized it was time unify
Jews under Zionism. Windmueller further asserts Zionism is threatened by
those new generations of Jews who are distancing themselves and whose
“Jewishness” is decreasing. Hence, Jews are threatened on a human level.
In addition, they are threatened by institutional and internal challenges.\textsuperscript{51}
As Americans, are the victims of terrorism so are the Israelis. The U.S.
and Israel are bound together to eliminate and combat the threat of
terrorism by fighting those terrorist regimes i.e. Iran and Syria, terrorist
figures i.e. Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden and non-state terrorist
actors such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

The American-Israeli alliance benefited from the 9/11 events by
enabling the formation of the concept of terrorism led by such figures as
Osama Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Mahmoud Ahmadani Najad and Hassan
Nassrallah.

As seen in the above chapter, most of the conservatives in the US,
namely the AIPAC members, share religious, moral, geo-strategic, and
cultural ties with Israel. These commonalities plays a key role in
maintaining and strengthening the transatlantic alliance. The next chapter

\textsuperscript{50} Steven Windmueller,” September 11: Its Implications for American Jewry”.
\textit{The Jerusalem Letter}, February 2003, p.1
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p.2
will go further into the pro-Israel support in the US to properly understand the internal sources behind the US foreign policy's inclination toward the Jewish State.
Chapter 4

Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy

Discussing who the Jewish, Christian Zionists and neo-conservative figures are and how they influence the American public and political system is now essential. As a pluralistic society, the US is comprised of numerous communities. A significant number of them, ranging from Christian evangelicals, to pro-Israel Americans, to the Jewish Diaspora in the US, have a great influence on the country’s foreign policy, whether through money, lobbying, the media and more.

The American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is a key Jewish organization that uses the American political system in Israel’s favor. Walt and Mearsheimer explain that an organization such as AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations (CPMJO) operate under radicals who support Israel’s right-wing Likud Party.\(^{52}\) According to both authors, besides Jewish figures, well-known Christian evangelicals such as Gary Bower, Jerry Farwell, Ralph Reed, Pat Robertson, Dick Armey and Tom Delay also support the organization. They explain that Jerry Farwell, a pastor urged the American public to support Israel’s cause.\(^{53}\) Hal Lindsey, a writer, claimed he think the Jews will start rebuilding the Mount Temple(a Jewish Temple).\(^{54}\)

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p.15
As for Pat Robertson, Dale explains that he is president of the Christian Broadcasting Network and leads the Christian coalition yet also supports the Jewish cause as well. Such Christian evangelicals deepen their political influence by tailoring their discourse to the mass public opinion.\footnote{Ibid., p3}

Another significant entity of the Israeli lobby is the Neoconservative evangelical Christians that include former Secretary of Education William Bennett, John Bolton, the Wall Street Journal editor Robert Barkley, columnist George Will and the former U.N. Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick.\footnote{Ibid., p3} Walt and Mearsheimer add that pro-Israel figures like Elliot Abrams, John Bolton, Douglas Feith, Richard Perle, (who supposedly possesses recordings of classified information being discussed between the FBI and Israeli embassy), Paul Wolfowitz, David Wurmser, Dick Cheney, David Welch and the former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice demonstrated their pro-Israel stance during the 2006 July War between Israel and Hezbollah as they worked to prolong the war regardless of the deaths of thousands of innocent Lebanese civilians, mainly women and children.\footnote{Ibid., p.15} A thorough and extensive look at the lobby's strategies will better enhance one's understanding concerning the great Jewish impact in the U.S.

\footnote{Ibid., p3}
\footnote{Jhon J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M.Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy". March 2006, p.15}
\footnote{Ibid., p.20}
Most people are aware of the global impact of U.S. policy around the world, and more especially in the Middle East, a geo-politically key region, known for its complete precariousness and volatility.\textsuperscript{58}

U.S. foreign policy is being diverted by the Israeli lobby to best serve the Israeli interests through a multitude of strategies. According to Mearsheimer and Walt, "A key pillar of the lobby's effectiveness is its influence in the U.S. Congress where Israel is virtually immune from criticism".\textsuperscript{59} Internal issues are always debated on Capitol Hill, and criticism of Israeli policy is practically nonexistent. Pro-Israeli Senators, Congressman and Congresswomen or Congress speakers work to identify or render American and Israeli foreign interests identical.

According to Walt and Mearsheimer, AIPAC is at the heart of the influence in Congress, thanks to its impressive capacity to reward congress candidates and who support not only approve of its initiatives but also questions, challenges, and even punishes those who go against the lobby.\textsuperscript{60} AIPAC's rewards are mainly monetary support to candidates sharing the lobby's ideology, beliefs and concerns. Douglas Bloomfield a previous AIPAC member affirms the organization request for favors such as legislative work, influencing tactics and strategies, drafting speeches and more.\textsuperscript{61}

AIPAC's influence on Capitol Hill makes it a good architect or designer of policy toward Israel on both internal and external levels. It

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p1
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p.17
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p.17
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p.18
works through different strategies to ensure at least one of the three government branches focuses on Israel and its future.\textsuperscript{62}

Besides influencing the legislative branch, the Lobby has managed to have an important influence at the executive level as well as with regards to presidential elections. As previously mentioned, Jewish organizations and individuals provide great financial support to candidates who align themselves with so-called pro-Israeli policies and as such, presidential candidates mold their foreign policy accordingly.\textsuperscript{63}

This leads to Jews being a significant and crucial factor in affecting the presidential elections. Jews are very involved in applying their civil right to vote, thus benefitting from high turnout rates with a concentration in influential states across the country such as California, Florida, Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania, explain Walt and Mearsheimer.\textsuperscript{64}

U.S. presidential candidates exploit their alleged support to Israel to gain the votes of the American Jewish community.

According to a study, Jeffrey Helmreich explains that American Jewish voting habits reflect that some 55 to 60 percent of Jews repeatedly support Democrats over Republicans, whereas 10 percent always support Republicans.\textsuperscript{65} The remaining 30 to 35 percent can swing its support from

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p.18
\textsuperscript{64} Jhon J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M.Walt, “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy”. March 2006, p.18
the Democratic to Republican candidate or vice versa depending on the voter’s political aspirations and the appeal of the candidate.

In the 2000 New York Senate race, Democrat Hillary Clinton was victim of the Jewish “swing vote”. Helmreich explains that in addition to the 30 percent swing vote against Clinton, the usually set 60 percent Democratic base was tainted and the current secretary of State’s support had gone down to less than 60 percent. She actually allegedly failed in persuading the Jews of her commitment to both Israel and Zionism.66

Furthermore, the lobby AIPAC has influence in preventing opponents from getting to certain top positions. Almost always are supporters of Israel at top positions, and frequently when it comes to foreign policy posts. Presidential candidate Howard Dean back in 2004 had urged the U.S. to be more even in managing the Arab-Israeli conflict, and in response, Senator Joseph Lieberman accused him of “selling Israel down the river”.67 Dean was attacked by many top democrats and U.S. citizens.

AIPAC’s goals are better advanced when pro-Israel or neo-conservatives figures take up important positions of the U.S. government. President Bush’s administration includes major neo-conservatives such as David Welch. Occupying the place of Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Welch will partake in the U.S. government position that best advances Israeli interests over those of its Arab neighbors.

66 Ibid., p.5
Noting the lobby's influence on media, the think tanks, academia and more is also important, explain Mearsheimer and Walt. By influencing and manipulating the media, AIPAC, the neo-conservatives, Christian Zionists and other prominent Jewish organizations have a say in biased, pro-Israeli newspapers, magazines, radio and TV programs. They attempt to transform most American commentators into defenders and proponents of the Israeli cause and state, in order to later influence the American audience and legitimize Israel's actions in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{68}


This assault affects the citizens' thinking and constitutes a circle that is closed and in which magazines, TV and radio programs continuously engage in neo-conservative propaganda, with messages that have a great impact on presidential or congressional candidates' success. Neoconservatives today control a huge section of the U.S. media that reaches out to U.S. citizens of all ages throughout all aspects of their daily lives.

Clarke and Halper explain that wealthy neo-conservative figure Rupert Murdoch's media empire consists in Fox Television stations a key

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p.20
\textsuperscript{69} Jonathan Clarke and Stephen Halper, "America Alone: the Neo-conservatives and the global order". Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.184
network that itself includes Sky Television, Star T.V and Direct T.V as well as the National Geographic Channel, Fox Kids globally and the Fox Family Channel. The network is also made up of 130 newspapers such as the London Times, New York post and Wall Street Journal; and the magazines, the Weekly Standard and TV guide. Through the authority of such an empire, all the aspects of American media are subject to neoconservative influence favoring Israel and luring the average American citizen to do the same, almost rendering Israeli and American interests equal.

Alongside controlling the media, pro-Israel organizations and figures target U.S. think tanks to observe debates and control denigration against Israel. Think tanks play an important and significant role in engineering or shaping U.S. domestic and foreign policy. In 1985, AIPAC created its own think tank WINEP (Washington Institute for Near East Policy), which Mearsheimer and Walt confirm is both funded and managed by those supporters of the Jewish State. They add that within the span of 25 years, the US has witnessed the formation of numerous pro-Israeli organizations and think tanks, namely the American Enterprise Institute, the Center of Security Policy, the Foreign Policy Research Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA). In addition, neo-conservatives do not settle with solely creating their own

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70 Ibid., p.187
71 Jhon J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M.Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy". March 2006, p.21
think tank, but they also target pre-established prominent and critical U.S. think tanks, and even targeting academia.\textsuperscript{72}

Indeed, pro-Israeli forces have moved into the classroom, whose core is supposed to be freedom of thought and speech. They influence American youth and to decrease criticism of Israel. Mearsheimer and Walt in their book "The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy" argue that opponents of Israel increased with the collapse of the Oslo peace process and with Israel's behavior during the second Intifada.\textsuperscript{73} These incidents worried the Israeli lobby, which attempted to regain influence and credibility on university campuses by creating new groups to bolster Israel's image and reputation. Both authors explain that pro-Israel neocons Martin Kramer and Daniel Pipes created "Campus Watch", a website to monitor academics and professors who support students to account any type of behavior, story or issue that might harm or be considered harmful of Israel.\textsuperscript{74} Although not very successful, this type of work and organizations prove the extent of the Israeli lobby influence within the academic circle.

Columbia University, one of the most targeted universities by neoconservatives and Jewish circles, is often accused of anti-Semitic charges because of faculty member, the late Edward Said, a Palestinian scholar and critique of Israel's actions in Palestine. The university

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., p.22
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.23
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.24
campaign’s intention was to eliminate Israel critics and monitor teachers' views and beliefs.

In fact, charges of anti-Semitism are frequently used by the lobby as a weapon to shut or silence Israeli opponents and critiques. According to Walt and Mearsheimer Jewish organizations, by using western guilt for WWII and the holocaust justify their cause as moral and just.\textsuperscript{75}

More precisely they accuse Israel’s opponents of questioning Israel's right to exist thereby presenting themselves as victims of the past, of anti-Semitism and of continuous discrimination. Whenever they feel Israeli actions are not being highly praised, they immediately resort to the charges of anti-Semitism to portray Israel as a state of lasting danger, in fear of another Holocaust. Historian Peter Baldwin claims that “the singularity of the Jewish suffering adds to the moral and emotional claims that Israel can make... on other nations”.\textsuperscript{76}

As such, Israel's right to exist is made to be seen as a primary concern even if it denies and takes away another people’s right to exist, live on its territory and have the right to self-determination. Norman Filkenstein’s book “The Holocaust Industry” claims those who remained silent during the killings of the Jews are also to be blamed, leading him to further assert that “Whatever expedient Jews might resort to, even aggression or torture constitutes legitimate self-defense”.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} Norman G. Finkelstein, “The Holocaust Industry”. Verso, 2000, p.48
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p.50
To attract greater sympathy, Jews akin the persecution of the Arabs to that of the Nazis. This image of victimization is always used to legitimize Israel’s actions towards the Arabs. They also focus on the supremacy of God’s chosen people, that they were allegedly chosen by God and delivered a message. Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians is proven moral because they are applying God’s will on earth and they stress the Jewish suffering was unique, and that as such, the Jews are themselves unique.\textsuperscript{78}

Israel’s tactic is an effective one no one wants to be accused of being anti-Semitic. Such a qualification would be very dangerous, even though anti-Semitism is in decline, because anti-Semitic charges are being frequently used by pro Israeli circles.\textsuperscript{79}

The Israeli lobby proved its strength by targeting and approaching U.S. Christians. Israel forged new alliances in the U.S. to face anti-Israeli media, as well as the public relations between softening American Jewish support for Israel, and an increasingly organized and vocal Arab American community”.\textsuperscript{80} Pro-Israeli circles realized they need the support of U.S. Christians, Palestinians and Arabs. They addressed U.S. Christian religious beliefs to mobilize large amounts of U.S. citizens knowing Because of religions chief role and influence on politics.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., p.54-55
\textsuperscript{80} David Raab, "Understanding American Christian attitudes regarding Jerusalem". The Jerusalem Letter, August 2002, p.1
Harry Truman serves as an undeniable example of religion’s power during elections and politics when he was the first to recognize the state of Israel".  

Truman decided to recognize Israel in order to increase his share of American Jewish votes for the upcoming presidential elections. That year pro-Israeli circles took advantage of the shift in attitudes from the different evangelical movements to draw sympathizers to the battle for Jerusalem.

At beginning, Protestants supported Jerusalem’s international status yet in April 2002, unhappy with authorized church policy, clergy and theologians created the Episcopal Jewish Alliance for Israel. This shift favored Israel, because protestant believers then adopted new stances favoring Israel’s of Jerusalem. Pro-Israeli forces in turn addressed evangelical believers. In fact, there had not been a split between the evangelicals and Jews as that between the Jews and the Protestants before 2002. Each party stressed the magnitude and “sacrality” of Jerusalem. They both met on the crucial need of Israel’s control of Jerusalem but for different reasons. When Zionists decided to address and target the evangelical church, they tackled the religious beliefs and attachment of these Christian believers. Despite Jerusalem’s religious implication, Jews wanted to control the holy city to safeguard the Israeli state and benefit from the services the city offers. Some evangelicals believed Jews received Jerusalem as part of his “eternal covenant

81 Ibid., p.2
82 Ibid., p.3
meaning that Jews could not give away the land". Pro-Israeli circles took advantage of this evangelical belief to claim their quest for political and military control over Israel was right. Many Christian Zionists believe, as previously discussed that Christ will return after the full restoration of the Israeli land promised by God.

So by allying themselves to Christian Zionist organizations, Jews began to achieve, attract and influence a large number of American Christians. They used religion as a tool since the latter plays a major role in the U.S. As William Dale argues in his article, "The Impact of Christian Zionism on American Policy" that the link between Christian Zionists and Jews was forged during AIPAC's 1995 annual policy conference. When Jewish leaders came to terms with the necessity of evangelical support in achieving their goals. Consequently, they invited Ralph Reed, executive director of Pat Robertson's Christian coalition, to join the conference.".

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93 Ibid.
Chapter 5


"Prevailing in the war on terrorism must be our primary, immediate priority" as President Bush said.\textsuperscript{85} The fight against terrorism is front and center rather than behind the scenes. Between September 11, 2001 and January 11, 2002, 98\% of the official business conducted by the House of Representatives and 97\% of that in Senate was related to terrorism. Within that timeframe, Congress presented more than 450 counter-terrorism resolutions and amendments.

Theoretically, there are several counterterrorist instruments such as diplomacy, the criminal justice system, control over financial assets, military force and intelligence.\textsuperscript{86} Nevertheless, what emerged from September 11 was the largest, most powerful mobilization of U.S force since 1990 Gulf War I. It was that context of self-defense, preemption and anti-terrorism that engendered the new justifications of U.S foreign policy and its war on Iraq.

Immediately after the 9/11 attacks, the Senate voted to approve the administration’s “authorization for use of military forces”. The bill gave the president unlimited power to “use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on


September 11, 2001, or harbored such persons in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the U.S.". 87 Essentially, this definition gave the US unlimited authorization for the deployment of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. This became the U.S’ counter-terrorist response.

After 9/11, the goal was to wipe out Al-Qaeda and to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. However, Bush announced that he had plans to expand the war, which would not end in Afghanistan. "Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist global reach has been found, stopped and defeated. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." 88 This set the tone for the so-called Bush Doctrine. The Bush Doctrine was the basis of going to war against Iraq in March 2003. He did so without the support of the international community but fully backed by the Jewish lobby. The benefits which the latter derived from the Iraqi invasion will constitute one of this thesis’ subsequent focus of analysis.

The United States’ National Security Strategy was issued in September 2002. It essentially set out a new course for American Foreign policy; "while the U.S. will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right to self-defense by acting preemptively". 89

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89 Ibid.
Preemption war was one of the central tenets of the new U.S foreign policy, accordingly, the NSS document gave the U.S justification to preemptively declare war.

This is precisely what Joyce P. Kaufman states: president Bush authorized the attack on Iraq in March 2003 without U.N. approval. This is a radical departure in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. Kaufman compares Bush to his father and states that his father was able to build a strong coalition before he went to war in 1991. He believed that the war in Iraq set the stage for preemption, but was uncertain as to whether or not this would remain the essence of U.S. foreign policy.\textsuperscript{90} In fact, the doctrine of preemption was nothing new. It did exist during the Cold War but the difference after 9/11 was that preemption now included preventive war and was advocated by the Israeli lobby. The Bush administration argued that in an age of nuclear-armed terrorists, this definition needed to be broadened to emphasize preventive war as well.\textsuperscript{91}

In his article "A Grand Strategy of Transformation" John Lewis Gladdis analyses what the NSS doesn't say. The Bush NSS as he refers to it has a hidden agenda, one that the administration never advertised it.

Bush warned of an axis of evil that includes Iran, Iraq and North Korea. However, it was not made clear why containment and deterrence would not work against these tyrants. And that's in fact the core problem between realists and neoconservatives on the issue of containment and

\textsuperscript{91} Francis Fukuyama, "After The Neo Cons: America at the Crossroads". London: Profile books, 2006, p.83
deterrence. Whereas the former advocate a containment policy with Iran, the latter deeply oppose such policy with revolutionist regimes such as Iran.

John Lewis Gladden, in his article, questions the motives of the Bush administration and notes that perhaps it wanted to complete the task of the Gulf War left unfinished.\textsuperscript{92}

At home, the Bush administration responded to the 9/11 attack with new policies. First, it created an entirely new agency, the Department of Homeland Security. Second, it invaded Afghanistan. Third, it announced a new strategic doctrine of preemptive war and fourth, it invaded Iraq under the pretext of searching for weapons of mass destruction (WMD). According to Francis Fukuyama, the first two were definitely responses to the September 11th attacks, however the latter two were not however constituted a real interference of the Israeli lobby, especially with respect to the invasion of Iraq.

September 11th changed U.S threat perceptions because it brought two menaces: radical Islamism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Globalization has definitely brought with it new dangers. The U.S is trying to confront these especially that since 9/11, terrorism have broadened to encompass non-states actors which makes it all the most difficult to combat. One of the U.S’ foreign policy challenges is its ability to confront

theses threats and to be able to read them before another 9/11 happens.93

Brad Roberts asked the question: when is preemption just? He believes that the strongest case for U.S preemption exists if the aggressor has actually threatened to use weapons of mass destruction.94 However, Fukuyama emphasizes the failure of American intelligence to identify WMD capabilities in Iraq. In addition, Fukuyama states preemption may deter proliferation or slow it down but it will not entirely prevent it. This is evident in the case of Iran, which is not going to give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons.95

We will consider Obama’s new approach towards Iran in the coming section. But the question remains: Does the potential in the acquisition of weapons legitimize preventive wars? If so, then any country would invade another based on a supposed notion of threat. Lind emphasizes that wars must be avoided because this phenomena will not be limited to the U.S only. Soon other countries, will build their cases for arms purchases on notions of preventive threat and war. This will eventually doom the American way of life96, leading to the question: why? Should the U.S change its foreign policy when it comes to spreading democracy and

fighting terrorism? In the Iraqi war the U.S. completely ignored the international community and acted unilaterally without U.N approval. Georges W. Bush went about it alone. Bush his father initiated the first Gulf war, but what was the difference?

Ross states that Bush Senior built coalition and gained U.N. support through statecraft and style. Ross argues that Bush Senior approach was consultative even if the substance was not. It had intensive and extensive efforts to persuade other leaders even often face to face discussion.97 Dennis Ross adds that both were committed to act militarily and alone; however, the style of Bush Senior was different.

Because the Bush administration's style ended up hurting the substance of the Bush agenda on fighting terrorism and stopping weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, many agree that this approach was not a real success. Richard N. Haas believes that U.S policy makers need to avoid mistakes and should temper their preemptive policy by reducing military force as an option or using democracy as a pretext.98 The Bush administration didn’t rely on diplomacy when carrying out its strategies, and Iraq is a prominent example.

Mohammed Ayoob evaluates the argument that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction justified the war. Within the Arab world, he argues, it was well known that Iraq no longer possessed such weaponry. These weapons he asserts didn’t pose a real threat to its neighbors, however,

Arabs believe that Israeli nuclear capability poses a clearer danger to them and to the region. So the question here is why the U.S. launched a war against Iraq? Isn't it because of Israeli pressure? By doing so, the U.S. gained nothing but increased the Arab anger towards it.  

Judith Lichtenberg gives possible principles of action that the U.S. government should have invoked before invading Iraq. One of the principles states that a country may engage itself in preventive wars against rogue states possessing WMD. However, Lichtenberg further states that even though it’s a legitimate principle of action, possession of WMD didn’t materialize as evidence in order to invade Iraq. Iraq posed no serious threat to its Arab neighbors, but it might have been a primary threat to Israel. As a result, most people conclude that the U.S. argument about Iraq’s WMD served to justify an invasion that has meant to serve other objectives.  

Iraq posed no serious threat to its Arab neighbors, but it might have been a primary threat to Israel. As a result, most people conclude that the U.S. argument about Iraq's WMD served to justify an invasion that has meant to serve other objectives. Given that the two countries have developed a resilient friendship and share more than values as discussed earlier in this thesis.

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Chapter 6

The case of Iraq: Specific analysis of the Israeli lobby's influence in Foreign Policy decisions.

Let us now turn to the question of how the Israeli lobby and its neo-conservative allies advocated and engineered the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

On March 17, 2003, alongside the British forces, the U.S. launched Operation Iraqi Freedom to invade Iraq, and overthrow Saddam Hussein’s Baathist regime claiming that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that the Baath party was linked to Al Qaeda.\textsuperscript{101} There were many other factors leading up to the 2003 Iraqi invasion such as the Iraqi oil reserves, the, the hatred between Bush's family and Saddam Hussein, that goes back the 1990's i.e. to the second gulf war, and the neo-conservative policy or designs for a New Middle East that would strengthen Israel's position in the region. The combination of all those considerations triggered Operation Iraqi Freedom.

At the beginning, the U.S. invasion of Iraq is to be viewed as a strategic intervention whereby-as previously mentioned- the intervention can be justified by self-interests and real-politik.\textsuperscript{102}

After all, the US is known to be the world’s largest consumer of oil. Even though it has its own oil reserves, the U.S. strives to achieve hegemony over Middle Eastern oil reserves and full US control over the

\textsuperscript{101} Bernd Hamm (ed), "Devastating Society: The Neo-conservative assault on democracy and justice". Pluto Press, 2005, p.48

resources would guarantee access to energy, mainly extraction and distribution.

North American oil consumption is set at 21 million barrels a day, and domestic oil and gas production does not meet public demand. Given this situation, it is essential to secure cheap and easy sources of fossil fuels, especially within an administration that is inherently relying on oil companies.\(^\text{103}\)

After Iraq comes Saudi Arabia, from who starting in spring 2002 was another resource, providing 800,000 barrels a day to Americans and Saudi Arabia, rendering the nation the sixth most vital source for U.S. oil consumption.\(^\text{104}\)

Since the 1990's the U.S. had no special treatment when it comes to Iraq's oil and could not do much to change the situation between both countries. The Bush Administration seized the 9/11 events to associate Saddam Hussein with terrorism: it took advantage of the terrorist incidents to invade Iraq and to establish its control over oil reserves, transport and refinement process, in order to stabilize global oil prices. Furthermore, the $10 to $30 a barrel increase between 1997 and 2000 added to the situation, and estimated set prices would not change.\(^\text{105}\)

Whereas the West ensure that oil is refined, the East is where the oil is dug out. From the Middle East to Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region oil in its crude state is not very valuable. The price of the oil is

\(^{103}\) Bernd Hamm (ed), "Devastating Society: The Neo-conservative assault on democracy and justice". Pluto Press, 2005, p.51
\(^{104}\) Ibid., p.52
\(^{105}\) Ibid.
significantly controlled by the U.S. and the west. However, the invasion of Iraq took place with the intention of controlling the price of crude oil and the world oil market. From the time of the Iraqi invasion and pro-American Iraqi government conversion, most of the major contracts for petroleum exchange take place under the hospices of American companies. Many Bush Administration officials, namely former U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and President Bush himself hold significant roles within these oil companies. The super power entered Iraq to institute its authority an grip over Iraqi oil to provide its customers back home as well as to conquer the supremacy of OPEC countries and gain full control of the business. The aforementioned reasons are behind the American premeditated intervention.

Relations between Bush Senior and Saddam Hussein since the 1990’s have been marked by hatred. Before the 21st century however, these opponents were very close, given the U.S. and Iraq joined forces in 1979 to face and fight against Iran and the Khomeini revolution. Saddam thought the U.S. supported him during his Kuwait invasion of 1991 because the U.S. had been ambiguous about the issue. Iraq was caught off guards as the U.S. stood by Kuwait and after the second Gulf War, Iraq was subject to an embargo by the U.S. which it eventually survived. As Bush Junior took the presidential seat in 2000, he followed in his father’s footsteps and affiliated Saddam Hussein to terrorists, nuclear weapons and the 9/11 attacks. According to these two allegations, the U.S. launched Operation Iraqi freedom, and yet, the U.S. failed in finding
WMDs and links to Al-Qaeda. The claims were in face neo-conservative excuses to highlight the critical need to attack.

The link between Israel, the Israeli lobby, its neo-conservatives figures and the Iraq war will be established in the following section.

The chief reason behind the Iraqi invasion was to increase Israel’s security in the Middle East. According to Philip Zelikow, a member of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (2001-2003), executive director of the 9/11 commission, and counselor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the issue was not a threat against US but one against Israel\textsuperscript{106}, and former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was continuously calling for a military attack. Claims state Israeli had submitted numerous reports to Washington about Iraq’s WMD programs.\textsuperscript{107} Furthermore, Israel was troubled when President Bush referred the issue of WMD to the United Nations, growing more suspicious when Saddam Hussein agreed on the UN’s inspection commission. Israel had been calling for rapid and tough American action against Saddam and his regime. Israeli officials’ rhetoric and intelligence actions clearly stated they would profit from a Saddam-less, divided and weakened Iraq. Israel thus profited more Iraq ten did the U.S. which in turn, triggered terrorist actions, and launched a latent communal war between Shiites and Sunnis, yielding to total regional chaos. Ironically, Iraq no longer constitutes a threat to Israel because the country is in a complete shambles, ruled by confessional frictions and

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
war, and the new Iraqi government--which is pro American--is no longer Israel's enemy as Saddam's regime was.

In September 2002, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres pushed for a campaign against Saddam Hussein, while, the former Israeli PM's article in The New York Times argued that the biggest risk liked in a lack of action.\textsuperscript{108}

Israel wanted war, and it happened. Israeli officers did not only count on themselves, they were forcefully backed by the Israeli lobby and by its prominent flag-bearers in the neo-conservative movement. They avidly supported Bush's announcement.

In fact, the war was largely apprehended and called for by the Israeli lobby and especially its neo-conservative members who were constantly calling for Saddam's removal, even prior to the year 2000.\textsuperscript{109}

In 1998, neo-conservatives had called on President Clinton, to remove Saddam. The list of war planners included Elliot Abrams, John Bolton, Douglas Feith, William Kristol, Bernard Lewis, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz.\textsuperscript{110} These figures were not successful during Clinton's term nor during the early years of Bush's administration, because they lacked any substantial evidence proving that Iraq constituted a strategic threat to the U.S. in the Middle East or at the global level. The neo-conservatives' golden opportunity arrived with the 9/11 events: neo-conservative figures--such as Perle, Lewis and

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.31
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p.110
Wolfowitz got involved in a persuasion campaign vis-a-vis Bush and his administration. In spite of a lack of evidence about Saddam’s negative intentions against the US, Wolfowitz supposedly advocated an aggression in Iraq prior to one in Afganistan during a chief meeting with Bush at Camp David in September 2001, even though Bin laden was known to be in Afganishtan.\textsuperscript{111} Evidently, Bush did not follow Wolfowitz’s advice and first went after Bin Laden, but he took Wolfowitz’s words into account by considering an eventual hit against Saddam following Afghanistan. After targeting the president, neo-conservative figures turned to Vice President Dick Cheney and sought his support for the war. Iraq was thereafter linked to terrorism and to the war on terror. To bolster their case against Saddam, neo-cons reached out to public opinion through their large media empire. They also influenced the information of the American intelligence and continued to target and manipulate the most prominent members of Bush’s administration. Neo-conservatives were clearly aware that Iraq posed a real threat to Israel because of its large oil and water reserves or resources and because of its self-sufficient economy. Iraq managed to weather the economic embargo without witnessing economic or financial disaster. All along it developed self-sufficiency whereby it did not need much of the banned imports. Its large oil reserves invigorated Iraq’s economy, allowing the country to come close to building nuclear facilities. Iraq constituted a regional rival power to Israel. In fact, no one was really certain regarding Iraq’s acquisition of

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p.32
the nuclear weapon, but the mere thought of it constituted a real threat to the survival of Israel—the sole nuclear power in the region. When it came to manipulating the intelligence, some claim Scooter Libby consulted with the CIA multiple times to exert pressure in support of the war, and he went as far as preparing a thorough briefing back in 2003 on the Iraq threat.\textsuperscript{112} He supposedly urged Collin Powel submit it to the UN Security Council Further organizations were created to find links between Saddam and Al Qaeda to better sell the war and dethrone Saddam Hussein, a crucial Israeli strategic objective. During the Iraqi campaign, neo-conservatives were aware that they needed an Iraqi figure that would first help them in their campaign and second serve their interests in the post invasion era, so they turned to Ahmad Chalabi—an exiled Iraqi—who had already proved his support of Israel by promising to support the state once he was in power.\textsuperscript{113}

Neo-conservatives' obsession with Iraq and uncontested devotion to Israel made them address the American public opinion with the goal of winning the ordinary American citizen's support for the Iraq war, and so they launched a large, deceitful media campaign. Founded in 1993 and largely owned by neo-conservative personages, the Fox News Channel ranks amongst the most widely viewed networks in the U.S, and the media was undeniable in helping forward the advance and cause of the war.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p.33
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p.34
Following the 9/11 attacks, Fox started to provide the American public with a neo-conservative interpretation of events by constantly emphasizing the terror threat and the need to eradicate all terrorist harboring regimes. In fact, the channel exploited emotions such as fear and anger to lure the American public opinion. "Americans now watched Fox in fear of an impending catastrophe".\textsuperscript{114} As stated previously, Rupert Murdoch is the head of a large media empire that includes Fox news Channel; moreover he mobilized media conglomerate to better support and serve Israel's interests in the U.S. by constantly calling for a war on Iraq, and when it was time to promote the war and the overall aggressive policy, all necessary were already set.\textsuperscript{115}

Neo-conservative media succeeded in forming public misperceptions of the Iraq war, creating ties between 9/11 and Iraq and luring a large audience by playing on their feelings of fear and stressing the contrast between "good and evil". With a constant focus on the concepts of evil and terror, stations such as Fox news constantly claimed that Iraq or Saddam Hussein had a say in the 9/11 attacks and ties with Osama Bin Laden, and even that WMD were used against U.S. soldiers. Rather than being misperceptions, one can argue such allegations were manipulated and formed into constructed facts.

The neo-conservative media exploited evidence to better manipulate the listener's emotional fear and obtain subsequent approval and support for

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
America's war. They exploited American fear of another catastrophe, and further terrorist acts by providing the public opinion with constructed and false findings.

Neo-conservatives were the chief advocates in the Iraq war—they actually called for it since the conclusion of the second Gulf War—masking their real objectives, which included the abolition of Iraq's threat toward Israel, the destruction of one of Israel's regional rivals, and changing the Middle East's religious, political, economic and cultural face. They lied on a daily basis to the public opinion, and Paul Wolfowitz would soon admit that WMD had not made for the most compelling case and excuse for war but were used because “everybody” could agree on the matter in light of bureaucratic issues and differences.\textsuperscript{116}

Neo-conservatives clearly benefited from 9/11 and their primary objective was removing Saddam, furthermore they associated the Iraqi invasion to 9/11, in order to create new dangerous opponents, new reality and definitely an urgent need to change the structure of the Middle East.

Iraq was the stage by which neo-cons proved the pillars of their doctrine: "military preemption, regime change, the merits of exporting democracy, and a vision of American power that is fully engaged and never apologetic".\textsuperscript{117} Iraq became the ground for members of the Israeli lobby to act in order to decrease the threat to Israel. A divided Iraq, merged in an ugly confessional war, would heighten Israel's global profile

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p.202
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p.206

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and raise Israel's security, because it would thereafter enjoy greater regional stability.

The Israeli lobby and neo-conservative figures jeopardized the war on terror and hindered U.S. interests in the Middle East to pursue Israel's interests and secure its existence and continuity. The fact that the U.S. followed through the 9/11 attacks with a state to state response of war rather as opposed to via non-state actor's action was a result of neo-conservative maneuvering.\(^{118}\)

Neo-con military thinking constituted and still constitutes a quintessential aspect of U.S. foreign policy, especially following 9/11. Many even argue that this thinking has a powerful stake when it comes to managing relations between Arabs and Israelis. Some may go as far as considering Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle representatives of Israel in the US. They are both neo-conservative figures and members of the Israeli lobby, and their actions and attitude seek goals that are common to those of the Jewish State notably vis a vis the "fight against terrorism". It was Israel's struggle that made them recognize that terrorism, like communism, must be fought without compromise.\(^{119}\)

Another prominent neo-con figure wrote that Saddam was linked to Palestinian terrorist groups and accused of providing financial and moral support to terrorist groups and organizations against Israelis; he was also

\(^{118}\) Ibid., p.281  
accused of financial assistance to the families of the terrorists. Perle, Feith and Wolfowitz were the ones to drive Bush into the war.\textsuperscript{120} 
Bernd Hamm added that Iraq's had a water supply, which could be used to relieve Israel and rejuvenate a former pipeline between Iraq and the Jewish state.

The US intervention in Iraq was intended to secure Israel's strategic interests there. Neo-cons and the American Jewish organizations or groups are making the U.S. directly intervene in the Arab-Israeli conflict on Israel's side to secure its longtime Middle Eastern ally, to whom it is religiously, culturally, morally, and more importantly politically, linked.

They were successful in driving U.S. military into a continual state of belligerency in Iraq, and since March 2003 the U.S. military has been explicitly present on Middle Eastern soil.\textsuperscript{121} The U.S. military is to serve Israel on two fronts, firstly to stand by the Israeli military and defend the Jewish state in case of any severe attack by Hezbollah, Iran, or Syria.

Secondly, the presence of the U.S. military and its work in combating terrorism will facilitate Israel's because Israeli Defense Forces are no longer alone in combating terror. The neo-conservatives and other prominent Jewish figures thought that Iraq's fall would set off a domino effect, which would in turn lead to the fall of other Arab terrorist and totalitarian regimes. The neo-conservative vision of the New Middle East—composed of confessional federations or countries—could not come to life,

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p.58 and p.242
\textsuperscript{121} Jhon J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M.Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy". March 2006, p.35
hence Israel to on its own declare the war on Hezbollah and Lebanon back in 2006. Fortunately, Israel did not succeed in defeating the Lebanese Resistance and dividing the region; An article in Ha'aretz (dating from February 17, 2003), stated that Senior IDF officers Prime Minister Ariel Sharon supporters, like Israel National Security Advisor's Ephraim Halevy, depict an ideal future for Israel after a war.\textsuperscript{122}

In brief, neo-conservatives, Israeli leaders and officials, prominent Jewish organizations in the US, and the Bush administration thought the war in Iraq would make the initial move within an cleverly orchestrated campaign to reconstruct the Middle East and guarantee security for the state of Israel. They still struggle to establish this New Middle East, and only time will reveal whether such an endeavor is ever to come true.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p36
Chapter 7
The case of Iran

The Bush administration tackled its differences with major nuclear powers like Iran through a policy of disengagement. This hallmark of the Bush policy was seen by neo-cons as an efficient strategy in dealing with a country that has voiced dislike of Israel. Bush had used the same disengagement policy as in Iraq.

Iran, over the years, has been deemed a nuclear threat. The U.S. has also blamed it for “supplying sophisticated weapons” to forces within Iraq, used to fight U.S. troops. Furthermore, the Bush-Cheney-Rice coalition claims Iranians are involved in “violent activities” and fueling “terrorism” in the US and Iraq. They also accused Iran of having certain “ambitions” that needed to be “contained”. Iran was likened to Al-Qaeda to provide the U.S. with a need to protect itself. The buildup against Iran is very similar to that against Iraq. The main focus of Bush-Cheney-Rice led neo-cons was “to finish the job” and concoct a new Middle East that ensured Israel’s protection before Bush ended his term. 123

At the same time, they could not afford another attack on Iran.

According to Mahtab Farid, an award winning international reporter, founder of US Iran NEWS and an expert in US Iran relations, in January 2002, Bush deemed Iran part of an "axis of evil" and said that "Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an

unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom". Bush said Iran and its allies formed the infamous "axis of evil", arming each other and possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMD).\textsuperscript{124} Bush went as far as labeling Iran a "threat to world peace" on January 9, 2008.\textsuperscript{125} Washington and Tehran proceeded with a verbal war, with aggressive rhetoric against the Islamic Republic. While visiting Jerusalem, Bush continued to refuse engaging Iran (since the Islamic Republic refuses to stop Iran's nuclear energy program disregarding the International Community). Think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute AEI and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy WINEP, and media outlets, such as FOX news exacerbated the situation and almost all the panels that were held in Washington DC addressed the Iranian threat. The fact that the U.S. and Iran have not held an official meeting in over 30 years is also worth noting. They solely met at an ambassadorial level to discuss reconstructing Afghanistan and matters related to Iraq. They never managed to hold direct talks.

The disengagement of the Bush Administration had many consequences on America’s standing in the region and its credibility. Special assistant to President Barack Obama and senior director of the Central Region at the National Security Council (NSC) Dennis Ross

endorses a policy of engagement but argues the situation and context after 9/11 rendered engagement very difficult.\textsuperscript{126}

Many Scholars believe that disengagement was not the only flaw in Bush's policy. Makovsky and Ross, in their book \textit{Myths, Illusions and Peace} argued that the administration made strong statements repeatedly however failed to act on them vis-à-vis Iran which, as a result, led to Iran not fearing any consequences for its behavior. This constituted a significant mistake in Bush's strategy.\textsuperscript{127} Obviously the neo-cons play a key role in the use of such unsuccessful tactics. The neo-cons were convinced of negotiations' failure and favored the policy of disengagement that led to leaving Obama in such a challenging situation.\textsuperscript{128}

Neoconservatives such as Richard Perle and many others (who were very prominent in the Bush administration and served at the highest level) also believe in the use of force to defeat regimes like Iran.\textsuperscript{129} Bret Stephens, neo-conservative and former editor of the \textit{Jerusalem Post}, supports disengagement and confrontation against Iran over economic sanctions but believe their effect requires time and patience.\textsuperscript{130}

Stephan Walt explains that in \textit{The Wall Street Journal}, neoconservative Eliot Cohen reassures that the only way to get rid of a nuclear Iran is through an American or Israeli military attack, even if this risks "a

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p.172
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p.130 and p.160
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p.10 and p.182
substantial war”. He says such an option is better than surviving a world with Iranian nuclear weaponry. Such declarations echo the neo-cons' earlier campaign in support of invading Iraq (a decision Eliot Cohen willingly endorsed). Cohen also calls on the U.S. to “actively seek the overthrow of the Islamic Republic”. He does not urge a U.S. invasion (given the U.S. is not capable of affording another war and also has little public support), but rather calls for using “every instrument of U.S. power, soft more than hard” to destroy the current regime for Israel’s sake. Walt adds that another neoconservative Paul Wolfowitz pushed for a U.S. involvement to reorganize the Middle East, despite failure in Iraq, in The Financial Times, Wolfowitz asserts the negotiations with the Iranians are impossible. He also thinks that letting them own nuclear weaponry might lead to the next nuclear attack since 1945.

The aforementioned chapter describes a number of prominent figures in the American political arena, which are part of AIPAC or share similar goals with the powerful lobby group. One can see a significant figure of proponents in defense of Israel who propel ideas and support political actions that favor the Jewish State, in particular under the pretext of common religious and political causes. The next chapter will explore the prospects of the lobby and its supporters under the new Obama Administration.
Chapter 8

The future of the neo-cons and AIPAC under the Obama administration

The Obama administration was criticized by many analysts and politicians in Washington DC from the beginning of its term when the president set a plan that consisted in withdrawing the U.S. troops from Iraq by 2010. Patrick Clawsan, the deputy director for research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, argues, the great hope of Obama’s approach is in fact misguided. Clawsan considers that Iraqi politicians might not be ready to take over responsibility, stating that Iraq will slip backward towards more instability and Iran will prove more effective in meddling and controlling the political scene.131

Obama's policies of engagement and multilateralism were a clear departure from the previous administration. Obama is convinced in his administration’s capacity, however, and realists also think the Obama administration is capable of handling the Iranian problem while mourning the consequences of Bush’s disengagement. Realists believe engagement can salvage the situation and urge separating Israeli from American interests.132

The U.S. under the Obama Administration tries to distance itself from “special” to “good” and more “normal” relations with Israel. It tries to be objective in its foreign policy regarding the Arabs in general and the

Israeli Palestinian conflict, as demonstrated by the Cairo speech and the push for the peace process.

From the beginning, Obama made his plans for talks at the highest level with Iran without preconditions clear. He went as far as saying that “changes in Iran’s behavior could possibly be rewarded with membership in the World Trade Organization, other economic benefits and security guarantees”. Obama insists on stressing the differences with his predecessor.

According to David Medinicoff, Washington should engage with moderate and pacifist Arab and Muslim countries to reflect his tolerance and fairness vis-à-vis Muslims and the Arab world. President Obama tried to prove this in his Cairo speech. The president expressed a balanced view and made his willingness for change clear. However, he is still subject to significant pressure from the Israeli lobby.

Focusing on Iran, Kenneth Pollack in his book the Persian Puzzle states that it will be impossible for the U.S. to affect regime change in Iran. He mentions of projecting an attractive image that might decrease hatred towards America. Pollack argues Iranians want respect, a reference to Bush deeming Iran part of the axis of evil. Within such a frame of

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thought, engaging Iran in a deal will necessitate respect as a prerequisite.\textsuperscript{135}

Bush’s approach with Iran undoubtedly worsened the situation. To rectify the current U.S.-Iranian relations, U.S. officials must regain Iranian trust and show positive intentions through investing money and time within their diplomacy. Pollack discusses multilateralism and touches on the need for other partners in reaching out to Iran, namely European and Saudi support. Ross believes in providing Iran with benefits at several levels, namely the economic, political and security, with the guarantee that Iran will alter its behavior.\textsuperscript{135}

According to Patrick Clawson, negative records of bilateral relations prove that engaging with Iran is unfeasible. He points to the 1979 meeting between National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Iran’s prime, defense and foreign ministers when their picture featured in an Iranian daily the following day.

Radical Iranians there feared a cooperation between moderate Iranians and the U.S government. They said, it was a scheme to topple the revolution. Three days after and in response, the U.S. embassy was seized.\textsuperscript{137}

Senior researcher at the Global Research in International Affairs Center, IDC, Herzliya Jonathan Spyer believes that engaging with Iran

only helps the latter and will widen Iran’s horizons for nuclear armament.\textsuperscript{138}

Similarly, John R. Bolton, a prominent neo-conservative figure in U.S. foreign policy under the Bush Administration criticizes the Obama Administration and opposes negotiation and engagement, arguing too, that Obama will ultimately provide Iranians with enough time to complete their nuclear project.\textsuperscript{139}

Michael Eisenstadt, a senior fellow and director of the \textit{Military and Security Studies Program at the Washington Institute (WINEP)}, says the military options should be readily available should multilateral diplomatic efforts fail.

Eisenstadt also discusses the Israeli doubts over diplomacy’s success, stating Israel might initiate a strike on Iran’s nuclear infrastructure regardless of the U.S.’ stance.\textsuperscript{140}

Apart from the neo-cons, AIPAC also does not refrain from voicing its concerns over Obama’s policies. Although Abraham Fox, head of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in his book \textit{The Deadliest Lies} slams Walt and Mearsheimer for overstating the role of the Israeli lobby in influencing

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U.S. Foreign policy, especially with regard to Iraq, Fox, contradicts himself and considers Israel’s security essential.141

Many also point to a lack of transparency between the lobby and the administration. ADL head Abraham Foxman filed a complaint, expressing concern over the “lack of consultation and the need for the administration to do things publicly”. He adds that U.S-Israel relations are 60 years-old, and that “all of a sudden they’re treating Israel like everyone else”, which he deems “disturbing”.142

On the other end of the spectrum, some argue the importance of distinguishing between U.S. vs. Israeli interests. Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations argues that keeping differences between Tel Aviv and Washington secret is essential.143

Neoconservative and Anti-Defamation League member Abe Foxman in an interview with the Jerusalem Post was critical of Obama (March 16 2010) and US Vice President Joe Biden who warned Netanyahu over the Ramat Shlomo incident, when he announced to further settlement buildings there. Gen. David Petraeus also reportedly sent the Pentagon a briefing “with a stark warning: America’s relationship with Israel is important, but not as important as the lives of America’s soldiers”.144

143 Ibid.
On Monday 15, 2010, AIPAC deemed a recent US statement “a matter of serious concern”, calling for the Obama Administration to work with Israel to decrease the tension between both countries. The Administration should make a conscious effort to move away from public demands and unilateral deadlines directed at Israel, with whom the U.S. shares basic fundamental, and strategic interests”. ¹⁴⁵

It claimed that escalated rhetoric was diverting attention from dealing with Iran’s nuclear weapons’ pursuit, and regional peace. “We strongly urge the Administration to work closely and privately with our partner Israel, in a manner befitting strategic allies, to address any issues between the two Governments”, said the group. ¹⁴⁶

According to the Washington Post, on March 10, 2010 Israel’s Interior Ministry announced plans for 1,600 more Jewish homes beyond the Jewish State’s 1967 border, spurring worldwide reaction, including U.S. critique. The newspaper stated that Obama was not the first to react so swiftly, but that his strategy would not necessarily work, pointing to Obama’s plunging poll ratings in Israel. They even pointed out that Obama has a negative image of neglecting Tel Aviv’s needs, requesting

¹⁴⁵ The American Israel Public Affairs Committee. AIPAC: “Pillars of the U.S.-Israel relationship”. AIPAC. Web. 08 Feb, 2010
unacceptable demands and ignoring Palestinian and Arab Leaders neglectful attitude.\textsuperscript{147}

A retired Israeli General Yaacov Amidror adds that Israelis should not succumb to pressure by those who exploit Israel’s actions that are frequently interpreted by the international left as a mistake.\textsuperscript{148}

Meanwhile, the pro-Israel group AIPAC and others began lobbying Congress and Democrats joined Republicans and Senator Joe Lieberman, who has been a harsh critic of the administration’s Mideast policy. “Pennsylvania Rep. Christopher Carney, a Democrat, and Illinois Republican Rep. Mark Kirk sent a letter to President Obama urging a halt in public criticism of Israel and a focus rather on enforcing policies against Iran. Similarly, the intensely pro-Israel delegation of New York openly criticized the White House. “We should not have a disproportionate response to Israel. We need to be careful and measured in our response, and I think we all have to take a step back”, Rep. Eliot Engel said told Congress. “The Administration, to the extent that it has disagreements with Israel on policy matters, should find way to do so in private and do what they can to defuse this situation”, said Rep. Steve Israel.\textsuperscript{149}

Some reports go as far as saying that Obama is attempting to topple Netanyahu, as stated by Elliot Abrams and local neoconservatives to Israeli public on IDF Radio, March 16 2010 Abrams was reported as

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\item\textsuperscript{149} Ben Smith, “Democrats Begin To Criticize Obama on Israel”. 16 March, 2010. \texttt{politico.com}. Web. 05 April, 2010
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saying that "the crisis between Israel and America was not created by Netanyahu's decisions but only by Barack Obama", blaming the Obama administration for the crisis. Abrams adds the current situation was harmful to peace prospects with Palestinians and added the term "preconditions" did not exist as part of Bush's negotiations. He also noted a very interesting point that "History suggests that Israel is much more flexible when it feels the most secure", stating that Obama's moves are decreasing Israel's sense of security.\textsuperscript{150}

Scott Ritter, in his recent book \textit{Target Iran} bluntly accuses the Israeli lobby and Israel of exaggerating the perception of the Iranian threat. Ritter considers that the current conflict between the U.S. and Iran has roots in Israel.\textsuperscript{151}

Ritter argues that any American invasion of Iran would be orchestrated and engineered by neoconservative pro-Israel supporters, with an outcome similar to that of the war in Iraq.

Ritter even goes as far as accusing Americans of sacrificing their national interests promoting and their own self-hatred for the sake of other nations, namely the Jewish State. This echoes what an Ohio congressman has said about AIPAC, claiming the lobby's strong influence was

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\textsuperscript{151} Scott Ritter, Target Iran: The Truth About the White House’s Plan for Regime Change. New York: Nations books, 2007, p.53
preventing American policy-makers from distinguishing between U.S. and Israeli national interests.\textsuperscript{152}

Even former member of the U.S. peace team Aaron David Miller, who served as Denis Ross’s deputy during both the Bush and the Clinton administrations, wrote after he left government that the U.S. had functioned far too often as Israel’s lawyer in negotiations, saying “we represented Israel, took side with it and did not push back against its position”.\textsuperscript{153} According to Stephen Walt (the author of the Israel lobby and U.S. foreign policy), Washington DC’s main issue today is the neoconservative forces such as those of Elliot Cohen who are arduously working to convince Iran that an enrichment capacity is better than the bomb itself.\textsuperscript{154}

The Freeman affair is an ideal example of the lobby’s attempts to hinder Obama’s diplomatic initiatives. The pro-Israeli lobby had concocted a slanderous campaign against the Obama administration candidate for chairman of the National Intelligence Council.

Charles Freeman has experience in U.S foreign service and has been openly critical of the Bush administration’s policy in the Middle East. His name was withdrawn from the candidate list, something he held the Israeli lobby accountable for, stating, “The aim of this lobby is control of

\textsuperscript{152} Paul, Findley They Dare To Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel’s Lobby: Chicago Review Press, 1989, p.49
the policy process through the exercise of a veto over the appointment of people who dispute the wisdom of its views...and the exclusion of any and all options for decision by Americans and our government other than those the lobby favors".\textsuperscript{155}

Freeman even wrote a letter to his friends saying that that the lobby's tactics were dishonorable and indecent.\textsuperscript{156} The lobby’s main objective is to obstruct anyone who is looking for a position in the Obama administration related to the Middle East.

Freeman went further and said that U.S. bloodshed came at the cost of unconditional support to Israel, and that Bush's foreign policy was the cause behind the birth of radicalism in the Arab and Muslim world.\textsuperscript{157}

Obama and his team were pressured by the pro-Israeli lobby in the Charles Freeman case and many other issues such as the health care bill reform that Obama is trying to pass. This raises serious questions about whether the new administration will be able to make its own decisions about the Middle East and other related issues. And that's what Roger Cohen described February 15\textsuperscript{th} on BBC during an intelligence debate when he stated that President Obama "has been told by some Jewish

\textsuperscript{156} Robert Dreyfus,“ Is the Israel Lobby Running Scared? Or Killing a Chicken to Scare The Monkeys?” The Daily Star, 17 March, 2009. p.4
\textsuperscript{157} Chas Freeman, “Examination of U.S Support for Israel”. Interview by Fareed Zakaria. GPS. CNN. 15 March, 2009. Television.
congressman, to step back on Israel if he wanted his health bill to pass  

The Israeli Lobby in Washington DC, does not miss an opportunity. The lobby organizes conferences, workshops and trainings for Israeli activists with the participation of high level American and Israeli officials on the vital issues of Iran and grass roots advocacy. The objective of all this is to gain new tools and learn how to effectively and efficiently benefit time and resources to advocate for Israel in the halls of government, pages of newspaper print, media, and internet sites. Indeed, lobbying in the U.S. is not against the law, and organizing conferences is acceptable. This event advertises an AIPAC representative, Jennifer Laszlo-Mizrahi, President of The Israel Project, an Israeli diplomat Dan Arbell, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Israel and apparently several unnamed congressional legislative assistants. I guess that this is too blunt and awkward to have an officially accredited diplomat to call for a workshop whose objective is to instruct Americans how to advocate on behalf of that same diplomat’s country?

According to Jonathan Clarke, in his article “The end of the neo-cons?”, neo-cons no longer exist under the Obama administration. He goes as far as saying that “at first sight, the incoming Obama administration appears to be the polar opposite of neo-conservatism”, hinting at the Kyoto Protocol, the international agreement linked to the

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159 Stephen Walt, “Another Invite Lost in the Mail”. Foreign Policy January 7 2010. www.foreignpolicy.com Web. 05 April, 2010
United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Geneva Convention comprised of four treaties and three additional protocols that set the standards in international law for humanitarian treatment of the victims of war. According to Clarke, diplomacy and direct talks with states such as Iran and Cuba are primordial. He also notes that Defense Secretary Gates stressed the use of force as the last resort.\textsuperscript{160} Clarke also points to the devastating economic crisis, the cost of the previous war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their consequences. He also stresses the effect of the financial meltdown and the heavy costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which have already weakened the pre-eminence of U.S. power. He concludes that the U.S. no longer holds flawless unipolar advantage.\textsuperscript{161}

Many see that Obama's focus is no longer in military aggression with the idea that U.S. military power should be used to intervene on the ground in crises like the Rwandan genocide or in Darfur. However, the neo-cons insist that Iran is the defining matter for U.S. foreign policy, and the U.S. must use force in dealing with the Iranians.\textsuperscript{162} Journalist Robert Dreyfus believes neo-cons await the failure of Obama's engagement policy with Iran and as such, have a consequent set of

\textsuperscript{160} Jonathan Clarke, "The End of the Neocons". 29 February, 2009
\texttt{www.news.bbc.co.uk} Web. 05 April, 2009
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
measures to propose, including improved cooperation with the Jewish State and stronger sanctions against Iran.\textsuperscript{163}

Stephen Walt states that the neoconservatives' benefit from a tensed relationship between the U.S. and Islam to safeguard the "special relationship with Israel", however such a benefit has decreased under the new administration.\textsuperscript{164} Simply because neo-cons today are spineless. Indeed, the interests of Obama and AIPAC do not exactly converge, and Obama through his engagement policy, believes that the U.S. should change its image. Obama does not reject the long partnership between U.S. and Israel, but today advocates are for moving away from the "special ties" and normalizing relationships between the two countries. The U.S. because of its pro-Israel agenda has caused huge damages to U.S. interests throughout the region and beyond and needs to decrease its negative image.

The new administration with its engagement policy is seeking to save the U.S.' image, as reflected through a tensed relationship with Israel that feels annoyed by the sudden change. Roger Cohen believes in the positive effect of stepping back from the US special relationship with Israel in favor of a normal relationship.\textsuperscript{165}

In the context of a "normal relationship", there would be consequences to such defiance. However, within the "special relationship" that exists, there

\textsuperscript{163} Robert Dreyfus, "Neo-Cons Still Preparing for Iran Attack". 4 Dec, 2008. www.atimes.com Web. 05 April, 2009
\textsuperscript{164} Stephen Walt, "What Could They Have Been Thinking". Foreign Policy. March, 2010. www.foreignpolicy.com Web. 05 April, 2010
\textsuperscript{165} "The U.S. Should Step Back From Its Special Relationship with Israel" February 9, 2010. http://intelligencesquaredus.org/. Web. 05 April, 2010
are no such consequences. According to Cohen, America's perceived collaboration with Israeli violence comes at a cost. Roger Cohen says that nobody is arguing for a divorce but rather arguing that President Obama wants to see consequences to the continued settlement activity, and Netanyahu's declarations that "some settlements are Israel's for all eternity".\textsuperscript{166} If the U.S. was firmer, Israel would measure its actions more carefully and a resumption of Israeli-Palestinian talks, currently paralyzed, would be more likely. "Israel, if it thinks it can act with complete impunity is not going to be responsive to U.S. desires".\textsuperscript{167}

In his book \textit{Soft Power}, Joseph Nye states that to reduce resentment, the U.S. should worry about the "hearts and the minds" of the Middle East\textsuperscript{168}. Michael Lind also states that the purpose of the American way of strategy is to preserve the American way of life, however the exact opposite took place under the Bush Administration.\textsuperscript{169}

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\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
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Chapter 9

Conclusion

As explored by the above thesis, the power of the Israeli Lobby within the U.S. and more specifically, the body’s influence on U.S. foreign policy are undeniable. Thorough examination shows that, over time, the U.S. has clearly sided with the Jews against Arabs, leading to drastic consequences both within the U.S. and at the international level, particularly with respect to the Middle East.

Indeed, one can argue within reason that in operating at the level of non-state actors, the Israeli Lobby and supporters of the Israeli state were pivotal in driving the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and in worsening the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories, notably through the Gaza war in the winter of 2009, as well as through Israel’s recent announcement of significant settlement expansion and projects to Judaize certain sacred areas in annexed East Jerusalem. The chief protagonists orchestrating U.S. policy are the neo-conservatives and AIPAC, which can be considered the backbone of the Jewish Lobby. Indeed, since the establishment of the Jewish State, there has been an incredible bond between AIPAC and Israel which translated through the relations between Washington and Tel Aviv. This bond has not only remained, but continues to evolve and manifest itself over time, through various ways.

According to Findley, Israelis and many Jewish Americans benefit from all-inclusive support, whether at the level of the government,
Congress or the White House, or within think tanks, education and more importantly, the media.\textsuperscript{170}

This support has only increased following the 9/11 attacks. Politicians are frequently at the lobby's knees; entire institutions must follow certain relevant guidelines, and even President Obama, who has shown a blatant difference from his predecessor in dealing with the U.S.' supposed worse enemies, struggles in the face of the Jewish lobby's pressure. From being criticized for his Cairo speech, to attacks and questioning of his policy of engagement, to direct threats toward the new president for his disapproval of Israel's latest ambitions and activities in Jerusalem, Obama is clearly struggling to make up for the rather worrisome situation, created by Bush and the latter's creating the concept of "Axis of Evil”.

AIPAC's influence is indeed so overwhelming that many argue U.S. interests are not at par with Israel's, but that Tel Aviv's importance sometimes even supersedes that of Washington's, leaving the U.S. in turn very vulnerable, as have stated a number of political analysts.\textsuperscript{171} Although the U.S. invaded Iraq for reasons of national interests, the chief objective, over time, has evidently become Israel's security and motivation to become the sole democracy and major economic power in the Middle East. A similar pattern is being observed with respect to Iran and its nuclear aspirations and how the international community is attempting to

\textsuperscript{170} Paul Findley, \textit{They Dare To Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby}. Chicago Review Press, 1989, p.37

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., p.49
deal with it. Furthermore, according to most thinkers, following the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration moved toward a full strategic alliance and approval of Israeli policies, something Israel has craved for over the years. One is no longer surprised to hear that Israel’s enemies are the same as the U.S.

The situation we are left with today is that Neoconservatives have earned themselves qualifications such as that of radical Hawks, supported by right wing Israeli circles. Arabs and a significant rest of the international community have, in tandem, lost faith in the U.S.\textsuperscript{172} The style of the Bush administration and its neoconservative agenda has only fueled Arab anger and hatred, whereby constant terror threats and successful attacks are now a norm in our contemporary world. At present, one is uncertain what can be done given the lobby’s power, and, as argued by Joseph Nye, the U.S. should consider reforming soft power institutions, seeking objectives not through military and economic coercion but rather through the positive attraction of values and societies.\textsuperscript{173}

While success remains far from being guaranteed, the real challenge will be a balanced approach, especially when it comes to incorporating Israel’s interests within the realm of U.S. foreign policy in the region. Although Obama’s approach shows a clear departure from that under Bush, with a tendency toward multilateralism and engagement as

\textsuperscript{172} Michael C. Hudson, "The United States in The Middle East” International Relations of the Middle East. Oxford and New York: Oxford, p.300

\textsuperscript{173} Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York: Public Affairs, 2004, p.120
echoed in his Cairo speech, many fear the new president will remain subject and victim to the Israeli Lobby's pressure. The current debate around whether or not to exert new sanctions on Iran should be telling of what is left to come.
Bibliography


Additional Readings


