

## The Impact of United States of America Intervention on The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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### *Abstract*

*The Israeli occupation of Palestine became a prolonged conflict; this conflict was caused by the seizure of the Jerusalem area. Jerusalem itself is a holy city for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The conflict began in 1917-1947 when during British rule in Palestine with Jerusalem as the center of government, the Balfour Declaration stated that Britain handed over the mandate of Palestine to the United Nations. During the ongoing conflict to date, not only two countries, namely Israel and Palestine, are involved, but there is also the intervention of the United States which has a fairly dominant role. For example, Donald Trump as President of the United States of America unilaterally announced that he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017, thus triggering a greater struggle than ever in the Middle East. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview, description, and understanding of the occurrence of conflict events in the Palestinian territories, by looking at the origins of the conflict, the role of the United States in it, and the impact of the dominant role of the United States in this prolonged conflict.*

**Keywords**— *Conflicts, Israeli-Palestinian, the United States of America*

### **1. Introduction**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has had a long journey, since the Arab-Israeli War in 1948 (URJ Youth, 2016). Until 2021, even though it has been going on for 73 years, this has not reduced the fire of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which seems to continue to heat up. Until now, both sides are still fighting for the interests and desires of their respective countries. The duration of the conflict that never ends, illustrates how complicated and complex the problems that occur between the two are.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine became a prolonged conflict; this conflict was caused by the deprivation of the Jerusalem area. Jerusalem itself is a holy city for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam society (Lapidoth & Ahimeir, 1999). The

conflict began in 1917-1947 when during British rule in Palestine with Jerusalem as the center of government, the Balfour Declaration stated that Britain handed over the mandate of Palestine to the United Nations (Kramer, 2017). Which was then handled by the UN with the proposed division of the country into Jews and Arabs (Palestine). But in fact, the Israeli population is only about 31.5% of the total population in Palestine. This causes the Palestinians to fight for their freedom in their land. On the other hand, Israel considers that the division is still not representative and each party wants Jewish land. Until 1948 it was declared that Israel stood as a state entity. Until 1948 it was declared that Israel stood as a state entity. This marked the start of the war between Israel and Palestine.

The State of Israel was founded in 1948 and since that day has had to defend its independence and right to live through a series of ongoing wars and conflicts with its Arab neighbors, which have been and continue to take a high death toll. Major conflicts include the 1948-49 War of Independence. The newly formed and poorly equipped Israel Defense Forces (IDF) repelled the invaders in a fierce battle, which lasted about 15 months and claimed more than 6,000 Israeli lives.

Afterward, there was the 1956 Suez war (Sinai Campaign) between Israel and Egypt, fighting to end terrorist attacks on Israel and to remove the Egyptian blockade of Eilat, marking the final transformation of the IDF into a professional army capable of operating on a large scale (URJ Youth, 2016). The 1967 Six-Day War, in which Israel captured territory from Syria, Egypt, and Jordan. At the end of six days of fighting, Judea, Samaria, Gaza, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights were under Israeli control. Jerusalem, which had been divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule since 1949, was reunited under Israeli authority. The October 1973 war when Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise attack against Israel (6 October 1973), with Egyptian troops crossing the Suez Canal and Syrian troops penetrating the Golan Heights. Over the next three weeks, the Israel Defense Forces turned the tide of battle and repelled the attackers, crossing the Suez Canal into Egypt and advancing within 20 miles (32 km.) of the Syrian capital, Damascus, and the 82-85 war in Lebanon. The war in Lebanon can be divided into two phases. The first was conventional warfare, which lasted from June 6 to August 23, 1982, when the terrorists were driven out of Beirut. The second phase, which lasted for the next three years, was the counter-insurgency campaign. The war, which was originally

called "Operation Peace for Galilee" resulted in the removal of most of the PLO's organizational and military infrastructure from the area. Since then, Israel has maintained a small security zone in southern Lebanon adjacent to its northern border to protect its inhabitants in Galilee from further attacks by enemy elements. Israel withdrew from the security zone in 1999. Between wars, tensions have remained high in the area, and have resulted in skirmishes and terrorist activity.

In 2014, for example, the Israeli military attacked people in the Palestinian territories and caused the most casualties, namely, on July 8, 2014, as many as 600 civilians became victims of clashes. Despite the efforts made by the UN to mediate peace between the Israeli army and Hamas, a political movement that became known during the protest movement after the death of several Palestinians in a tragedy. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted on carrying out a massive massacre in the Gaza Strip. He ordered the Israeli army to pursue the Hamas group in densely populated residential areas of the Gaza Strip, which he considers a hideout for Hamas. Benjamin Netanyahu's order caused a strong reaction from the Hamas army, by striking back at the Israeli military headquarters area, which also caused casualties. The ceasefire then occurred again on July 27, 2014, but did not end as the world community hoped, but Israel again carried out missile attacks on the Palestinian territories. The victims throughout 2014 were 2,327 Palestinians and 88 Israelis.

This never-ending conflict has certainly attracted the attention of the whole world. Many parties are involved in supporting one party or seeking peace for both. Among the parties involved in the United States. The involvement of the United States can be found in several events

related to this conflict, among them by responding to the intifada movement in 1987 and forcing both sides to negotiate. In 1991, the Middle-East Peace Conference under Secretary James Baker managed to bring together Israeli officials with PLO (Palestine Liberation Front) officials to discuss the conflict. As well as his role as a mediator in other negotiations such as the Oslo Agreement, Camp David, and Annapolis.

Donald Trump as President of the United States unilaterally announced that the United States recognized Israel as the capital of Jerusalem, thus triggering a greater struggle than ever in the Middle East. The United States is said to be the first region in the world (including Britain) to claim Israel's independence after the proclamation. Many observers of the future global strategy at that time viewed the relationship between the United States and Israel as a dilemmatic relationship (Zanotti, 2021). With this comes the question "Why did President Donald Trump decide to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel?"

## 2. Analytical Framework

### 2.1 National Interest Theory

To understand more about international relations, the framework of the national interest theory is used to be understood so that we can understand the international manners discussed in the article. The experts argue that "nation-states act according to their national meaning" because the meaning of national interest finds the key to the merit of one nation-state to the other nation-state.

The following are six clusters of meanings that the nation-states need to achieve according to Thomas W. Robinson: The Primary Interests (the main interest of

one nation-state can't be interfered with by other nation-states, such as the preservation of physical attributes, khitah, and culture). Secondary Interests (centered under the national interest, containing the presence of a nation-state in which tucked protection of the nation-state from the outside of the region and includes diplomatic immunity to multiply diplomatic employees). Permanent Interests (the national interest that is relatively persistent and long-term. For example, the United States is reluctant to hold a close relationship with Israel). Variable Interests (the national interest of a nation-state that is considered vital to the service of the nation in limited situations. These interests are influenced by the usual assumptions and manners that functioned at that time. The General Interests (national interest that some nation-state designs to apply to a limited number of fields such as economic ties, trade, diplomatic ties, etc. For example, having reconciliation is the mass national interest of all nation-states). And Specific Interests (national interest that was formed by the excesses of logical flow. These interests are defined in terms of time and place.

### 2.2 Bilateral Relation Concept

The author also used the bilateral relation concept as the research framework to decide on a hypothesis as the answer to a research question. Bilateral relations or bilateralism is a political, cultural, and economic association between two countries. Most of the cooperation between nation-states is carried out bilaterally, for example, through political-economic agreements, embassies permutations, and international visits. The realization of bilateral relations between countries is applied through diplomatic relations as a form of formal relations between the two countries. Bilateral relations are cooperation between the two parties in

which each party has an interest in its national fulfillment. Like the phenomenon that the researcher is currently examining, the relationship between the United States and Israel must have the interest to be achieved, one of the ways is the cooperation that they have been doing for a long time. The foreign policy itself is an arena for meeting each country to fulfill their respective interests by conducting bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation.

This article will discuss the strong, alleged bilateral associations that are believed to have effects on the US-Israeli relation, including the role of the military, arms sales, joint courses, and permutations of information. In addition, there is regular US-Israeli cooperation in developing military technology, which later makes Israel one of the largest arms exporters worldwide, the United States is also Israel's largest trading partner, according to data from the International Trade Commission, America and Israel are the largest trading partners to Israel. 24, whereby the United States and Israel signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1985, and all customs duties between the two were abolished.

### **3. Methods**

The main method used in this research is the qualitative method. By using a discourse literature review method, namely by researching through books, theories, opinions, and article journals that are more relevant and focused on the related analysis. Other than that some of the information's extracted from supporters via the internet and in print. Although there are quantitative credits, they are merely attached to explain parts of the studies and describe a case that is related to the Palestine-United States at this time. By using a literature review strategy, explorers

can gather secondary information, namely adding reference literature regarding the benefits of the United States in the legalization of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which can be seen by analyzing the foreign policies that are made and its importance to the United States itself.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 US – Israel Relations**

The United States maintains relations with Israel while maintaining relations with Arab countries which incidentally are anti-Israel. Therefore, the United States is always involved in various rumors that combine with the clash between Israeli and Arab. The impact of the decision also affected the Middle East resistance such as Jordan and Egypt, where in his third visit, US Vice President Mike Pence to Middle Eastern countries did not go according to his expectations. This is because it sparked opposition from the Palestinian and Christians of Egypt (Lapidoth & Ahimeir, 1999). In addition to that, King Jordan Abdullah also explicitly suggested that the East Jerusalem sector be the future Palestinian sector, and also King Abdullah hope that the United States would not be careless in taking part in this case because it would be troubling the stability of the Middle East area.

Donald Trump's decision includes making fundamental deformations part of the good of the United States of America, where the previous President was still thinking about stability in the Middle East in making statements ahead of claiming Jerusalem as the mother of Israel's wall, which was included in the constitution of the Jerusalem Embassy Act 1995.

Despite trying several times as a mediator on several occasions, the United States seems to have close relations with

one of the parties to the conflict, namely Israel. For example, the United States' decision under the leadership of Lyndon Johnson to further strengthen security cooperation with Israel after Israel's victory in the six-day war in 1967. This close relationship seemed to continue under the leadership of Ronald Reagan who positioned Israel as an allied state in the Middle East in 1980. Not to mention the fact that from 1970 to 2019, the United States has vetoed 83 UN Security Council resolutions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And the warmest thing is the policy during the leadership of Donald Trump which seems to be very supportive of Israel through the relocation of the Israeli Embassy to Jerusalem. Through the double standard that the United States does by being a mediator but on the one hand often providing support to one of the conflict parties, it is time to question the involvement of the United States in the conflict. Is it helping to resolve the conflict or even hindering the creation of peace because it supports one of the conflict parties?

#### **4.2 Israel Lobby to the United States of America**

Since the 1960s, the United States has been a very strong supporter of Israel (Zanotti, 2021). It has played a key role in the promotion of good relations between Israel and its neighboring Arab states, namely Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt, along with several others in the 2020 Abraham Accords, while also holding off hostilities from other Middle Eastern nations such as Syria and Iran. Relations with Israel are a very important factor in the U.S. government's overall foreign policy in the Middle East, and the U.S. Congress has likewise placed considerable importance on the

maintenance of a close and supportive relationship.

Since 1985, the United States has provided nearly US\$3 billion in annual grants to Israel, which has been the largest recipient of annual American aid from 1976 to 2004 and the largest cumulative recipient of aid (\$146 billion, not inflation-adjusted) since World War II; approximately 74 percent of these funds are spent on the purchases of American goods and services. More recently, in the fiscal year 2019, the United States provided Israel with \$3.8 billion in military aid. Israel also benefits from around \$8 billion in American loan guarantees. While the United States has disbursed significant financial aid for Israel in the past, the primary form of American aid for Israel at present is military-oriented (see Israel–United States military relations) rather than economic. Moreover, the United States is Israel's largest trading partner, and Israel is the United States' 25th-largest trading partner; two-way trade totaled some \$36 billion in 2013.

The strong support that has been given by the United States to Israel is closely related to the existence of one of the most influential lobby groups in US politics, namely AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee). The existence of this group is not only aimed at lobbying the United States Congress but also the executive body of government, of course, to increase the United States' close relationship with Israel and to produce policies that are in line with it (Tonce, 2016). AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) is an interest group that has a strong desire to establish a Jewish state (Israel) in Palestine by using various methods, both financially and politically, to influence foreign policy, especially in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, AIPAC has a very important role.

The lobby strives to ensure that public discourse about Israel portrays it in a positive light, by repeating myths about Israel and its founding and by publicizing Israel's side in the policy debates of the day. Pro-Israel forces predominate in U.S. media and think tanks, which play an important role in shaping public perception as well as actual policy. The goal is to prevent critical commentary about Israel and to ensure continued public support for Israel (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006). The lobby also includes prominent Christian evangelicals. These "Christian Zionists" believe Israel's rebirth is part of Biblical prophecy, support its expansionist agenda and think pressuring Israel is contrary to God's will. Therefore, these communities will be highly supportive of Israeli causes (Bacevich, 2008). The lobby also gains massive support from various pro-Israeli businessmen that willing to donate large sums of money to advance Israel's interests. By preventing U.S. leaders from pressuring Israel to make peace, the Lobby has also made it impossible to end Israeli Palestinian conflict. With this extraordinary influence, it is highly unlikely that the Palestinian issue will be discussed among policymakers in the U.S. Most of the foreign political elites see the Israel-Palestine conflict from the Israeli perspective. So it will be hard to determine the even-handed policy that benefits both sides, so far the U.S. policy regarding that conflict has been one-sided in favor of Israel (Walt, 2017).

AIPAC's position as one of the strongest lobby groups in the United States is evidenced by its success in influencing several United States foreign policies that are not only related to but also benefit Israel such as the closer US-Israeli domestic security relationship as evidenced by establishing cooperation in the field of research and project development (Tonce,

2016). This impact is also seen in various aids in the form of military assistance which reached US\$ 1 trillion in the form of government assistance as well as guarantees for obtaining foreign aid for Israel which reached US\$ 2.52 trillion in 2006.

In addition to the beneficial effects for Israel already mentioned, Israel's lobbies through AIPAC also affect the United States' foreign policy that supports Israel, in this case, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this case, once again the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel can serve as an example of how strong this lobby is. That is just one of the interests Israel is trying to channel through this lobby group such as AIPAC's desire for the United States to recognize Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the event of refusal to return 4 million Palestinian refugees to Israel (Tonce, 2016).

The AIPAC lobby is not only about the interests and direct relations of the United States with Israel but also affects the United States through its relations with other countries through influential actors in it. In this case, AIPAC also encouraged the United States to strengthen ties with the future leader of Saudi Arabia Prince Muhammad bin Salman, who is known to support Jared Kushner's decision as Donald Trump's senior adviser to refer to Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank as belonging to Israel (Tonce, 2016). Meanwhile, Palestine was only given the Gaza Strip and parts of North Sinai. Thus, AIPAC in this regard needs to encourage the United States to strengthen relations with Prince Muhammad bin Salman who supports Israel's agenda in the Middle East, one of which is dealing with Palestine. This can also be beneficial for Israel because it will make Palestine weaker.

Some other specific United States foreign policies that are suspected of being influenced by AIPAC include:

1. Strengthening the United States-Israel domestic security relationship by establishing cooperation in research and project development.
2. Guarantee the acquisition of foreign aid for Israel, which reached US\$2.52 trillion in 2006, and economic and military support.
3. Banning US aid and contact with Hamas until its leader recognizes the existence of the state of Israel (Khumairoh & Fadhil, 2019).
4. Extending financial loans to Israel until 2011.
5. Increase military assistance to Israel to reach the US \$ 1 trillion in the form of government assistance.

#### 4.3 Israel -US Cooperation in the Defense Area

To strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries, the United States and Israel agreed to continue with Foreign Military Financing (FMF) military assistance every year. The assistance provided by the United States to Israel in the form of foreign aid funds known as Foreign Military Funding (FMF) is a form of military aid funds. These funds are generally used for two things. First, for the improvement of combat equipment and the protection of the state of Israel, such as aircraft, the development of conventional weapons, and the maintenance of Israeli army personnel.

Reflecting on the United States' strong commitment to Israel's security, the United States is willing to increase military assistance to Israel every year for 10 years. This MoU was agreed upon in 2007 during the Bush administration and implemented from 2009 to 2018. Then, on September 14,

2016, the MOU for the provision of US military assistance to Israel was established and signed by each representative from the two countries. The United States was represented by Thomas Shanon as the acting Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Meanwhile, Israel was represented by Yaakov Nigel as the acting head of Israel's National Security Council. The MOU will only be valid for the 2019 funding year until 2028 later.

The discussions agreed upon in the MOU are:

1. Increase the total Foreign Military Funding (FMF) for Israel to a total of \$33 billion, from the previous \$30 billion. This fund will be disbursed in the form of annual assistance during the funding period. This means the United States will disburse FMF \$3.3 billion annually 31 Jim Zanotti, Israel: Background and U.S. Relations in Brief. CRS: Washington. 2016. Pg. 7- 8. to fund the security of the state of Israel.
2. Enhanced Missile Defense cooperation by increasing cooperation funds up to \$5 billion, or \$500 million annually for the Missile Defense program.
3. Gradual abolition of OSP, which is planned to be completely decommissioned by 2028.
4. Prohibit Israel from using FMF funds to purchase fuel energy from the United States.

Israel started to build a company engaged in the field of defense in the form of using missiles in 1980. The company cooperated with the United States on several projects. Israel and the United States were first involved in the development of missile technology when President Ronald Reagan initiated the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) which

was later widely known as the Star Wars defense system, namely in 1983, on the basis that the United States was obliged to protect the security of citizens and alliance when it gets a missile attack threat. In practice, this defense system can destroy nuclear missiles launched by the opposing party toward America shortly after being launched. President Reagan's statement is in line with United States policy, which until now can be seen that Israel is the country that receives the largest amount of foreign aid. This amount can be estimated to take up a quarter of the United States' share of foreign aid.

The United States cooperates with Israel on many anti-ballistic missile defense systems projects such as David's Sling, X-band Radar, The Arrow, Arrow II, High Altitude Missile Defense System (Arrow III), and Iron Dome. Iron Dome is an anti-ballistic missile defense system project developed by an Israeli-owned company. The company named Rafael Advanced Defense System is designed to be able to destroy short-range rockets that attack from a maximum distance of 70 km and can work efficiently in all weather conditions.

This project is based on Israel's response after the dispute between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006 when Hezbollah launched 4,000 rockets toward the northern part of Israel which claimed lives and resulted in the destruction of civilian homes. Israel became impelled to create a new defense system that is expected to protect the country from the short-range rocket and missile attacks.

The Iron Dome has been in operation since 2011 and has become an important system in Israel's overall defense system. This system, which is often referred to as the "queen of battle", played a major role in the Israel-Hamas conflict in 2012 until the Israel-Hamas conflict in 2014. This system proves that with such a

deterrent, casualties can be reduced with the help of its bow accuracy rate of up to 90%.

The United States added aid to Israel in 2014, namely, Israel received Iron Dome anti-missile assistance twice a year where usually the assistance received was once a year, which at that time was still under the Obama administration. Ehud Barak Israel's defense minister revealed that Israel still needs 13 Iron Dome batteries to protect all parts of Israel from the threat of short and medium-range missiles launched by Hamas and Hezbollah.

#### **4.4 Influence of US Involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Resolution (Emerging Global Response)**

The US is an important factor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as part of the United Nations Security Council. Moreover, for the US, Israel with its liberal-democratic understanding is a country that can be used as a strategic asset so that on a moral basis it must be supported. So with this special position, Israel has been receiving support from the US in the form of politics, economics, and the military. One of the events that attracted attention when looking at the US involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was when the US declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (Yusrina, 2019). This recognition is the result of increasingly close cooperation between the US and Israel. The reason is, that President Trump's action has triggered various reactions from the international community, this is because by doing so the US is considered to have violated the United Nations Security Council resolution, namely resolution number 181 of 1947 concerning the status of Jerusalem as an area under international authority. And given separate legal and political status (separated body). This resolution is a

mandate to the Arab state (Palestine) and the Jewish state (Israel), each of which has independent status (UN document, 'Chapter 12: The Status of Jerusalem':9).

Reactions emerged from various circles, including the Palestinian Arabs themselves, who began to stage political protests in Gaza and the West Bank after Trump's announcement, so the United Nations Security Council immediately held an emergency meeting and rebuked Israel for causing the loss of more than 60 lives (Palestinian protesters on the Gaza border). This action occurred on the same day that the US opened its embassy in Jerusalem and the same day as the 70th anniversary of the founding of Israel (Yusrina, 2019). The second reaction emerged at the regional level, namely when Turkey initiated a meeting with member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on December 13, 2017, which then resulted in the Istanbul declaration discussing the rejection and condemnation of the US for its unilateral decision-making. The third reaction emerged at the international level when the United Nations Security Council in its session affirmed relevant resolutions to encourage negotiations to resolve the problem. Even so, Trump did not retract the earlier confession and instead began funding the US embassy in Jerusalem. Paraguay followed the move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (Yusrina, 2019).

## 5. Conclusion

The United States as one of the major dominant actors also plays an important role in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine to this day. the United States' closeness to Israel seems to strengthen this statement which is also evidenced by the great assistance that the

United States has always provided to Israel. Not infrequently this often supports Israel to launch aggressive actions that cause heavy losses to Palestine as one of the main parties involved in this conflict.

U.S. foreign policy in the Israel-Palestine conflict has always been biased which tends to favor Israel. This biased attitude is worsening under President Donald Trump's administration. His policies regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict have to support Israeli causes. His policies include recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (Shalom & Michael, 2018), defunded NGO funding such as UNRWA and USAID which undermined their operations in Palestinian territory (Deutsche Welle, 2018), withdrew from UN bodies that accused hostile towards Israel (Borger, 2018), also the latest move was to recognize Israel's sovereignty over Golan Height (Romo, 2019). This attitude has certainly served Israel's interest. Trump's administration won't even engage with the Palestinian or include Palestinian narratives when making regional decisions. Previous administrations at least have recognized Palestinians as an important entity that is also influential in the peace process with Israel. Further, Trump is undermining any future peace deal opportunities by supporting Israel (Ward, 2019).

The dominant support of the United States of America for Israel also causes its role as a mediator in conflict resolution to not be optimal because of the inclination and support for one party which actually hinders the achievement of the peace process and even adds to the chaos of the existing situation. It is necessary to have independent actors who can be neutral towards both parties so that the conflict that has been going on for a long time can

immediately find common ground that can be accepted by both parties.

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