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The U.S. Foreign Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Case Study: George W. Bush & Obama Administrations

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master Degree in Civilization and
Literature**

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Dedication:

I dedicate this work to the spirit of my dear father, who always wanted to see me in this position. For you my mom, thanks for always being there for me. To my brothers Farid and Bilal, sister –in- law Manel, and my little nephew “ Laid”. To my grandparents, uncles, aunts, and all my relatives.

I also want to remember my close friends, Nadjat, Fatima and Leila, and I would like to tell them that without your love and support I could not complete this task, Thank you.

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Abstract:

This study deals with a topic of the American attitudes and policies toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during Bush and Obama administrations, which came as a result of reform subject matter of the United States. After the events of 9/11, the American political discourse has become more focused on combating terrorism and spreading democracy in the Middle East. The importance of deciding on the issue of Palestinian Authority reforming in the interest of the United States' foreign policy is becoming increasingly important to define the parameters of its new Middle East policy, and to tighten its control and influence on it. Indeed, the political behavior of the Palestinian leadership has sent indicators on the difficulty of reaching the ceiling of Palestinian demands to a level consistent with Israel's security concerns, which should re-evaluate the role played by the Palestinian leadership in the peace process as a whole, and how it contributed to the failure to reach a settlement agreement. On this basis, the researcher assumed that the need of the United States to achieve the Israeli-Palestinian agreement "peace" serves the nation's projects and interests.

الملخص

تتمحور هذه الدراسة حول موضوع المواقف والسياسات الأمريكية تجاه الصراع الإسرائيلي-الفلسطيني خلال إدارة كل من جورج دابليو بوش و أوباما والتي جاءت كنتيجة لموضوع الإصلاح في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. بعد أحداث 9/11 ، أصبح الخطاب السياسي الأمريكي أكثر تركيزاً على مكافحة الإرهاب ونشر الديمقراطية في الشرق الأوسط. حيث أصبحت السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة مهتمة بشكل متزايد بالقضية الفلسطينية إصلاح سلطتها لتحديد معالم سياستها الجديدة في الشرق الأوسط ، وتشديد سيطرتها وتأثيرها عليها. خاصة أن السلوك السياسي للقيادة الفلسطينية قد أرسل مؤشرات حول صعوبة الوصول إلى سقف المطالب الفلسطينية إلى مستوى يتناسب مع مخاوف إسرائيل الأمنية ، والتي يجب أن تعيد تقييم الدور الذي تلعبه القيادة الفلسطينية في عملية السلام ككل. ، وكيف ساهمت في الفشل في التوصل إلى اتفاق التسوية. على هذا الأساس ، افترض الباحث أن حاجة الولايات المتحدة إلى تحقيق "اتفاقية السلام" الإسرائيلية - الفلسطينية تخدم مشاريع ومصالح الأمة.

Résumé :

Cette étude traite du sujet des attitudes et des politiques Américaines à l'égard du peuple israélo-palestinien sous l'administration de George W. Bush et d'Obama, suite au sujet de la réforme aux États-Unis d'Amérique. Après le 11 septembre et la Le discours politique américain est devenu davantage axé sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et la propagation de la démocratie au Moyen-Orient. L'importance du rapport sur la réforme de l'AP pour la politique étrangère américaine est devenue plus importante dans la définition des paramètres de sa nouvelle politique au Moyen-Orient, Et renforcer son contrôle et son influence. Surtout que le comportement politique des dirigeants palestiniens a envoyé des indicateurs sur la difficulté d'atteindre le plafond des demandes palestiniennes à un niveau correspondant aux préoccupations de sécurité d'Israël, qui devrait réévaluer le rôle joué par les dirigeants palestiniens dans le processus de paix dans son ensemble. Et comment cela a contribué à l'absence de règlement. Sur cette base, le chercheur a supposé que le besoin américain d'un «accord de paix israélo-palestinien» sert ses intérêts et les intérêts de la nation.

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List of Abbreviations:

AOR Area of Responsibility

AIPAC American Israeli Public Affairs Committee

AICE American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise

CIA Central Intelligence Agency

EU European Union

FTA Free Trade Agreement

ICC International Criminal Court

U.S United States

USA United States of America

PA Palestinian Authority

PLO Palestinian Liberation Organizatio

U.S.S.R Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USNA United States Naval Academy

OA Office of Administration

WWII Second World War

General Introduction :

With the establishment of the State of Israel on part of the British mandate in Palestine since 1948, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become one of the most pressing issues on the international scene. And the real beginning of US-Israeli relations was marked by the establishment of the State of Israel, where the US administration was the first to recognize the initiative to show its support to Israel nearly from President Truman to Obama.

Literature Review:

Several works and research have been conducted on Bush's policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its effects on the American foreign policy, among them Robert O. Freedman who said that Bush's policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was characterised by three distinct stages in which he showed different attitudes toward the conflict. Notably, when he first took office in 2001, he extremely distanced himself of Clinton's activist policy. Moreover, Freedman asserts that President Bush was a little bit biased to the Israeli side, and immediately after the 9/11 attack he declared his focus on fighting al'Qaeda organization and some Palestinian organizations accusing them as its partners. Due to these events Bush refused to launch the negotiations between Israel and Arafat warning him first to stop violence and surrender terrorists, until the situations calmed down he announced his two peace processes "Roadmap in 2003, and Annapolis in 2007".

Turning to the administration of Barack Obama, there were also plenty of researchers who took the chance of analysing its attitudes towards the mentioned conflict such as; Carol Migdalovitz who claimed that despite the difficulties he faced in his first term presidency, Obama was active to achieve peace between Palestine and Israel, and he did never hesitate to communicate with both side's leaders to engage in peace talks. The author pointed that from

that time, disagreements between the US and Israel officials begun mainly over the settlement freeze and other issues that were never in Israel's favor.

Aim of the Research:

The present study focuses on the US-Israel relationship and its influence on US foreign policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. In addition to that, the topic concentrates on Presidents Bush and Obama efforts and attitudes towards the conflict between Israel and Palestine as well as the approaches taken by both of them to reach a peaceful final solution to the conflict.

Statement of the Problem:

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the research attempts to look for answers to several questions related to the US foreign policy and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during George W. Bush and Obama administrations. And the most important question that should be answered is, in general what were the attitudes and policies of Presidents Bush and then Obama towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?.

Hypotheses:

President George W. Bush may neglected the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and showed no intention of change until the last months of his second term.

Obama may was lucky somehow that he had an islamic roots, thus made him most welcomed by all the Arabs and expected to be the president of change.

The American efforts for peace may hampered by the delay of dealing with the subject as a priority.

Approach of Study:

The applied approach in this research is historical, in which the reliance was on analysing historical events to describe the policy of the United States towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, the presented historical approach explains in detail the policy of Presidents Bush and Obama to determine what the conflict is, and how to resolve it.

Division of Chapters:

The present work is divided into three chapters: the first chapter provides a theoretical overview of the pre-Obama Bush administration and its political attitude towards the conflict, his first years and the challenges he had faced in the Middle East. The second chapter deals with the coming new administration by Barack Obama, his relationship with the Arabs as well as the Israelis, and the road of peace attempts he had taken to resolve the dispute. While the last chapter focused mainly on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and its history within the American involvements. Furthermore, this chapter will attempt to discover the reasons behind its continuous failure.

Chapter 1

The U.S Foreign Policy and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict during the Bush Administration

1-1 Introduction:

After the Second World War and the change in the balance of international forces in favour of the United States of America, it became the first country that began to hold the international issues files and sought to resolve them according to its visions and interests. These issues include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the most difficult issue at that time where the United States had played a crucial diplomatic role for the unresolved negotiations between the two parties.

The aim of the present chapter is to examine the US position toward the dispute especially during Bush's presidency; additionally, to discover the factors and principles that shaped his strategies toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although he was not much interested in the conflict and peace talks during his first term of presidency, he showed the opposite in the next term, and changed his position after the September 11 terrorist attacks. This chapter will attempt to help us having a better understanding of his policy toward the region, and thus the results he brought with his policies to resolve the conflict.

1.2. A Brief History of the American -Israeli Relationship and Cooperation:

The United States has long been considered Israel's greatest supporter since its establishment as a state in Palestine. Dieter Schmaglowski pointed that most U.S –Israel relations studies emphasized the role of American domestic politics while others mention broader security considerations. He added that the assumption which is not accepted is that strong relationship between the two is rooted in mutual national interests due to their pluralism in social, ideological, and political makeup. He added that the analysis done by Seth P. Tillman concerning the U.S. policy toward the Middle East, argued that the domestic political considerations were primarily the basis of Washington's support for the creation of

the state of Israel. He asserted that the roots of the early American commitment to Israel were “shared values and sentiments, duty and affiliation.” The same opinion was shared by Eytan Gilboa through his study on U.S public opinion polls; he reached similar results stating that the most important basis for the American attitude towards Israel is the existence of common values(30, 31).

Actually, Jim Zanotti said: since the Cold War, the U.S-Israeli relationships have reinforced bilateral cooperation in many areas. Nevertheless, leaders from the two countries periodically differ on key issues (1).

The beneficial alliance between the United States foreign policy and Israel was mainly based on the principle of “self determination” which means that since the end of the First World War, the Americans were having a faithful belief about the legal existence of Israel in the Palestinian land after the UN recognition of the Israelis right to exist. Hence, the UN recognition was followed by the approval of the partition plan of British controlled Palestine in 1947 and, again, when it accepted the Israeli application for membership of the organization in 1949. In this vein, Paul D. Miller claimed that the U.S granted all those quantities of support and aid to Israel as a reward for being the unique partner in achieving civil liberties and support democracy(18, 19).

The American Israeli relations had officially begun in the aftermath of the W W II when the Middle East became a subject matter in the American eyes; accordingly, the US needed to invade the Middle East for securing its interests, namely oil resources, and to support Zionism for the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine. This plan was applied after 1945. Therefore the US support for Israel was mainly implicit in the early years; yet, it took its characterization as “special” later on after 1948 with the official establishment of Israel’s State on Palestine.

Particularly, the Eisenhower doctrine was a Cold War strategy aiming to wrest the Arab countries away from the U. S. S. R, when the French, British and Israeli made a plan to invade the Suez Canal 1956; the US threatened to impose economic sanctions against Israel even to expel the country from the United Nations (UN). Although Eisenhower threatened Israel to withdraw from Sinai, he also acknowledged the legitimacy of the Israeli security concerns (Anziska Seth 16). With the coming of the new president John F. Kennedy to the White house, the US foreign policy witnessed a shift toward the Middle East. The new president took a step to engage in political relations with the region adversaries like Jamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt to promote the regional stability. Besides, the Cold War challenges obliged the US and pushed US closer to Israel for protecting the Middle East interest against the Soviet Union and made Kennedy the first president to define the American Israeli relations as “special” (16).

Obviously, one of the most important things that strengthened the US relations with Israel was the Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidency who decided to supply the country with direct arms shipments, including Skyhawk aircraft with strike capability. Although Johnson’s focus on the Vietnam may have shifted the Middle East to lower priority, the outbreak of the Six Days War of 1967 moved the region and the fate of US Israeli relations to a center stage. In 1980 with the election of Ronald Reagan; relations with Israel were granted the strategic priority, and his administration marked the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding enshrining bilateral cooperation with Israel on November 30, 1981. This alliance included military cooperation between US and Israel as the special status of an ally for the first time. The development of the American-Israeli relation continued to be seen in every war that involved Israel and Arab countrie, in which the US never hesitated to help the Israeli forces and strengthened its alliance.

Our two nations have a lot in common, when you think about it. We were both founded by immigrants escaping religious persecution in other lands. We both have built vibrant democracies. Both our countries are founded on certain basic beliefs, that there is an Almighty God who watches over the affairs of men and values every life. These ties have made us natural allies, and these ties will never be broken.

— President George W. Bush (Remarks National Dinner
Celebrating Jewish Life in America, September 14, 2005)

In terms of the strategic interests, Israel often cooperated with the United States concerning military development and intelligence gathering. The US aid for Israel has increased by over 400% after the Israeli victory of 1967 war to become the United States' largest recipient of aid in 1974 (Mast 4). It was stated by the AIPAC that the United States and Israel have a deep strategic partnership aimed at confronting the common threats to both nations. Many Scholars like John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen J. Walt viewed that the U.S.-Israel relationship is a strategic motive that would make the United States more secure (5).

By the same token and in terms of trade cooperation, the US- Israel Free Trade Agreement is typically treated as footnote in most discussions of US trade policy .It was the first free trade negotiated by the United States signed in April 1985. The main aim of the agreement to US trade policy is in setting several precedents for its trade policy and provide some lessons for the broader debate over the value of bilateral free trade agreements. Thus the US-Israel FTA was first amended, and later complemented by the US-Jordan agreement in

order to eliminate the discrimination done by the US-Israel FTA against Palestinians and Jordanians (Rosen 51).

Besides the mutual US-Israel benefits from the FTA, both of them were looking for personal advantages to gain from the agreement. On one hand, at the US level the goals in pursuing the agreement (FTA) with Israel were. First, to demonstrate strong bilateral relations and reduce discrimination against US exporters caused by the EC and Israel 1985. Second, the U.S. aimed to strengthen the Israeli economy and reduce the dependence on the American foreign assistance, and last one was to make the major trading countries make a forward step for the multilateral negotiations. On the other hand, because of the Arab boycott, Israel first needed the trade agreement to engage to markets in high income countries like United States and Europe. And then it seeks to strengthen the ties with the United States (52).

The main objective behind the FTA may be the elimination of all tariffs and quotas of agricultural products. Tariffs were reduced according to schedules, and currently tariffs in industrial products are free between the US and Israel. In the agreement first years, the value of trade between the US and Israel was estimated to \$4.8 billion or less than 1 percent of US total trade. Between 1986 and 2000, the Israeli total exports had grown on average by a little more than 11.5% per year. And since 1985, Israeli imports have grown by 9.5% (Rosen 53-56).

As another form of cooperation between the United States and Israel, the "AICE" enterprise, was established in 1993 as a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization to strength the two States relations by emphasizing the fundamentals of the alliance and the values our nations share. Actually the enterprise worked for the exchange of views concerning the military cooperation between the two nations and facilitate the formation of partnership

between Israelis and Americans. In addition, it aimed to explore common historical interest issues between U.S-Israel people and governments (Bard 375).

1-3 George W. Bush Policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

3.1 Bush's policy prior to 9/11 attacks:

Throughout all its eight years, the Bush administration struggled to make peace between Israel and Palestine where he sought to get rid of riots and violence between the two parties. It can be said that the new administration succeeded in creating a kind of temporary cohabitation between Israel and Palestine.

When George W. Bush took office on January 20, 2001, he spent a long time in dealing with some political issues, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition, the administration was facing a kind of disagreements over such issues. During his first term, Bush set four main goals to control the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. First, he was influenced by the failure of Clinton legacy to resolve the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, so he treated the situation with a hands-off policy as a mantra in his early months of presidency. "Hands off" means a policy by which the U.S would remain an Israeli supporter while leaving the Palestinians to fend for themselves. However, this approach ended in the aftermath of the brutal events of 9/11(Marrar 21).

The Bush administration's hands off policy to the Middle East changed after a few months in office when he had started to criticize the Palestinian leadership's efforts to control the violence in relation to the Al-Aqsa Intifada (149-150). The Bush team noticed that the Intifada had grown bloodier months before the transition in Washington and it was necessary to intervene and reduce the level of violence and calm the region. In his first meeting with the NSC, Bruce Riedel, a CIA official career who had been the NSC's senior director for the

Middle East under Clinton, described the consensus by saying that it is not the time for peacemaking; now is the time for conflict management (Abrams 5-6).

During the NSC meeting on January 30, 2001, Bush made it clear that he had no intention to continue the Arab-Israeli diplomacy. He maintained that he was going to correct the imbalances of Clinton administration concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by tilting it back toward Israel to get things back to balance. Moreover, Bush was deliberately against appointing a special envoy to the Middle East peace process in order to counter Clinton's policy who relied heavily on Dennis Ross in that role (Kurtzer, Lasensky, Quandt, Spiegel, Telhami 157-158).

Following President Bush's succession to office on 7 March 2001, Ariel Sharon became the prime minister of Israel. Sharon expected that there would be a meeting of minds between himself and President Bush, and he had high hopes of his administration. However, during his first foreign visit to the White House he received a different secluded policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and seemed to ignore Clinton's peace proposals for the region(Qurie 37).

Therefore, at the conference of the Pro-Israeli AIPAC lobby, when Sharon visited Washington in mid-march 2001; Powell stated that "leaders have the responsibility to denounce violence, strip it of legitimacy [and] stop it" While Sharon said that Jerusalem would remain united under Israel sovereignty and that Israel would not negotiate under the threat of violence (Singer and Grossman 224).

The failure of the Camp David negotiations and the Palestinian Intifada displayed the US peacemaking efforts. Instead of an agreed divorce by negotiating a two state solution, Israel under its new leader Sharon began to enforce separation on the ground by building a security barrier bending deep the West Bank to protect settlements beyond the 1967 lines, furthermore,

he cut off East- Jerusalem from the West Bank hinterland. In addition to that, the new US President Bush was determined not to intervene diplomatically in any peace talks between Israel and Palestine as long as Arafat did not seek to stop violence. Besides that for any peace talks to be resumed, the USA and Israel insisted that violence had to be stopped (Serry 16).

The Mitchell Report a Sharam el-Sheikh fact-finding commission created by former President Bill Clinton to find out what factors contributed to the renewed violence that followed the Camp David failure. Moreover, the commission aimed to explore ways to achieve a permanent settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians. The Report was chaired by former U.S. senator George Mitchell who released its findings to public in May 2001. The Mitchell Report called on the Palestinian Authority and Israeli government to take immediate steps to end violence brought by the Second Intifada and the suicide bombing activities by the Palestinian militants. Moreover, the report made three main recommendations. It, on the one hand suggested the Palestinian Authority to renew cooperation with Israel to ensure security and prevent Palestinians from using populated areas to fire at Israel. On the other hand, the Israeli government was required to freeze all settlement activities, withdraw the military forces to positions prior to 28 September, 2000 in order to reduce the number of violence confrontations, encourage non-lethal responses to unarmed Palestinian demonstrators, and lift the closure and transferring all tax revenues owed and allowing Palestinians working in Israel to return to their jobs. (Deeb II 25-26).

3.2 Bush's policy from 9/11 events to the Karine A Affair:

The World Trade Center attacks put the White House in crisis mode and resulted in a major reversal of US foreign policy. In few weeks later, many countries in the Middle East provided assistance to the U.S. in its fight against terrorism. These nations included long-standing allies, as Turkey and Oman, as well as countries that have already been associated with terrorism,

such as Syria and Yemen. The U.S. position in most of the Arab world is declining even among its allies such as Egypt and Jordan. The main reason for the tension in US-Arab relations was the increasing violence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which had begun well before the 9/11 attacks. After the attacks, Prime Minister Sharon used President Bush's campaign against terrorism to justify Israeli military operations against Palestinian targets which were mostly won by President Bush's public backing. At the same time, Israeli-US relations were both closer and difficult. Despite the US support that Israel had received from Bush for the suicide bombings, he was not satisfied with the conflict due to its effects on his policy in the region (599).

After Mitchell's recommendations were never implemented because of the absence of any American highest effort, there was another try to end violence by the 'Tenet Plan' which was an Israeli-Palestinian plan for security and ceasefire proposed by CIA director George Tenet on June 13, 2001. It stipulated that Israel and the PA would immediately resume security cooperation, take immediate measures to impose a cease-fire, and present each other with information on terrorist threats (Emerson, Tocci 41-42).

In October 2001, shortly after the 9/11 events Bush became the first US president to publicly come out for the establishment of a Palestinian state as the only way to resolve the conflict peacefully. But at some point in the evolution of his thinking over the next few months, Bush seems to have realized that there is something strange about supporting the creation of a Palestinian state run by a terrorist like Yaser Arafat and his followers (Rosen 132). In the same context, Professor John Davis said that the Bush administration has retreated from Sharon's 'security fence', which is being built along the West Bank. This fence, along with settlement and roads already in the West Bank, will make it impossible to create a viable Palestinian state (179).

The U.S. continued to press both Israel and the PA to commit to the cease-fire arrangement of 29 August, which has been mediated by the high representative for the common and security of the EU Javier Solana, although no new political initiative or any progress was made. Sharon, who rejected personal calls from President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell to resume talks with the Palestinian Authority on October 18, 2001, suspended all contacts with the Palestinian Authority and gave the IDF's approval to escalate its policy of launching attacks against Palestinians. To engage in terrorist acts and threatening to wage war against Arafat, some members of the Knesset wing went further, calling for Arafat to be expelled from the West Bank and Gaza.

Within hours of Zeevi's assassination, the Israeli army deployed helicopter gunships over Palestinian cities and transferred troops to external parties in Jenin (Zone A). On October 18th, Israeli forces reoccupied Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah, in the next day, Israel entered Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Qalqiliya and Tulkarem the following day, and on October 22, the United States condemned the reoccupation of West Bank cities and towns in Area A as "unacceptable" and called on Israel to withdraw immediately. Israel was forced to withdraw from the West Bank cities, but its army continued to occupy areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority and assassinate senior Hamas members. With no new political initiatives in full swing and without any diplomatic progress on the horizon, Israeli-Palestinian clashes continued throughout November and December (Dean 567).

In November 19th, 2001, in a speech in which he gave more details on the administration's views on the establishment of a Palestinian state, Secretary of State Powell announced that the United States had appointed Anthony Zinni as its Special Envoy to the Middle East on an immediate mission to help Parties to achieve a permanent cease-fire and move along the lines of the Tenet Security Action Plan and the Mitchell Report. "Without a cease-fire, we are still trapped in the moving sand of hatred," Powell said. In other words, the

administration will first focus on stopping the ongoing violence before addressing long-term political issues. Therefore, the story of Zinni reflects how developments on the ground, primarily Arafat's unwillingness to counter Palestinian terrorism and to impede progress towards peace laid the foundation for the Israeli attack in April - and the US response. However, Mearsheimer and Walt completely ignore Zinni's views on US decisions time, perhaps because it illustrates a source of other US policy from the lobby.

Zinni focused his efforts on reaching a consensus among Israelis and Palestinian Security Committees respectively appointed by Sharon and Arafat to proceed the cease-fire under the existing framework announced by George Tenet. Zinni made extensive trips. On the Israeli side, he pointed out 'security' and that the troops were willing to risk getting Tenet in the game, he wanted. Before returning to the United States after his first weeks on the land, Zinni costs each side with a homework to provide it with a specific list of steps that can be taken to implement each stage of the Tenet Plan (Fishman 173-174).

Zinni's mission collapsed in March 2002 amid a wave of Palestinian suicide bombings in Netanya and several other Israeli cities. It was not until June 2002 that President Bush presented his comprehensive plan for an Israeli-Palestinian settlement (Rabinovich 142).

On January 3, 2002, the Karine A, a Gaza bound ship was seized by the Israeli forces for carrying 50 tons of terrorist weapons from Iran which Arafat and security advisor Mohammad Dahlan contended that it was personal aim of which they were unaware. Arafat's denial made pounded his position in the Israeli and U.S eyes. In this context, Powell noted that: He cannot tie [the Karine A affair] directly to Chairman Arafat on the basis of the information that is available to him, but it is certainly a case where he should have known and may well known. Powell just can't prove that Arafat did know or had direct control over the operation.

If Arafat was innocent as Powell pretend, he still bore the responsibility for the Palestinian leader's actions (Zoughbie 26). Arafat was identified by the Bush administration as the main cause of all problems and the obstacle in the road for peace process. In order to restore the legitimacy within the U.S, Arafat wrote a letter to Powell accepting the whole responsibility of the Karine A incident as head of the Palestinian authority. Unfortunately, the letter was received when damage was already done (27).

Bush was convinced through the Karine A incident that freedom was the antidote to evil in Palestine and the Middle East. Bush's main focus in the address was "terrorism" in states such as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea which he named the axis of evil (28).

In order to achieve peace for Palestinians and Israelis to live in stable conditions, Bush believed that the current Palestinian authority lead by Arafat should be replaced and changed. He carried on: "Today, Palestinian authorities are encouraging, not imposing, terrorism," he carried on: "The United States will not support the establishment of a Palestinian state until its leaders engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists and dismantle their infrastructure." (June 24, 2002). In the meanwhile, Bush said the United States, the European Union, and Arab States were willing to help the Palestinians to improve their political and economic system (CNN.com. Bush: Palestinians need new leader, June 24, 2002).

According to Carol Migdalovitz, the Bush administration didn't have an initial prominent role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks, even more, there was no special Middle east envoy appointed by the Secretary of State Colin Powell. The administration focused mainly on the peace process after the September 11, 2001 as a part of the war on terrorism.

Lewis D. Solomon claims that as a promotion of Democracy in the Middle East, on June 24th, President Bush delivered his long –awaited speech that fixed the new form of the U.S

policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian disagreement. Throughout the speech, President Bush called on the Palestinians to give up on Yassar Arafat and elect a new democratic leader to gain the U.S support to create a Palestinian state (40). In the way of highlighting his administration's relationship and support to Israel, in the White House Bush spoke to the American Jewish Committee and said:

we will speak up for our principles, and we will stand up for our friends in the world. And one of our most important friends is the State of Israel At the first meeting of my National Security Council, I told them a top foreign policy priority is the safety and security of Israel. My administration will be steadfast in supporting Israel against terrorism and violence, and in seeking the peace for which all Israelis pray (May 3, 2001).

Despite the fact that Bush was a great Israeli supporter, he did not agree with them in response to settlement activities; evenmore, he cut the amount of loan guarantees available by hundreds of millions of dollars. During the first year of the Second Intifada, Bush prepared for two main things, firsts the imposition of arms embargo on spare parts for U.S -made helicopters to protest its equipment use in the killing of Palestinian leaders. Second, he exposed the peace process back plan to end the violence. As U.S president, Bush was the first one who made the Palestinian State establishment an explicit objective in his foreign policy. Furthermore, after he had unveiled his Roadmap for peace which called for the Israeli settlement activities freeze among other issues, he succeeded to obtain the UN Security Council resolution support and united the international community behind his plan (Mitchell, Sachar 24- 25).

His Roadmap plan was drawn up by the “Quartet” – the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. The main aim of the plan was to suggest how a settlement might be approached but not to end it. Actually the plan contained a phased timetable which all centered upon the idea of security establishment before a final settlement. While the first phase called for supporting the two-state solution from both sides, end the Palestinian violence and act against terrorism and attempt to stop the Israeli settlement activities. While the second one focused on the creation of a Palestinian state with provisional borders at an international conference (news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle-east/6666393.stm History of failed peace talks).

Gregory S. Mahler and Alden R.W. Mahler claimed that President Bush did not consider the Roadmap process as his priority and he did not even visit the Middle East as president until his last year in office 2008; as a result, the Roadmap has been questioned at its first steps. In 2003, the U.S focus was on Iraq invasion neglecting the peace initiatives. Moreover, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced in 2004 that as long as Palestine does not have suitable serious negotiators to be trusted.

At the same year, President Yasser Arafat died leaving his place to Mahmud Abbas who was elected in 2005 promising to advance negotiations with Israel. Shortly after, the cease-fire agreement had been accepted by militant groups still embroiled in the al-Aqsa intifadha and the Israeli troops. In 2006 the election of Hamas which was considered by the U.S Department of State as a terrorist organization, represented a move away from the peace process. Consequently, the United States suspended its financial guarantees to the Palestinian Authority unless Saudi arrangements for a Hamas-Fatah agreement with the Palestinian Authority were resumed under Fatah in the West Bank, while Hamas remained in Gaza without any financial guarantee to date (29-30).

On November 20, 2007 President Bush wanted to leave his mark on the Middle East process, so he planned for another endeavor: the ‘Annapolis peace’ that was held on November 27 at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis. The conference marked in its first time the coming of both sides to negotiate and agree upon the two-state solution. The Annapolis peace conference also marked the Arab Nations’ spectacular attendance and number of participants which was inactive before. The Annapolis conference’s main Objective was walking in the Roadmap footsteps to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute (31).

Despite good faith initiatives for peace, there were many obstacles that stood in the way of success at the conference. On behalf of the Arab States, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia was the first one who showed his skepticism by saying that Annapolis peace conference would be another photo opportunity and no real progress was likely. President Bush responded that serious talks will take place after the conference, and the United States will be at a dead end. Unfortunately, spoilers stood in the conference way most notably the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who stated that “apart from hurting the Palestinians, this conference will accomplish nothing.” Hamas also opposed the conference stating that the conference will fail (Silva 49-51).

1-4 Conclusion:

With the establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine in 1948, the United States declared its support to Israel in a kind of faithful belief. Hence there was an intimate relationship between U.S and Israel in terms of trade and military. This chapter aims basically at showing the policy that U.S president, George W. Bush had adopted toward the Arab Israeli conflict during his first term of presidency. The 9/11 attacks led to a significant change in U.S. foreign policy as the main focus on fighting terrorism, namely in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Korea as axis of evil that must be fought. According to Bush, the U.S

efforts seeking the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel never took its complete road; because of al-Qaida terrorist attacks. The Karine A incident of January 2002 was the evident that made the Bush and Israel convinced of the Palestinian terrorists, then bush warned Arafat many times to arrest those terrorist and bring them to justice. As Arafat denied the Palestinian terrorists, U.S president Bush viewed that the U.S wouldn't help in the peace process unless the Palestinian authority changed, On the state of Union address 2002, Bush called for the leadership change and looking for a terrorism apposed authority. After Arafat's death President George W.Bush tried to build a good interesting relationship with the new Palestinian Aurhority chairman Mahmud Abbas. The Bush presidency continued to search for the conflict solution by proposing new peace plan trials, but unfortunately he was not lucky to bring peace to the Palestininas and Israelis.

Chapter 2

The Contributions of President Obama to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

2.1. Introduction:

When Obama officially took office on January 20, 2009, he was encompassed by some complex international issues to deal with. The most important was the Middle East, especially the Palestinian conflict with Israel. Unlike his predecessor, Obama that his foreign policy direction will not be as his forerunner's; he claimed that Bush did not consider the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of his foreign policy's priority, he rather tried to benefit from it. Moreover, he had asserted, through his many famous speeches such as the inaugural and Cairo speeches his ambitious vision to give the dispute its right and attempt to resolve it peacefully. Actually, Obama did not deny the position of the Middle East and its importance for the American foreign policy and showed his respect for Islam and promised to change the American bad image among the Islamic world. In fact, Obama's realistic tone within his speeches raised high expectations among the Arab Muslims in the Middle East about his intentions to create a new branch in the Israeli-Palestinian peace road. The chapter will highlight Obama's doctrines as a U.S president, and the Arab Islamic expectations which were held after he had announced his word about the nature of the Israeli- Palestinian disagreement. Obama rejected the American exceptionalism and neo-imperialism based on his deep democratic roots. He always wants to distance his foreign policy from those of his predecessor George W. Bush, as he had criticized his unilateralism and his ambition to democratize the whole world. He added that he is against the American policy especially with the Middle East accusing it of selfishness and love of utility. Instead, he stated that he would use force only to achieve the humanitarian rights.

2.2. President Obama's Doctrine:

President Obama was adhering to several principles and doctrines during his presidency, these doctrines included both the internal and external policies of the country. In this sense, Professor of public policy at Pepperdine University, Robert G. Kaufman has examined Obama's doctrine main tenets:

Tenet I: *“protect the World and the United States from the arrogance of the American power”*. Unlike his predecessors, Obama rejects the “American exceptionalism” and “neo-imperialism” conducted against the interest of other countries; moreover, he had also apologized several times for the American policy and attitudes used toward many countries especially, the Middle East.

Tenet II: *“Embrace multilateralism, rather than unilateralism or narrow coalitions of the willing, as the default presumption for American grand strategy*. This means that from the first, Obama was against multilateralism to Bush's unilateralism and his ambition to democratize the whole world. Instead of that Obama tends to emphasize legalism and the binding effects of the international treaties and norms. He believes to use force and multilateralism only to achieve the humanitarian goals that are considered by the international community as legitimate.

Tenet III: *“minimize the importance of ideology and regime type”* more than any previous American administration; Obama undertakes the regime type or ideology hand in hand with the international diplomacy. He narrowed the relations between the United States and any kind of totalitarian regime like his approach used with Raul Castro.

Tenet IV: *“Use of force as a rule sparingly, proportionally, multilaterally, for limited goals, with limited means and only as a last resort. Establish a high burden of proof to justify exceptions to this rule.”* Although Obama has proved to dislike U.S military interventionism, especially when it lacks the UN approval, he never stopped to intervene across the world. The United States has intervened in Libya with a NATO coalition in 2011 and is currently involved in air attacks in Syria since 2013 and against ISIS since 2014. Nevertheless, the American intervention in Libya exemplifies its tension to use force and “modus operandi” i.e. the main interest of any State should be being secure, not hegemonic. That convention was the same by which Obama opposed the creation of new Israeli settlement in the West Bank.

Tenet V: *“focus more on soft power and unconventional threats rather than hard power and great power rivalry”* Obama preferred to use soft power instead of hard power to make other states take a useful direction and secure the unconventional threats; moreover, he tried to apply and do so through his famous speeches in Cairo and Istanbul 2009 and signing an agreement on nuclear with Iran.

Tenet VI: *“accept gracefully the decline of the American power”* as part of his multilateral view, Obama accepts the notion that the United States loses its power as a global power in the world as well as the only pole of the diplomatic relations with the new centers such as the UN and the emergence of Asiatic countries namely China and India.

Tenet VII: *“conciliate and accommodate actual and potential rivals”* Obama went beyond stressing the need to conciliate the existing and potential adversaries of the United States (Cosmelli 11, 12, 13).

In a manner different from his predecessor Bush’s doctrine, Obama tended to move away from the unilateral of the war on terror and focus instead on his grand strategy and the use of “Soft Power”.

2.3. the New President and the Arab Expectations:

The Obama administration was expected to focus on the Palestinian cause immediately to stop Israeli settlement activities and to act as an honest broker in peace negotiations. Most Arabs believed that the United States was the first supporter and ally of Israel, prompting US President Barack Obama to rebuild US-Arab relations and change the American image among Arabs, especially in the Middle East. In his book "American Policy towards the Islamic World: Focus on the Post-9/11", Saleem Kidwai says that with a new US administration, a broad shift in the American approach to the Muslim world is justified. Because of his Islamic roots, the new president can play an important role in promoting peace and understanding in the world, especially between America and the Muslim world.

Unlike Bush, Obama has a cultural and racial diverse background which makes him more open to different religions, cultures and races. He has depended on multilateralism and stressed the importance of international cooperation to solve global problems. Kidwai continued to say that Obama is the first “post racial President” who can use his power to transform perceptions to the long-term advantage of the U.S and become a “ post-civilizational” President. To achieve his presidency goals in rebuilding good relations of mutual interest with the Muslim world and restore the US lost image , Obama is obliged first to look forward the future of Iraq and resolve the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Obama administration was expected to change the U.S foreign policy’s direction toward the Muslim world, as he was expected not to repeat the Bush mistakes (23, 24, 29).

Ahmed Y. Zohny stated: “John Esposito (2011) argued that the election of Barak H. Obama in 2008 created a new atmosphere in the Muslim World and globally as well, and it was a hope of potential redirection of U.S foreign policy. According to the later, Obama

announced in his campaign and election that he was pragmatic and technocratic who always cares about what is "succeeded." In his opening speech, Obama emphasized that his conversation with Muslims was hoped to build a good mutual interest relationship as he did at Cairo University in 2009 when he showed his appreciation of Islam and the Koran. He accepts Muslims in the United States, as well as through the show 2009 when he showed his appreciation to Islam and Quran. He was unlike his Predecessor George. W Bush when he declared that he accepts the Muslims in U.S, as well as through showing his sympathy toward the Palestinian dilemma (377).

2.4. the Yes We Can Speech and the New Beginning:

According to Eugenio Lilli, On 4 June 2009, through the famous speech on Egypt, President Obama as a promise of change for the Arab World stated:

I'm honored to be in the timeless city of Cairo [...] we meet at time of tension between the United States and Muslims around the World [...] [T]ension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalization led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam [...] this has bred more fear and mistrust [...] this cycle of suspicion and discord must end [...] I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual respect (3).

In fact Barak Obama's intention to change the U.S foreign policy toward the Muslim world has started from his inaugural address of January 2009, when he declared that "the U.S would seek a new way forward its relations with the Arab Muslim world built on mutual interest and respect"(June 4,2009). Two months later, while addressing the Turkish Parliament in Ankara, President Obama declared that "the U.S will never be at war with Islam; Instead it will seek better stable relations, and create a good atmosphere with the Muslims all over the World. Moreover, he said that U.S seeks a common ground and a respectful way of treating from the U.S side. (April 6, 2009)

In Cairo, along with promising to set a new beginning, Obama had also acknowledged that the previous U.S attitudes and foreign policies toward the Muslims were characterized by a kind of fear, mistrust, suspicion and discord. As he publicly pointed that his administration will work on reconstruct the U.S- Muslims relations to achieve primarily the goal of setting a "new beginning in US-Muslim relations. Obama's message of change was welcomed and accepted by both the domestic and international public opinions. Domestically he was given an initial approval rating of 68% by the US public opinion and classified near the top of the list of US presidents who was elected after World War II at the same level of President Dwight Eisenhower and only behind President John Kennedy. While internationally, a year after his inauguration, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (3, 4).

Dr. Ghassan Shabaneh viewed that President Obama in Cairo laid the foundation of his vision for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, he reiterated his vision at the United Nations General Assembly. The president, through his Cairo and another speech which he delivered on September 23, 2009, wanted to end the occupation and settlements. In addition, in his Cairo speech the president was absolutely clear and showed the U.S opposition to the Israeli settlements and occupation in the Palestinian territories, and in this context he said: "The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli

settlements”. However, there were no political, economic, or legal measures by the Obama administration for preventing Israel from building in the occupied Palestinian territories (4, 5).

Zaharana argued that president Obama in his first week in office granted his first television interview in the White House for an Arab satellite channel, and showed the two objectives that his administration would take in charge; the Palestinian Israeli conflict and to handle Afghanistan and Pakistan area (1).

2.5. Obama and His Policy toward Israel:

Within few weeks in office, Obama appointed George Mitchell as special envoy to the Arab-Israeli Peace Process with the same task as the Clinton administration. The decision was taken by the new president to make a distance between his foreign policies and those of George .W. Bush who showed only an opportunistic interest in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Unfortunately, Obama was not lucky because his election came at the end of the three weeks armed conflict between Palestine and Israel known as “Operation Cast Land and the Israelis invasion of Gaza Strip” (Cosmelli 11).

Therefore, Obama wanted to replace the unilateral policy pursued by the Bush administration with a policy of engagement with countries that had entered into conflict with the United States. In particular, he wanted to establish new relations with Islamic countries. As a result, to avoid the risk of appearing biased in the peace process, he considered the conflict a priority in his foreign policy agenda. In addition, he wanted to contribute as quickly as possible to the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis as a project that would weaken Iran's proxies (13).

In order to change the Image of the United States among the Arabs and throughout his interview with “Al-Arabiya” Obama said that his job for the Muslim world is to convey that

the Americans are not their enemy, and he added that they are all human beings, they were not perfect, so sometimes they make mistakes. As stated earlier, Obama promised a new course in Arab-Muslim relations, the strong historical between the United States and Israel told the public that America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable. It is based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied(Cairo University, 4 June 2009).

For the Palestinian side, the Palestinian people did not ignore - the vote between Muslims and Christians in pursuit of the homeland. Moreover, he said that America would not turn its back on the legitimate Palestinian aspirations for dignity, opportunity and their own state (Anziska 25).

According to Dov Waxman, President Obama was blamed by many Israelis and Israel supporters in the United States of being the reason for the tensions between the United States and Israel in recent years. They claimed that Obama is not really pro-Israeli; furthermore, they added that Obama did not know the real meaning of being a pro-Israeli, and it is believed by the American Jewish community and Israelis that Obama did not support the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, so he is not a pro-Israeli. Moreover Obama is not regarded as a "true friend" of the country. It is highly suggested by some analysts that the real problem is between the two leaders Obama and Netanyahu who politically came from different camps, Obama is liberal while Netanyahu a conservative. Even personally, they don't seem to like or trust each other (72, 73).

2.6. The Obama's First Steps toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

According to Itamar Rabinovich, the new President believed that he could change the reality of the US relations with the Arabs; therefore, he adopted the “linkage theory” which argued that the United States could have a smoother relationship with the Arabs and Muslims. During a congressional hearing in march 2010, the commander of the military's central command “General David Petraeus” was the one who made the most explicit articulation of the theory's view, he said that the enduring hostilities between Israel and its neighbors push them to a challenge of advancing their interests in the AOR [Area of Responsibility] (186).

After Obama had called for the settlements freeze in the Palestine, Netanyahu set several conditions including the Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish State, disarmament of the Palestinian State to guarantee Israel's security. Moreover, he added that Israel needs safe borders with Jerusalem remaining the united capital of Israel. When Obama insisted on a construction freeze, Netanyahu said that until the final-status agreement, Israel would not build new settlements and would not allocate land for new ones, but he disagreed to the idea of a construction freeze in existing settlements, arguing that “there a need to have people live normal lives”. On November 25, and after further give and take, a ten-month construction freeze decision was announced by Netanyahu to calm down the Obama administration without alienating the right wing of Netanyahu's own Likud Party and his coalition partners. Furthermore, these two decisions would clear the air between Washington and Jerusalem and help in renewing the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation (192).

Through the previous years, there had been a serious negotiations done by Ehud Olmert who presented Mahmud Abbas with a last minute, far-reaching proposal, to which the Palestinian leaders failed to respond. In May 2009 Olmert asked President Obama to reevaluate the whole Annapolis process. In his Cairo Speech, for the second time Obama had

called to freeze settlements due to the failure of Operation Cast Lead to resolve the problems in Gaza. And as it was said earlier , the US envoy George Mitchell had begun early in 2009 to renew the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as an urgent issue, but his efforts, President Obama and his Secretary of State Hillary Clinton could not passed the negotiation because Abbas refused to be in direct negotiation with Netanyahu exceptionally in terms of acceptable reference for him and his conditions which were unacceptable to Netanyahu who was sticking to his desire of the Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state and the national homeland of the Jewish people (193).

U.S president Barak Obama during his first four years in office, faced a hard pressure from a triple alliance formed of: the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acting in cooperation with both the Republican leadership in Congress (newly organized after its Tea Party's victories in the 2010 midterm elections), the potent congressional Lobby for Israel which is composed of an archipelago of an old, rich, and conservative Jewish organizations which had been headed by the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee [AIPAC], allied an Israeli supporters from the with right-wing Christian evangelical groups. This tripartite forced Obama to retreat from the decisions and positions which he had supported in his two first years in office, notably the Israeli settlement freeze from the occupied West Gaza, and his insistence on the return to the 1967 borders (Khalidi 1941).

2.7. the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiation Developments during Obama Administration:

According to Ali Abdul Rashid, President Obama was the first African-American president of the United States who had the vision of fighting racism, oppression, and segregation as well as spreading peace all over the world. Furthermore, he was unlike the former administrations whose efforts for making peace between two historic adversaries, the Israeli, and Palestinians didn't fulfill. Abdul Rashid argues that Obama is a man of integrity and the one who can achieve the Middle East peace. The peace challenge had begun directly with the historical turnout on November 4, 2008 when Obama declared that Middle East peace process is a gradual process that requires patience, diligence, and persistence (1).

Herbert C. Kelaman viewed that the Israeli Palestinian peace process has passed through many stages but, since the 1967 war the conflict of the two people returned to its origins. According to Kelamn, the peace process that has been begun with the Oslo accord in 1993 broke down with the failure of the Camp David Summit in 2000, followed by the onset of the second intifada(26).

At the same time, Carol Migdalovitz states that on his first full day in office 21 January he telephoned PM President Mahmud Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and Jordanian King Abdullah II to communicate about his engagement in the peace process activities from the beginning of his first term. The next day, Obama in cooperation with the State Secretary Hillary Clinton announced the appointment of former Senator George Mitchell as their special envoy for Middle East peace. Mitchell was supported by President Obama as fully empowered to represent the White House and State Department, thereby boosting his emissary's clout. On January 27, on his first television interview to Al-Arabiya Obama said: "I think it is possible for us to see a

Palestinian State [...] that is contiguous, that allows freedom of movement for its people, that allows for trade with other countries, that allows the creation of businesses and commerce so that people have a better life”.

During his first trip to the region, Senator Mitchell visited Israel and some regions in the Middle East, namely (the West Bank, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia) to listen to the region’s leaders’ views on the Israeli-Palestinian settlements. On February 19, Mitchell supported the Egyptian efforts to forge the unity between Fatah and Hamas as united government to reinforce the peace process. In addition, Mitchell spoke about Hamas’s bad chances and that it would need to fulfill the demands of halting violence, Israel’s recognition, and acceptance of previous Israeli agreements (6).

On March 4, during her visit to Ramallah Clinton emphasized the two-state solution that would be in Israel’s best interest. After meeting King Abdullah II of Jordan on April 22nd, Obama described the next months as a hope and that the U.S role as helping to create the conditions that facilitate agreement (7).

On the following day, Secretary of state Clinton told a House Committee that Israel should be respectful with Palestinians and peace efforts, to gain support against Iran. She added that Arab governments believe that the Israeli negotiation reentry would strength them in dealing with Iran. But Israel rejects linkage between the peace process and Iran. On 5 May, Vice President gave a speech to AIPAC called on Israel to work for the two-state solution, not build more settlements, dismantle outposts, and allow the Palestinians freedom of movement. This opinion was also agreed by Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee John Kerry who warned that the “the window of opportunity and said:

settlements don't just fragment a future Palestinian State. They also fragment what the Israeli Defense Forces must defend, they undercut Abbas, and strengthen Hamas by convincing the Palestinians that there is no reward for moderation (Dimin 253).

Disagreement between Israeli and U.S officials over the settlement freeze developed, and Clinton said the Obama Administration has the negotiating official record that was turned by the outgoing Bush Administration. She added that there is no memorialization of any informal and oral agreements. If such understandings were reached, she noted: "they did not become part of the official position of the United States government. And there are contrary documents that suggest that they were not to be viewed as in any way contradicting the obligations that Israel undertook pursuant to the Road Map. And those obligations are clear." Thereafter, at the Cairo speech Obama made it clear that "just as Israel's right of existence cannot be denied, neither can Palestine's". Concerning settlements he stated: "the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements.

This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop. In order not to be understood that there were some problem between US and Israel because of the settlements, on June 9 in Israel Senator Mitchell clarified that "these are not disagreements among adversaries. The United States and Israel will remain close allies and friends." Mitchell expressed his desire to create the conditions to resume negotiations(Migdalovitz 8).

Upon coming to office, Obama's peace team believed that the U.S would gain the Palestinian confidence, and lure them to accept the peace talks freeze. And in effort to placate Obama, on November 25, 2009 the Israeli PM imposed a ten month freeze on construction permits for new residences and the start of new residential construction in the settlements to restart the peace talks with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu said:

we have been told by many of our friends that once Israel takes the first meaningful steps toward peace, the Palestinians and Arab States would respond.... I hope that this decision will help launch meaningful negotiations to reach a historic peace agreement that would finally end the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians (25 Nov 2009).

Meanwhile, the special Middle East envoy George Mitchell said :

We did get a ten month...moratorium on new housing construction start on the West Bank, which was less than what we asked for, less than what the Palestinians wanted, but was more than any government of Israel had ever done on that subject, and it was a significant action which I believe the Palestinians should have responded to by getting into negotiations earlier.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister didn't stick to his word " the total freeze" what made Abbas refused to negotiate even with the freeze blaming Obama for the deny of what he had promised in Cairo that Israel must stop all construction activities. Mitchell later said: "the real loss was that we didn't get a full ten months. We didn't get nine months or eight months. We got one month_ less than a month, and it was not enough to gain traction and get the parties invested in continuing the process." (Rosen 23, 33).

According to Migdalovitz, the Obama administration began 2010 with renewed efforts to restart negotiations. According to media report, the 1967 borders was the basis of negotiations (2). On January 6 Mitchell was interviewed on the Public Broadcasting System's Charlie Rose Show in which he focused on three hopeful tracks: political negotiations,

security, and Palestinian economic growth and institution building. He claimed that the United States is seeking a “parallel process” for the Palestinians and Israelis and all the countries that are concerned with the issue. After two days later, a Palestinian newspaper summarized the Palestinian ideas about peace negotiations reportedly formulated by Saeb Erekat, head of the PLO’s Negotiations Department and Umar Suleiman, Egypt’s intelligence Chief. The first goal should be a Palestinian state with capital city of Jerusalem based on the 1967 borders. Second, the Israeli settlement activities in Jerusalem should stop completely for six months. Third, negotiations should resume from the Olmert 2008 point and include all final status issues. On January 12, for the first time Mahmud Abbas declared that if Israel would not freeze settlements for a fixed period, he also refused to restart the negotiations. Moreover, he said “we don’t want (U.S.) guarantees. We want the United States to tell Israel to fully freeze settlements for a period of time and then we will resume negotiations.”

On January 20, Netanyahu called for the Israeli presence on the eastern side of the future state which meant the Jordan Valley as a condition to stop the permeation of rockets and other weaponry. There was an answer from an Abbas’s spokesman responded by asserting that they “ [...] will not accept anything less than a completely sovereign Palestinian State on all the territories with its own borders, resources and airspace, and [...] will not accept any Israeli presence, either military or civilian, on our land.” (3).

From January 21st -25th, Mitchell made his ninth visit to the region, and on 27th of the same month the State Department issued a statement that he continued a “two –pronged approach which are mutually reinforced, the first one to encourage the parties to enter negotiations, and the second to help the Palestinians build the economy that will be necessary when the Palestinian State is established. Netanyahu had earlier said that the ideas that Mitchell came with are included confidence-building measures such as the withdrawal of Israel forces from more territory from West Bank, release of prisoners and interesting in how

to restart negotiations on the core issues of the borders. According to a Palestinian official, Abbas did not favour resuming any level of negotiations before a complete cessation of settlement activity including in east Jerusalem. On January 24, at Etzyon after his meeting with Mitchell, Netanyahu declared it to be an inseparable part of the Israel State, and at Ma'ale Adumim, he affirmed: "We are here, and we will stay here and build here as part of sovereign Jerusalem." Furthermore on January 29, in Ari 'el, he announced : "here is where our forefathers dwelled and here is where we will stay and build....Ari 'el...will be an integral, inseparable part of the state of Israel in any future arrangement." (3).

On January 28, in Russian television President Abbas stated that Jerusalem should not be divided and people's various faiths should be respected. Moreover, Abbas once more again affirmed that he would not resume negotiations before the total freeze of the settlement included in east Jerusalem. As he reported that the United States had asked Israel to make gestures to the Palestinians, including transferring additional territories in the West Bank to Palestinian control, halting Israeli military incursion, prisoners release, dismantling checkpoints and allowing building materials to enter the Gaza Strip. Israel had not yet responded (4).

Initially, after Obama was elected for the second term, he faced a severe domestic criticism for his hesitant handling of the fighting in Syria, deteriorating relations with Egypt and the war in Lybia. Meanwhile, Secretary of state Kerry was appointed as his special envoy for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. After three years of frozen negotiations, John Kerry undertook a single-minded mission to restart Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations and succeeded to convince the two sided and Arab States to conduct some important confidence-building measures. Kerry visited the region multiple times, moving between Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Amman to renew the negotiations framework. Unlike the previous situation of insisting on the urgency of the two-state solution, Kerry indicated that he

is hoping to use the economic development of Palestinian areas on the West Bank as a means to build support for a new set of Middle East peace negotiations. Without seeing any fulfilment of any long-standing Palestinian demands, Obama ended up piling the pressure on the Palestinian side pushing Abbas to agree to negotiate with Netanyahu mainly for ending the continuing Israeli building of colonies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem under the borders of June 4, 1967 as the basis for the two-state solution.

The ideas offered by Kerry to bridge the gaps and create a suitable atmosphere for restart the negotiations were a little bit ambiguous, and it was indicated by news reports that the Kerry plan depended on “a broad package of economic incentives, security reassurance and political gestures in hopes of bringing the two sides to the negotiating table knowing that Mahmud Abbas has for years insisted that any new talks should be based on the Israel’s borders before it seized Arab territories in the 1967 war, but Netanyahu always refused. Despite the Palestinian distrust on Israel and its Prime Minister Netanyahu, On July 19, 2013 Kerry announced that the two sides, Palestinian and Israeli accept to go back to direct negotiations and reach an agreement which establishes the basis for resuming peace talks. In April 2013, in addition to economic incentives and projects presented by Obama to push the strangled Palestinian economy, Kerry himself according to one Palestinian official is seen as a “well trusted” diplomat that would help secured Palestinian agreement. When Kerry engaged to his shuttle diplomacy, the EU to show its different productive approach toward the Israeli-Palestinian question, decided to stop all its funding to any Israeli project in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

This decision will end the ambiguous Israeli presence beyond the old “green line” border since the 1967 Middle East war without bearing the costs. The EU’s decision was described as an earthquake in Israel, but warmly welcomed by Palestinians and peace-loving Israeli who played an international role in resolving the conflict, and who have grown

desperate of the lack of an effective Obama policy in this regard. So it is impossible to resolve the conflict issues without the United States (Gielen 227).

Thomas G. Mitchell said that since 2010 Obama faced problems with Republicans who have encouraged the strict non-cooperation with his re-election policy. They aimed to prevent Obama from his achievements in the Middle East and this will only happen if they retain control of the House. During his visit to Israel in May 2013, Obama delivered a speech similar to the one of Cairo, but throughout this speech Obama wanted to assert an Israeli audience about Israel's long historical roots in the Middle East going back millennia, and also calling for the their support to the two-state solution. Thomas G. Mitchell believed that the two-state solution retains a compelling logic as the only possible solution, so neither will the Arabs soon recouple themselves to the occupation nor will Israeli Jewish be content to return to the insecurities of a time without a state (179, 180, 181).

After six rounds of shuttle diplomacy between the the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority (PA), On July 30, 2013 the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks resumed in Washington under the initiative U.S Secretary of state John Kerry. Israel, PA, and the United States committed to nine months of negotiations to reach the a comprehensive peace agreement based on the two-state solution.

The negotiating members were Israel's Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, and Isaac Molho, Netanyahu's special envoy from the Israeli negotiation team. While from the Palestinian team there were Saeb Erekat, the chief negotiator, and Mohammed Shtayyeh a close advisor to Mahmud Abbas. Former U.S ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk has been nominated as the U.S special envoy to the Israeli –Palestinian negotiations. Indeed Israel neglected the Palestinian concerns and clear position which has been the case since the OA and that of Kerry's rounds 'the two-state solution'; however, the Israelis continued to be ambiguous on

their position to build settlement projects. At the beginning of August 2013, Kerry succeeded to organize a dinner meeting with the negotiators in D.C, and urged both parties to make what he called ‘reasonable compromises.’ However, he never clearly stated the essence of those compromises. In his press conference, Kerry has stated that by the talks the U.S aimed to end the conflict but unfortunately Kerry’s plan and ideas weren’t welcomed by the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and the American last effort failed once more (Amrov 9, 10).

Unfortunately the Israelis and Palestinians were unable to agree from the beginning on the process of Kerry’s agenda for the talks. The main concern of the Palestinians was borders and security arrangements to be discussed at the negotiations beginning, while Israel demanded that all of the core issues be discussed in parallel; they insisted first on reaching understandings on its demands for security arrangements before borders discussion. Moreover Israel insisted on its maintenance as a military presence for decades in the West Bank and along the Jordan River eventhought the Palestinians opposed any Israeli soldiers presence on its territories. On the subject of Jerusalem, the Palestinians demended the 1967 past situation return while Israel rejected any discussion over transferring sovereignty of Jerusalem to them. After his failure to conduct the two sides direct talks final status accord already in mid-November 2013, he realized that it would be better to focus on a framework agreement defining the borders of the two-state solution.

By the end of March Kerry and Indyk tried to bridge the gaps and conducted intensive contacts on the document via a proximity indirect talks for resolving the core issues. After Kerry’s meeting with Abbas in Paris on February 19, the Americans discovered that these terms were very far from what Abbas was ready to accept and the gap between the two sides was getting wider making it impossible to reach any final agreement. In late February 2014 Kerry adopted an American document of an accepted principles for both sided, with some of its content reservations. The document of principles aimed to enable the continuation of the

nine months of final status negotiations supposed to conclude in April 2014. However the gaps were still too big. Under intense public pressure Israel refused to release the fourth group of terrorists on the scheduled date unless Palestine commit to quit the peace talks at the end of April, as well as a commitment to refrain from resuming unilateral action at the UN . On his part Abbas refused to extend the negotiations and would immediately resume unilateral action at the UN if prisoners were not released.

The Palestinians rejected the proposed alternatives to the prison release as well as to discuss the American compromise proposals to continue the peace process preferring to seek acceptance into international institutions, contrary to their commitments. In June the focus moved away to the war between Israeli and Hamas after three Israelis teenagers were kidnapped and killed, followed by the killing of a Palestinian boy. In October 2014, after the war ended Kerry resumed his diplomatic effort at the Security Council. At the same time Palestinian were seeking the support of nine members of the Security Council to end the Israelis occupation of the West Bank. He checked with Netanyahu over his acceptance of resuming the negotiations based on the Palestinian borders of 1967 lines, Netanyahu did not reject Kerry's idea. In late December 2014, the Palestinian request was rejected by the Security Council, and in early January 2015, there was a request submitted by the Palestinian Authority to join 22 international conventions, including the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague which was for many years believed by Palestinians as powerful instrument for exerting international pressure on Israel (Schiff 163-166).

2.8. Conclusion:

Obama can be considered as the first U.S president who was very popular among people and especially in the Middle East. Due to his Muslim origins, Barack Hussein Obama was long-awaited by the Arab Muslims who thought that he could change the American foreign policy in favor of the thorny Palestinian cause. In fact, the most notable thing that made them look forward to a better tomorrow with the coming new president was mainly the Cairo speech of June 2009, also known as “New Beginning” to show the Arabs and Muslims all over the world his good intention to rebuild the Muslim-American relationships which had been lost since the 9/11 events. Furthermore, Obama called the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a respectful introduction praising the Islamic religion and Christianity, on his lips, the main aim of the “yes we can” speech was changing the scope of US foreign policy for achieving Middle East peace, and improving the American-Muslim relationships.

Chapter 3 :

The Reasons of the Failed Peace Talks

3.1. Introduction:

The American administration has realized that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a reflection of the American presence and American interests in the Middle East. Accordingly, the United States is paying the military and security price in the Middle East because of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. For more than 20 years America has played the role of the ruler and director of the peace process between Palestinians and Jews, and its name was associated with the Camp David Accords in 1977 and 2000, the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Accords in 1993, Taba 2001, the Arab Peace Initiative in 2002, the Geneva Accord of 2003, Annapolis in 2007, and the secret meeting in Jordan in 2012, all of which failed.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed explanation about the course of US efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East. It will, moreover, highlight the obstacles and impediments that have caused the failure of all attempts to resolve the conflict. Furthermore, the chapter will try to discover the truth of the assessment of U.S. peace attempts by Palestinians, and do they still rely on it to bring peace and calming the situations.

3.2. A Short History of the Middle East peace talks and the American involvement:

In the past decades, every presidential administration in the U.S. has attempted to secure peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. There was something surreal about the Arab-Israeli negotiations of the 1990s, and the rapid integration of the idea and images that were once considered fictional. It is even more mysterious: the first public handshake in September 1993 between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat the Chairman in the White House garden, or the speed with which Israel and the PLO meetings became routine. In October 1991, a peace conference was held in Madrid bringing together all parties, but the mere presence of Arab and Israeli politicians in the same room as a reason for such a ceremony reflects the number of backward steps of coexistence that the adversaries have taken over the years. While most observers realize that these breakthroughs break a century of hardship, many are not even aware that leaders today they are also heirs to a long history of Arab-Israeli negotiations. This history, of course, has been a bleak record of failures in achieving peace. The successful conclusion of many Arab-Israeli agreements since 1998 is Said's departure from this tradition. But the difficulties in implementing these fragile agreements still exist, and other aspects of Israeli-Arab and Palestinian Israeli conflicts prove to be resistant to negotiated solutions (Eisenberg, Caplan 1).

The United States has deployed enormous resources as a peace broker in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in part because of its special relationship with Israel as well as its economic and strategic interests in the Middle East. President Jimmy Carter began the first major peace effort in 1978 that led to the signing of the Camp David peace deal between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Successive

America has maintained a tradition of mediation, but a clinical commitment was made by the Clinton administration, culminating in the signing of the Wye River Memorandum which seeks to implement the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on 28 September 1995 and subsequent agreements (Peacemaker, 23/10/1998). Despite mediation efforts, peace between Israelis and Palestinians remains an imaginary luxury, and violence today remains between the two peoples (Ewane 1).

In the meanwhile, Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin felt that something dramatic had to be done to break the historic stalemate between their countries. Then, the two great leaders needed to mobilize all their political footholds and benefit from a comfortable local and regional environment. To do so, they needed political courage, which they had ample supply of, and only then could the American intervention, which consisted of the tempting mix of financial rewards with the effective arm twist, succeed. Not at any time before. President Carter certainly did, but the offer was not really. He belonged then and forever to Begin and Sadat. The American role has been greatly facilitated by their ability to communicate and enjoy the confidence of supporters at the same time. A lesson to be learned by any force that wants to play a useful role in any future movement between Israelis and Palestinians (Olmert February 18, 2013).

Since 1993 much has happened, and the agreements may seem somewhat irrelevant and old, but they are not. The long road of reconciliation between the arch enemies had begun somewhere, and Oslo was the icebreaker. Here, too, American participation in the final stages of the process has become effective only because both sides have had the same interest at the same time to falsify the deal. Is not a marginal role of the United States, but not the decisive role as well. The story of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty of 1994 is another example of the American role, the role of facilitation and completion, but not the story of the instigator.

There are two factors that made this peace possible. The first was the Oslo Accords (Olmert February 18, 2013).

In the last 50 years of American peacemaking, there has been no less willing administration of the Middle East peace mission than the first administration of President George W. Bush. With a violent upheaval and the failures of Clinton still in his mind, President Bush had little taste for the Middle East peace mission. This sentiment intensified after the events of 9/11 with the end of peace process and directing attention towards Iraq, Afghanistan, and the rest of the global war on terror (Fuglestad, Heyns 7-8).

The third effort was unveiled only in early 2016, and this time the United States faced difficulty in making the parties talk to each other, let alone engage in serious discussions that could lead to peace. In all of the ongoing efforts, the United States has pressed Israel to make concessions, specifically to halt settlement construction in the West Bank, long considered by the United States as obstacles to peace, both of which have failed American efforts. As a result, US-Israeli relations have deteriorated (Jervis 36).

The true interpretation of past decades of failed peace negotiations is not mistaken in incomplete tactics or conditions, but no strategy can succeed if it is based on Israel acting irrationally. Most of the arguments presented to Israel for agreeing to partition are that they are better than the frightening and unsettling future in which the state does not cease to be a Jewish state or a democracy, or both. Israel is constantly warned that if it does not decide soon to grant citizenship or sovereignty to the Palestinians, it will become, at an undetermined future date, an apartheid state. But these assertions contain an implicit recognition that it makes no sense for Israel to hold a deal today instead of waiting to see whether such perceived threats actually materialize (Thrall, 16 May, 2017).

3.3. The Factors that Led to the Collapse of the Past Negotiations:

There were many reasons behind the collapse of the peace efforts between the Palestinians and Israelis, the following highlights some of the most prominent ones:

Lack of trust: one of the most difficult problems between the two sides, and no effort has been made to strengthen it. On the contrary, they have undertaken both demonstrable actions on the ground, such as settlement building and expansion, exacerbated into deliberate violence, and failed to react to level people to people, and to engage in public sharpness in ways that only deepen distrust. Furthermore, Personal chemistry and communication between Israeli and Palestinian leaders which can stimulate confidence, was and still is absent.

Controversy over participation in the Rules: In the light of the blatant difference on various issues, each side insisted on rules of engagement that supported its perceived reality and were consistent with its external behavior strategic interests. For example, Netanyahu insisted that negotiations should be studied first National Security Concerns in Israel because of the continued sense of durability. The Palestinians, on the other hand, wanted to negotiate on the border first to determine the criteria for determining their status of the internal space on which the independent State would be established.

Refusing to delink conflicting issues: Both sides have failed to disengage conflicting issues for fear that making important concessions without ensuring the success of the final game will hurt future negotiation, and therefore agreed that nothing is agreed unless everything is agreed at the same time. As a result, they refused to set aside, or "bank", any

issue they had reached agreement on, because they can not imagine a comprehensive peace agreement because of their past experience with each other. This has made it difficult to make lasting progress. Whenever they enter new negotiations, they have to start from scratch.

Failing to engage the public: Both sides have failed to engage their audience in progress (or lack thereof) in the peace process, call support, and prepare their compatriots to accept the inevitable concessions that would be required to reach an agreement. Moreover, the press has been left in the dark and has not been allowed to see or measure any aspect of the negotiations that would trigger a public debate, leaving the public with little or no hope that the peace negotiations in fact lead to agreement.

Political Factionalism: While the majority of Israelis and Palestinians (based on many opinion polls conducted over the years) have consistently supported a two-state solution, the political factions within the communities fear of uncertainty in the future makes it extremely difficult waiver of this or any other matter. Although the political opponents with agendas represent a small part of the total population, there has been a sustained engagement in peace talks.

Power disparity in the negotiations: Israel, while enjoying a large number of military forces, Palestinians under the occupation has limited ability to challenge Israel. As a result, they sought to balance power relations at the negotiating table or before the start negotiations with Israel by demanding, for example, a freeze settlement activity or release of Palestinian prisoners,

Lack of a comprehensive US strategy: As mediator, the United States has not followed a carefully constructed framework for negotiations that can guide the parties to make the necessary compromises to reach an agreement. In fact, as the United States and Israel both swing and change course according to design or circumstances, the United States (through

frustration) has changed its strategic approach as a reaction, thus losing coherence and control over the negotiation process, leading to repeated failure.

No consequences for failure: Although the US offered economic and security incentives for both to reach an agreement, it lacked a strategic approach and attached no repercussions for failing to reach an agreement. That is, the lack of a mechanism to punish either or both sides for failing to make serious progress made it possible to resist any pressure, knowing that they could do so with impunity. Netanyahu's defiance of the US' wishes to halt the expansion of settlements to create a positive atmosphere for the negotiations offers acase in point.

Absence of bold leadership: There was a serious absence of courage and vision a leadership that can move against the political stream for a greater goal will make important concessions that can advance peace negotiations (Meir 10-11-12).

The American peace plans are bound to fail because they tend to exclude the complexities of the violent Arab-Muslim reality and because they are stuck with simple solutions, appropriate thinking and rapid reforms. These plans have been plagued by an endless clash between the West's desire to conclude short-term agreements for rest and the need for arrangements that serve the interests of genuine national security in the long term.

American peace initiatives have been derailed assuming that the Arab-Israeli conflict was the "conflict in the Middle East" and that the Palestinian issue was at the core of that conflict. These assumptions have been shattered against the stones of reality in the Middle East, as highlighted in the 2010 revolution in the still-intractable Arab tsunami (dubbed the "Arab Spring"). Moreover, the preoccupation with the Palestinian cause in confronting the Middle East and the United States of greater national and national security challenges has damaged the US position on deterrence and its regional and global position. A more important

national and national security has damaged the US position on deterrence and its regional and global position.

All American peace initiatives have tried to force Israel to make important concessions to the Arab / Palestinian side, which is equivalent to the systematic Arab aggression that encouraged further aggression. These initiatives have demonstrated moral equivalence between the aggressors (Arabs) and the intended victim (Israeli); between the most effective and unconditional strategic ally of the United States (Israel), and a close ally of the enemies and adversaries of the United States. The role of counterterrorism (Israel) as a model and a key training ground for anti-American terrorists and the shrine of hate education [the Palestinians] (Ettinger July 18, 2018).

3.4. Bush's Failure to Achieve Peace:

On June 24, 2002, President Bush delivered a speech for the establishment of a "peaceful democratic" Palestinian state alongside Israel and calling for a new Palestinian Authority. Although Bush's vision and the road map represent a new shift in US policy on the Palestinian issue, they have failed to exercise influence over Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territories. They failed to provide details on final status issues, including the future of Jerusalem, refugees, Jewish settlements, state and borders, which served to satisfy Israel's objections to packaged deals that might require pressure to withdraw from the Palestinian territories (Mohamad 79).

One of the reasons why Bush failed to push the peace process - despite all the uproar surrounding the Annapolis conference in 2007 - was to think only that if the Palestinian Authority, if it supported it, supported Hamas, the reality of Hamas would cease to dominate Gaza In a way or another. He has ignored the fact that Hamas rule there,

considering that peace can happen without addressing the issue of Hamas' control over the region (Keinon, July 27, 2018).

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared his failure to achieve any peace agreement with Israel even with the American President George W. Bush's implementation. Furthermore, he said that besides the Israeli intransigence over settlement issue, expressing his disappointment, that the United States has not exerted more pressure on Israel to stop its Stubbornness and facilitate the peace process (CBC, April 25, 2008).

3.5. Obama's Failure to Achieve Peace:

After President Obama's public expression of the administration's sense of frustration in light of the bad picture of the Middle East peace process. In a lengthy interview with Time magazine, he stressed that his administration has increased the appreciation of the US ability to persuade Israel and the Palestinians to engage in meaningful negotiations. President Obama said both sides did not want to make "bold gestures" to push the peace process forward. If the United States knew that it was dealing with "an intractable issue as it had before," the president said, it would not have created such great expectations. Moreover, In an uncharacteristic manner, the president did not blame either side for the situation. On the contrary, the statement explains the understanding of the circumstances, especially the internal ones, limiting the freedom of action of the parties: coalition restrictions and divisions within the community (almost certainly a reference to Israel) and the PA's concerns about Hamas's response to an event of meaningful political process.

There is no doubt that the collapse of the peace process has seriously damaged the prestige and credibility of the administration and President Obama himself. Now all that's left for him is trying to contain the damage. It seems that the president is facing the option of

stepping up American intervention in the process through steps closer to imposing a settlement on both sides. Ideas have been heard in this direction in various circles within the administration. It is not unreasonable for the president to seriously consider such an option. From Israel's point of view, such an option could involve a severe crisis with the administration (Shalom INSS Insight No. 160, February 8, 2010).

Peace between Israelis and Palestinians is likely to be far more distant at the end of Obama's term than at the beginning. Finally, his administration failed to improve America's image in the Middle East, which Obama sought to begin with in the Cairo speech. In fact, US regional views were often lower in 2014 and 2015 more than at the beginning of Obama's presidency in 2009. These failures was acknowledged by the administration officials, sometimes explicitly. The most obvious example is Kerry's frustration with Israel and the failure of the peace process. Overall, Obama was also a victim of bad timing or bad luck. Israel Netanyahu, Former US leaders faced personal and political difficulties with the Israelis when they tried to promote Israeli-Palestinian peace, one could predict that Obama would be. With Obama, however, the situation has become much worse.

According to Aaron David Miller, a Former diplomat who worked On Middle East issues in both Republican and Democratic administrations, the Obama-Netanyahu relationship was "obviously the most disjointed relationship between the American and Israeli leaders (Jervis 46-49).

“Regardless of the excesses of the Obama administration, the Middle East is not primarily a mess in the president's making”, but was largely a result of the region's break, anger and dysfunction in the event of turmoil ...” Moreover, the region is passing a period of unprecedented change: "Not since Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century has the Middle East seen much chaos." this is hardly the context of a successful American policy (48).

Hamas ignorance by Obama was one of the most serious obstacles in the conflict resolution way, instead, he and Secretary of state Hillary Clinton called for a unity between Fatah and Hamas assuming that such a government will be dominated only by Fatah, but the reality was completely the opposite (Gilboa 54). President Obama has tried the most difficult to calm down the Israeli-Palestinian problems and has failed to achieve, most of them dramatic so far. The naive and well-planned initiative in his first term led to a humiliating diplomatic defeat, it is understood that he will not be keen to enter this arena again. But the issue is largely unstable, as the recent Israeli-Israeli conflict shows (Dunne 122). As he completes the last year of his second term, it may be inevitable, yet still disappointing, far short of any such collective transformation. But Obama himself can be clearly blamed for some of his lack of early promise to change foreign policy (Unger 3).

The Obama administration has also failed to achieve an effective communication with both the local and foreign audiences. Thus, although President Obama addressed the Muslim public in many opportunities, he has refrained from making any serious effort to reduce Israelis' concerns about the risks involved in withdrawals. By failing to explain his efforts through the media and talking to American Jews - 78 percent of whom voted for him in the 2008 election - the president essentially gave up on his critics. Although President Obama's personal interventions in this process were impressive, he failed to create a leadership structure to manage the process when other problems requiring his attention forced him to move forward.

Obama has entrusted Senator Mitchell with the day-to-day management of the program. Practical and on Secretary of State Clinton and senior Dennis Ross counsel sought their efforts to move the undesirable figures, but it was never clear what authority they had given, who, in the absence of the president, coordinated the administration. Instead of defining the parameters of the negotiations and determining their speed, the administration

has allowed the parties to identify these critical issues, making it imperative that Israeli and Palestinian leaders allow their positions on these matters to be localized. This in turn deprived management of the ability to identify two important issues: whether they were possible or not the talks should be based on the progress made in the previous Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and whether the administration will put forward bridging proposals on the table. The administration therefore failed to deliver urgency, rather than indicating that it was willing to reach the parties in the necessary concessions at their own pace (Feldman 3).

Although President Obama came to office with enough tools to change the reality of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict regarding the peace process, he had failed to enhance the United States “smart power” to achieve the desired goals (Shabaneh 3). Because of the delay in starting the negotiations between the two sides at the mid-point of his first term. In addition to that, the immediate engagement to the Israelis settlement freeze caused immediate problems with Israeli government that would not help the Palestinians who are in need to the U.S diplomatic achievements. Furthermore, the author highlighted that the lack of confidence between the three parts: Arab states, Israel and United States was basically big problem to reach the peace agreement (Newman, Peters 322).

3.6. Conclusion:

The Obama administration brought a dramatic change to the direction of US-Israeli relations by neglecting the American past support to Israel, and its attempts to help them establish their own State alongside with Palestine. This does not mean that the US new administration stopped its support to Israel, but it started adopting some new positions and opinions that the previous administrations did not dare adopt. Such attitudes have emerged after Obama’s decisive decision against Israel requesting the Israeli Prime Minister

Netanyahu to freeze the settlement activities in the Palestinian occupied lands, and work for put the two parties together for peace negotiations. From his first weeks in office, Obama called for George Mitchell to be his special Middle East peace envoy, attempts launched supporting the two-state solution based on the 1967 lines. But for the disagreement over such issues between Netanyahu and Abbas, after many threats and trials, Obama decided to boycott the peace talks because of lack of integrity especially from the Israeli side.

Starting his second term and after period of frozen negotiations, Obama returned to restart the peace talks calling for his Secretary of state John Kerry to retry for negotiate and put the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams together to resolve the conflict. Since his appointment and the commencement of his functions on February 1, 2013, his trips to the Middle East are permanent. He had even spent his last months in an effort to enhance trust between the parties and achieve a vision of two states for two peoples. Unfortunately, the features of the last days show his efforts will never let them leave their trenches. After many trials to reach peace between Israel and Palestine, in late 2014 John Kerry realized that as long as the two sides did not agree on the US documents principles the peace agreement is impossible.

General Conclusion:

Due to the importance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the U.S. foreign policy schedule, there were a special announcement by US presidents towards the dispute as a kind of danger confronting. Furthermore, the long past US-Israeli relationship made the US to be the first administration that showed its support to the State of Israel, as well as encouraged it to establish its own state along with Palestinian land. To benefit from the Middle East oil resources the United States had to face the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and fairly look for a suitable resolution for it. President George W. Bush was one of the US presidents who witnessed the conflict and was obliged to act for its resolution. When he first took office he faced the 9/11 events after which he declared his policy against the Palestinian Authority under Yasser Arafat. He said that he is not the only one who could control the terrorist attacks. Besides, he declared his policy which contained of the main concern of war on terror and then resuming the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks which had been frozen from the Oslo Accord. Unfortunately after many efforts by Bush's administration, peace was impossible.

Whereas the Obama's first term was unlike the Bush administration, in his first weeks Obama appointed Senator George Mitchell as his special envoy to Middle East, and the expectations by the Arab Muslims were raised up to believe that Obama is the long-awaited president who will work deeply for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially after he delivered his famous Cairo speech. Obama's relation with Israel was strict, thus he warned them several times to freeze settlements from the occupied Palestinian lands, as his relationships with them got stricter with the election of Netanyahu as an Israeli Prime Minister. At the end the Obama administration understood the unique solution for the conflict is the establishment of two states "the two-state solution" based on the prior Palestinian 1967 borders, from the beginning Netanyahu announced his rejection to the idea, instead he put set

of conditions to resume negotiations with Palestinian Authority. The gaps between the two sides were getting bigger and the Obama's efforts destroyed every time until the last try on 2014 with his new Secretary of State John Kerry who set his plan to resume negotiations and convince the Israeli and Palestinian side to meet together and reach a final status for the dispute. The Kerry plan was expected to succeed, but its end was only like the previous efforts. After the United States succeeded and transfer the Arab-Israeli conflict to only a Palestinian-Israeli conflict, its administration's peaceful engagement with the Palestinian issue has created a new development in resolving the conflict. what is important in this development is that for the first time it contained the US administration's attempts to resolve the conflict through the most advanced attempt of Oslo peace process between 1993 and 1995 and Taba. Because of the requirement of a sovereign Palestinian state that is geographically cohesive, with Jerusalem as the capital of two states, the Palestinian issue has entered into new developments presented by the failure of both; the Palestinian and Israeli sides to reach an agreement on Clinton's Camp David 2002 proposals, followed by the outbreak of Al'Aqsa Intifada that demonstrates the failure of the Oslo Accord and subsequent agreements.

After the 9/11 attacks, the US policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has changed its direction toward war on terror, and on 24 June 2002 president Bush outlined a Roadmap plan original principles to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On 12 May 2003 the plan was rejected by the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon who stated that the main basic of the plan "settlement freeze" is impossible. Later in 2007, Bush led another attempt at the USNA in Annapolis Maryland, the conference aimed to revive the negotiations by gathering a broad international support.

When Obama became president of the United States in 2009, he showed great interest in the Israeli conflict, and its resolution was declared as one of the priorities of the US foreign

policy. Obama thus had a considerable effort to bring the two parties to a settlement. Unfortunately, his ambition to end the conflict was not sufficient.

The investigation revealed that both the American administration of Bush and Obama failed to achieve peace between Israel and Palestine for many reasons. And the advise for a future visions may be to give a big attention and importance to the dispute, because the conflict was somehow neglected mainly by Bush and delayed by Obama. Thus the importance will make everyone acts and looks for solutions to end the conflict.

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