

CHAPTER III

THE REASONS BEHIND U.S. UNWAVERING SUPPORT TO ISREAL IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

3.1 Is the U.S. Foreign Policy in Israel-Palestine Conflict Always Biased Favoring Israel?

From the previous chapter explanations, the researcher can assume that U.S. foreign policy in Israel-Palestine conflict has always been biased which tend to favor Israel. From the establishment of Israel as a state, the U.S. has voiced its strong support and deep connection to the Jewish state. Even though the U.S. has participated in various peace process between Israeli and Palestinian, its close relationship with Israel and mutual interest as well as strategic concern have undermined U.S. role as a broker or mediator in that process. Because of this biased attitude the U.S. has failed to exerted pressure to Israel to commit to the peace process, which resulted in an unsolved conflict between the two adversaries. The U.S. has been favoring Israel for decades, even until today, supports given by the U.S. administration towards Israel signals no declining anytime soon. This biased attitudes is worsen under President Donald Trump's administration. His policies regarding Israel-Palestine conflict has definitely support Israeli causes.

His policies includes recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moved embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, defunded NGO's funding and undermined their operations in Palestinian territory, withdrew from UN bodies that accused hostile towards Israel, also the latest move was to recognized Israel's sovereignty over Golan Height. These attitude has certainly served Israel's interest. Trump's administration won't even engage with the Palestinian or include Palestine narratives when making regional decisions. Previous administrations at least have recognized Palestinian as an important entity that also influential in the peace process with Israel. Further, Trump is undermining any future peace deal opportunities by supporting Israel (Ward, 2019).

As already mentioned in the first part of previous chapter, there are three rationales for supporting Israel. The strongest rationale is that the close relationship between U.S. and Israel is driven by mutual interest and shared strategic concern. Since the Cold War era, Israel has posed as beneficial ally for the U.S. Israel helped contain Soviet influence in Middle East at that time. Today, Israel is the most advanced country to deal with terrorism. Its military measures has proven to be effective in countering terrorism in that region (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006). The U.S. has seen Israel as a crucial ally when it comes to security issues. Israel has also act as balancing states or satellite state for the U.S. in Middle East. Despite its power and military might, the U.S. still needs Israel's capabilities in dealing with various threats generated from that region. Israel is the only country in Middle East that could satisfy U.S.' ambition in protecting its security and interest, and the U.S. has considered Israel as the most reliable partner. Therefore, the U.S. always favored Israel, particularly related to Israel-Palestine conflict. U.S. considerations related to security and safety not only for itself but also for its allies in the Middle East has been the main factor of why the U.S. supporting Israel which reflected in its biased foreign policy in Israel-Palestine conflict. Mutual interest and security concern became the main factor influencing U.S. foreign policy in Middle East region. Various threats for the U.S. and its allies that come from this reagon then became the external variable that influence U.S. foreign policy. In this research, these variables that comes from U.S. external environment will refer as systemic factors.

The second rationale is U.S. support towards Israel is driven by Moral justifications. The Holocaust, crimes committed against Jews during World War II became the main arguments on why the U.S. supported the establishment of Israel as a state and give Israel such massive supports, even until today. Many of its supporters argued that Israel deserve special treatment because the Jews have been suffered in the past. Nazi's atrocity during the World War II became moral justifications for Israel's right to exist, but unfortunately in the expense of Palestinians (Gilboa, 1987). Third rationale is the U.S. and Israel have shared values. Since both of these countries are democratic countries, both also uphold democratic values. Particularly those related to individual freedom and human rights. But Israeli democracy is at odd with American values mainly concerning

human rights. The conduct of Israel's policies in the territory it occupied has been contradictory with human rights values agreed by international community. Palestinians have been subject of various human rights violations. Israel often ignored criticism addressed by international community and refused to improve its behavior to recognize Palestinian rights. But still, the U.S. seems to turn a blind eyes towards Israel and even protecting Israel in international arena (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006).

Both of these reationales are manifested through domestic environment that influence U.S. foreign policy in Israel-Palestine conflict. The domestic environment may include U.S. state structure and various domestic actors. This domestic actors have strong moral connections to Israel and justified that with shared values between the two countries, Israel needs unwavering U.S. support and Israel deserves it. These domestic actors consist of interest groups and foreign policy elites responsible for foreign policy making that pro-Israel. Because of the strong moral and values justifications favoring Israel in U.S. domestic environment, the policy enacted by the U.S. is reflecting these actors interest. Therefore, U.S. policy in Israel-Palestine conflict is bias and benefiting Israel only. These variables that come from U.S. domestic political environment then became one of the factor that influence U.S. foreign policy domestically. The factors that influence U.S. foreign policy in Israel-Palestine conflict will be explained in the next section.

In this research, neoclassical realism will be used as a ground theory to analyze what factors compels the U.S. foreign policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during President Donald Trump's administration that favor Israel. Neoclassical realism provides a rich understanding of the determinants of foreign policy and the way that states respond to international challenges. It explicitly incorporates both external and internal variables. Neoclassical realism assumes that a country's foreign policy is driven by international structure or systemic pressure that needs to be translated by domestic actors in order to enact policy (Rose, 1998). In line with neoclassical realism, the author will analyze both the systemic or structural factors and domestic environment that influence the U.S. foreign policy that favor Israel under President Donald Trump's administration.

3.2 Systemic Factors

Systemically, the factors that influence foreign policy are the international system, especially the relative material capability. The theory of neoclassical realism argues that the analysis of foreign policy must begin with relative material capabilities. Before acting, the state not only sees its capabilities, but also must consider the power of other countries. Neoclassical realism predicts that in the long run the relative material power resources possessed by a country will shape foreign political ambitions. This is what happens in the context of U.S. relations with Middle Eastern countries. In order to enact a certain policy regarding Israel-Palestine conflict, the U.S. need to understand its position in the region in general. The Middle East is a complex region with interrelated conflicts not only among states, but these conflicts involving non-state actors as well. U.S. policy in Middle East need to serve not only its interest, but its ally's interest too. The U.S. must make sure they achieve their goals in any cost. As the only superpower in the region, the capabilities possessed by the U.S. are unquestionable. But still, to maintain its superiority and influence the U.S. will committed to eliminate their "enemy" to determine that the factors threatening its interest in the region will be contained. The most influential factors that drive U.S. foreign policy in favor with Israel in Israel-Palestine conflict are currently Iran's ambition to possess nuclear weapons and the threats from various radical terrorist groups in the Middle East that might jeopardize U.S. and its allies position in that region.

3.2.1 Iranian Quest for Weapons of Mass Destruction

Currently, the United States has had genuine conflicts of interest and/or values with most of Middle Eastern regimes and press them to change policies that it regards as threatening or immoral. But the recurring tendency to demonize every one of these governments and to exaggerate their power has also made it harder to influence their conduct and to cooperate at those moments when interests aligned. This has been most tragically evident in the case of Iran (Walt, 2013).

The U.S. and Iran have an unstable relationship over the past few decades. During World War II when Iran was still lead by Shah, U.S. considered Iran as its ally along with Israel. The last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, maintained close ties with the United States. He pursued a modernizing economic policy, and a strongly pro-American foreign policy, and he also made a number of visits to America. Iran's long border with America's Cold War rival, the Soviet Union, and its position as the largest, most powerful country in the oil-rich Persian Gulf, made Iran a "pillar" of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East at that time (Little, 2009).

The U.S. had helped Iran in various aspect not only socio-economic and political, U.S. also gave Iran nuclear support. The U.S. helped Iran create its nuclear program starting in 1957 by providing Iran its first nuclear reactor and nuclear fuel, and after 1967 by providing Iran with weapons grade enriched uranium. Iran's nuclear program was launched in the 1950s with the help of the United States as part of the President Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace program, an initiative to provide countries with peaceful, civilian nuclear technologies in the hope that they wouldn't pursue military nuclear programs (Inskeep, 2015).

But the warm relationship turned cold after Iranian Revolution in 1979 which ousted the pro-American Shah and replaced him with the anti-American Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The movement against the United States-backed monarchy was supported by various leftist and Islamist organizations and student movements. Ever since both countries relation became intense. Iran was under constant U.S. unilateral sanctions. In the Muslim world, particularly in its early years, the revolution triggered enormous enthusiasm and redoubled opposition to western intervention and influence. The U.S. and its allies, particularly Israel feared that nuclear capabilities possessed by Iran would fall into the hands of this Islamist insurgents and might attack them one day (Murray, 2009).

Because of the rivalries, the United States had alleged that Iran had a program to develop nuclear weapons. Iran maintained that its nuclear program

was aimed only at generating electricity. The United States' position was that "a nuclear-armed Iran" is not acceptable. Since 2005, the U.S. and its European allies tried to negotiate with Iran to reduce its nuclear material (BBC News, 2005). The ultimate nuclear deal between U.S. and other permanent Security Council members plus Germany with Iran was adopted in 2015 called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Under JCPOA, Iran agreed to eliminate its stockpile of medium-enriched uranium, cut its stockpile of low-enriched uranium by 98%, and reduce by about two-thirds the number of its gas centrifuges for 13 years. For the next 15 years, Iran will only enrich uranium up to 3.67%. Iran also agreed not to build any new heavy-water facilities for the same period of time. Uranium-enrichment activities will be limited to a single facility using first-generation centrifuges for 10 years. Other facilities will be converted to avoid proliferation risks. To monitor and verify Iran's compliance with the agreement, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will have regular access to all Iranian nuclear facilities. The agreement provides that in return for verifiably abiding by its commitments, Iran will receive economic relief from U.S., European Union, and United Nations Security Council nuclear-related sanctions (Joyner, 2016).

The international community had long sought a landmark diplomatic agreement with Iran on its nuclear program, and such an agreement was also a long-sought foreign-policy goal of the Obama administration. Obama stated that the inspections regime in the agreement was among the most vigorous ever negotiated, and criticized opponents of the deal for failing to offer a viable alternative to it (Ross & Petraeus, 2015). Some argue that deterrence is the key to ensuring not just that Iran is in compliance with the agreement but also to preventing them from developing nuclear weapons. It also provided the United States and key partners maintain a strong and credible deterrent against a future Iranian decision to go for the bomb. The majority of international community have favored the agreement. Although, there are some others that rejected the idea, arguing that Iran will develop nuclear weapons in near future even if the agreement take place. While the nuclear

deal has a number of significant flaws, at least some can be rectified by a number of mitigation measures, which provide the basis for an effective implementation strategy (Eisenstadt, 2015).

But a major shift in U.S. stance on this agreement occurred during early year of Trump's administration. On 13 October 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he would not make the certification required under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) of 2015, accusing Iran of violating the "spirit" of the deal and calling on the U.S. Congress and international partners to "address the deal's many serious flaws so that the Iranian regime can never threaten the world with nuclear weapons." That move, the administration hopes, will prompt Congress to take additional legislative action to amend INARA by adding restrictions on Iran's activities related to ballistic missiles and other threats, and include trigger points that would immediately impose sanctions if Iran violates those restrictions. Trump claimed that the administration's policy is based on a clear-eyed assessment of the Iranian dictatorship, its sponsorship of terrorism, and its continuing aggression in the Middle East and all around the world. Those could prompt the United States to walk away from the deal (Watson, 2017).

His tone made clear that he has no interest in what, for the Obama administration, was the biggest gamble of the accord: to provide the basis for two longtime adversaries to find other ways to cooperate. He also suggested that Iran would never change. Since becoming president, Trump has twice reluctantly certified the agreement. He even considered that the agreement is no longer in the nation's national security interests (Shugerman, 2017). Although Trump will allow that Iran is living up to the letter of the agreement, he will make the case that the deal is fatally flawed and that its non-nuclear behavior violates the spirit of the regional stability it was intended to encourage. Trump's administration believed that since the signing of the nuclear agreement, the regime's dangerous aggression has only escalated. At the same time, it has received massive sanctions relief while continuing to develop its missiles program (The White House, 2017).

Persuading the allies to renegotiate the deal is an impossible goal. The leaders of Britain, France and Germany quickly issued a joint statement urging the United States to adhere to the agreement. European Union's foreign policy chief said the agreement was working well and continues to prevent Iran from developing atomic weapons. Federica Mogherini called for a "collective process" to preserve the historic accord. Russia's foreign ministry claimed Iran has strictly complied with the deal, and urged against reimposing sanctions. Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, said his country would consider "no amendment whatsoever" to the deal. He argued that no president could single-handedly revoke an international document backed by UN. Critics fear that imposing the sanctions by effectively killing the deal could lead to a revitalization of Iran's nuclear programs (Landler & Sanger, 2017).

On May 8, 2018, the United States officially withdrew from the agreement after President Donald Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum ordering the reinstatement of harsher sanctions. In his speech, Trump called the Iran deal "horrible" and said the United States would "work with our allies to find a real, comprehensive, and lasting solution" to prevent Iran from developing nuclear arms. According to Trump, in theory, the so-called "Iran deal" was supposed to protect the United States and its allies from the lunacy of an Iranian nuclear bomb. In fact, the deal allowed Iran to continue enriching uranium and, over time, reach the brink of a nuclear breakout. The deal's inspection provisions lack adequate mechanisms to prevent, detect, and punish cheating, and don't even have the unqualified right to inspect many important locations, including military facilities. Not only does the deal fail to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions, but it also fails to address the regime's development of ballistic missiles that could deliver nuclear warheads. Finally, the deal does nothing to constrain Iran's destabilizing activities, including its support for terrorism. Since the agreement, Iran's bloody ambitions have grown only more brazen (Cox Media Group National Content Desk, 2018).

Leaders in both Saudi Arabia and Israel, however, celebrated Trump's announcement. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lauded the

President's "courageous decision," saying it had created an "opportunity to fix this bad deal, to roll back Iran's aggression and to confront its criminal support of terrorism". Given the Iranian regime's murderous past and present, Trump stated that "U.S. should not take lightly its sinister vision for the future." The regime's two favorite chants are "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." In recognition of the increasing menace posed by Iran, Trump said that "after extensive consultations with our allies, I am announcing a new strategy to address the full range of Iran's destructive actions." (The Economist, 2017)

President Trump, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and National Security Advisor John Bolton all subscribe to the Saudi-Israeli-Gulf states line on Iran. Trump endeared himself to each of these governments by withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, and the administration has ramped up its denunciations of Iran's support for terrorism and its supposedly destabilizing regional activities. The Obama administration had repeatedly insisted that "all options were on the table," but its larger goal was to create a situation where war with Iran would be unnecessary. Trump has reversed that approach, and some observers now fear that war is where he or his chief advisors wants to go. America's European allies are deeply resentful of U.S. policy, because they understand that Trump's decision to abandon the nuclear deal was a strategic blunder (Walt, 2018).

It is clear that the relationship between Iran and U.S. allies in Middle East is as cold as its relationship with the U.S., mainly with Israel. After the revolution in 1979, Khomeini declared Israel an "enemy of Islam" and "The Little Satan", while the United States was called "The Great Satan." Iran cut off all official relations, official statements, state institutes, events and sanctioned initiatives adopted a sharp anti-Zionist stance (Al Jazeera, 2006). The second Iranian supreme leader, Ali Khamenei called Israel a "cancerous tumor" that should be removed from the region. He emphasized that "Palestine belongs to Palestinians, and the fate of Palestine should also be determined by the Palestinian people." He believe that Israel's existence is

responsible for many problems facing the Muslim world. Iran should know that the United States and the Zionist regime are the enemies of the Islamic nation and in fact they are the hegemonic powers that are the enemies of the Islamic people, therefore Iran might attack U.S. and Israel one day (Tepper, 2012).

This is a serious threat not only for Israel and the U.S., but a threat to the regional stability as a whole. If Iran developing nuclear weapons, there's a chance that the Grand Leader's statements is more than just a bluff. America's moderate Arab allies, such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and others are already alarmed at Iran's aggressive regional policy and would feel increasingly threatened by a nuclear-armed Iran. This is why U.S. and its Middle Eastern allies pursue a harsh strategy towards Iran by reimposing sanctions, to make sure that Iran will never get their hands on nuclear weapons (Abbott, 2018). A nuclear-armed Iran would embolden Iran's aggressive foreign policy, resulting in greater confrontations with its neighbor and the international community. Iran already has a conventional weapons capability to hit U.S. and allied troops stationed in the Middle East. If Tehran were allowed to develop nuclear weapons, this threat would increase dramatically. Iran is one of the world's leading state sponsors of terrorism through its financial and operational support. Iran could potentially share its nuclear technology and know-how with extremist groups hostile to the United States and its allies (Anti-Defamation League, n.d.).

The stakes are high, and nothing the United States, UNSC, or Israel could do has a high probability of resolving the situation happily. Iran's low-enriched uranium (LEU) stockpile contains enough uranium-235 to fuel at least one nuclear weapon if it were enriched further. This might be the consideration by the U.S. and Israel to pursue offensive strategy towards Iran, notably a war. After being attacked, the current regime would almost certainly be more hostile, would kick out international inspectors, and would rush to build nuclear weapons. American (or Israeli) bombing would also probably inspire sympathetic Muslim populations and political-terror organizations to

support Iran politically and perhaps in other ways. Iran's Revolutionary Guard and other agencies would use proxies to escalate attacks on American interests and personnel. In the near term, the primary impediments to Iran's nuclear-weapons capability are the small size of its uranium stockpile and the quality and quantity of its centrifuges. Several factors will affect when Iran might produce a sufficient quantity of weapons-usable uranium: the average efficiency of Iran's centrifuges; the amount of stockpiled nuclear material; the centrifuge production and installation rate; the number of centrifuges running at any given time; centrifuge reliability; and Iran's willingness to trade off a higher rate of centrifuge malfunction for a higher enrichment rate (Radzinsky & Perkovich, 2010).

If Iran decided to build nuclear weapons and was interrupted in the process by a military attack, it is extremely difficult to predict the consequences. Much would depend on the ensuing actions and reactions. The risks of acute crises and military conflicts would increase as Iran tried to project power and influence while being countered by the United States, Israel, and others. The apocalyptic shadow of Iranian and Israeli nuclear weapons would hang over the political-security environment, resulting in the daunting prospect of managing crises that could go nuclear without significant warning. Diplomatic options for resolving the crisis are shrinking, and military alternatives are replete with dangerous consequences (Radzinsky & Perkovich, 2010).

Weakening Iranian regime and restraining its capabilities to produce and develop nuclear weapons seems to be the top priority of the U.S. and its allies in Middle East right now. The U.S. will use any means necessary and might not hesitate to use its military power to protect its closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, from Iranian threat. Other issue such as Israel-Palestine conflict became less crucial for top policy makers in the U.S. and its Middle Eastern allies to solve. Their safety and security became the main concern to achieve than to solve Israel-Palestine problems. The Iran's nuclear program has important implications for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well. The issue

gained prominence not only because of the acceleration of the Iranian nuclear program but also because of the persistent efforts by the Israeli government to elevate it above all others. The Iran issue has served as a way to deflect American and international attention away from the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The U.S. is unlikely to muster the amount of pressure necessary to persuade Israel to restart meaningful negotiations in the near future (Munayyer, 2015).

Israeli officials closely consult with U.S. counterparts in an effort to influence U.S. decision-making on key regional issues. Reflecting Israeli concerns about these issues and about potential changes in levels of U.S. interest and influence in the region, some of Israel's leaders and supporters make the case to U.S. officials and lawmakers that Israel's security and the broader stability of the region continue to be critically important for U.S. interests. They also argue that Israel has substantial and multifaceted worth as a U.S. ally beyond temporary geopolitical considerations and shared ideals and values. U.S. decision makers' views on these points could influence the type and level of support that the United States might provide to address threats Israel perceives. They also could influence the extent to which the United States places conditions on the support it provides to Israel (Zanotti, 2017).

The shift of concern seems true in the relations of Israel and the Gulf States, mainly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, America's best friends. No one more than happy to hear such great relationship development than the U.S. With more voice that comes from the Arab World on their side, it's easier for the U.S. to defeat Iran and to protect Israel at the same time. While it remains unlikely that direct diplomatic relations will be established between Israel and Gulf States in near future, regional realignments are expanding the scope for unofficial contact and tangible cooperation in numerous issues. A set of common interest has emerged, the threat of Iranian nuclear for both. There were backlash against the Iran nuclear agreement back in 2015 from Israel and the Gulf States, mainly Saudi Arabia. Although the two sides have unstable relationship because of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the relationships

are improved when Iranian nuclear get in their way. Israel-Palestine conflict no longer represented the only defining concern of the political landscape in the Middle East, although they might not be buried underneath the surface of regional geopolitics (Ulrichsen, 2016).

Both sides adopted a stricter foreign policy approach to the threat to regional stability that mainly come from Iran. This perspective very much aligned with the U.S. especially under President Trump's administration. Senior professionals in the intelligence and security fields from both Israel and the Gulf countries were collaborating with the U.S. The absence of any meaningful reengagement with the Palestinian peace process, Israeli and Gulf officials both acknowledge that it will be difficult to expand an open diplomatic relationship. The new ties between Gulf States and Israel can be deepened by informal and unofficial level. Gulf States and Israel relations have thickened around technocratic cooperation in sectors of mutual interest that range from renewable energy, water management, and medical technology to entrepreneurship and innovation as drivers of economic transformation (Ulrichsen, 2016).

Gulf countries are also moving to strengthen military cooperation with the United States. They are buying new weapons and have received promises of security coordination but are pressing for even stronger commitments. They are developing an independent approach to secure their vital interests. These interests include preventing Iran from further destabilizing the Arab world by promoting sectarian conflicts and backing armed Shiite groups, including those within Gulf Arab states, as well as ensuring that Iran does not expand its nuclear program in the region at the expense of Arab interests (Ibish, 2015).

The Trump administration was counting on Saudi and pan-Arab desire to help the Palestinians and help the "peace process" to overcome Arab desires to avoid political danger. Without integrating the leaders of the Arab states into a new framework for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, President Trump is unlikely to achieve the peace he seeks. The Arab states have a crucial role to play, both in incentivizing the Israelis to make sacrifices for peace, and in

supporting the Palestinians in concluding a conflict-ending agreement with Israel (Danin, 2017). Arab regimes do care about the Palestinians, but they care about themselves and their own political health far more. There have been dilemmas facing the Arab World today. On one side, they are concerned about Israel's treatment of Palestinian especially when violent conflict break through, but on the other, the cooperation with Israel particularly in intelligence and security fields seems promising to help Gulf States deal with Iranian nuclear threat. A common values to solve Palestinian issue is likely to undermine when a common interest to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons get in the way (Abrams, 2017).

3.2.2 Radical Terrorist Groups

Radical Islamist terrorism in its many forms remains the most immediate global threat to the safety and security of U.S. citizens at home and abroad, and most of the actors posing terrorist threats originate in the Middle East. The emergence of non-state actors in the Middle East has been associated with different political, religious and economic factors within the region. Foreign influence and interference in the political activities of different countries also contributed to a varying extent to the creation of these groups (Binzafran, 2016).

Historically, the Middle East has been characterized by religious and sectarian conflicts. Muslims have also created rivalries among themselves, based on ethnic and sectarian interests of Sunni and Shiites distributed in different parts of the region. Political and religious leaders in the Middle East have partly contributed to the acrimonious existence in the region. After World War I, when the British and the French divided the region into random small states, there was this lack of equitable distribution of natural resources and the emergence of greedy dictators in various countries, which has further created discontent and a rebellious feeling within the population (Mazhar, et al., 2013).

Middle East is a complex region with various actors conflicting with one another over a certain issue or even over vastly different reasons. With that complexity, the Israel-Palestine issue just adding fuel to the fire. A long time conflict between Israel and Palestine might not be the only reason that cause the rising of non-state actors in the Middle East, most notably Islamic terrorist groups. But it certainly became the most significant factor used by these groups to recruit supporters efficiently. The genesis of Islamic militancy related to this conflict can be traced back to the creation of Israel in 1948. The displacement of Palestinians from their homeland resulted in an unending and vicious cycle of violence between Arab states and Israel. After the fall of Jerusalem in subsequent Arab Israeli Wars, the conflict acquired global dimensions inspiring Muslims all over the world to join the struggle of liberating Al-Quds from Israeli occupation. The conflict in Palestine even inspired troops from regular armed forces of distant states to rush and join the militaries of Arab nations engaged in fighting the Israeli forces. The growth of such interest allowed for the growth of terrorist organizations whose targets were not limited to Israel, but included members of the international community (Zaman, 2015).

The Palestinian genocide in Gaza has significantly helped the non-state actors to fetch new recruits from across the world on the assurance that the newly established caliphate would ultimately free Jerusalem and Palestinians from the Israeli occupation. Brutalities committed by Israel cause desperation and enrage the Muslim youth to join these militant organizations. Sunni militant Palestinian groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad could also find motivation to join the IS or Al-Qaeda and act as their affiliates, thus bringing these groups to the very borders of Israel (Halevi & Soffer, 2014).

The Israeli-Palestine conflict has created division in the region as Arabic countries openly express their support for Palestine. In contrast, Western countries have sided with Israel, a scenario that has placed them on the fire line of terror organizations. Evidently, most Muslim and Arab nations have openly expressed their grievances towards the plight of the Palestinians.

Besides, outrage has also been evident towards the U.S. for its continued support of Israel. Al-Qaeda has exploited this animosity to source funding, recruit sympathizers from Arab and Muslim communities and target major American facilities in the Middle East and beyond. Related to this matter, the group's intention in regional politics has primarily been connected with reducing the influence of America and its allies, particularly Israel in the region (Binzafran, 2016).

The dominance of non-state actors in the region has also continued to increase. What concerning the most is that their operations are not limited in Middle East region only, but they are now able to reach international scope with the help of advancement in technologies and weaponry. Because of this reason the non-state actors namely Al-Qaeda had succeeded attacking the U.S. in 9/11. After this incident the main U.S. policy in the region and in international realm as a whole is to combat terrorism that threatening not only U.S. interest and security, but also its allies'. As U.S. closest ally in the Middle East and as the most targeted states by these terrorist groups, the safety of Israel is crucial to the U.S. Both countries are now threatened by the proliferation and lethal potential of terrorist or extremist groups with the intent, capability, and willingness to attack the vital interests of both nations on a potentially catastrophic scale. The emergence of extremist actors with violent political agendas, advanced weapons and communications capabilities, religious or ideologically-based interests, long-term strategies, and the willingness to confront powerful states through terrorism and other asymmetric means and methods continues to threaten U.S. and its allies in various aspects (Vinson, 2015).

The U.S. and its allies in the Middle East had been involved in confrontations and wars with various terrorist groups in different area of the region with different intentions too. The U.S. clearly work hard to eradicate all extremist groups that get in its way. Besides making sure the security and safety of its allies, the U.S. also want to keep the Middle East stable and remain in peace. Top U.S. officials believe that these violent actions cause by

terrorist groups spreading across the region have caused instability and chaos in Middle East. In order to bring back the stability, these groups must be destroyed. But the Middle Eastern regional system is actually in a permanent state of flux. As a region given to domestic unrest, intra-regional conflict, and superpower competition, it has never been marked by stability (Rabinovich, 2015).

This vision also shared by U.S. allies, mainly Israel. Surrounded with hostile Arab neighbors has force Israel to adapt to dire conditions for the sake of its own survival. One of the most complex challenges for the United States arises when a foreign government is passive, half-hearted or recalcitrant in its counterterrorism efforts. Effective local partners are vital for counterterrorism and building up their capabilities is a long process, but the will to fight is critical. The lesson for U.S. policymakers from Israel's experience is that sustained pressure is necessary. Another challenge for the United States is how to best combine offensive and defensive measures in the fight against terrorism. Arrests are a particularly useful way of weakening terrorist groups. Israel has benefited in recent years from the effective use of checkpoints to thwart terrorists and from the well-publicized measure of building the security barrier. Like the United States, Israel has used targeted killings. The United States must have a high standard for targeted killings because, unlike Israel, it relies heavily on the cooperation of foreign governments to arrest terrorist suspects and to disrupt terrorist plots. If a targeted killing operation, particularly one that goes awry, alienates allies, the strategic effect could prove disastrous. The bar for approving a targeted killing should therefore be set high. Israel's experiences and the lessons of these policies suggest a promising strategy in dealing with terrorist groups for the United States (Dicter & Byman, 2006).

In crafting its foreign and national security policies, Israel's current choices at the regional level are limited and clear. In line with the threat of Iranian nuclear that not only concerning for Israel, but also for its Arab neighbors such as Gulf States. Both sides also shares common threat that

comes from extremist groups. Israel and the Gulf countries, along with the U.S. have been involved in combating terrorism together. Shared advanced weapons and intelligence have proven effective in tackling conflicts with these groups. It is no question that the intelligence and strategy that provided by its allies, mostly Israel is valuable for U.S. policy regarding terrorism (Eisenstadt & Pollock, 2012). The U.S.-Israeli alliance now contributes more than ever to American security, as bilateral cooperation to deal with both military and nonmilitary challenges has grown in recent years as already presented in previous chapter.

U.S.-Israeli security cooperation dates back to heights of the Cold War, when the Jewish state came to be seen in Washington as a strategic asset against Soviet influence in the Middle East and a counter to Arab nationalism. Although the world has changed since then, the strategic logic for the U.S.-Israeli alliance has not. Israel remains a counterweight against radical forces in the Middle East, including political Islam and violent extremism. It has also prevented the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region. Israel continues to help the United States deal with traditional security threats. Israel's military experiences have shaped the United States' approach to counterterrorism and homeland security. The two governments work together to develop sophisticated military technology to fighting extremist groups. Israel's military research and development complex has pioneered many cutting-edge technologies that are transforming the face of modern war, including cyber weapons, unmanned vehicles (such as land robots and aerial drones), sensors and electronic warfare systems, and advanced defenses for military vehicles. Israel's presence in the region provides a de facto cost-effective guarantor of security well beyond its borders. Furthermore, Israel's military strength and central geo-strategic location provide a strong deterrent against Iran and other radical forces that threaten America, its allies and regional and global U.S. objectives (AIPAC, n.d.).

Not only the U.S. sees Israel as valuable ally, today's majority Sunni Arab countries shares the same vision. They are fully cognizant they face real

threats most significantly, from Iran and terrorist groups. One country they do not see as a threat is Israel. And significantly, they have come to realize Israel shares their assessment and is a uniquely qualified partner in facing down threats to regional stability and prosperity. It remains to be seen if under the radar cooperation can blossom into actions that improve the lives of people across the region (Abrams, 2015). The Trump administration has pushed hard in this area. They believe, and Israel agrees, that reconciliation becomes more possible when people see the fruits of peace for themselves. There are joint programs both sides can undertake on the ground that can begin the process of thawing relations and building trust. For the alliance, there is hope in Israel that a new approach can sideline bad actors while empowering those who strive for peace and prosperity. Like any meaningful relationship it takes work to maintain it, and the regional and political dynamics they face today create both challenges and opportunities (Hanegbi, 2018).

Israel had the potential to be a far better ally, indeed a genuine strategic asset, if it pursued a compromise peace with the Palestinians and other Arabs. But that was a complex case to make, and nuanced arguments generally fare worse in the political arena than simple ones. In the end, virtually every president treated Israel as an ally deserving unconditional aid (McConnell, 2011). The situation in the region is extremely complex and numerous issues seem to be overlapping. Contradictory approaches of states within and outside the region and competing global interests have made it almost impossible to craft a cohesive policy over the escalating crisis in the Middle East. Challenges like resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian disputes are some of the most immediate and compelling issues which have to be resolved by the regional states considering the geographical realities, ethnic tensions and sectarian issues. Seriousness towards adopting the right approach for the resolution of the conflict in Middle East which, at the moment, appears to be escalating into a major regional war and might take decades to stabilize or normalize (Zaman, 2015).

The prominence of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement in the administration's overall approach to the region has been scaled back. The U.S. sees an agreement as potentially conducive to stronger Israel-Gulf ties, which would advance U.S. goals in the region. Israeli-Palestinian peace is no longer afforded the status of a vital condition for improving Israeli-Gulf cooperation. For the U.S., Israel is not the cause of the region's problems. States have increasingly found common interests with Israel in confronting common threats. The administration's approach to the peace process seems to be based less on normative precepts and more on policy calculations (Arad, 2018).

But it is highly unlikely that the case of Palestine will be solved in near future. The threats that come from non-state actors mainly from terrorist groups seems to have the similar urgency as Iranian nuclear threats. Even when President Trump has already relied to regional power to help facilitating the resolution of the two rivalries, it is safe to say that any new peace process will not be happening soon. Arab states commitment to reach the agreement on Palestine issue yet again intersect with their interest in protecting themselves from Iran and terrorist attack, which is conditional for them to think about Israel's favor in order to get information and help they need (Byman, 2016).

When it comes to the violent actions of terrorist groups compared to resolution for Israel-Palestine conflict, the latter became secondary in the face of greater threat for the region. In this matter, the U.S. has clearly sided with those that benefits them the most, Israel. President Trump might already has "Deal of The Century" or also known as "Trump Peace Initiative" in attempt to resolve Israel-Palestine conflict. The deal is probably dead on arrival but could create another roadblock. There is no telling whether the Trump administration will implement this declared project, but there can be no Israel-Palestine peace accord as long as Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas lead the sides. Both figures are unable and unwilling to build the necessary domestic support for serious negotiations. But again the world are unable to predict

whether that plan might really bring peace to the parties conflicted or even worsen the already dire conditions (Etzion, 2017).

Meanwhile, the Trump administration's careless approach and blunt favoritism all but guarantee that any peace process would fail. But it is likely that the U.S. and its allies will keep pursuing hawkish stance on the region in order to achieve their goal in combating terrorism, but at the expense of Palestinians. U.S. efforts to limit nuclear proliferation appear equally hypocritical given its willingness to accept Israel's nuclear arsenal but try every means possible to stop Iran from developing one, will encourages others to seek similar capabilities including these extremist groups. The dire situation in Palestine also gives extremist a powerful recruiting tool, increase the pool of potential terrorist and sympathizers, and contributes to Islamic radicalism around the world (Etzion, 2017).

3.3 Domestic Factors

Domestically, the factors that influence foreign policy are the foreign policy elite, interest groups, or the domestic structure of the state. Neoclassical realism argues that systemic pressures must be translated through factors at the unit level (Rose, 1998). There is no immediate transmission belt linking material capabilities to foreign policy behavior. Foreign policy choices are made by actual political leaders and elites, and so it is their perceptions of relative power that matter not simply relative quantities of physical resources of force in being. Neoclassical realism identifies elite calculations and perceptions of relative power and domestic constraints as intervening variables between international pressures and states' foreign policies. Relative power sets parameters for how states (or rather, those who act on their behalf) define their interests and pursue particular ends (Lobell, et al., 2009).

Neoclassical realists consequently view policy responses as a product of state–society coordination and, at times, struggle. Nonetheless, while the executive is potentially autonomous from society, in many contexts political arrangements

frequently compel it to bargain with domestic actors (such as the legislature, political parties, economic sectors, classes, or the public as a whole) in order to enact policy and extract resources to implement policy choices. State and societal elites or interest groups have a different “evoked set” of concerns about an ascending foreign power. Interest groups will seek to identify and brand states that have a component of power that harms their parochial interests as a national threat. They will then apply pressure on the government to advance their preferred domestic and foreign policies. They also may push the Foreign Policy Elites (FPE) beyond what is in the nation’s grand strategic interest (Lobell, et al., 2009).

As a democratic country, the level of coordination between government and the public is high in the U.S. Many interest groups are competing with each other to influence the government to pursue policy that benefits them the most. Related to Israel-Palestine conflict, the strongest groups that influence U.S. policy relating that matter of course the pro-Israel lobby groups. Pro-Palestine voices are less significant because the popularity of the advocates that in favor with them is not that big compared to the pro-Israel groups. Most of the time, the government see what they perceived as threats according to the perspective of these groups. That’s why the U.S. policy are directed to the pro-Israel side.

3.3.1 U.S. Domestic State Structure

State structure and domestic political institutions often crystallize state-society relations. Formal institutions, organizational processes, and bureaucratic management often established by constitutional provisions with clearly specified rules and regulations set the broad parameters within which domestic competition over policy occurs. Consequently, they determine who can contribute to policy formation, at what stage of the policy process, and who can act as veto players, using their power to block policy initiatives in order to reshape governmental policies. Structural restriction such as a division of powers, checks and balances, and public support serve to constrain democratic leaders to enact a certain policy. These variables will affect

whether state leaders can harness the nation's power, and whether democratic states can adjust and adapt readily to external shocks or shifts in the international distribution of power (Ripsman, 2016).

This is evident in the case of United States. The checks and balances in the U.S. Constitution have the intent of checking the authority of the presidency and ensuring that domestic power is widely shared among the citizenry. The disadvantage of the American system is that it can hamstring the president in times when quick and decisive foreign policy is necessary. Those which require the executive to consult with opposition forces or which encourage actors outside the executive to use their power to the fullest can complicate policy making and implementation. These features will determine whether the FPE has the autonomy to conduct policy as it sees fit or whether it must make compromises with institutional veto players or logroll with others to form a winning coalition to secure a policy's adoption (Ripsman, 2016).

Foreign Policies are designed by the head of government with the aim of achieving complex domestic and international agendas. It usually involves an elaborate series of steps and where domestic politics plays an important role. Domestic political environment shapes the entire framework of decision making in a country even in international context. Depending on the political system of the head of government, the influencing factors will vary. For the head of government in a democracy such as The U.S., consensus of the government office and public opinion will play an important role. National leaders, especially the head of government has to play a two level game between international and domestic politics. The head of government in any kind of political system is motivated by two similar goals: retain political power and build and maintain policy coalitions. The domestic politics can also influence states' leaders either because they want to achieve domestic goals through foreign policies or they want their foreign policy decisions not to interfere with domestic agendas (Hussain, 2011).

Domestic politics or domestic state structure interferes with foreign policy decisions. The head of the government has to cope simultaneously with international and domestic imperatives and the head of government has to maintain a good face locally and internationally. Domestic consensus need to be achieved before a country's enact a certain policy. If a policy is not accepted at home it is unlikely to succeed in the international context. Foreign Policy analysis needs to be multilevel and multifaceted in order to understand the complicated motivational factors and nature of foreign policy. Sometimes, leaders may have to resort to suboptimal foreign policy due to domestic political demands (Hussain, 2011).

The formation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy is strongly influenced by its state structure. Power diffusion is a prominent feature of American policy-making process. The high decentralisation means that no single actor can dictate the country's policies. Under the constitution, power is shared to the three equal branches of government. Although Presidents play the most important role within the administration, they have to contend with an active Congress, oversee a complex executive bureaucracy, and respond to pressures and ideas generated by the press, think tanks, and public opinion. The U.S. governmental structure allows a wide range of actors to play a part in the process of making U.S. foreign policy. Such sources are crucial to have a comprehensive picture of U.S. foreign policy (Nguyen, 2014).

The Founding Fathers, the framers of the U.S. Constitution, wanted to form a government that did not allow one person to have too much control. With this in mind, they wrote the Constitution to provide for a separation of powers, or three separate branches of government. Each branch has its own responsibilities and at the same time, the three branches work together to make the country run smoothly and to assure that the rights of citizens are not ignored or disallowed. A branch may use its powers to check the powers of the other two in order to maintain a balance of power among the three branches of government. The three branches consist of legislative which responsible to make laws, executive that carries out laws and judicial which

responsible to evaluate laws. The legislative branch or known as Congress in the U.S. consist of House of Representatives and Senate. The executive branch consist of President, Vice President, Cabinet members, and most federal agencies. While the juducual branch consist of Supreme Court and other courts. All these three branches have the same level power. Each branch of government can change acts of the other branches. The president can veto legislation created by Congress and nominates heads of federal agencies. Congress confirms or rejects the president's nominees and can remove the president from office in exceptional circumstances. The Justices of the Supreme Court, who can overturn unconstitutional laws, are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. This ability of each branch to respond to the actions of the other branches is called the system of checks and balances (U.S.A. Government, 2019).

The United States government is based on the principles of federalism and republicanism, in which power is shared between the federal government and local or state governments. Federalism refers to a political system in which there are local (territorial, regional, provincial, state, or municipal) units of government, as well as a national government, that can make final decisions with respect to at least some governmental activities. The federalist system allows the states to work for their own people. It is designed to ensure state's rights and it does not come without controversies. Powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for states and the people, which are divided between state and local governments. Most Americans have more daily contact with their state and local governments than with the federal government. Police departments, libraries, and schools usually fall under the oversight of state and local governments. Each state has its own written constitution, and these documents are often far more elaborate than their federal counterpart. Under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, all powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for the states and the people. All state governments are modeled after the federal government and consist of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial (The White House, n.d.).

Presidential-congressional relations in the making of foreign policy are essential to understanding the process by which the choices of foreign policy are made. Both the President and Congress have unique foreign policy powers. The separation of these powers often leads to a political “tug-of-war” in the realm of foreign policy making. The process by which the choices of foreign policy strategy are made are also influenced by intra-executive-branch politics. Though the president is the leader of foreign policy within the executive branch, how well he fulfills this role depends on other domestic actors too. Forces outside of the government are also able to influence foreign policy and the choices made by government officials. Such outside influence comes primarily from three sources: interest groups, the news media, think tanks and public opinion (Norton, 2019).

The separation of powers has spawned a great deal of debate over the roles of the president and Congress in foreign affairs, as well as over the limits on their respective authorities. The Constitution, considered only for its affirmative grants of power capable of affecting the issue, is an invitation to struggle for the privilege of directing American foreign policy. Article I of the Constitution enumerates several of Congress’s foreign affairs powers, including those to “regulate commerce with foreign nations,” “declare war,” “raise and support armies,” “provide and maintain a navy,” and “make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.” The Constitution also makes two of the president’s foreign affairs powers such as, making treaties and appointing diplomats, dependent on Senate approval (Masters, 2017).

Beyond these, Congress has general powers to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper. That would allow legislators to influence nearly all manner of foreign policy issues. Like various legislation laws already mentioned in previous chapter, Congress determined the laws related to foreign governments. Congress also plays an oversight role. The annual appropriations process allows congressional committees to review in detail the budgets and programs of the vast military and diplomatic bureaucracies.

Congress has broad authority to conduct investigations into particular foreign policy or national security concerns. Furthermore, Congress has the power to create, eliminate, or restructure executive branch agencies, which it has often done after major conflicts or crises (Masters, 2017).

The executive branch, mainly the president's authority in foreign affairs, as in all areas, is rooted in Article II of the Constitution. The charter grants the officeholder the powers to make treaties and appoint ambassadors with the advice and consent of the Senate. Presidents also rely on other clauses to support their foreign policy actions, particularly those that bestow executive power and the role of "commander in chief of the army and navy" on the office. Presidents also draw on statutory authorities. Congress has passed legislation giving the executive additional authority to act on specific foreign policy issues. Presidents also cite case law to support their claims of authority. In particular from U.S. Supreme Court decisions. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson provided a logic for assessing presidential authority:

"First, when the President acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization of Congress, his authority is at its maximum, for it includes all that he possesses in his own right plus all that Congress can delegate. Second, when the President acts in absence of either a congressional grant or denial of authority, he can only rely upon his own independent powers but there is a zone of twilight in which he and Congress may have concurrent authority, or in which its distribution is uncertain. Third, when the President takes measures incompatible with the expressed or implied will of Congress, his power is at its lowest."

Federal courts, including the Supreme Court, weigh in from time to time on questions involving foreign affairs powers, but there are strict limits on when they may do so. For one, courts can only hear cases in which a plaintiff can both prove they were injured by the alleged actions of another and demonstrate the likelihood that the court can provide them relief. Another form of judicial restraint turns on the "political question" doctrine, in which

courts decline to take sides on a major constitutional question if the judges say its resolution is best left to the president or Congress (Masters, 2017).

Before the President enacts foreign policy, there should be a consensus for that policy between all these three branches. If there is no domestic consensus, then the policy might not be effective. Beside the government officials, the President or foreign policy elites need to bargain with various domestic actors in order to gain their support towards a certain policy. Domestic actors might influence foreign policy making by shaping public opinion through media and think tanks in the directions they favored. It is hard for government to ignore the impact of domestic actors have on foreign policy. In order to preserve their power, political leaders need to bargain with these domestic actors. Government policy itself helped create interest groups. Such as wars create veterans, who in turn demand pensions and other benefits. As government involve in more diverse area of policy, the broader interest groups will formed. These interest groups are found in greater numbers at certain times than others. They often are young, caught up in a social movement, drawn to the need for change, and inspired by some political or religious doctrine. The more activities government undertakes, the more organized groups that will be interested in those activities (Wilson, et al., 2011).

Interest group activity is a form of political speech protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution: it cannot lawfully be abolished or even much curtailed. The First Amendment guarantees the right of individuals to speak their minds and lobby their senators and representatives. This right cannot be preserved for individuals and denied to groups. After all, groups are just collections of likeminded individuals. As a result, placing any meaningful restrictions on the activities of lobbyists is next to impossible. Freedom of speech protects each person's right to participate, the separation of powers and federalism means any participant can usually find a political ally, the decentralized structure of Congress (one effect of federalism and the separation of powers) gives each member an incentive to call attention to himself or herself by making speeches, taking positions, and (above all)

attacking adversaries, and the courts provide a convenient arena in which to wage endless struggles (Wilson, et al., 2011).

Since U.S. complex political system makes it easy for all kinds of people and groups to wield at least some power, people should not expect policies to get made in only one way. If the people had a less participatory, less adversarial system, it would be much easier to explain policy making. In the United States, everybody gets into the act. Some policies are proposed by the president and enacted by Congress, others are proposed by members of Congress and enacted despite presidential objections. Congress may override the president's veto or sufficiently modify the proposal to get him to withhold his veto. The most striking change in the American government since its founding has been the vast increase in the scope of its activities and the reach of its powers. In a government whose leaders are chosen by a competitive struggle for the people's votes, candidates for office have a strong incentive to offer new programs to voters in order to win their support. It is hard to excite people by promising to do less for them; it is only natural, therefore, that politicians usually promise to do more. These complex process influence U.S. foreign policy (Wilson, et al., 2011).

3.3.2 Israel Lobby Groups

There is a strong moral case for supporting Israel's existence, but that is fortunately not in jeopardy. Viewed objectively, Israel's past and present conduct offers little moral basis for privileging it. Many scholars assume that the bond between the two countries is based on shared strategic interest. But neither these aspects convincing enough to explain the unwavering support of the U.S. towards Israel. Some argued that the main drives for this support are the activities of the Israel lobby groups. This special-interest groups have managed to shape U.S. foreign policy in directions they favored (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006). Were it not for the lobby's ability to work effectively within the American political system, the relationship between Israel and the United States would be far less intimate than it is today.

Today's pro-Israel lobby began in 1939 under the leadership of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, originally from Lithuania. He created the American Zionist Emergency Council (AZEC) (Weir, 2014). Ever since, the pro-Israel lobby groups have been developed in massive scale until today. One of the most prominent America's pro-Israel Lobby group is The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). AIPAC's beginnings in the 1950s reveal the long journey the group has traveled as it has grown in size and stature. It once operated in obscurity; now its influence lies partly in its genius for publicity. The perception that AIPAC represents a consensus among American Jews has always been a key to its political influence, which explains the group's sometimes seemingly outsized opposition to Jewish dissent from its line. "America's Pro-Israel Lobby," born in awful knowledge, has always existed to make Israeli realities and priorities palatable to Americans (Rossinow, 2018).

The Israel lobby's power flows from its unmatched ability to play the game of interest-group politics. What sets the Israel lobby apart is its extraordinary effectiveness. For the most part, the individuals and groups that comprise the lobby are doing what other special-interest groups do, just much better. Moreover, pro-Arab interest groups are weak to non-existent, which makes the lobby's task even easier. The core of the lobby consists of American Jews who make a significant effort in their daily lives to bend U.S. foreign policy so that it advances Israel's interests. Their activities go beyond merely voting for candidates who are pro-Israel to include writing letters, contributing money and supporting pro-Israel organizations (Bacevich, 2008).

The lobby also includes prominent Christian evangelicals. These "Christian Zionists" believe Israel's rebirth is part of Biblical prophecy, support its expansionist agenda and think pressuring Israel is contrary to God's will. In addition, the lobby also draws support from neoconservative gentiles (Bacevich, 2008). "Christian Zionism," which has under its effect a wide proportion of the conservative American Protestant population, provides

a natural supporting ground and electoral base for the pro-Israel U.S. politicians who support Israel's stance. Christian Zionism is built upon a particular interpretation of verses in the Bible which are concerned with the end of the world. Christian Zionists however believe that before the second coming of Christ, Jewish people will gather in Jerusalem. According to them, this process will trigger a war that will involve the whole world and by the end of this war Jesus Christ will return to Earth and build the "Kingdom of God," which will last for 1000 years – then, the world will come to an end (Okur, 2018). This is why Christian Zionists is so eager to support Israel's agenda.

The lobby pursues two broad strategies to promote U.S. support for Israel. First, it wields significant influence in Washington, pressuring both Congress and the Executive Branch to support Israel down the line. Whatever an individual lawmaker or policy maker's own views, the lobby tries to make supporting Israel the "smart" political choice. Second, the lobby strives to ensure that public discourse about Israel portrays it in a positive light, by repeating myths about Israel and its founding and by publicizing Israel's side in the policy debates of the day. The goal is to prevent critical commentary about Israel from getting a fair hearing in the political arena. A key pillar of the lobby's effectiveness is its influence in the U.S. Congress, where Israel is virtually immune from criticism. Where Israel is concerned, however, potential critics fall silent; there is hardly any debate at all. Jewish senators and congressmen work to make U.S. foreign policy support Israel's interests. AIPAC's success is due to its ability to reward legislators and congressional candidates who support its agenda and to punish those who challenge it. Money is critical to U.S. elections. AIPAC makes sure that its friends get financial support from the myriad pro-Israel political action committees. AIPAC also organizes letter-writing campaigns and encourages newspaper editors to endorse pro-Israel candidates. AIPAC prizes its reputation as a formidable adversary, of course, because this discourages anyone from questioning its agenda (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006).

The lobby also has significant leverage over the Executive Branch. That power derives in part from the influence Jewish voters have on presidential elections. Despite their small numbers in the population (less than 3 percent), Jewish-Americans make large campaign donations to candidates from both parties. Furthermore, Jewish voters have high turn-out rates and are concentrated in key states like California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. This increases their weight in determining electoral outcomes. Key organizations in the lobby also directly target the administration in power. The lobby's goals are also served when pro-Israel individuals occupy important positions in the Executive Branch (Waxman, 2010).

There is nothing illegal or morally wrong with lobbying Congress or candidates for office. In fact, it can serve a useful purpose in educating members and candidates about matters subject to legislation. The problem comes when the lobbyists use money to secure access or buy support for proposed bills and resolutions. AIPAC itself does not make political contributions. Instead it uses its considerable resources to link current and aspiring members of Congress with pro-Israel donors. AIPAC's projection of invincibility encourages political candidates and officeholders to accept pro-Israel contributions or risk seeing those funds go to their opponents (Hager, 2016). Besides, political junkets are nothing new. Despite ethics laws that prohibit elected officials from accepting gifts (including free trips) from lobbying organizations, legislators at all levels of government have regularly traveled to Israel on lobby-paid junkets. Israel was the most frequented freebie destination for Members of Congress. The Employee Standards of Conduct of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, Congressional guidelines and state Ethics Commissions prohibit elected officials from accepting travel gifts from organizations that lobby on issues before them. Yet in the face of often confusing rules and dubious exceptions, lawmakers continue to succumb to the lure of free foreign travel with impunity (Foreign Policy Journal, 2016).

The lobby also strives to shape public perceptions about Israel and the Middle East. It does not want an open debate on issues involving Israel, because an open debate might cause Americans to question the level of support that they currently provide. Accordingly, pro-Israel organizations work hard to influence the media, think tanks and academia, institutions that are critical in shaping popular opinion. The lobby's perspective on Israel is widely reflected in the mainstream media, in good part because most American commentators are pro-Israel. This pro-Israel bias is reflected in the editorials of major newspapers. To discourage unfavorable reporting on Israel, the lobby organizes letter-writing campaigns, demonstrations and boycotts against news outlets whose content it considers anti-Israel (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006).

Pro-Israel forces predominate in U.S. think tanks, which play an important role in shaping public debate as well as actual policy. The lobby created its own think tank in 1985, called WINEP. WINEP is funded and run by individuals who are deeply committed to advancing Israel's agenda. The lobby's influence in the think-tank world extends well beyond WINEP. Over the past 25 years, pro-Israel forces have established a commanding presence in a various think tanks. These think tanks are decidedly pro-Israel and include few, if any, critics of U.S. support for the Jewish state (Bacevich, 2008).

The lobby has had the most difficulty stifling debate about Israel on college campuses, because academic freedom is a core value and because tenured professors are hard to threaten or silence. The lobby moved aggressively to "take back the campuses." AIPAC tripled its spending for programs to monitor university activities and to train young advocates for Israel, in order to vastly expand the number of students involved on campus in the direction of national pro-Israel effort. The lobby also monitors what professors write and teach. Finally, a number of Jewish philanthropists have established Israel studies programs, to increase the number of Israel-friendly scholars on campus (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006).

Anyone who criticizes Israeli actions or says that pro-Israel groups have significant influence over U.S. Middle East policy stands a good chance of getting labeled an anti-Semite. In effect, the lobby boasts of its own power and then attacks anyone who calls attention to it. This tactic is very effective: antisemitism is loathsome, and no responsible person wants to be accused of it. This is why pro-Israel forces, when pressed to go beyond assertion, claim that there is a “new antisemitism” which they equate with criticism of Israel. In other words, criticize Israeli policy, and that person are by definition an anti-Semite (Waxman, 2010). The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act is an expansive U.S. State Department definition of what anti-Semitism is, also crafted by Israel lobby organizations, which is designed to clamp down on criticism of Israel, particularly on college campuses. So Israel lobby organizations backing such laws want to be able to say that certain criticism under this State Department definition is anti-Semitism (Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, 2018).

The Israel lobby is currently mobilizing to stop and even criminalize the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. The BDS movement is generally seen as a loose grouping of actors from various countries who advocate or engage in economic measures against Israel or Israel-related individuals or organizations. Those who are part of the movement or support it generally express sympathy for the Palestinian cause. In July 2005, various Palestinian civil society groups issued a “Call for BDS.” These groups sought international support for “non-violent punitive measures” against Israel unless and until it changes its policies by ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall; recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UNGA resolution 194 (McMahon, 2014).

Debate is ongoing in the United States and elsewhere about whether economic “differentiation” between (1) Israel in general and (2) entities

linked with Israeli-developed areas and settlements whose legality is questioned under international law, including areas that Israel has controlled and administered since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Israel and many of its supporters, along with the international media, frequently raise the possibility of Israel's "isolation". Israeli officials strenuously oppose the BDS movement, and statements by U.S. officials have consistently denounced any boycotts or other punitive economic measures targeting Israel. Israeli political leaders routinely denounce BDS, and Israel's government has reportedly allocated about \$26 million in annual funding to the Ministry of Strategic Affairs aimed at countering BDS-related activities. Such countermeasures apparently include assertive public diplomacy, outreach to enlist anti-BDS allies within the Jewish diaspora, and digital initiatives like gathering intelligence on activist groups. Some current and former Israeli diplomats were cited in 2016 as saying that robust Israeli efforts to counter BDS may backfire by providing the movement with free publicity and by possibly alienating would-be diaspora supporters including in the United States via polarizing rhetoric. Some private individuals and organizations have raised funds and public awareness in an effort to counter pro-BDS sentiment in the United States (such as on college campuses and social media websites) and elsewhere since BDS is relatively succeeding in creating more platforms for open discussions on many university campuses and some media (Zanotti, et al., 2017).

A number of U.S. policymakers and lawmakers have stated opposition to or taken action against the BDS movement. Some Members of Congress argue that the BDS movement is discriminatory and are seeking legislative options to limit its influence. Since 2015, various U.S. states have also enacted or proposed anti-BDS or anti-differentiation legislation. Some legislation explicitly applies to situations involving both Israel and "Israeli-controlled territories." More states are likely to follow. Most pro-Israel billionaires are also funding a massively rich campaign and lavish conferences to combat the influence of the civil society-powered BDS movement (Baroud, 2017).

On other aspect, there's a legislative rule with the force of law currently in effect through the Department of Energy that says any government contractor or employee cannot publicly say or write that Israel has a nuclear weapons program under penalty of losing their job. That de facto law is called WPN-136. It's had a devastating impact on legitimate discussions of nuclear proliferation in this country, and many countries in the world don't consider the U.S. to be particularly forthcoming as a nonproliferation partner. Israel is the only undeclared nuclear weapons entity in the world, with an estimated secret arsenal of up to 400 nuclear warheads – all of which are outside the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of the United Nations, which makes it, arguably, the greatest potential threat to global peace in the history of mankind. To which must be added the fact that Israel is one of the only UN member states to refuse to be a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) or the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). An undeclared nuclear Israel, outside the inspection of the IAEA is a grave enough global problem (Bellchambers, 2017).

There is little question the lobby remains a potent political force today. The “special relationship” is firmly intact: An increasingly prosperous Israel continues to receive billions of dollars in U.S. assistance, and it is still largely immune from criticism by top U.S. officials, members of Congress or contenders for public office. Being perceived as insufficiently “pro-Israel” can disqualify nominees for important government positions. Wealthy defenders of Israel such as Sheldon Adelson and Haim Saban play outsize roles in American politics, especially on Israel-related issues. A number of hard-liner individuals and groups in the lobby remain staunch opponents of the sensible policy towards Israel (Walt, 2017).

By preventing U.S. leaders from pressuring Israel to make peace, the Lobby has also made it impossible to end Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The U.S. has become the enabler of Israeli expansion in the occupied territories by not pressuring Israel to stop the settlements. Denying the Palestinians their rights certainly has not made Israel more secure. In contrast, it will reduce the

number of Palestinian leaders who are willing to negotiate. The inability of U.S. Congress to conduct a genuine debate on these vital issue paralyzes the entire process of democratic deliberation (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006).

With this extraordinary influence, it is highly unlikely that the Palestinian issue will be discussed among policy makers in the U.S. Most of the foreign political elites see the Israel-Palestine conflict through the Israeli's perspective. So it will be hard to determine even-handed policy that benefits both sides, so far the U.S. policy regarding that conflict has been one sided in favor to Israel. Few public voices that pressed the government to enact fair policy related to this issue seems insignificant. Because compared to the voices of pro-Israeli government officials, their number are relatively small and unpopular. By putting Israel and Zionism first, these rich individuals, powerful lobby groups, hundreds of think-tanks, thousands of networks across the country and their allies among the religious right, are now the main wheelers and dealers in any matter concerning U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and Israel's political and security interests.

3.3.3 Foreign Policy Elites (FPE) of Trump's Administration

Divisions among the top officials of the state or commonly known as foreign policy elites (FPE) charged with the formulation of grand strategy and key societal elites can adversely affect the threat assessment process and ultimately strategic adjustment. FPE stands at the intersection of international and domestic politics. The FPE has responsibility for grand strategic planning, including the identification of changes in the global or regional balance of power. Yet, in order to implement foreign and security policies, the FPE must forge and maintain a coalition with various societal elites. Societal elites may push the FPE beyond what is in the nation's grand strategic interest. Elites might also challenge a policy because it will undermine their coalitional interests, even if it is in the national interest (Lobell, 2009).

The making and carrying out of America's foreign policy involve all three branches of government and a complex array of governmental institutions and agencies. The president and the executive branch have the most significant role in making foreign policy and are responsible for carrying it out. In forming U.S. foreign policy, the president relies on advice from the National Security Council (Constitutional Rights Foundation, n.d.). The National Security Council (NSC) is the President's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials. The Council also serves as the President's principal arm for coordinating these policies among various government agencies. Its regular attendees (both statutory and non-statutory) are the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the statutory military advisor to the Council, and the Director of National Intelligence is the intelligence advisor. The Chief of Staff to the President, Counsel to the President, and the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy are invited to attend any NSC meeting. The Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget are invited to attend meetings pertaining to their responsibilities. The heads of other executive departments and agencies, as well as other senior officials, are invited to attend meetings of the NSC when appropriate (The White House, n.d.).

Congress also plays a part in America's foreign policy in the role of accepting, changing, or rejecting policies proposed by the president. The Supreme Court plays a limited role in foreign policy. It has jurisdiction over cases involving treaties, admiralty and maritime law, and ambassadors and other public ministers. It also is charged with deciding disputes between states and foreign states and their citizens and subjects. At different times, tensions have arisen between the branches in the conduct of foreign policy. Other times, tensions have arisen between the Congress' power to declare war and the president's role as commander in chief (Constitutional Rights Foundation, n.d.).

In the case of America, as already explained in the previous section concerning pro-Israel Lobby Groups, the perceptions of foreign policy executives or top policy makers are much influenced by these lobby's work besides each leader's own perception about certain issue. The lobby's extraordinary funding and effectiveness have contributed to the formation of leader's perception about certain issue. In this regards, foreign policy executives' perception are tend to pro-Israel or at least how they see Middle East constellation are based on the perspective of Israelis only. This kind of phenomenon happened almost in every governmental institutions. It is hard to challenge this status quo especially for those to express their concern toward Palestinians. The deep-rooted leaders and public perception regarding Israel-Palestine conflict will never be even-handed and therefore generate biased foreign policy which tend to favor Israel.

In Trump's administration, it is not hard to conclude that his closest circle are likely to think alike. His top national security leaders that influenced his decisions regarding Israel-Palestine issue the most are consist of Vice President Michael Richard Pence or commonly known as Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, National Security Advisor John Bolton, and Trump's son-in-law Senior Adviser Jared Kushner. They are sharing visions related to Middle Eastern affairs. They also came from similar background whether from business realm or political thinking. Not only influenced by these people's hard-liner view on Palestinian issue, his close relationship with Benjamin Netanyahu became one of the reason why he's pursue biased foreign policy. President Trump himself stressed the importance of being an honest broker in Israel-Palestine conflict. But his rhetoric seems out of touch with reality, as already discussed in the previous chapter it is clear that Trump is a pro-Israel. He has made several comments that suggest he has closer ties to Israelis than Palestinians. Trump has called himself "pro-Israel" and endorsed Netanyahu's re-election in 2013. That is a good indication Trump isn't neutral (Sherman, 2016).

Domestically, Trump also gain massive support from Evangelical Christian communities. These communities are tend to support policy that beneficial for Israel, in line with their biblical believe about “the end of the world.” According to a Public Religion Research Institute poll conducted in late 2018, President Donald Trump enjoys an approval rating of 71 percent among white evangelicals (Kuttab & Moon, 2019). Many of his supporters believed that Trump was “a Christian man,” that his heart was in the right place, his intentions for the country were pure, that he alone was capable of delivering to a troubled country salvation in the here and now. Besides Trump, Netanyahu also popular among Evangelical Christians. They tend to support his hardline policy toward Palestinian in order to “preserve” Jewish country (Haberman & Kaplan, 2016). Trump also gained support from Jewish community in the U.S. Trump’s Jewish supporters were more religious, mostly aligned with Likud and its right-wing coalition partners. These Jews are only a minority of the roughly six million who live in the United States, but they tend to be more focused on issues pertaining to Israel, and are, in some cases, willing to spend a great deal of money to influence U.S. policy (Entous, 2018).

The bond between Trump and Netanyahu goes far beyond political flattery and good chemistry. Trump and Netanyahu have forged a symbiotic alliance. Trump’s benevolence toward Israel buoys the prime minister’s prospects. And when he responds gratefully by heaping praise on Trump, Netanyahu bolsters the president’s standing among his core Republican and evangelical supporters. Trump enjoys high approval ratings in Israel, and Netanyahu has made his close relationship with the American president a centerpiece of his political career. The result of Trump’s pro-Israel policy is that anything that emphasizes Netanyahu’s relationship to the administration is a very good political prop for Netanyahu. Trump seeks to reap his own political windfall from those decisions as he gears up for his re-election bid in 2020. He predicted that American Jews might boost his polls in the next election in part because of his pro-Israel policies (Shesgreen, 2019).

President Trump also has close relationship with numerous pro-Israel businessmen. The president himself was a successful businessman as real-estate developer. This is not unusual if Trump has close ties with various business partners. One of the most prominent pro-Israel businessman is casino billionaire Sheldon G. Adelson. Adelson has been a prominent player in promoting his pro-Israeli agenda. He donated \$20 million to a political action committee that supported Donald Trump's election campaign in 2016 in exchange for Trump's promise to make the move of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem a priority as president. Adelson and other pro-Israel backers put great pressure on Trump to take the Jerusalem decision as soon as possible, after he became president of the United States. Adelson wanted to take the issue of dividing the capital "off the table." The pro-Israel businessman is known for his close relationship with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and using his casino fortune to influence Republican Party members with his Zionist ambitions (Daily Sabah, 2017).

Adelson also owns a popular tabloid in Israel called Israel Hayom, which has long served as a loyal tribune for Netanyahu. He takes a particularly derisive view of the Palestinians, believing that establishing a state for them would be "a stepping stone for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people." Adelson exerts almost as much influence on electoral politics in the U.S. as he does in Israel. No Republican candidate can easily afford to ignore him. He also critical towards Obama's stance on Israel, and considered Obama an enemy of Israel. He had vowed to spend "whatever it takes" to prevent Obama from securing a peace agreement with the Palestinian leaders while in office (Entous, 2018).

The Israelis found the Trump circle easy to persuade. Trump and his closest advisers shared Netanyahu's antipathy toward Obama. They had little government or diplomatic experience, and were eager to please their staunchly pro-Israel and pro-Likud base. The Israeli government's use of its intelligence capabilities to pit the President-elect against the sitting President had no modern precedent. What's more, Trump and his team seemed more

trusting of a foreign leader and his intelligence than they were of the President of the United States and American intelligence agencies. Unlike Obama, Trump is popular in Israel (Entous, 2018).

Trump had run for office as a noninterventionist, with the slogan “America First.” He quite honestly had very little interest in meddling in the Middle East in general and very little interest from a philosophical point of view. With Obama finally out of the way, Netanyahu could concentrate on getting the Trump team to embrace his grand strategy for transforming the direction of Middle Eastern politics as he preferred. Netanyahu had every reason to believe that the central figures in the new Administration had a “special feeling” for Israel. Trump put Jared Kushner in putative charge of Middle East policy (Entous, 2018).

Trump’s favorite son-in-law is by all means his go-to authority on all things Jewish. Kushner, who is Orthodox and whose children with Ivanka Trump attend Jewish schools, was tapped early on by Trump to take on the Middle East peace portfolio, in addition to his many other responsibilities at the White House. Trump hinted shortly after the elections that it was Kushner’s Jewish background that makes him the ideal candidate. Kushner resigned as chief executive of Kushner Companies when he joined the White House as Trump’s senior adviser. The Israelis already had ties to the Trump family. Netanyahu had a long friendship with Charles Kushner, the father of Jared Kushner. In recent years, the Kushners, Orthodox Jews who made their fortune in the real-estate business and hold conservative views on Israel, have donated large sums of money to Israeli causes and charities, including tens of thousands of dollars to a yeshiva in the Beit El settlement, in the West Bank (Guttman, 2018).

Jared Kushner’s family real estate company also received a roughly \$30 million investment from Menora Mivtachim, an insurer that is one of Israel’s largest financial institutions, according to a Menora executive. The Menora transaction is the latest financial arrangement that has surfaced between Mr. Kushner’s family business and Israeli partners, including one of the country’s

wealthiest families and a large Israeli bank that is the subject of a United States criminal investigation. The deal illustrates how the Kushner Companies' extensive financial ties to Israel continue to deepen, even with his prominent diplomatic role in the Middle East. Kushner's company has also taken out at least four loans from Israel's largest bank, Bank Hapoalim, which is the subject of a Justice Department investigation over allegations that it helped wealthy Americans evade taxes. It's reasonable for people to ask whether his business interests are somehow affecting his judgment. No one could ever imagine this scale of ongoing global business interests that give the president and his top adviser personal economic stakes in an astounding number of policy interests. A lot of people wonder whether the United States has ever been an honest broker in the Middle East, and given the positions of the Trump administration, it's probably even more vulnerable to those claims (Drucker, 2018).

Michael Richard Pence is currently serving as Vice President of the United States. He has a well-established political career. At first, he ran unsuccessfully for a congressional seat in 1988 and in 1990. Mike Pence rejuvenated his political career by running for the U.S. House of Representatives again in 2000, this time winning the seat in Indiana's second congressional district. He then became a member of the United States House of Representatives from 2001 to 2013. While in Congress Pence belonged to the Tea Party Caucus, which is a congressional caucus (a group of U.S. Congress that meets to pursue common legislative objectives) of conservative members of the Republican Party in the United States Congress (Sherman, 2010). He also won the seat of the 50th governor of Indiana from 2013 to 2017 before joining Donald Trump as his Vice President. Pence had stronger connections at the time to the politically influential big donors than Trump did. When Donald Trump settled on Michael Pence as his running-mate, it looked as though one of the main motives was to reassure religious conservatives, and to make up for his own wobbly grasp of theology. Pence was very supportive of Donald Trump's controversial stance such as the Southern Wall and immigration policy. During the transition phase of the

Trump administration, Pence was reported as holding a large degree of influence in the administration due to his roles as a mediator between Trump and congressional Republicans, for reassuring conservatives about Trump's conservative credentials, and his influence in determining Donald Trump's cabinet. Trump's choices have reflected Pence's politics devotion to conservative principles and his relationships with powerful groups (LoBianco & Bradner, 2016).

Mike Pence is an Evangelical Christian and strong supporter of Israel. He and Trump stand with Israel because considered "Israel's fight is our fight, because Israel's cause is our cause." And, unlike Trump, he has a long record of political support for Israel. Pence has stated his support of Israel and its right to attack facilities in Iran to prevent the Iranians from developing nuclear weapons, has defended the actions of Israel in its use of deadly force in enforcing the blockade of Gaza, and has referred to Israel as "America's most cherished ally." In Trump's administration the Republicans retained control of both the House and the Senate, whose support for Israel remains extremely strong (Keinon, 2016). Pence stood out as a reassuring figure to the devout and right-wing. He has often described himself as "Christian, conservative, Republican, in that order". Little in his recent career gives any reason to doubt the sincerity of that claim. He has explicitly linked his metaphysical beliefs to some of the causes he holds most dear, including opposition to a Palestinian state (Erasmus, 2016).

During Trump's early year at the White House, Rex Wayne Tillerson was serving as 69th U.S. Secretary of State. Before joining the Trump administration, Tillerson was chairman and chief executive officer of ExxonMobil from 2006 until 2017. Tillerson was first recommended to Trump for the Secretary of State role by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, which also backed up by former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Tillerson became Secretary of State on February 1, 2017. An unconventional choice for the role, Tillerson's tenure was characterized by a lack of visibility in comparison to his predecessors in the traditionally high-

profile position of Secretary of State. In many ways, Trump's choice of Tillerson as his top diplomat was a harbinger of the unprecedented degradation in U.S. "soft power" that was about to come. The former Exxon Mobil CEO had no experience in government (Bayoumi, 2019). After some tensions and differences escalating between him and the President, Trump dismissed Tillerson in March 2018, making his term of office one of the shortest in recent history. He was the first Cabinet official ever to be fired on social media. Tillerson and Trump "shared a common goal: to secure and advance America's place in the world and to promote and protect American values," but noted they don't share the same value system. Tillerson also suggested he does not approve of social media as a way to disseminate and learn of vital policy updates, knowing that Trump often do that, expressing his concern about a certain issue via Twitter. Both of them certainly have very different approach (Sanger, 2017).

Tillerson was replaced by CIA Director Mike Pompeo, a hawkish, Trump loyalist whose foreign policy positions are much more closely aligned with the president's. Trump stated that his differences with Tillerson came down to personal chemistry and disagreements on policy, adding that he and CIA Director Mike Pompeo have a very similar thought process. Where Trump sought to rip up treaties and trade agreements, Tillerson appeared to favour stability and continuity. While Pompeo's easy relationship with Trump might boost the State Department's standing with the administration (Gunter, 2018). As Director of the CIA, Mike has earned the praise of members in both parties by strengthening U.S. intelligence gathering, modernizing defensive and offensive capabilities, and building close ties with U.S. friends and allies in the international intelligence community (Horsley, 2018). Trump was confident that Pompeo is the right person for the job. Trump also sure that Pompeo will continue his program of restoring America's standing in the world, strengthening U.S. alliances, confronting its adversaries, and seeking the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and Iran (Zhao, 2018).

Pompeo was always ambitious and successful. Trump loves to brag that Pompeo. He deployed to the border between East and West Germany during the Cold War, returned to Harvard Law and edited the Law Review, and joined a top law firm in Washington. Pompeo then turned to business, launching an aerospace manufacturing business in Kansas funded in part by Koch Industries, the industrial behemoth headed by the billionaire brothers known for their funding of conservative and libertarian causes. The local political class started to notice him as donor and he became the state's Republican national committeeman. Largely a political unknown, Pompeo set his sights on Congress in 2010. Early on, Pompeo was not favored to win his primary. KochPAC, aviation executives, and social conservatives soon endorsed him and he won. He was a member of the United States House of Representatives from 2011 to 2017, representing Kansas's 4th congressional district. Pompeo is also a member of the Tea Party movement like Mike Pence. When Pence took over Trump's transition, Pompeo's name appeared on a short list for national security posts before finally stationed at the State Department (Dias, 2018).

Just like Vice President Mike Pence, Pompeo is also an Evangelical Christian. In the case of Israel-Palestine conflict, of course, he pledged his support towards Israel. Benefited from the massive support from the Evangelical Christians, many government officials introduced Christian Zionist rhetoric into America's Middle East foreign policy. In an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network during a high-profile trip to Israel, he said that "President Trump right now has been sort of raised for such a time as this, just like Queen Esther, to help save the Jewish people from an Iranian menace." Pompeo is a hard-liner towards Iranian regime, he believe that U.S. must take a hard stance on Iran so that Israel's security does not compromised (BBC News, 2019). Christian Zionists, which includes Pompeo and Vice President Mike Pence, believe in a specific theological interpretation that focuses on the claim that the secular State of Israel is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Pompeo is also playing with fire by inserting a religious element into an already troublesome part of the Middle East. Using religious examples

and favoring one religious group over the other is a scary recipe that could possibly lead to a religious war that no one in the region wants (Kuttab & Moon, 2019).

Mike Pompeo also condemned the growing rise in anti-Semitism around the world. He believe that anti-Zionism is same as anti-Semitism. Pompeo was more diplomatic in tone compared to U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, who criticized Democrats had been “co-opted by people who promote rank anti-Semitic rhetoric,” he nevertheless criticized the contingency of the Democratic Party increasingly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. They both condemned member of Congress that support BDS movement. During Pompeo’s speech in AIPAC Conference, he stated that “criticizing Israel’s policies is an acceptable thing to do in a democracy. But criticizing the very right to exist of Israel is not acceptable. Anti-Zionism denies the very legitimacy of the Israeli state and of the Jewish people.” This marked as a strong support from U.S. Secretary of State to Israel (Cortellessa, 2019).

Pompeo tend to have positive view regarding Israel. He has a record as a strong supporter of the Israeli government. After meeting with Netanyahu, and expressed that the Prime Minister is a true partner of the American people and that Netanyahu’s efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons are incredibly admirable and deeply appreciated. He also said, “In the fight against terrorism, cooperation between Israel and the United States has never been more important, and we must stand with our ally Israel and put a stop to terrorism. Ongoing attacks by the Palestinians serve only to distance the prospect of peace.” His strong stance on this issue was among the reasons that Democratic Senators voted for him, in addition to a number of Republicans who have been skeptical of Trump’s foreign policy priorities (Tibon, 2017).

Another hawkish towards Middle East policy in President Donald Trump’s administration is National Security Adviser John R. Bolton. Bolton replaced Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster as NSA, making him the third person to seat in that position. McMaster replaced Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, who was asked to resign amid reports that Flynn lied to Vice

President Mike Pence about the nature of conversations he had with Russian officials and his tenure did not last long (Fenwick, 2017). McMaster became the second NSA to leave his post. The Lieutenant's departure does not come as a major surprise, McMaster and Trump were always an unlikely team in terms of style. McMaster is a career military officer and academic with a Ph.D. in military history, and Trump considers himself a straight-talking, convention-defying outsider. The two also appear to have irreconcilable differences in terms of their personalities. Trump prefers casual banter to the orderly updates he received from his national security adviser. The president has complained that McMaster is too rigid and that his briefings go on too long and seem irrelevant. This is not the first time that high-profile U.S. officials have retired from Trump's administration because of differences with the President (Richardson, 2018).

Bolton's arrival as national security advisor now casts a shadow over the future of the White House chief of staff John Kelly, and the defense secretary James Mattis, both of whom are reported to see Bolton as a wild card, and a civilian with no experience of war who has backed plunging the U.S. into new conflicts. The former envoy to the UN in the George W Bush administration has been a consistent advocate of the use of military force to further U.S. goals around the globe. Some conservatives close to the White House had argued that Bolton was too hawkish for Trump, and that his foreign adventurism would detract from the president's "America first" strategy. Bolton is one of the Iran deal's fiercest opponents, and an advocate of a military solution to the standoff over Iran and also North Korea nuclear and missile programs (Pilkington & Borger, 2018).

John Bolton remains a keen enthusiast for regime change in the Middle East. He argued that not only should the president tear up the Iran nuclear deal and resume all previous sanctions but that U.S. should supply material and financial support to the opposition. That Bolton has the Iranians so clearly in his gun sights will be good news for Gulf leaders who like Bolton and Trump enjoy provoking bloody battles without ever having experienced war

themselves. Like the Gulf, the Israelis see Iran as their greatest existential threat. With a push from Bolton, a war likely occur between Iran and Gulf-Israel unusual coalition (Law, 2018). This could also lead to the abandonment of Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Since every party is busy to go to war Iran, the Palestine issue seems not in their current interest. For Bolton, Israel's safety from Iran is crucial. He reassured Israel that the U.S. intends to protect it from Iranian aggression even after the 2,000 U.S. troops stationed in Syria, where Iran has a growing military presence, are gone. Israeli officials worry that a U.S. departure from Syria could lead Israel to become even more aggressive in striking Iranian positions across the border, risking an escalation that could lead to a wider clash with Iran's Islamist regime, which Israel sees as a much more dangerous threat to its existence. Bolton went to great lengths to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to Israel's right to self-defense (Labott, 2019).

He has long been a hardliner on Palestine. According to Bolton, for more than two decades, U.S. policymakers have generally acceded to Palestinian insistence that a new state be created for them, stitching together the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. These territories have no particular history either of national identity or of economic interdependence. They are simply bits and pieces of the collapsed Ottoman Empire and the failed League of Nations' post-World War I mandate system. The only logic underlying the demand for a Palestinian state is the political imperative of Israel's opponents to weaken and encircle the Jewish state, thereby minimizing its potential to establish secure and defensible borders. The cruelest irony is that by using the Palestinian people as the tip of the spear against Israel, their supposed advocates have caused the Palestinians extensive suffering. Their economic well-being, their potential for development and the prospect of living under a non-corrupt, representative government have been lost in the shuffle of challenging Israel's very right to exist (Bolton, 2014).

In his opinion, as long as Washington's diplomatic objective is the "two-state solution," Israel and Palestine, the fundamental contradiction between

this aspiration and the reality on the ground will ensure it never comes into being. There simply cannot be two states living side by side in peace and security when one of the “states,” for the foreseeable future, cannot meet the basic, practical requirements for entering into and upholding international commitments, including, unfortunately, the glaring lack of its own legitimacy. Instead of pursuing the misguided notion of “two states,” U.S. policymakers should instead ask what other solutions are possible that would provide Palestinians with personal dignity and security, economic growth and the prospect of living under a responsible, responsive government. Concededly, there is no perfect alternative, but the most attractive prospect is to attach the disparate Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to their neighboring contiguous Arab states, Jordan and Egypt, respectively. Bolton might call this a “three-state solution.” (Bolton, 2014)

After the late 1940s collapse of the League of Nations’ Middle East mandates, Jordan successfully governed the West Bank until the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Today, Israel, Jordan and Palestinians should draw new West Bank boundaries. Jordan could, with relative ease, resume sovereignty over those portions of the West Bank not incorporated into Israel. The contentious issue of Jerusalem’s status as the purported capital of “Palestine” would disappear, since Amman would obviously be the seat of government for an enlarged Jordan. Gaza is a harder problem, but incorporating it into Egypt is clearly a better solution than allowing it to remain the headquarters for Hamas and other terrorist groups. By merging Palestinian with these countries, Palestinians could be rapidly integrated into the Jordanian economy, and participate in its ongoing political development. Such a solution would enormously benefit the Palestinian people by providing political stability and the prospect of enhanced economic security (Brown, 2018).

Bolton has been involved with numerous conservative organizations, including the far-right anti-Muslim Gatestone Institute, he served as the organization Chairman from 2013 before joined Trump’s administration. No wonder that Bolton has a really skeptical view towards peace process in Israel-

Palestine conflict. In 2010, Bolton co-founded the Friends of Israel Initiative with 12 other international figures. This project seek to counter the attempts to delegitimize the State of Israel and its right to live in peace within safe and defensible borders. The initiative was being launch because of the founder's outrage and concern about the unprecedented delegitimation campaign against Israel, driven by the enemies of the Jewish state and perversely assumed by numerous international authorities. It differs from previous such efforts in that this initiative is promoted by people who are not Jewish and whose motivations are based on the deep conviction that Israel is part of the Western world. In fact, today Israel is a fundamental actor for the future of the West (Dershowitz, 2019). Although the peace process is important, the members of Friends of Israel Initiative are more concerned about the onslaught of radical Islamism as well as the specter of a nuclear Iran since these are threats affecting not only Israel, but the entire world. This helps to explain why Bolton is a hard-liner towards Palestine (Jerusalem Post, 2010).

Another important figure in President Trump's administration is 26th U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis. He is a retired United States Marine Corps General. His world view regarding Middle East, especially Israel-Palestine conflict is a bit different than his other colleague. Even Mattis stressed the importance of U.S. partnership with Israel to counter Iranian ambition, he believe that "two-state solution" is the best way to deal with never-ending Israel-Palestine conflict. He has said the situation in Israel is "unsustainable" and and that settlements were obstructing the possibility of a two-state outcome between Israelis and Palestinians. Mattis specifically warned that if Israel continued to expand its settlement presence, its long-term character as a Jewish and democratic state would be at risk, ultimately leading to Israel becoming an apartheid state. In particular, he has said that the perception of biased American support for Israel has made it difficult for moderate Arabs to show support for the United States. Mattis strongly supported Secretary of State John Kerry on the Middle East peace process, praising Kerry for being "wisely focused like a laser beam" on a two-state solution (Cortellessa, 2016).

He also said that America pays a price for its perceived bias in support of Israel. He considered that the conflict foments anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of U.S. favoritism for Israel. Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of U.S. partnerships with governments and peoples in the area of responsibility and weakens the legitimacy of moderate regimes in the Arab world. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda and other militant groups exploit that anger to mobilize support. The conflict also gives Iran influence in the Arab world through its clients, Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas (Berman, 2013). He wanted the conflict to be addressed as soon as possible. Mattis argued that “we have got to find a way to make the two-state solution that Democrat and Republican administrations have supported. We’ve got to get there, and the chances for it are starting to ebb because of the settlements, and where they’re at, they’re going to make it impossible to maintain the two-state option.” His view towards the peace process clearly differ from other Trump’s aides (Israel, 2018).

Like Tillerson and McMaster, Mattis was at odds with some of Trump’s positions on the Middle East, such as exiting the Iran nuclear deal, moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, and withdrawal U.S. troops from Syria. He disagreed with the decision and advised the president against it. Mattis then announced his resignation because of the differences with the President’s thinking in many issue. Despite many critics towards Israel, but he nonetheless continued strong defense ties with Israel. During his tenure, Mattis has received mix response from various pro-Israel community that might see him as hostile towards Israel. But he stated that the U.S. will committed to Israel’s security and defense by support Israel’s internal security and Israel’s external security. Israel has an absolute right to defend themselves. Despite his view, many argued that it’s likely not going to have a huge impact on the U.S.-Israel relationship because the relationship is deep in bureaucratic ways throughout the Pentagon. The Defense Department has historically been friendly toward the Jewish state (Richman, 2018).

Both sides realize that the biggest threat facing them right now is Iran and extremist groups. Many see James Mattis at the only “adult” in Trump’s circle. He posed a balancer of Trump’s impulsive personality and controversial policy. But with Mattis out of the league, no one seems have the power to stop Trump from bringing chaos into Middle East. Supported by war-hawk Secretary of State and National Security Adviser, there’s a big chance that his administration will involve in another deadly war against its adversaries in Middle East, particularly Iran (Froomkin, 2018). With his resignation, the chance is tiny to promote two-state solution for the two adversaries, concerning Trump’s administration are dominated by hard-liner on Palestine.

Prior to the resignation of James Mattis as Secretary of Defense, Trump appointed Patrick Michael Shanahan, who has a strong relationship with the President and Vice President Mike Pence, as acting Secretary of Defense since 2019. Shanahan was the 33rd Deputy Secretary of Defense. He is a Former Boeing executive before joining the administration. At his career in Boeing, he worked mostly on the aerospace company’s commercial side, meaning that he had little interaction with the IDF or the Defense Ministry. For tech-hungry Israel, a Boeing executive with over three decades of experience in commercial airliner programs, as well as president and general manager of Boeing Missile Defense Systems and of Boeing Rotorcraft Systems, could be an advantage. On the other hand, Shanahan has no military background and little foreign policy experience. Shanahan will have to contend with the threat, and smooth over the concerns of many allies in the region, especially Israel (Ahronheim, 2018).

Trump praised Shanahan as a “good buyer” of military equipment, and not the expert strategist and military man that many expected. As a mechanical engineer, the former Boeing executive is a full-on technocrat with a strong business sense. This pragmatic trait is what Trump’s Department of Defense (DoD) seems to need at the moment, as Shanahan has started a budget revision of the whole Department in a bid to modernize the government

agency. The DoD is hiring Boeing to expand and improve its Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) anti-ballistic missile system which has undergone a significant redesign under Shanahan. The manufacturer is second-largest U.S. government and defense contractor, right under Lockheed Martin. A reason why the company has made sure to have a “good” relationship with the White House (Telesur, 2019). Both Trump and Shanahan’s business strategy to push for more arms sales to allies. It seem unclear what his view regarding Israel-Palestine conflict. What Shanahan seems care about is development and modernization of Defense Department in military technology. He pursue a strategy that might beneficial for U.S. military and technology. With this mindset, it’s very likely that Shanahan is tend to side with Israel that benefited U.S. the most (Bort, 2018).

The pro-Israel figures in Trump’s administration are not limited to his national security circle. Other U.S. administration’s posts that might related to Israel are mostly seated by pro-Israel officials. The choice for Ambassador to Israel was David Friedman, a bankruptcy lawyer from Long Island who held right-wing views on the Middle East and contributed money in support of the same West Bank settlement as the Kushners. Friedman was chosen by Trump thanks to his loyalty, his years-long work relationship with Trump and his ties to Israel. He is an Orthodox Jew with strong ties to the West Bank settler community (Entous, 2018). Since taking office as U.S. ambassador to Israel, Friedman has emerged as an independent voice who almost singlehandedly led the Trump administration to take positions aligned closely to Israel’s right wing, including the embassy relocation to Jerusalem, changing the terminology regarding the West Bank and Gaza and refusing to publicly adopt a two-state solution. And with his nomination of a pro-settlement ambassador who openly opposes U.S. support for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Trump has signaled what some see as his intention to play an active role in Middle East peace issues as a strong ally of Israel’s right-wing government (Foreign Policy Analytics, 2017).

The chief envoy to the region would be Jason Greenblatt, a graduate of Yeshiva University and an attorney who worked for the Trump Organization. He is an Orthodox Jew, and extremely close to Trump and enjoys the president's trust after working for the organization for 19 years. And, for Trump, the combination of real estate experience and ties to Israel makes for an ideal expert on resolving the seemingly insoluble territorial dispute between Israelis and Palestinians. Netanyahu could be confident that Trump would look out for his interests and share his opposition to Obama's policies in the region. Even before Trump entered the White House, Israeli officials talked about having more influence and a freer hand than ever before (Guttman, 2018).

Steven Mnuchin is Trump's treasury secretary has very little involvement in the American Jewish community and had never had any dealings with Israel. Still, the former investment banker turned film producer is inexplicably viewed by Trump as an asset when it comes to dealing with Israel and the Jewish community. Not only was he asked to sit next to Trump when the president made his recent call to Jewish leaders, but Mnuchin was also selected to head the American delegation to the opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem. Other influential figure is a fellow New York billionaire, Ron Lauder, who is the president of the World Jewish Congress. He has known Trump for years, and the two have always kept open lines of communication. Early in the presidency, Lauder was the one whispering on Trump's ear and working to convince the newly elected president to take a bold move to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace. Though his input in shaping the plan was minimal, Lauder still speaks highly of the president (Guttman, 2018).

Sorely missing from the Trump's inner policy circle are, of course, the experts. He did not include government professionals and academics, seasoned diplomats and foreign policy experts who had spent decades learning the issues, which he views by and large, as political adversaries. He has chosen to keep them outside the close ring of advisers on Jewish and Israeli issues. With these pro-Israeli figures, Trump's administration seems

reshaping Middle East policy that has guided U.S. administrations for decades. And these circles consist of Jewish advisers who might protect Trump from accusations of anti-Semitism or lack of sensitivity to the community that might be directed at him and his administration (Entous, 2018). With the supporters of a two-state solution gone, no one can guarantee that Trump's peace plan will not be biased and will eventually end the decades-long conflict. It is more likely that current Trump's aides will never consider the Palestinian question in delivering their grand deal. On the contrary, with each of these figures' close ties with the Jewish State, U.S. policy regarding that matter will certainly be only beneficial for Israel (Stavridis, 2018).

Until now the Trump peace plan has still kept under the wraps. No one knows what the President's intention with that deal is. But from The White House news, the peace plan will mainly involve economic initiatives. According to Kushner, the peace plan is different from previous efforts, Kushner is convinced that the Palestinian people are less invested in the politicians' talking points than they are in seeing how a deal will improve their prospects for a better life. Trump's administration seems to believe that the prospect of peace is very much alive, appears contrary to the reality. They are better placed to succeed than all their failed predecessors. But while it is already clear that Trump is a terrible dealmaker who has yet to conclude any significant international agreement, Middle East peace may be the issue on which he is least well-placed to succeed concerning the situation. It is hard to see how the United States under Trump will ever be seen as an honest broker, when two-thirds of Palestinians oppose the resumption of contacts with U.S. negotiators and most of them view the United States as biased in favor of Israel (Gordon & Kumar, 2018).

Trump's fantasy about the deal is that the Palestinians can be bought off with economic assistance to compensate for political losses. Kushner suggested that the Trump administration could "attract very significant investments in infrastructure that will lead to increases in GDP and we also hope a blanket of peaceful coexistence." Previous U.S. administrations have

tried to enhance the prospects for peace by improving conditions on the ground but it still unable to produce the desired outcome for peace. Trump's administration should know by now that prosperity will never substitute for political peace. The key issues remain borders and sovereignty, security, settlements and occupation, refugees, and Jerusalem. Palestinians will not survive by promising economic benefits alone (USMEP, 2018).

It is yet unclear when will Trump release his "deal of the century." Even when the deal is still in the dark, there is no doubt the Palestinian Authority will reject the plan, which Palestinians believe will be one-sided and tilted toward the positions of Israel's right-wing government. Yet the more consequential question is what the reaction will be in the broader Arab world. Trump had stated that the role of Arab World is important in his upcoming deal. He expect Arab Nations will participate in this peace plan. The Palestinians want to see the plan rejected by the entire Arab world, especially by largest Muslim country such as Saudi Arabia. But remembering U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States also Israel in countering Iranian nuclear, one might argue that Arab world might consider the plan as a basis for negotiations. But the economic initiatives that scheduled to be released by the U.S. is a bit confusing. The so called "economic initiatives" will require a lot of money in order to support Palestinian infrastructure project and day-to-day lives. Concerning the U.S. has already defunded UNRWA and froze aid to Palestinian from other channels, how can the U.S. deliver its plan. With Trump's demand that Arab world need to participate in his plan, he might want to ask other countries to fund its "economic vision" for the Palestinians. To talk about economic incentives in absence of a serious political approach and when both sides are not ready even to meet, is the height of folly. The administration will have a hard time finding ways to promote the economic initiatives unless, of course, Trump changes his mind and decides that the United States should pay for them with its own money (something that is very unlikely to happen). Trump should also consider political narrative in delivering his plan for this peace deal to move forward (Tibon, 2019).

In the past few years, both U.S. and Israel seems moving away from two-state solution. A right-wing Likud obsession is supported by a hawkish approach by the U.S. in this conflict will never bring Israel and Palestine closer to peaceful agreement. A majority of members of the current Israeli cabinet do not even support the creation of a Palestinian state, much less the concessions Israel would need to make to achieve it. Both Israel and Palestine are far from ready to make the major compromises required for peace. Introducing yet another peace plan only to have it pronounced dead on arrival just emboldens opponents of compromise, and even supporters of violence, on both sides. Both sides have devoted many years to working on this issue and worry about the consequences of the status quo, both for Israel's future as a secure, democratic, and Jewish state and for the future of some 6 million Palestinians (Gordon & Kumar, 2018).

The U.S. have also seen, and participated in various peace efforts. But the reality is that under present circumstances, with the current Israeli and Palestinian governments, at this point the two-state solution itself is almost impossible. Neither the Palestinian nor Israeli people, nor their leaders, are currently prepared for the compromises required for a deal, and accentuating this reality will only make things worse. If Trump's administration really invested in the peace process between the two countries, they need to become an honest broker and delivering unbiased foreign policy regarding this issue. But if Trump continued to practice one-sided policy, there will be no peace for both parties and his administration are far worse than the predecessors that could at least committed to the peace process (Abrams, 2018).