

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

From the findings, the researcher has analyzed various sources related to U.S. foreign policy in Israel-Palestine conflict. It can be concluded that the conduct of U.S. foreign policy under President Donald Trump's administration related to this matter is biased that favors Israel. This biased attitudes are caused by international structure or systemic factors and unit-level or domestic environment. Both factors influenced policy makers to enact a biased foreign policy regarding this conflict. The U.S. has been involved indirectly in decades-long Israel-Palestine conflict. The U.S. has acted as a mediator and a broker for the two adversaries. It supposed to be a neutral party in this prolonged conflict, but in the contrary, the U.S. has conducted biased policies that tend to favors Israel for decades. The role of the U.S. as an even handed broker has been jeopardized. Since early establishment of Israel as a state, the U.S. has failed to deliver a lasting peace plan for both sides. Until today, it is unclear if the U.S. will be able to propose an effective peace agreement to end this conflict.

This biased attitudes that tend to sides with Israel and also U.S.' endless support to Israel have caused by various reasons. The relationship between U.S. and Israel is undoubtedly close. No one would question the close ties between the two countries. Israel has long been, and remains, America's most reliable partner in Middle East. There are broad opinions on why do U.S. and Israel have such level of closeness. Some argue it is based on moral justifications. The Holocaust has triggered massive American support for the creation of Israel as a state where the Jews will be save from the atrocity of the Nazis. Others argue that American commitment to Israel is based on shared values and ideology. As democratic countries, Israel and the U.S. uphold democratic values as well. Such as protections of Human Rights and promote individual liberty. But, even if Israel and U.S. is a

democratic states, both countries' attitudes seems out of touch with reality. Moral imperatives will diminished if interest gets in the way. Israel treatment towards Palestinians have caused a humanitarian catastrophe. Not only Israel rejects Palestinians' basic human rights, but Israel Defense Force also kill innocent civilians and kids. The living conditions in Palestine is dire and far from decent. Israel also treats Arabs that live within its border as a second class citizens. There should be no discriminations in a democratic country, but this clearly not the case in Israel.

Many scholars assume that the bond between the two countries is based on strategic interest. Israel has gained unconditional U.S. supports as its allies and act as its balancing state in the Middle East. For years, Israel has proven to be a great strategic ally for the U.S. But backing Israel was not come without consequences. Israel is often endanger U.S. interest in the region by act without the U.S. The U.S. massive support to Israel has also complicated America's relations with the Arab world. Besides, the two countries undeniably close relationship has triggered the rise of anti-America hate that further threaten U.S. interest at home and abroad. Strategic partner is clearly not the only word that fit to describe both countries' closeness. The relationship between these two democratic countries is beyond moral, ideological, and strategic justifications. The bond is too deep to be broken.

For decades, the U.S. and Israel have maintained a strong bilateral relations. U.S. aid has been a major component in cementing and reinforce this ties. Israel is the only country with a special privilege when it comes to U.S. aid. From an economic aid to military supports and diplomatic backings, Israel has definitely benefits from its close relationship with the U.S. But some might argue that this relationship is uneven. The U.S. has gained so little compared to the massive efforts it poured for Israel. It's not that Israel is not beneficial for the U.S., but the good things that comes with the relationship is incomparable. Without the military supports from the U.S., Israel's own military capabilities are already far better than its Arab neighbors. It has top-tech military equipment, well-trained soldiers, and Israel even has undeclared nuclear weapons. On its own, Israel might be able to survive the attack from other adversaries. Israel's economy is also one of the most

developed in the Middle East. Not to mention their advancement in education and technology as well. But even with that capabilities, Israel remains the largest economic aid recipient from the U.S. Not only material supports, Israel also enjoy strong diplomatic and political backings from the U.S. in international arena. The international society have long condemning Israel for its breach of various international laws. But the U.S is constantly protecting its “little brother” from international pressure. Israel continued to disobey international law. Their treatment of the Palestinians have worsen over time. No international party able to ground Israel for its mean behavior when the U.S. is always by its side.

When the U.S. is supposed to enact an even-handed foreign policy regarding Israel-Palestine conflict to ensure a fair outcome, on the other hand, U.S. policy under Trump’s administration regarding this matter is too pro-Israel. Trump declared Jerusalem as Israel’s capital in 2017, where Jerusalem has become a central issue in Israel-Palestine conflict since decades ago. This recognition implies that the U.S. in increasingly supportive towards Israel’s position without considering Palestinian narratives. This would almost certainly kill any viable future peace deal. The U.S. also quitted UN Human Rights Council, citing that the council is biased towards Israel, which is often condemning Israel’s behavior in the Occupied Territory, while unaware of human rights abuse in other parts of the world. The U.S. has defunded UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA). Trump complained that the U.S. has not received appreciation or respect for the large sums of aid it provided for the Palestinians. And even considered that funding the agency is no longer in U.S. interest. The U.S. also closed PLO office in Washington and USAID office in West Bank and Gaza. It claimed that the PLO has not taken steps to advance the start of meaningful negotiations with Israel. The closing of USAID office also intended to pressure Palestinian leaders to engage in peace talks with Israel and Trump administration. Both The U.S. and Israel have left UNESCO, amid concerns that the organization foster anti-Israel bias and often critics Israel. The latest move was the recognition of Israel’s sovereignty over Golan Heights by President Donald Trump. For Israel, it’s a major win, because Golan served as a strategic military and agricultural post. Trump’s move have clearly undermine standing international law. He had complicated America’s position in the Middle

East. Many have considered the U.S. as biased and unhelpful actor, promoting Israel's interest in a way that perpetuated the conflict.

There are various reasons that influence U.S. policy related to this matter. The U.S. foreign policy is driven by systemic factors and domestic environment. Systematically, the factors that influence foreign policy is the international system, especially the relative material capabilities. In the case of U.S. in the Middle East, despite its enormous power, the U.S. is still unsure about threat that might endanger its interest and security in that region. The U.S. might need its most reliable ally, Israel, and the U.S. need its strength to secure America's economic and political interest in the region. The most influential regional dynamics in Middle East that threaten not only U.S. interest, but also its allies' are Iran nuclear capabilities and various radical terrorist groups.

A nuclear-armed Iran is definitely unacceptable for Middle East, particularly for superpower like the U.S. ever since the death of pro-America Shah of Iran, the relationship between U.S. and Iran is not that great. The new Supreme Leader has pursued an anti-America support from broad Middle Eastern civilians. Iran is also known for its massive support for militant groups. Not to mention, Iran relations with U.S.' allies in the Middle East are also concerning. Tensions have not declined, especially with Israel. If Iran possessed nuclear weapons the most vulnerable party of its attack is Israel. Other U.S. allies in the Gulf might feel threatened as well. With nuclear warheads, there's no guarantee that Iran will not share its knowledge with radical Islamist groups. These possibility became a warning mostly for Israel as its main target, and also for the hostile U.S. Gulf states and Israel, together with the U.S. have worked to weakening Iranian regime and restraining its capabilities to produce and develop nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, radical Islamist terrorism in its many forms remains the most immediate threat to the safety and security not only for the U.S., but also for its allies in Middle East. The emergence of various non-state actors in that region has been associated with different political, religious, and economic factors. Foreign influence and interference in the region also contributed to a varying extent to the creation of these groups. The U.S. and its Middle Eastern allies have been

involved in confrontations and wars with various terrorist groups in different areas with different intentions too. They have work hard to eradicate all extremist groups that get in their way. Aware of its position in the hostile region, Israel has continued to develop new weapons and tactics to help eradicate these groups. As the most advanced military in that region, Israel might have a better chance to defeat them. Even the U.S. relies on its military might in dealing with their common enemy. Not only the U.S., realizing Israel's potential, other Arab nations are starting to turn to Israel for help. From purchasing military equipment to sharing intelligence, Israel has proven to be the prominent actor in combating terrorism in that region. The U.S., Israel, and its Middle East allies are facing a common enemy and shared a same perception regarding the biggest threats in the current dynamics. Therefore, the relationships between these parties have improved over time.

When it comes to Iran nuclear capabilities and radical Islamist groups compared to the resolution of Israel-Palestine conflict, the latter became secondary in the face of a greater threat for the Middle East. It's not that Arab world do not care about Palestinians, but remembering the current circumstances, it certainly hard for most Arab Nations not to turn to Israel for help. They do concern about the conflict, but this commitment jeopardized when a bigger more urgent threat endanger their security and interest get in a way. Israel has clearly benefited the most from this situation. The U.S. under Trump's administration seems happy with the improved relationship between Israel and its Arab allies. The issue in Israel and Palestine became less urgent for them. The U.S. is likely pursue a hawkish stance towards the region, but at the expense of Palestinians.

In domestic environment, the factors that influence U.S. foreign policy are the perception of policy makers regarding international structure, and powerful interest groups. In this case, the most influential interest groups in shaping U.S. policy related to Israel-Palestine conflict is none other than Israel lobby groups. Were it not for the lobby's ability to work effectively within the American political system, the relationship between Israel and the U.S. will be less intimate than it is today. The Israel lobby's power flows from its unmatched ability to play the game of interest-groups politics. The core of the lobby consist of American Jews who

make significant contributions in their daily lives to help shape U.S. policy in their favors or to advance Israel's interest. Their activities go beyond merely voting for pro-Israel candidates in legislative and executive branch, but also contributing money and supports pro-Israel organizations. The lobby strives to shape public perceptions about Israel and the Middle East. It does not want an open debate regarding issues involving Israel. Pro-Israel organizations also work hard to influence the media, think tanks, academia, and institutions that are critical in shaping popular opinion. They want public opinion related to Israel is in positive lights to ensure continuous support towards Israel.

Other contributing factors in shaping the U.S. foreign policy is top policy makers or known as foreign policy elites. This group consist of the President and his closest circle and adviser. In Trump's administration, the perception of the leaders are much influenced by Israel lobby groups beside each leader's own stance on Israel-Palestine issue. In this regard, foreign policy elites' perception are tend to pro-Israel. The deep-rooted leaders and public perception about Israel-Palestine conflict will never be even-handed and therefore generate biased foreign policy which tend to favor Israel. The policy enacted by these leaders are beneficial to Israel with little concern of Palestinian narratives. In Trump's administration, his closest circle are likely to think alike, or at least have a similar view about a certain issues. With a strong pro-Israel or Jewish background sitting as the top officials, it is almost impossible to be a neutral party as a mediator for Israel and Palestine. The close personal relationship between U.S. and Israel officials also help to maintain a strong ties between the two countries. With the current trend, it is highly unlikely that the U.S. will act as a neutral broker for two adversaries, let alone to propose an even-handed peace plan to ensure a fair outcome for both parties.

4.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Because of the limitation of time and space, there are gaps in this research about U.S. foreign policy in general or regarding Israel-Palestine conflict in particular that would benefit from future research. Some topics presented below might help to fill

the gap which this research unable to present. There are broad ideas for future researcher that interested in analyzing U.S. foreign policy or Middle East dynamics as a whole. Each of these topics offer different point of views that will be interesting for future researchers in assessing this matter. This research can be useful for estimating the formulations of U.S. foreign policy towards Israel-Palestine conflict.

Few topics suggestion for future research related to U.S. biased foreign policy in Israel-Palestine conflict are:

- Research that further analyze Trump's peace plan for Israel-Palestine conflict. Future researchers can assess the effectiveness of the plan or to what extent the Trump's peace plan generates a peaceful relationship between Israelis and Palestinians. The future research can also analyzing the impact and the outcome the peace plan might cause, either for Israel and Palestine, or for the region.
- Others can focus on different actors that might involve in Trump's deal of the century, and how these actors contribute to the success or failure of these peace plan. Future researcher can also explain what factors influence the success or failure of the Trump's peace plan.
- One might predict the future of Middle Eastern dynamics after the announcement of the Trump's peace plan. Other might also forecast the future relationship trends between Israel and Palestine in particular, or between Middle Eastern countries in general.
- Future researchers have been provided by this thesis with the basis to analyze the relations between the U.S. and Israel and examine the impact of the close relationship to each countries' interest. Thus, the researchers will be able predict the future relations between U.S. and Israel, whether both countries have the same level of closeness or whether the relations of the two improving or even declining. The assessment of this research will need the researchers to provide the readers with various factors that might influence the two countries' relationship.
- This research examines U.S. biased foreign policy towards Israel-Palestine conflict. Thus, provided future researchers to conduct a policy evaluation

on how should the U.S. enact its policy to act as an even-handed mediator and to ensure a fair outcome for both nations. The research need to analyze what factors need to be improved for the U.S. to come up with a better peace agreement to end this prolonged conflict.

- Future research might focus on similar topics with this research by using other methods and different theoretical framework to analyze the matter.