**U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israel**

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**Course Overview**

The course will examine the continuity and the changes in U.S. foreign policy toward Israel. Briefly, the evolution of U.S. relations with Israel, from President Truman’s controversial decision to recognize the Jewish state in 1948 to America’s role as Israel’s greatest supporter in the world today. The course will examine key milestones, including President Truman’s controversial decision to against advice from the U.S. foreign policy establishment and formally recognize the state of Israel; the wartime American airlift in 1973; the U.S. role in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy to the two Camp David summits; and the U.S. role in providing military, economic, and diplomatic aid to the Jewish state. Specifically related to foreign policy: what factors explain foreign policy decision-making towards Israel? What impact do U.S. presidents have in shaping the foreign policy? And how do foreign policy crises impact decision-making towards Israel? The course will analyze throughout how a combination of domestic political, and strategic factors have led to the formation of a unique bilateral relationship characterized by both tight bonds and inherent tensions.

**Course Objectives**

This course aims to provide the student with an in‐depth understanding of major themes, historical events, and personalities in American‐Israeli relations. Throughout the term, we will discuss the nature of America’s “special and strategic relationship” with Israel; U.S. arms sales and foreign aid to Israel; the roles of various ‘lobbies’, and public opinion; and U.S. mediation efforts in Arab‐Israeli peacemaking. You will become familiar with the key players and issues, as well as with the complexities of U.S. diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. The course is intended to provide students with the tools needed to follow with a critical eye day‐to‐day events in the Middle East

The structure of the course is simple and concise. An initial overview of a topic will be followed by interesting case studies, focused on key episodes in the evolution of US foreign policy towards Israel. Many of these studies center upon crisis situations, which tested the relationship and redefined it. After these case studies, discussion on some controversial contemporary aspects of the subject will occur.

It is important to emphasize what this course is not. It is not a course on the Arab-Israeli conflict or the peace process.

Finally, as students you will upon completion:

1. Analyze selected contemporary policy issues using knowledge of theory, history and the political   
process.

2. Demonstrate research, analytical, writing, and presentation skills.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the term, you should be:

1. Thoroughly familiar with the key issues and themes of U.S. foreign policy and in particular foreign policy towards Israel.
2. Able to identify seminal events, their implications, and the personalities associated with them.
3. Able to critically assess the nature of America’s “special and strategic relationship” with Israel.

**Classroom Code of Conduct**

To pass this course, a student must attend all class sessions, do all assigned readings, actively listen to and focus on lecture material, take notes, and don’t be afraid to ask questions or participate in discussions.

I use “cold calling”, i.e. calling on students regardless of whether they have raised their hands or not, in order to encourage class discussion, so be attentive and familiar with the reading materials.

Mobile phones are NOT allowed in class.

Laptops and tablets should ONLY be used for academic purposes, and not for emails, browsing the internet, social media and other non‐course related activities. I will occasionally walk around during class. Any violation of this request will result in the complete prohibition of the use of laptops and tablets.

Lastly, be courteous and respect the opinions of your classmates.

**Plagiarism Statement**

Plagiarism means the use of the thoughts ideas words, phrases or research of another person or source as oneʹs own without explicit acknowledgment.

In keeping with this definition, all work, whether written or oral, submitted or presented by students as part of course assignments must be the original work of the student unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

Cheating on examinations of any kind (quizzes, midterms, finals, etc.) includes copying another student’s answers, exchanging information, using notes or books unless expressly permitted to do so by the instructor, or gaining access to examinations prior to the actual taking of such examinations.

Other examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, copying or preparing another person’s work; buying prepared papers.

Helping anyone to engage in any of the violations described above qualifies as academic dishonesty.

**Late Submission Policy**

I prefer that students submit their assignments on time unless they have a concrete and relevant reason (illness, family crisis etc.) that was brought to my attention as early as possible.

To avoid different types of plagiarism discussed in the previous section, I will accept late submissions. Yet papers submitted after due date will result in 1 full grade penalty.

**Grading:**

* 15 percent of the grade is determined by class (and possibly on-line) participation.
* 20 percent of the grade is determined by a short mid-term.
* 65 percent of the grade is determined by a final paper, the topic of which you will choose in consultation with me.

**Secondary Readings**

The course seeks to relate both contemporary and historical issues, therefore students are expected to stay current by reading relevant online news:

Times of Israel: <http://www.timesofisrael.com>

Jerusalem Post: <http://www.jpost.com>

New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com>

Wall Street Journal: <http://www.wsj.com>

Fathom: <http://fathomjournal.org>

Tablet: <http://tabletmag.com>

**Required Readings**

For this course, the readings will range widely. There is no textbook. Also, I have selected journal articles, taken from a wide range of authors, so students will have read something by most of the recognized authorities in this field. There are also several documentary films and video clips of presentations by key figures too. Additional articles and video clips may be added by the instructor.

Online Readings by theme:

Background

Samuel W. Lewis, “The United States and Israel: Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance,” *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 364-78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329351

Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, “The United States and Israel since 1948: A ‘Special Relationship’?” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1988), pp. 231–262. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1111/1467-7709.00115

America’s View of Israel

Walter Russell Mead, “The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentiles Back the Jewish State,” *Foreign Affairs,* July-August 2008, pp. 28-46. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20032714

President Truman and Recognizing Israel

Bruce J. Evensen, “Truman, Palestine and the Cold War,” *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 28, No. 1 (Jan., 1992), pp. 120-156. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283481

Allis and Ronald Radosh discuss their book *A Safe Haven,* C-SPAN*, July 14, 2009,* http:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU248hUV3-I.

Conflicts

George Ball. “The Coming Crisis in Israeli-American Relations. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/1979-12-01/coming-crisis-israeli-american-relations

Special and Strategic Relations

Douglas Little, “The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and Israel, 1957-68,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol. 25, No. 4 (Nov., 1993), pp. 563-585. http:// www.jstor.org/stable/164535

Mordechai Gazit, “The Genesis of the US-Israeli Military-Strategic Relationship and the Dimona Issue,” *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. 35, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), pp. 413-422. http:// www.jstor.org/stable/261028

Relations during war

William B. Quandt, “Lyndon Johnson and the June 1967 War: What Color Was the Light?” *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring, 1992), pp. 198-228. http://www.jstor.org/stable/ 4328430

“USS Liberty: Dead In The Water,” BBC Documentary, 2002. http://www.youtube.com/watch? v=kjOH1XMAwZA

Boaz Vanetik and Zaki Shalom, “The White House Middle East Policy in 1973 as a Catalyst for the Outbreak of the Yom Kippur War,” *Israel Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 2011), pp. 53-78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/ISR.2011.16.1.53

Zeev Schiff, “The Green Light,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 50 (Spring, 1983), pp. 73-85. http:// www.jstor.org/stable/1148281

David A. Welch, “The Politics and Psychology of Restraint: Israeli Decision-Making in the Gulf War,” *International Journal,* Vol. 47, No. 2 (Spring, 1992), pp. 328-369 http://www.jstor.org/ stable/40202763

Relations during peace

Kenneth W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab- Israel Peace* (New York: Routledge, 1999), read author’s view of book by President Carter: <http://www.meforum.org/1633/my-problem-with-jimmy-carters-book>

William B. Quandt, “Camp David and Peacemaking in the Middle East,” *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 101, No. 3 (1986), pp. 357-377. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2151620

Mitchell Bard, “Interest Groups, the President, and Foreign Policy: How Reagan Snatched Victory from the Jaws of Defeat On AWACS,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 583-600. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40574500

Yehuda Avner, “An inept attempt at a flawed peace,” *Jerusalem Post,* December 2, 2008. http:// www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=122586

Stuart E. Eizenstat, “Loving Israel. Warts and All,” *Foreign Policy,* No. 81 (Winter, 1990-1991), pp. 87-105. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1148810

A Foreign Policy of Support Without Limits

Scott Lasensky, “Paying for Peace: The Oslo Process and the Limits of American Foreign Aid,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring, 2004), pp. 210-234. http://www.jstor.org/stable/ 4330002

“Elusive Peace: Israel and the Arabs,” PBS Documentary, http://www.youtube.com/watch? v=50ZktlbxsgY

Guy Ben-Porat, “Netanyahu’s Second Coming: A Neoconservative Policy Paradigm?”*Israel Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Fall, 2005), pp. 225-45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30245773

The lobby debate

John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 13, No. 3 (Fall 2006), pp. 29-87. http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/pdf/ 10.1111/j.1475-4967.2006.00260.x

John J. Mearsheimer, Stephen M. Walt, Aaron Friedberg, Dennis Ross, Shlomo Ben-Ami and Zbigniew Brzezinski, “The War over Israel’s Influence,” *Foreign Policy,* No. 155 (Jul. - Aug. 2006), pp. 56-66. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25462064

Robert C. Lieberman, “The ‘Israel Lobby’ and American Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics,* Vol. 7, No. 2 (June 2009), pp. 235-57. http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/news\_events/newsletter/ documents/Liebermanexchange-TheIsraelLobbyandAmericanPolitics.pdf

Asset or Liability?

Efraim Inbar, “Israel: An Enduring Union,” *Journal of International Security Affairs,* No. 11 (Fall 2006), pp. 7-13. http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/efraim\_inbar/enduring.pdf

Robert D. Blackwill and Walter B. Slocombe, *Israel: A Strategic Asset for the United States*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Nov. 2011. http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ uploads/Documents/pubs/Blackwill-Slocombe\_Report.pdf

“Israel: Asset or Liability? A Debate on the Value of the US-Israel Relationship, Robert Satloff vs. Chas Freeman,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, http:// www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/SatloffDebate.pdf

Martin Kramer, “The American Interest,” *Azure*, No. 26 (2006), pp. 21-33. http:// scholar.harvard.edu/martinkramer/files/americaninterest.pdf

21st Century U.S. foreign policy towards Israel

Dov Waxman, “The Real Problem in US-Israeli Relations,” *The Washington Quarterly,* Vol. 35, No. 2 (Spring 2012), pp. 71-87. http://csis.org/files/publication/twq12springwaxman.pdf

Aaron David Miller, “The U.S., Israel and American Jews: A Negotiator Looks Back,” New York University, April 15, 2010. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP4VV1InjdY

Itamar Rabinovich, “Israel and America: Where We Stand Now,” New York University, April 22, 2010. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLnkESDOrm0

Haim Malka, *Crossroads: The Future of the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership,* Center for Strategic and International Studies, Sep. 16, 2001. http://csis.org/files/publication/ 110908\_Malka\_CrossroadsUSIsrael\_Web.pdf

Aaron David Miller, “Warning: Turbulence Ahead,” *Foreign Policy*, July 25, 2012. http:// www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/07/25/warning\_turbulence\_ahead

Amy Davidson, “A Bad Day in American-Israeli Relations. http://www.newyorker.com/news/amy-davidson/a-bad-day-in-american-israeli-relations

Elliott Abrams on the New Government and Israel-US Relations. Read more at <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/39325/elliott-abrams-on-the-new-government-and-israel-us-relations-israel-radio/#mOVY2pBfAVdkzWLD.99>