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## UN SECURITY COUNCIL VETO: POWER THE AMERICAN WAY

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**JCSP 44**

***Exercise Solo Flight***

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

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Maj Lesley Kerckhoff

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## **UN SECURITY COUNCIL VETO: POWER THE AMERICAN WAY**

Never has the Jewish culture come so close to re-establishing their historical roots as the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 in 1947 and ultimate Declaration of Independence in 1948 creating the state of Israel. The Middle East peace has been a mirage just out of reach between Israel and Palestine. Since its independence Israel has benefited greatly from the United Nations (UN) despite multiple resolutions being directed at it for violations that are tantamount to ethnic cleansing. In this world of developed and developing states, there is merit in aligning with a more powerful state. Israel has found this in the United States (US).

The UN Security Council veto came into more common practice by the US in the 1970s. A change in US diplomacy tactics saw an open attitude of superiority begin to take over diplomats working with the UN.<sup>1</sup> This was the beginning of the lessening of any perceived power held by the UN as an international organization. The US confidence in its actions and use of the UN Security Council would ensure their foreign policy was enacted to their liking. Leadership in the international world is a requirement, but hard power can only take a nation so far.<sup>2</sup> The US, in the post-cold war times, has power, but it could be seen to be waning because of embroiled commitments in South East Asia and the Middle East.

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<sup>1</sup> David Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All: The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 118-19.

<sup>2</sup> Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karnes, *The United Nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2012), 14-15.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the US has veto power over resolutions that do not align with their desired foreign policy. History has shown that the US is not afraid to use their veto to overwhelmingly support Israel. Correspondingly, “Israelis may not care much about foreign opinion...but they know that their prosperity and security depends on keeping the US behind them.”<sup>3</sup>

This paper will discuss how the use of the UN security council veto by the US has negatively impacted the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so ensure their power in the region. This will be discussed through the lens of realism since the independence of Israel until April 2018. The first section will show how anarchy has emboldened the US as well as Israel and the resulting connection and decline of UN influence. Secondly, this paper will look at the idea of the state and its rational self-interest that has found a symbiotic relationship between the two democracies including a power and regional influence. Lastly this paper will evaluate Israel’s survival in the Middle East and how its presence ensures the survival of the US’s power in the region. This paper will not discuss the US Israeli Lobby, nor will it delve into the religious right’s support for Israel as a domestic influence.

## **Anarchy**

Israel as a smaller state has ably avoided the consequences of international ire throughout its existence. It has done this by aligning itself with the US, thereby achieving its aims without a higher international authority. As Mingst and Karns point out, small states use the power of

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<sup>3</sup> Ian Williams, “No US Veto for Israel, Just an Abstention, On Security Council Resolution on Gaza.”; *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, (Mar 2009).

larger states within the UN to gain position and favour.<sup>4</sup> Israel has benefited from being a UN member as it did receive aid from the World Bank and often uses the International Criminal Court to establish precedent.<sup>5</sup> With US power backing, Israel has legitimized its desire to expand and control the historical lands of the Jewish people. This has also meant questioning of their actions and vehement disagreement with their actions, but little, if any resulting consequences.

The ability of the US to steer the UN Security Council and neutralize its efforts in the Middle East was evident in its veto of the 18 December, 2017 draft resolution 1060 pertaining to the status of Jerusalem. On 10 December, 2017, US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley spoke to the UN Security Council about her nation's support and declaration that Jerusalem is Israel's capital. Presenting primarily that the US will always be behind Israeli concerns she also spoke to the Palestinians. She assured them that the US is "committed" to aiding a peace agreement. She also reminded them of the diplomacy and financial aid that the US has provided to them for years. However, she did clarify, "The United States has not taken a position on boundaries or borders. The specific dimensions of sovereignty over Jerusalem are still to be decided by the Israelis and the Palestinians in negotiations."<sup>6</sup> Her words in this speech were hopeful and allowing for nations to come to her side. It was her remarks immediately before the General Assembly vote on the status of Jerusalem that were significantly more pointed at both member nations and the UN itself. Funding of the UN was a hand played to dissuade nations. "When we make generous contributions to the UN, we also have a legitimate expectation that our good will

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<sup>4</sup> Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karnes, *The United Nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> [http://projects.worldbank.org/search?lang=en&searchTerm=&countrycode\\_exact=IL](http://projects.worldbank.org/search?lang=en&searchTerm=&countrycode_exact=IL)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unwatch.org/nikki-haleys-jerusalem-speech-un-full-text/>

is recognized and respected.”<sup>7</sup> There was to be no mistaking that a positive vote meant negative repercussions for the offending states.

After the vote, the French representative, Francois Delattre, stated that “...today’s vote expressed the will of 14 Council members to reaffirm the validity of international law. Expressing hope that the United States would return to the international consensus...”<sup>8</sup> The US unconditional support for Israel is questioned each time it denies the negative actions of that state and goes against the logic and expectations of the other world states. Members of the UN are also aware that it is the UN Security Council who, under Chapter VII, controls the power to order compliance by an aggressor.<sup>9</sup> This fact will ensure the continued support of Israel by the US and the avoidance of a long-lasting peace agreement.

During an exceptionally violent time for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, before the voting on UN resolution 1860 in January 2009, Secretary of the General People’s Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, His Excellency Mr. Abdurrahman Mohamed Shalgham said that the UN Security Council was ineffective. This “hesitation on taking a decision and adopting a resolution have permitted the Israeli war machine...to perpetrate the worst of horrors and to ignore international law.”<sup>10</sup> More recently, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has called to “...invalidate US vetoes and objections if they are found to be in violation of the goals, principles, and conventions on which the international

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-nikki-haleys-speech-to-un-general-assembly-on-jerusalem/>

<sup>8</sup> “Permanent Member Vetoes Security Council Draft Calling upon States Not to Establish Diplomatic Missions in Jerusalem” Security Council SC/13125 18 December 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Istvan S. Pogany, *The Security Council and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> Security Council 6061st meeting, (Tuesday, 6 January 2009, New York), 12.

system was established.”<sup>11</sup> With the international organization’s hands held by the veto, there is little that any of the other nations can do to enforce any change in the Middle East. Israel can operate from a position that is nearly impervious to deterrence.

Bilateral side-lining of the UN in the peace process by the US has neutralized any possibility of the international organization achieving a workable peace. The UN is considered by most member nations to be the method to express concerns and achieve a result for both parties.<sup>12</sup> The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is certainly an exception. By not having the UN play a major role in negotiations, it diminishes its overall position as an international organization, so it must “... reinvigorate its status as the only and effective international platform for all issues so that peace may last.”<sup>13</sup>

On one occasion in 1996 when the UN was able to uncover and release a report condemning an Israeli attack on a UN refugee centre, the backlash on Israel by its fellow members was significant. The US failed in blocking this release but continued to keep the UN outside of the peace process.<sup>14</sup> Steve Chan writes that “... the more power a country has, the more pertinent is the question of whether it is so committed.” His idea is that the hegemon is in charge and can choose the direction to take the international community, not the UN. Also, discussed is that a country’s opposition to a motion can be the end of the dialogue despite the desires of other nations.<sup>15</sup> The few times that the US has not vetoed a resolution, either by supporting or

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-calls-to-invalidate-american-vetoes-at-security-council/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://modern diplomacy.eu/2017/12/27/israel-palestine-issue-role-united-nations/>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>14</sup> Institute For Policy Studies, Washington. January 2001

[http://tari.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=15](http://tari.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=15)

<sup>15</sup> Steve Chan, “On States’ Status-Quo and Revisionist Dispositions: Discerning Power, Popularity and Satisfaction from Security Council Vetoes.” *Issue and Studies* 51, no. 3 (September 2015): 16.

abstaining, have shown that they do believe in the idea of a two-state option for peace.<sup>16</sup> UN Resolution 2334 provided a voice to the idea of peace.

The US has been at the helm of the peace process for decades and little to no change has been realized between the two parties. The UN has been kept back because the parties saw the US as the "honest broker" and the US also wanted to control the discussion as it was supplying the aid and diplomatic manpower to the conflict.<sup>17</sup> Each time the US chooses a side in the conflict they experience negative results from their own citizens in addition to Israel. US senate documents contain a statement by US Senator Robert Mendez (D-NJ) that the US had failed and "...encouraged anti-Israeli sentiment by conceding an argument that was not ours to concede."<sup>18</sup> The utility of the UN to conduct a thorough assessment and neutral process to mediate a peace process between Israel and Palestine will continue to experience resistance as long as the US profits from the discontent and small power link in the region.

Israel continues to use the UN as a platform to demonstrate their power link with the US, but the Palestinian Authority (PA) is slowly developing legitimate connections in the international community. The PA was accepted as a non-member observer state of the UN in November 2012. This is the first step in acquiring other internationally recognized memberships like the International Criminal Court. Most importantly it confirms their existence as a state entity that is deserving of rights and privileges within the international community.<sup>19</sup> The PA is

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<sup>16</sup> Saliba Sarsar, "The Question of Palestine and United States Behavior at the United Nations." *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 3, (Spring 2004): 469.

<sup>17</sup> Institute For Policy Studies,  
[http://tari.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=15](http://tari.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=15)

<sup>18</sup> Mendez: US Must Veto Flawed UN Resolution that Fuels Anti-Israeli Sentiment." Congressional Documents and Publications, (Feb 18, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13701636>

already a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and has attempted to join the World Tourism Organization. Concerned with this movement, Israel "...warned the Palestinians that their joining the organization could have consequences in their relations with the US." Independently, Israel also threatened that they would not collect taxes on behalf of the PA. The US played a part in stalling the Organization for it to develop a diplomatic plan.<sup>20</sup> The dependence of the US to apply their influence vice allowing the international body to evaluate the admittance of the PA on its own merits perpetuates the common belief that the UN is inconsequential to the Middle East conflict.

### **The State**

Israel is often identified in the UN as an occupying power; however, this power comes from the relationship and support of the US vice an independent state's actions. Israel uses the US hard power, as defined by Joseph Nye, to control the narrative to the world and justify its own actions. Nye says the US is making a mistake when it believes that "...military preeminence can solve all problems...[and] rely on hard or soft power alone."<sup>21</sup> UN Security Council draft resolution 2011/24 of 18 February 2011 condemned the Israeli occupation and aim to "...alter the demographic composition, character and status of the Territory..."<sup>22</sup> Israel continued to expand its settlements with a primary interest of developing for its own Jewish population. The

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<sup>20</sup> "UN World Tourism Organization nixes PA membership bid Israeli diplomats had attempted to pressure the agency to reject the Palestinian bid," Jerusalem Post, (September 13, 2017) <https://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/UN-World-Tourism-Organization-nixes-PA-membership-bid-504984>

<sup>21</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Think Again: Soft Power", *Foreign Policy*, (Feb 23, 2006) <http://foreignpolicy.com/2006/02/23/think-again-soft-power/>

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Security Council quick links. <http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick/veto>

interests of the Israeli government and those of the US coincide. A dominant proxy in Israel in the Middle East ensures a US hold in the region. Contrary to the ideal under the Charter of the Great Powers acting “in the interests of the UN as a whole,” the US readily used its veto as a “by proxy” requiring them to remain a party to the dispute and unquestionably in charge of their own interests.<sup>23</sup>

The US has often played the mediator as it has been trusted by both sides in regional conflicts. The Arab-Israeli conflict has long relied on the US to play this role; however, the US has always been more aligned with the Israeli cause. Zartman and Touval believe there are two reasons for both sides remaining open to the US as a mediator despite this bias: the party close to the mediator can be pushed closer by a perceived ally, and the other side could be more likely to concede concessions in the hopes of developing a more positive relationship with the US.<sup>24</sup> One method that has been attempted is the use of experts in fields that can be mutually beneficial. The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) assisted both Israel and Palestinian education departments with methods that had been successful in Northern Ireland and Macedonia. The provision of expert power provided by the US could be seen as a neutral stance in a commonly prejudiced mediation.<sup>25</sup>

Zartman and Touval put forth a caution that a prolonged dependence on a mediator as a “crutch.”<sup>26</sup> Israel continues to accept the safety of the US’s unwavering support. When the US uses its UNSC veto, the US is essentially acting as Big Brother stepping in to help in a school

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Schindlmayr, “Obstructing the Security Council: The Use of the Veto in the Twentieth Century.” *Journal of the History of International Law* 3: (2001): 224-225, 233.

<sup>24</sup> Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2013), 443.

<sup>25</sup> Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War*: 482-83.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 453.

yard fight. In his essay, Yehoshafat Harkabi expresses a longing for the US to be more honest vice deferring advice on Israeli policy and saying one thing, ie supporting UN Resolution 242, yet not speaking up when Israel outright occupies further territory.<sup>27</sup> A glimmer of hope that the US could one day act in a manner that would demonstrate disapproval, or at least concern for peace, was in 2016 when they abstained from a security council vote condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank. This allowed the security council to call upon members to “...exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final-status issues in the Middle East peace process...”<sup>28</sup> It also showed that the US will acknowledge international law. However, this abstention did incite Israel to condemn the security council for denying their “...‘eternal rights’ in Jerusalem.”<sup>29</sup> If the US wants to cease conflict in the Middle East, they must act in a less one-sided manner that could be providing mediation vice bully power in the region.

Unconditional support to the state of Israel for assure their security is a common US refrain which hampers the Arab-Israeli conflict. The US did not begin as an unconditional supporter. The first use of the UN Security Council veto in the interests of Israel was not until 1976. Since that time until December 2017 there have been 43 US vetos and one by the USSR (1984) with respect to the Middle East issue. Most notably is that in every instance of US veto, the only veto cast was by the US.<sup>30</sup> It was not until the Regan administration in the 1980s that “...exclusive support for Israel became American’s default Middle East policy...” It was seen that Israel’s position in the region could assist in the conflict with the Soviet Union. This would

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<sup>27</sup> Yehoshafat Harkabi, “The Fateful Choices Before Israel” *Essays on Strategy and Diplomacy*, 23-24.

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Security Council meeting SC/12657 23 Dec 2016 7853<sup>rd</sup> meeting(PM).

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Security Council meeting SC/12657 23 Dec 2016 7853<sup>rd</sup> meeting(PM).

<sup>30</sup> <http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick/veto>

allow the US to project its forces and diplomats to identify and address any security issues before they reached the shores of the continental US.<sup>31</sup>

The unconditional support by the US presents a threat to their power in the world. Each time the US uses its veto in support of Israeli actions, it uses its own power to enforce its desires and beliefs upon others. The theory of offensive realism and maximization of power is reinforced with the US and Israeli relationship.<sup>32</sup> To this pair, the perceived strength of a state is not as useful as the hard power, physical demonstration of military and diplomatic strength. Whether it is the number of tanks occupying the hills of Israel or the use of a veto and abstention to force the US policy on the international community, this power is tangible and obvious to opposing states. Expansion is also an element of offensive realism that interests both states.<sup>33</sup> Regional influence and supporting approval by the citizens of each nation with the general principles of the foreign policy which sees their power and influence move beyond tangible borders.

Israel conducts independent actions in the Middle East, but each time they reach a point that they can no longer bear the strain from outside influence, they fall back to the US power for support. A small nation cannot conduct endless war as they will ultimately deplete their supplies. The Israeli population, however, has endured for so long that adversity is a birthright and passed down to generations. All aspects of Israeli life have been securitized. They must present a

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Thomas, *American Policy Toward Israel: The Power and Limits of Beliefs*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 128-129.

<sup>32</sup> Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19.

<sup>33</sup> Steve Chan, "On States' Status-Quo and Revisionist Dispositions": 3.

powerful front at all times in order to influence the neighbouring states.<sup>34</sup> This exhibition of power will ensure the success of Israeli and US actions in the region. Powerful actions in Israel are more easily conducted as the democratically supported government promotes the security threat as part of its influence on citizens.

## Survival

The capability of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in the Middle East is unquestionably dominant for such a small state in the region. In 1992/93, Israel had a total active force of 175 000 and wielded 77.5 active and reserve soldiers per square mile. The next closest was Syria with 408 000 active members and 11.3 per square mile.<sup>35</sup> Global Fire Power has ranked the IDF 16<sup>th</sup> of 136 nations in 2018. This is based on a total force of 615 000 active and reserve personnel.<sup>36</sup> Israeli security is used to account for the massive amount of firepower and manpower readiness. Geoffrey Kemp believes that it is "...possible to rank the intimacy of relations between states according to the quality of the arms and other military support..."<sup>37</sup> With this in mind, the relationship between the US and Israel is absolutely concrete. UN Security Council draft resolution 878 of 10 November 2006, vetoed by the US, was condemning the "...excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, which has caused extensive loss of civilian Palestinian life and injuries..." Though it did mention the actions of the

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<sup>34</sup> Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 186, 134-35.

<sup>35</sup> James Leonard *et al*, "National Threat Perceptions in the Middle East" *United Nations Research Papers* No 37 (September 1995): 96.

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country\\_id=israel](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=israel)

<sup>37</sup> Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War*: 58.

Palestinians, its focus was on Israel as the superior in the over-match of military power.<sup>38</sup> With the US veto comes the assurance that Israel can continue to use its forces and subsidized equipment to maintain its borders and act as a proxy for the US in the Middle East.

A nation that is not held accountable for its military actions has little to lose by continuing with the force it has been using. Attacks on UN facilities by Israeli military forces were condemned in resolution 1860 in January 2009 as "...totally unacceptable and should not be repeated."<sup>39</sup> Ms. Shalev, the UN Representative of Israel justified their actions in her speech saying "...the current military operation is not an obstacle to peace; it is a prerequisite for peace," and "Now there is no choice but for the international community to take a side itself."<sup>40</sup> The US abstained from this vote thereby not committing to criticizing or holding Israel responsible for its actions in Gaza.

Another often cited reason for a formidable military in Israel and influence in the greater Middle East is oil security. This not just for the US, but also for Europe.<sup>41</sup> This was cited again in 2014 by former Israeli ambassador to the US, Michael Oren, when he said "Arab oil (and not Israel) was America's persistent focus in the Middle East."<sup>42</sup> To this end, the US is wary of another all out war between Israel and its Middle East neighbours in order to ensure the flow of oil continues. In 1977, William Quandt saw the role of the US as deterring war by supplying Israel with arms and funding to defend its borders from the overwhelming numbers of the

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<sup>38</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2006/878](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2006/878)

<sup>39</sup> Security Council 6061st meeting Tuesday, 6 January 2009, New York, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> "Crisis in the Middle East: The Arab/Israeli Dispute and its Effect on the Western Alliance" Report of a seminar at Royal United Service Institution, Whitehall, (3 December 1969), 7.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Hays Gries, "The Politics of American Foreign Policy: How Ideology Divides Liberals and Conservatives over Foreign Affairs." *Stanford University Press*, (2014): 183.

adjoining Arab states. He also argues that the Arab world accepts the US in a diplomatic role, despite their one-sided support, as they provide a link to Israel and supply arms to chosen Arab states.<sup>43</sup>

US aid has been the lifeblood to the Israeli state. Steve Chan concludes that the use of vetos is one indicator of another state's support, but there are also other indicators.<sup>44</sup> Foreign aid, in this case financial and arms resources, from the US has allowed for significant advances in Israeli development. While not directly stated in a resolution, the US stopped negative blowback onto Israel by applying its veto to draft resolutions that assign blame for actions pertaining to the expansion of the Israeli territory. This has allowed Israel to build its population, establish trade and further enforce their domestic security. But it is not just Israel who gains from the US aid. In his article, Saliba Sarsar states that the US policy of supporting Israel provides for their own security. Henry Kissinger is quoted as well saying, "The survival and security of Israel are unequivocal and permanent moral commitments..."<sup>45</sup>

The US aid to Israel ensures that Israel remains a force that can defend itself while surrounded by hostile neighbour states in addition to the non-state actors that permeate the region. Chan provides a unique outlook on "greedy" states that says they will continue to seek further resources even after they have all that they need to "ensure survival."<sup>46</sup> Israel is in a constant state of conflict with its neighbours so it is unlikely that it will ever be capable of producing or trading for all the resources it needs. Israel accounts for 0.001 percent of the

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<sup>43</sup> William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 289.

<sup>44</sup> Steve Chan, "On States' Status-Quo and Revisionist Dispositions": 25.

<sup>45</sup> Saliba Sarsar, "The Question of Palestine and United States Behavior at the United Nations," 463.

<sup>46</sup> Steve Chan, "On States' Status-Quo and Revisionist Dispositions": 4.

world's population, enjoys a high per capita income, yet receives one third of the US foreign aid budget. The support is unique to their relationship as no other state receives this amount nor in the generous "lump sum" manner than can collect interest immediately.<sup>47</sup>

Military build up and territorial expansion by Israel will soon result in a stalemate. The constant threat of terrorism requires a constant influx of support, but also a culture of war. The threat of violence on multiple fronts requires Israel to maintain a balanced force across its territory while also having vulnerabilities within their concentrated urban areas.<sup>48</sup> These demands on the IDF require significant diplomatic ties and the connection to the US as a means of survival as a state.

The lack of opposition leadership diminishes the success of a peace deal. In October 2015, US Secretary of State John Kerry called upon the PA leader, Abbas, to voice condemnation for the actions of his people. Blame being placed on the PA leader and expressions of frustration by the Palestinian people can only weaken a two-state solution.<sup>49</sup> The US and Israel will continue to use blame as a means of controlling the narrative and providing reasoning for the actions taken by the IDF in the occupied territories and defensive strikes outside of their territorial borders.

The rise in Middle East demand for action for justice and human rights could result in decreased human security for Israel and the US interests in the region. The focus is moving toward the occupation and the probable human rights violations being committed by Israel on the

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<sup>47</sup> Matt Bowles, "US Aid: The Lifeblood of Occupation." *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, <https://www.wrmea.org/congress-u.s.-aid-to-israel/us-aid-the-lifeblood-of-occupation.html>

<sup>48</sup> James Leonard *et al*, "National Threat Perceptions in the Middle East," 13.

<sup>49</sup> "UN Security Council to Discuss Worsening Israel-Palestinian Violence," Voice of America News, Washington (Oct 16, 2015).

Palestinian people. Two opposing views cause greater instability in the form of societal security dilemma. This division normally causes a decrease in the ability of the majority group of the state to maintain control resulting in a weakening in the state on the world stage.<sup>50</sup> Collins also outlines that this weakening usually requires a state to change to “...make ourselves strong again.”<sup>51</sup>

Where there is weakness, terror can take root. Gaza, and the Palestinian people located there, are in the middle of the violent conflict between Hamas and Israel. A security blockade put in place by Israel and Egypt is justified because Hamas could use any freedom to import weapons to support its terror initiatives.<sup>52</sup> The division also provides another reason to keep up restriction on movement and return of Palestinians. Each time there is an attack, either side can blame the other of being the aggressor and not truly seeking a peace. Israel uses terror as an opportunity to call out the Palestinian leadership and to exert a military force for each infraction.<sup>53</sup> UN draft resolution 980 from 14 October 2003 was vetoed by the US. The call in the resolution was for Israel to stop occupying more land and building walls that disrupt the populations in the occupied territories. For both parties it sought an end to acts of terror and violence and called to restore talks for peace.<sup>54</sup> By using their veto to quash this resolution the US again stopped Israel from acknowledging that its actions are causing the internal conflict and

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<sup>50</sup> Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 186, 188.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 184.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pa-calls-to-invalidate-american-vetoes-at-security-council/>

<sup>53</sup> “UN Security Council to Discuss Worsening Israel-Palestinian Violence”

<sup>54</sup> United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Security Council quick links.

<http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick/veto>

making peace a distant hope. Fittingly, Mingst and Karns caution that, “In a global village, someone else’s poverty very soon becomes one’s own problem.”<sup>55</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This paper has focused on how the UN security council veto has been used by the US and negatively impacted the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ensuring their power in the region is maintained. Anarchy and the denial of the UN to be enabled to work toward change and peace has been perpetrated by the US and its regional power of Israel. The Palestinian Authority is proving to be better at working for itself to develop legitimacy and an internationally recognized place in the world. Despite this, it is unlikely that Israel will change its model of using the UN when it suits them, but quickly falling back on the US’s ability to operate independently as a means of maintaining their position with the Middle East.

The role of the state in the Middle East conflict is assured as the US and Israel continue to seek self-interests to advance their power at the cost to what could be called the morally correct ideal of achieving peace. Human rights and international law are easily ignored as the power of the US as a hegemon can influence the neighbouring states and ensure their hold in the region. Over use of the UN Security Council veto and resulting diminishing of soft power among other states is possible. A hegemon can use its power, both hard and soft, to support its interests, but like the US unconditional support to Israel, the power can be tarnished by the actions of the

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<sup>55</sup> Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karnes, *The United Nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 275.

weaker state. The value of the regional presence will offset and reassure the state's citizens that their homeland security is guaranteed.

Survival of a state like Israel, given its location in the world, is not guaranteed without assistance from a global hegemon like the US. It is unlikely that Israel would have been as successful in maintaining their land had they not received such generous, though not self-less, support from America. As the relationship ensures a military presence in the region, the cost to keep the IDF resourced is to the benefit of the US.

The US hold on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and the status-quo of a continuous uncertainty in the region prove that this will be maintained unless there is a drastic change in the region or a decline in the US as a hegemon. One aspect of the issue which was not elaborated on in this paper is the fact that Israel has been a nuclear power since 1966/67 and its role in deterring Iran and Iraq as the major powers of the region.

Another issue for future discussion is the perceived impact of the Israel Lobby on US foreign policy. Religious fervor tends to make a situation binary when it needs to have elements of grey in order to provide for both sides of the case. The element of concession is not a factor in the Middle East peace process. Neither side is able to see beyond its own cause and with powers like the US, and more recently active participation by Russia, exercising their power in the region peace is not a pressing matter.

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