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***The Influence of AIPAC on Shaping the U.S.
Foreign Policy towards the Middle East:
The War on Gaza 2014 & 2021 as a Case Study***

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's
Degree in Literature and Civilization.**

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Declaration :

I declare that this thesis is my own original work and has not been submitted before , as far as I know, to any other university or institution. All sources and references used have been properly cited, and the content follows the academic standards of honesty and integrity.

Certified :

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Dedication:

To my beloved family,

With all my heart, I dedicate this work to you.

To my **beloved father**, may he rest in peace; who has been always there for me.

To my **mother**, your endless love, prayers, and strength guided me through every step.

To my **sister**, your kindness and support were always a light in difficult moments.

To my **husband**, thank you for your patience and for standing beside me through every challenge.

And to my **three little angels**, my children ; your smiles gave me the energy to keep going, even on the hardest days.

Without your **unconditional support**, I would not have been able to complete this journey.

This achievement is not mine alone ; it belongs to all of you.

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Thank you all for being part of this journey.

Abstract :

This thesis studies how a powerful lobbying group called **AIPAC** (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and how it influences **U.S. foreign policy**, especially during conflicts in the **Middle East**. The main goal is to understand how this group affects what the United States says and does when there is war, using the **2014 and 2021 Gaza wars** as examples.

The research shows that AIPAC has a strong role in shaping U.S. decisions. It works closely with **members of Congress**, supports election campaigns, and shares messages in the media. During both Gaza wars, most U.S. leaders supported **Israel** quickly and strongly, while saying very little about the suffering in **Palestine**. The study found that this support was not just based on national interest, but also because of the influence of lobbying.

The thesis also shows that **public opinion** in the U.S. is starting to change. More young people, human rights groups, and some politicians are beginning to speak out and ask for a more balanced policy. This research helps us better understand how foreign policy is made, who has the power to shape it, and how it can affect peace and justice in the region.

Keys words :

Foreign Policy - AIPAC – United States of America – Israel – Palestine – Gaza War - Middle East

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الرسالة تأثير جماعة ضغط قوية أو لوبي يهودي يعرف باسم AIPAC (اللجنة الأمريكية الإسرائيلية للشؤون العامة) على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية، خاصة خلال النزاعات في الشرق الأوسط. الهدف الرئيسي هو فهم كيف تؤثر هذه الجماعة على ما تقوله وتفعله الولايات المتحدة أثناء الحروب، من خلال دراسة حالتي حرب غزة في 2014 و2021.

تُظهر الدراسة أن لـ AIPAC دورًا قويًا في توجيه القرارات الأمريكية. فهي تعمل بشكل مباشر مع أعضاء الكونغرس، وتدعم الحملات الانتخابية، وتنشر رسائلها عبر وسائل الإعلام. خلال كلتا الحربين، قدم القادة الأمريكيون دعمًا سريعًا وقويًا لإسرائيل، بينما لم يقولوا الكثير عن معاناة الفلسطينيين. وتبين من خلال البحث أن هذا الدعم لم يكن فقط بسبب المصالح الوطنية، بل بسبب تأثير جماعات الضغط أيضًا.

كما تُظهر الرسالة أن الرأي العام في الولايات المتحدة بدأ يتغير. فعدد متزايد من الشباب، ومنظمات حقوق الإنسان، وبعض السياسيين، بدأوا يطالبون بسياسة أكثر توازنًا. تساعد هذه الدراسة على فهم أفضل لكيفية صنع السياسة الخارجية، ومن يملك القوة للتأثير فيها، وكيف يمكن أن تؤثر على السلام والعدالة في المنطقة.

الكلمات المفتاحية :

السياسة الخارجية - AIPAC (اللجنة الأمريكية الإسرائيلية للشؤون العامة) - الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية - فلسطين - غزة - إسرائيل - الشرق الأوسط

List of Acronyms :

Acronym	Full Meaning
AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CRS	Congressional Research Service
PAC	Political Action Committee
HRW	Human Rights Watch
BDS	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
IR	International Relations
ICC	International Criminal Court
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
ME	Middle East
EU	European Union

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General Introduction :

Introduction :

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) stands as one of the most powerful lobbying organizations in the United States, deeply rooted in the fabric of U.S. foreign policy, particularly regarding the Middle East. Founded in 1951, its aims to promote pro-Israel policies among U.S. lawmakers, exercising influence through lobbying efforts, campaign contributions, and public engagement. This research proposal focuses on how this organization has shaped U.S. foreign policy, with a particular emphasis on its role during the Gaza conflicts of 2014 and 2021.

The U.S.-Israel relationship has a long history, with roots tracing back to the early 20th century, but it gained significant traction after World War II and the establishment of Israel in 1948. AIPAC emerged as a key player in this relationship, advocating for policies that align closely with Israeli interests. Scholars like John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, in their decisive work *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, suggest that AIPAC's influence can sometimes overshadow broader U.S. interests, raising questions about the integrity and implications of such lobbying on American foreign policy (Mearsheimer and Walt 55). This study will investigate its strategies, its impact on public opinion, and how its lobbying efforts have affected U.S. policy decisions during specific conflicts in Gaza.

Research Questions :

To guide this study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How does AIPAC shape U.S. foreign policy decisions, specifically during Middle Eastern conflicts such as the Gaza wars?
2. What are the primary strategies and mechanisms that AIPAC employs to gain influence over U.S. policymakers?

3. To what extent do AIPAC's lobbying efforts align with or diverge from broader U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East?
4. How does AIPAC's pressure compare with that of other lobbying groups in the United States, particularly in relation to foreign policy?
5. What are the impacts of AIPAC's control on U.S. public opinion, especially during times of conflict, such as the 2014 and 2021 Gaza conflicts?
6. How does AIPAC's engagement with key U.S. politicians shape congress attitudes and actions during crises?
7. In what ways has AIPAC's lobbying during the Gaza conflicts affected humanitarian perceptions and responses from the U.S.?
8. What ethical implications arise from AIPAC's power over U.S. foreign policy, particularly concerning democratic decision-making and foreign lobbying?
9. How has AIPAC's lobbying influenced long-term U.S.-Israel relations, and what are the implications for future policy in the region?

Aims of the Study:

The study has three primary aims:

1. To explore the ways in which AIPAC influences U.S. foreign policy, particularly during Middle Eastern conflicts.
2. To investigate the effectiveness of AIPAC's lobbying techniques and campaign contributions in controlling American lawmakers and public opinion.
3. To understand the broader impacts of AIPAC's influence, particularly regarding the U.S.-Israel relationship and U.S. strategic goals in the Middle East.

Hypothesis :

This study hypothesizes that AIPAC significantly influences U.S. policy toward Israel, particularly in times of crisis, such as during the Gaza conflicts. It speculates that this influence is achieved through direct lobbying, campaign finance, and media efforts, resulting in U.S. policy actions that favor Israel's interests.

While this pressure can strengthen U.S.-Israel relations, it may sometimes conflict with America's broader Middle Eastern strategy and raise ethical questions regarding the role of foreign policy lobbying.

Literature Review :

There are a lot of literature reviews examine AIPAC's role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. Mearsheimer and Walt's *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* provides foundational insights into AIPAC's structure and control, arguing that AIPAC's activities can affect U.S. foreign policy in favor of Israel, even when broader American interests might be ignored (Mearsheimer and Walt 55). James M. McCormick's *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy* emphasizes the role of lobbying in affecting policy decisions, situating AIPAC within the context of American democracy and its lobbying landscape (McCormick 102).

Moreover, Steven W. Hook and John Spanier's *American Foreign Policy Since World War II* gives historical context to U.S.-Israel relations, highlighting the ideological and strategic ties that have developed over decades (Hook and Spanier 33). These initial texts will go together by more recent studies and analyses that explore AIPAC's role in specific policy decisions and its impact during conflicts, including scholarly articles that discuss the ethical dimensions of lobbying in a democratic context.

Research Methodology :

The research methodology will employ a qualitative case study approach, focusing on AIPAC's influence during the 2014 and 2021 Gaza conflicts. This will involve a comprehensive review of primary sources, including its official publications, congress voting record, and public opinion data . Secondary sources, such as books, peer-reviewed articles, and policy analyses, will be essential for understanding its lobbying techniques, campaign finance strategies, and public relations efforts.

The case study approach will enable a close examination of AIPAC's actions and their immediate and long-term impacts on U.S. policy, providing a good understanding of the organization's influence during essential moments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Significance of the Study :

This research is significant because it sheds light on how a powerful lobbying organization like AIPAC influences U.S. foreign policy during critical international conflicts, shaping responses that have far-reaching consequences. By focusing on the Gaza conflicts, the study reveals the ethical and strategic challenges that arise when domestic lobbying plays a role in shaping foreign policy. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to a broader understanding of the organization's authority within the context of democratic systems, providing insights that are crucial for future discussions about lobbying ethics, foreign policy formulation, and U.S.-Israel relations.

Limitations of the Study :

This study is limited by the availability of official information on AIPAC's internal activities. As a lobbying organization, this organization operates with a degree of secrecy that can be difficult to understand the full extent of its power. Additionally, while the focus on the 2014 and 2021 Gaza conflicts provides a rich context for analysis, it may not capture the total of the Jewish Lobby's power across all U.S. policies or during other Middle Eastern conflicts. Lastly, the study will rely heavily on publicly accessible documents and publications, as primary information on AIPAC's operations within the U.S .

The thesis is divided into three main chapters.

- **Chapter One** gives background information. It explains the history of U.S.- Israel relations and the beginning of AIPAC. It shows how this group started and how it became stronger over the years. The chapter also explains how it uses different tools to push U.S. leaders to take Israel's side.
- **Chapter Two** looks more deeply at AIPAC influence on U.S. policy. It talks about money, lobbying, media pressure, and friendships with powerful politicians. It also shows real examples where U.S. laws and policies were shaped by the lobby's work.
- **Chapter Three** is the case study. It explains what happened in the 2014 and 2021 Gaza wars, and in what way U.S. leaders responded. The chapter also studies what the lobbying group did during those wars ; it also explains its work behind the scenes. The chapter finishes by asking what this means for U.S. policy, for Palestinians, and for the future of peace.

This topic is very important. It shows that the work of foreign policy is not always decided by governments alone. Sometimes, strong groups can push countries to act in certain ways. This can be good, but it can also be dangerous, especially when innocent people are affected. It is also important to understand this topic in the Arab world ; where people care deeply about Palestine, about justice, and about peace. This thesis does not try to take sides, but it tries to ask fair and honest questions:

- Who influences American decisions in the Middle East?
- What role does AIPAC really play?
- And how does this affect real people, especially during war?

Chapter One :

1- The U.S.-Israel Relationship and AIPAC's Formation.

I- Introduction:

This chapter will first look at the key events that led to the U.S. and Israel becoming close allies. It will then explore how World War II and other events changed U.S. foreign policy and increased support for Israel. Finally, we will discuss the founding and growth of AIPAC, focusing on its goals, methods, and impact on U.S. politics. Understanding these events will help explain why the relationship between the U.S. and Israel is so significant today.

The relationship between the United States and Israel is an important part of American foreign policy. It has developed over many years, shaped by both historical events and political decisions. This relationship started with key moments like the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which showed British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and the United States officially recognizing Israel in 1948. World War II played a big role in making the U.S. more supportive of Israel, as many Americans felt a moral duty to help Jews and support the creation of a Jewish state.

As the Cold War began and the Middle East became more important in global politics, the relationship between the U.S. and Israel grew stronger. A key factor in this growth was the rise of lobby groups, especially the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), founded in 1951. It was created to organize and strengthen efforts to influence U.S. policies that support Israel. Over time, it became a powerful force in U.S. politics, using different lobbying methods to push for policies that protect Israel's interests.

1.1 Historical Context of U.S.-Israel Relations:

1.1.1 Key Events Leading to Diplomatic Ties:

1.1.1.1 Balfour Declaration (1917) :

The Balfour Declaration, issued by the British government on November 2, 1917, is one of the key events that set the stage for the later creation of the state of Israel. The declaration was a formal statement made by Arthur James Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, in a letter to Baron Rothschild, a well-known leader of the British Jewish community. It expressed Britain's support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, a country that was under British control after World War I.

This declaration was significant because it was the first time a major world power openly supported the idea of a Jewish homeland in already inhabited Palestine. The British government's decision to support the creation of a Jewish state reflected growing international interest in the idea of a Jewish homeland, especially after the agony of Jews during World War I and the ongoing persecution of Jews in Europe. However, it was controversial because the region was already home to a large Arab population, who were not consulted about this plan (Smith 24).

The Balfour Declaration did not create the state of Israel directly, but it was a critical first step toward its formation. It showed that the British and other powers like the United States were beginning to recognize the possibility of a Jewish state in Palestine. This recognition played an important role in encouraging Jewish immigration to the area, especially as Europe faced increasing so called anti-Semitism. Over time, the declaration became a symbol of hope for many Jewish

people, as it symbolized that the international community was beginning to support the establishment of a Jewish homeland.

The Balfour Declaration was not accepted by Palestinians, who felt betrayed by the British government. Many Arabs were opposed to Jewish immigration to the region, which they believed would threaten their own rights and future. Tensions between Jews and Arabs in Palestine and the region increased . The British government's support for the declaration also led to widespread protests and resistance by Arabs in the region, setting the stage for future conflicts in the area (Morris 56).

In short, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was an important step in shaping the U.S.-Israel relationship. Even though it was issued by Britain, it helped start events that eventually led to the creation of Israel, which later gained U.S. support. The declaration also encouraged Jewish organizations and supporters, including those in the United States, to push for Israel's establishment through diplomatic and political efforts.

1.1.1.2 U.S. Recognition of Israel (1948) :

The U.S. recognition of Israel on May 14, 1948, was one of the most significant moments in the history of U.S.-Israel relations. Israel declared its self-government on that day, and almost immediately, the United States, under President Harry S. Truman, recognized the new state. The timing of this recognition was crucial; it came just minutes after the declaration of self-rule, making the United States one of the first countries in the world to officially acknowledge Israel's sovereignty over Palestine.

The U.S. recognition of Israel was important for several reasons. First, it represented the fulfillment of decades of Zionist efforts to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The U.S. had been a supporter of the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine for many years, as demonstrated by the Balfour Declaration and by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's support for self-determination after World War I. Truman's recognition of Israel was in line with these earlier expressions of support. Additionally, the U.S. felt that supporting Israel could help stabilize the Middle East and strengthen its influence in the region during the early years of the Cold War (Gordon 72).

However, this decision was not easy. President Truman faced strong pressure from both sides in the United States. Many Jewish Americans and Jewish groups wanted the U.S. to support Israel, saying it was the right thing to do.

At the same time, Arab leaders and countries were against the creation of Israel. They believed it took away Palestinian rights. This caused problems not only in the Middle East but also in American politics, as different groups argued over whether recognizing Israel was a good idea (Landler 15).

In the end, Truman's decision to recognize Israel was influenced by a combination of moral, political, and strategic considerations. While it caused an immediate conflict with the Arab states in the region, it also helped secure the U.S.'s role as a key player in Middle Eastern politics. The recognition marked the beginning of a special relationship between the United States and Israel, one that would grow stronger over the coming decades.

1.1.1.3.Role of Jewish Lobbying Groups in Shaping Policy :

Jewish lobbying groups have played an important role in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Israel. One of the most well-known is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Since its founding in 1951, it has worked to strengthen ties between the two countries and make sure the U.S. government supports Israel's security and interests in the Middle East.

These groups influence U.S. lawmakers through lobbying, donations, and public support. Many members of Congress seek their help to win elections and gain financial backing. Over time, their efforts have helped keep U.S. financial and military aid to Israel at high levels and have influenced policies that support Israel's security (Chafets 88).

Their impact can be seen in many ways. The U.S. has strongly supported Israel in military aid, diplomacy, and defense agreements. One example is how the U.S. has often blocked United Nations resolutions that criticize Israel. Lobbying efforts have also helped secure billions of dollars in aid (Klein 103).

These organizations also focus on educating American leaders and the public about Israel. They say that Israel is an important ally in the Middle East, a region that affects global security and politics. During the Cold War and the so called War on Terror, they promoted Israel as a country that helps bring stability to the region. Because of these efforts, support for Israel has remained strong in both major U.S. political parties (Ginsberg 54).

In conclusion, some people believe this is a good thing because Israel is an important U.S. ally. They think that supporting Israel helps keep the Middle East

more stable and protects U.S. interests in the region. Others, however, believe that these groups have too much power. They say that the U.S. sometimes supports Israel even when it may not be the best decision for peace or for U.S. foreign policy. For example, the U.S. has often blocked United Nations decisions that criticize Israel, which some people think is unfair.

From my point of view, lobbying is a normal part of politics, but it should not be too strong. The U.S. should also think about other countries and the bigger picture. The U.S. should make decisions based on what is best for peace and stability, not just on what lobbying groups want. If one group has too much power, it can create problems in the long run.

1.1.2. The Influence of World War II:

1.1.2.1. Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy :

World War II had a strong effect on U.S. foreign policy. Before the war, the United States preferred to stay out of global conflicts and focused mainly on its own national interests. However, after the war, the U.S. became more involved in world affairs, especially in the Middle East. The war had displaced millions of people, including many Jews, who sought new opportunities and safety in different parts of the world (Mearsheimer / Walt 92).

At the same time, British control over Palestine was coming to an end, and tensions in the region were rising. Many Jewish people had already migrated to Palestine, seeking a homeland. The U.S. saw this as an important issue especially for strategic interests. American leaders believed that supporting the establishment of a

Jewish state in Palestine could help maintain its weight in the Middle East (Hook and Spanier 101).

Additionally, the Cold War was beginning, and the U.S. wanted to prevent Soviet expansion in the Middle East. The region was rich in oil, and securing strong alliances was necessary for economic and political reasons. Supporting a Jewish state in Palestine was seen by many in the U.S. government as a way to ensure a reliable partner in an area where American interests were growing (Klein 78).

As a result, the U.S. shifted its foreign policy. It started to take a more active role in Middle Eastern affairs, supporting Jewish migration and looking for ways to secure long-term partnerships in the region. These decisions had long-lasting effects and shaped U.S. involvement in the Middle East for decades to come.

1.1.2.2. Jewish Refugee Crisis and Its Effects on U.S. Attitudes Toward Israel :

The Jewish refugee crisis after World War II had a big impact on how the United States viewed the creation of Israel. After the war, millions of Jewish refugees had no homes. Many lived in camps in Europe because they could not return to their countries. They faced discrimination and had no safe place to go.

Before the war, the U.S. did not accept many Jewish refugees, but after seeing their suffering, Americans changed their views. Many people believed that helping Jewish refugees was the right thing to do. The idea of creating a Jewish homeland in Palestine became more popular in the U.S. because it seemed like a solution to the crisis.

Because of this, U.S. policies began to change. The government loosened strict immigration rules and supported Jewish migration to Palestine. However, there were also concerns about how this would affect the Arab population in the region. Still, many U.S. leaders felt a moral duty to help the Jewish people, especially after the Holocaust. This shift in policy was a key reason why the U.S. supported the creation of Israel in 1948 (Klein 78).

The refugee crisis also led to the growth of Jewish lobbying groups in the U.S. Many organizations focused on helping Jewish refugees and promoting the idea of a Jewish homeland. These groups worked hard to increase U.S. support for Israel and played a major role in shaping American foreign policy.

1.1.2.3. Establishment of Jewish Statehood:

The establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, marked the conclusion of years of huge effort by the Zionist movement, but it was also heavily influenced by the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust which was made as a pretext. The horrors of the Holocaust and the desperate need for a safe place for Jewish refugees greatly accelerated the movement toward the creation of Israel. By the time World War II ended, the idea of a Jewish state had gained significant support among the global community, particularly in the United States.

In 1947, the United Nations approved a partition plan that would divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. While the Jewish leadership in Palestine accepted the plan, the Arab leaders rejected it, leading to tensions and violence. Despite the rejection by Arab states, the UN vote was seen as a critical step

forward for the Zionist movement and a signal of growing international support for the establishment of Israel in Palestine .

The United States, under President Truman, played a crucial role in the establishment of Israel. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. recognized Israel immediately after it declared independence. This recognition was not just a political gesture; it signified U.S. support for the idea of a Jewish state, especially in the wake of the Holocaust. Truman's decision to back the creation of Israel was influenced by several factors, including geopolitical concerns and the need to maintain strong political ties with Jewish organizations in the U.S. (Ginsberg 98).

The creation of Israel was met with both joy and conflict. For Jews around the world, it was the fulfillment of a dream that had lasted for centuries. However, for the Palestinians and neighboring Arab states, it was the beginning of a long-standing conflict over land and sovereignty. The first Arab-Israeli war broke out shortly after the declaration of self-government, with neighboring Arab countries seeking to prevent the establishment of the new state. The war led to significant changes in the region's borders and the displacement of many Palestinians.

Despite the immediate conflict, the establishment of Israel laid the foundation for what would become a special and enduring relationship between the United States and Israel. U.S. support for Israel would grow stronger over the following decades, as the two countries developed close diplomatic, military, and economic ties (Gordon 112).

1.2. Formation and Growth of AIPAC :

1.2.1. Founding of AIPAC and Its Early Goals:

1.2.1.1. Establishment in 1951 :

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) was created in 1951. The group was formed in a period when the U.S.-Israel relationship was still growing, and Israel was seeking more support from the United States (Bar-Zohar).

The organization's early leaders, including Isaiah L. Kenen, recognized the need for a lobbying group to influence American policymakers in favor of Israel. They believed that having an organized group to represent Israel's interests in Washington would help strengthen the political and military relationship between the U.S. and Israel . AIPAC's initial role was not as influential as it would later become, but it laid the foundation for its growth into a powerful lobbying group.

At its founding, it focused on creating connections with U.S. legislators and government officials. The founders knew that for Israel to prosper and ensure its security in a unstable region, it would need strong allies, particularly the U.S. In the early years, the Jewish organization did not have the vast network or the influence it does today, but it worked to build its reputation as a legitimate and important voice in American politics.

1.2.1.2. Initial Objectives to Promote Pro-Israel Policies:

AIPAC's main goal from its beginning was to promote policies that would support Israel, particularly in securing U.S. military and economic aid. After Israel was founded in 1948, it faced numerous threats from neighboring countries. To ensure

its survival and security, Israel needed consistent and considerable support from the United States, especially as the Cold War began influencing international politics . It aimed to make sure that the U.S. would continue to provide military and financial assistance to Israel.

In addition to securing aid, AIPAC wanted to ensure that the U.S. government would support Israel in the international arena. The founders recognized that international support for Israel was crucial, especially in institutions like the United Nations (UN), where Israel was often isolated or criticized by other nations (Kenen 88). As part of its early strategy, the organization worked to convince American leaders that supporting Israel was also in the best interests of the United States. The U.S. had its own strategic interests in the Middle East, particularly as it required countering Soviet influence in the region during the Cold War (Chanes 64).

To achieve its goals, AIPAC used a variety of strategies, such as meeting with key policymakers, organizing events, and providing information about Israel's security needs. The organization's initial activities focused on building relationships with members of Congress and educating them about the importance of U.S.-Israel relations. Over time, it gained more influence as it expanded its reach and developed a more sophisticated lobbying operation.

By 1967, after the Six-Day War, AIPAC's influence had grown significantly. The success of the war, which resulted in a major victory for Israel, helped its cause because it highlighted Israel's importance as a stable ally in the Middle East. As a result, the lobby gained more attention and support, which allowed it to strengthen its lobbying efforts within the U.S. (Bar-Zohar) .

1.3. Strategies Employed by AIPAC to Increase Political Influence:

1.3.1. Direct Lobbying Techniques :

In the 1960s and 1970s, AIPAC focused on building close relationships with members of Congress. During this time, it worked to educate lawmakers about Israel's security needs and encouraged them to support policies that provided financial and military aid. Its representatives regularly met with key politicians to explain why strong U.S.-Israel relations were important. As U.S. involvement in the Middle East increased, the organization expanded its lobbying efforts by hiring experienced political advisors and former government officials to communicate directly with lawmakers.

In the 1980s and 1990s, AIPAC's lobbying became more organized and professional. The group started providing detailed policy briefings, research papers, and reports to members of Congress. These materials helped shape debates on foreign policy and guided decisions on military aid and diplomatic support for Israel. As the political climate changed, it adapted by focusing on both Republican and Democratic lawmakers, ensuring both parties support for Israel.

1.3.2. Base-Level Activism :

In its early years, AIPAC mainly worked with high-level politicians, but by the late 1970s, it realized that public support was also important. The organization then started grassroots mobilization, encouraging ordinary American citizens to support pro-Israel policies. It launched training programs to help volunteers engage with local leaders, write letters to Congress, and organize community events.

AIPAC expanded its grassroots efforts by recruiting young leaders from universities and political organizations. It also worked with religious groups, particularly within Jewish and Christian communities, to increase public awareness about Israel. By the 2000s, Base-Level Activism had become a key part of its strategy, allowing it to create a broad network of supporters across the country.

1.3.3. Political Contributions and Campaign Support :

The organization did not have a strong role in campaign funding. However, by the late 20th century, the association realized that financial support played a major role in elections. Although AIPAC itself does not donate money directly to candidates, it encourages members and affiliated political action committees (PACs) to support pro-Israel politicians.

During the 1990s, pro-Israel PACs became more active in funding election campaigns. it helped guide these donations by identifying candidates who strongly supported Israel and ensuring they received financial backing. This approach allowed the Jewish group to strengthen its influence by helping elect officials who were committed to pro-Israel policies.

Campaign support had become one of the most effective tools for maintaining strong U.S.-Israel relations. Many politicians seeking office recognized the importance of having AIPAC's support, leading them to adopt policies favorable to Israel.

1.4. AIPAC's Evolution Over the Decades:

1.4.1.Changes in Strategy and Focus Through Different Political Administrations:

Over the decades, AIPAC's strategies and focus have evolved in response to changing political environments and different U.S. presidential administrations. During the early years of AIPAC, the organization focused primarily on securing military and economic aid for Israel. In the 1960s and 1970s, AIPAC's efforts were focused toward making sure that Israel received the financial and military support it needed to defend itself in the Middle East (Chanes 145). However, as Israel became more established and its security needs evolved, AIPAC's strategies began to shift.

Under the leadership of different U.S. presidents, AIPAC adjusted its tactics. For example, during the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, AIPAC's lobbying efforts focused on promoting peace processes in the Middle East, while ensuring that Israel's security remained a top priority (Bar-Zohar 137). In this period, AIPAC began to promote for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while also strengthening military aid to Israel.

In the 1990s, during Bill Clinton's presidency, AIPAC expanded its focus to include more diplomatic efforts, such as promoting peace talks and the Oslo Accords. This period marked a shift in AIPAC's emphasis from just military support to more balanced approaches that included diplomacy and negotiations (Gould 110). AIPAC also worked to ensure that Israel's position in international forums remained strong, particularly in the United Nations, where Israel faced consistent criticism.

In the 2000s and beyond, AIPAC's strategies adjusted to focus on issues related to Iran's nuclear program, as the organization became increasingly concerned

about the potential threat posed by Iran to Israel's security (Kenen 98). AIPAC worked to lobby Congress to support sanctions against Iran and to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, which it considered a major threat to Israel's safety.

Throughout these changes, the organization has consistently adapted to the political climate, ensuring that its core mission of supporting Israel remains central to its efforts. With each new administration, AIPAC has modified its strategies to stay relevant and maintain its influence in Washington, always keeping in mind its primary goal: the security and survival of Israel (Chanes 148).

1.4.2. Timeline of U.S.-Israel Relations:

A timeline of U.S.-Israel relations helps to understand the historical context in which AIPAC has operated. Below is a simplified timeline highlighting key events that shaped the relationship between the two countries and AIPAC's role in influencing U.S. policy:

- 1948: Israel was established as a state. The U.S. recognized Israel shortly after its declaration of independence, marking the beginning of a formal relationship between the two countries.
- 1951: AIPAC was founded, aiming to promote U.S.-Israel relations and ensure that Israel received political, military, and economic support from the U.S.
- 1967: The Six-Day War resulted in a decisive Israeli victory. The U.S. began to increase its military aid to Israel, marking the start of strong U.S. military and diplomatic support for Israel. AIPAC played a key role in securing this support.

- 1973: During the Yom Kippur War, Israel faced a surprise attack from Egypt and Syria. The U.S. provided significant military aid to Israel, and AIPAC worked to ensure that Israel got the support it needed from the U.S. government.
- 1979: The Camp David Accords, arranged by U.S. President Jimmy Carter, resulted in a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. This was a significant diplomatic achievement for Israel, supported by AIPAC's lobbying efforts.
- 1993: The Oslo Accords were signed, with U.S. facilitation. AIPAC supported this peace process but continued to advocate for strong security guarantees for Israel.
- 2001-2008: Under President George W. Bush, U.S.-Israel relations strengthened, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. AIPAC lobbied for policies that focused on regional security and counterterrorism efforts, especially concerning Iran.
- 2008-present: AIPAC's focus has shifted to Iran's nuclear program, advocating for sanctions and military options to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

1.4.3. Key Events and Their Impact :

The following table shows key events in U.S.-Israel relations and their impact on AIPAC's role and influence in American politics.

Event	Year	Impact on U.S.-Israel Relations	AIPAC's Role
Creation of Israel	1948	The U.S. formally recognizes Israel, beginning a diplomatic relationship.	AIPAC is founded in 1963 to strengthen and maintain this relationship.
Six-Day War	1967	Israel's military victory strengthens its strategic importance to the U.S.	AIPAC works to ensure U.S. military and financial aid to Israel is increased.

Event	Year	Impact on U.S.-Israel Relations	AIPAC's Role
Yom Kippur War	1973	The U.S. provides emergency military supplies to Israel.	AIPAC lobbies for continued U.S. support in the form of military aid and political backing.
Camp David Accords	1979	Israel and Egypt reach a peace agreement with U.S. facilitation.	AIPAC supports the peace process while ensuring Israel's security concerns are addressed.
Oslo Accords	1993	A significant step toward peace between Israel and Palestine, facilitated by the U.S.	AIPAC supports the peace process, advocating for security measures for Israel.
U.S. Invasion of Iraq	2003	The U.S. focuses on Middle East security, particularly regarding weapons of mass destruction.	AIPAC strongly supports U.S. involvement in Iraq, highlighting regional stability and counterterrorism.
Iran Nuclear Deal	2015	Iran agrees to limit its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.	AIPAC opposes the deal, lobbying for stronger measures to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

1. 5 . Analysis of Key Literature:

1. 5.1. Overview of Academic Debates on AIPAC's Role :

Many scholars have different opinions about the role of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in U.S. politics. Some researchers believe that this Jewish group has a strong influence on U.S. foreign policy, especially on decisions related to Israel and the Middle East. One of the main debates is whether AIPAC has too much power over U.S. political decisions, particularly in matters like U.S. military aid to Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Some experts argue this organization plays a vital role in keeping the U.S. and Israel close allies. They believe this relationship is good for both countries. According to these scholars, its lobbying helps U.S. leaders understand Israel's security needs and the benefits of a strong partnership between the two nations (Chanes 132).

They also say that the organization's work helps educate U.S. lawmakers about why supporting Israel is important for peace and stability in the Middle East (Kenen 102).

On the other hand, some critics argue that pro-Israel lobbying in the U.S. creates an imbalance in foreign policy. They claim that certain advocacy groups have too much control over American decisions and often prevent a neutral approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to these critics, lobbying efforts can push the U.S. to prioritize Israel's interests, sometimes at the expense of other important goals, such as promoting peace in the Middle East or addressing human rights issues. Some also believe that the strong presence of these organizations in Washington makes it difficult for U.S. lawmakers to take positions that might challenge Israeli policies, particularly regarding the occupation of Palestinian territories. (Gould 115)

In addition to these debates, some scholars focus on the ethical concerns of foreign influence in American policymaking. They question whether it is appropriate for an organization that represents another country's interests to have such a major role in shaping U.S. decisions, especially when these policies affect many nations and people beyond Israel. This ethical debate adds another layer of complexity to the discussion on political lobbying and its impact (Bar-Zohar 142).

II- Conclusion:

In this chapter, we explored how the relationship between the U.S. and Israel developed over time. It started with key historical moments like the Balfour Declaration (1917) and the U.S. recognition of Israel in 1948. Over the years, political decisions and global events, especially the Cold War, made this relationship stronger. A major part of this connection is the role of lobbying groups, especially AIPAC, which has worked to influence U.S. foreign policy in favor of Israel.

From my point of view, this relationship is very complex. The U.S. sees Israel as a strong ally in the Middle East, which is important for its global strategy. However, the control of lobbying groups raises important questions. On one hand, lobbying is part of democracy, but on the other hand, it can give too much power to certain groups. This makes us wonder if U.S. decisions are always fair or they are sometimes shaped by political pressure rather than what is best for all sides.

Overall, this chapter made it possible to understand why the U.S.-Israel relationship is so strong and why it continues to be a key part of American foreign policy. It also helped us think more critically about the role of lobbying and how much power such groups should have in shaping government decisions.

Chapter Two:

2- AIPAC's Influence on U.S. Policy

Introduction :

This chapter looks at how this lobbying group affects U.S. foreign policy. It does this through different methods like political donations, lobbying, and public campaigns. The chapter also examines its relationships with important politicians and how it helps shape major laws.

Additionally, it explores the group's role during big conflicts, especially the Gaza wars, and how it influenced U.S. political decisions. Finally, different opinions about its influence will be discussed some see it as a powerful political player, while others question its impact on democracy and foreign policy.

2.1. Mechanisms of Influence:

2.1.1. Role of PACs and Donations :

One of the main ways this lobbying group influences U.S. foreign policy is through Political Action Committees (PACs) and donations. PACs collect money from supporters and use it to help politicians who share their views. Since U.S. election campaigns are very expensive, candidates depend on these funds. This system allows pro-Israel PACs and wealthy donors to support politicians who align with their interests (Mearsheimer 112).

Although AIPAC does not directly donate money, it plays a key role in guiding its supporters' contributions. It identifies politicians who support pro-Israel policies and encourages donors to fund their campaigns. These financial contributions help candidates win elections and stay in office. In return, many of these politicians back laws and policies that benefit Israel (Hook and Spanier 92). This creates a cycle

where politicians rely on financial support from pro-Israel donors, ensuring continued U.S. backing for Israel.

A clear example of this was in the 2020 U.S. elections when pro-Israel PACs donated over \$30 million to political candidates (McCarthy 52). These donations went to both Democrats and Republicans, ensuring that no matter which party is in power, Israel continues to receive strong U.S. support.

PAC donations also shape U.S. military aid and diplomatic policies. Lawmakers who receive large contributions from pro-Israel groups often vote to increase military assistance to Israel. Many of these politicians also support Israeli military actions, including conflicts like the war on Gaza. Over the years, this financial backing has helped secure billions of dollars in U.S. aid to Israel (Altman 563).

However, critics argue that this system raises ethical concerns. Some believe U.S. foreign policy should be based on national interests, not lobbying groups. Others worry that politicians might feel pressured to support Israel, even when it does not align with broader U.S. priorities (Mearsheimer and Walt 130). On the other hand, AIPAC and its supporters say these contributions strengthen U.S.-Israel relations.

Overall, PACs and donations are powerful tools for this lobbying group. By directing financial support to pro-Israel politicians, it helps shape U.S. foreign policy to benefit Israel's strategic needs.

2.1.2 . Analysis of Campaign Finance Data :

To understand the financial power of this lobbying group, it is important to look at campaign donations. In the U.S., all political donations must be recorded and reported to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Independent groups, like the Center for Responsive Politics, also track these donations and study how money affects politics. Reports from these sources show that pro-Israel groups give millions of dollars in every election (Hook and Spanier 92).

One clear way this influence appears is in how politicians vote on Israel-related policies. Studies show that lawmakers who receive large donations from pro-Israel supporters are more likely to back laws that help Israel. A good example is the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014, which increased military and economic cooperation between the two countries. Many politicians who supported this law had received funding from pro-Israel PACs (McCarthy 52). This shows how campaign donations can shape U.S. foreign policy.

Another example is the Iran Sanctions Act, which placed strict economic sanctions on Iran. This lobbying group strongly supported the law, and many of the politicians who pushed for it had received big donations from its supporters (Altman 563). The link between financial contributions and policy decisions suggests that money plays a key role in U.S. foreign policy, especially in the Middle East.

Financial records also illustrate that pro-Israel lobbying is stronger than most other foreign policy interest groups. While many organizations focus on international issues, this group and its donors give far more to political campaigns than most foreign interest groups. This gives it strong influence in Washington,

helping ensure that lawmakers continue to support policies that align with Israel's interests (Mearsheimer and Walt 145).

2.1.3. Grassroots Mobilization and Public Opinion Shaping :

2.1.3.1 .Community Engagement Initiatives:

This lobbying group does not only use political donations to influence U.S. foreign policy. It also works directly with communities to gain public support, a strategy called grassroots mobilization. Instead of focusing only on politicians, it encourages regular citizens to support pro-Israel policies and take political action (Mearsheimer and Walt 160).

One key way it does this is through leadership programs. These programs train young people and local activists to support Israel. The organization holds conferences, workshops, and events where participants learn about U.S.-Israel relations, lobbying methods, and how to influence lawmakers (McCarthy 58). This helps create a nationwide network of supporters who promote its agenda and push politicians to back pro-Israel policies.

Another important initiative focuses on college students. The organization works with students across the U.S., offering scholarships and funding for those interested in pro-Israel activism. It supports campus groups that advocate for Israel's interests and encourages students to participate in political activities. It also organizes yearly trips to Israel, allowing students to visit the country and learn about its policies (Hook and Spanier 170).

Beyond student engagement, this lobbying group also works with religious and community leaders. Many churches, synagogues, and faith-based organizations have strong ties to Israel. The organization strengthens these ties by providing religious leaders with educational materials, guest speakers, and financial support. This ensures that Israel remains an important topic in religious discussions (Altman 570).

Grassroots mobilization also involves direct action from community members. Supporters are encouraged to call, email, or meet with their representatives in Congress. Often, thousands of people contact lawmakers at the same time to push for pro-Israel policies. This type of mass political pressure has been effective in influencing U.S. foreign policy (Mearsheimer and Walt 165).

Through these community engagement initiatives, this organization has built a large and active support base across the U.S. Its grassroots efforts ensure that politicians feel not only financial pressure but also direct demands from voters to support Israel. This strategy has helped it remain one of the most powerful lobbying groups in the world.

2.1.3.2 Use of Media and Public Campaigns :

Media is very important in shaping what people think. This lobbying group uses media to influence how Americans see U.S.-Israel relations. Today, information spreads fast through TV, newspapers, and social media. The group makes sure that pro-Israel ideas are the main focus in public discussions (Hook and Spanier 175).

One way it does this is by paying for ads and opinion articles in big news outlets. These ads show Israel as a close U.S. ally, talking about shared values and security ties. Some ads also talk about the dangers Israel faces from other countries and say that the U.S. must continue to support Israel (McCarthy 63). this is a smart strategy ; when people see Israel as important to the U.S., they are more likely to support it.

The group also works with journalists and media companies. It gives them reports, expert interviews, and special briefings about the Middle East. Because of this, many news reports follow the group's ideas and show Israel in a positive way (Altman 575). This is very effective because instead of just telling people what to think, the group makes sure the news itself is written in a way that supports its views.

Social media is also a big part of its work. The group and its supporters use platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to share videos, pictures, and articles. These posts explain why Israel is important for U.S. foreign policy. The group also encourages its supporters to join online discussions and defend Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt 170). This makes sure that more people see and support their ideas.

When there is a crisis, media campaigns become even stronger. For example, during the 2021 Gaza conflict, the group launched a big campaign to support Israel's military actions. It made TV ads, social media posts, and got statements from U.S. politicians who support Israel (McCarthy 67). this shows how powerful media is, people's opinions can change very quickly when they see strong messages everywhere.

The group also works with think tanks and research organizations. Some well-known think tanks, like the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, publish reports and books that support Israel. These reports are used to influence both the public and the government (Hook and Spanier 180).

Some people criticize this media influence. They say that because the group is so powerful in the media, other points of view especially those supporting Palestinians are not heard. Some scholars think this makes it hard to have open discussions about U.S.-Israel relations (Mearsheimer and Walt 175). But the group's supporters say that these media campaigns are necessary to correct misinformation and give fair coverage of Israel.

In the end, using media and public campaigns is a key way this group stays powerful. By controlling news, social media, and expert research, it makes sure pro-Israel views are strong in U.S. politics. Along with community efforts, this makes it one of the most powerful lobbying groups. This strategy works well because it reaches many different people and makes pro-Israel views seem normal in public discussions.

2.1.4 Relationships with Key Political Figures :

AIPAC has strong connections with many American politicians. These connections help it influence U.S. foreign policy in ways that support Israel. The group builds these relationships by helping politicians during election campaigns, inviting them to important conferences, and encouraging pro-Israel voters to support them. In return, many of these politicians push for policies that benefit Israel.

Politicians who work closely with this group often vote for laws that give military and financial aid to Israel. They also defend Israel in conflicts and take strong

positions against its enemies. By keeping these relationships strong, the lobbying group makes sure that U.S. policies continue to support Israel both at home and around the world.

2.1.4.1 .Case Studies of Notable Politicians Influenced by AIPAC :

a. Joe Biden :

President Joe Biden has supported Israel for many years. As a senator, he often said that helping Israel was one of his main priorities. He attended AIPAC conferences and received support from pro-Israel donors.

In 2021, during the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, Biden defended Israel's military actions. He said that Israel had the right to protect itself. His administration also approved large military aid packages, continuing the U.S. policy of giving financial and military support to Israel (Smith 45).

b. Chuck Schumer :

Senator Chuck Schumer is known as one of Israel's strongest supporters in the U.S. Senate. He has received a lot of support from AIPAC and other pro-Israel groups. Schumer has helped pass laws that give billions of dollars in military aid to Israel.

He has also strongly criticized U.S. politicians who question Israel's policies. During the 2023 war on Gaza, he supported continued U.S. funding for Israel's military actions (Johnson 78).

c. Nancy Pelosi :

Nancy Pelosi, the former Speaker of the House, has maintained a long-standing relationship with AIPAC. She has received campaign contributions from pro-Israel groups and has frequently attended AIPAC-sponsored events. Under her leadership, the U.S. House of Representatives passed several measures aimed at strengthening U.S.-Israel relations. Pelosi has also supported increasing military aid to Israel and has defended Israel's actions in conflicts, including the wars on Gaza in 2014 and 2021 (Brown 112).

d. Donald Trump :

Former and current President Donald Trump developed strong ties with AIPAC during his presidency. Several of his foreign policy decisions aligned closely with AIPAC's objectives. In 2018, he moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a policy shift that AIPAC had long advocated. He also formally recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights and reduced U.S. aid to Palestinian programs. These actions were widely supported by pro-Israel lobbying groups and strengthened his relationship with AIPAC (Williams 130).

e. Tom Cotton :

Senator Tom Cotton has consistently supported policies that align with AIPAC's positions. He has advocated for strict sanctions on Iran, a key priority for lobby, and has received campaign contributions from pro-Israel political action committees (PACs). Cotton has also attended its annual conferences and spoken in favor of policies that enhance U.S.-Israel strategic ties (Davis 55).

2.2. Case Studies of Policy Impact:

Many important laws have been passed with AIPAC's support. These laws increase U.S. financial and military assistance to Israel and strengthen political ties between the two countries. The following are some key legislative initiatives influenced by the Jewish lobby.

2.2.1.1 U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act (2014):

The U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 was a very important law that made the relationship between the United States and Israel even stronger. AIPAC strongly supported this law and worked hard to make sure it passed. This act officially called Israel a "major strategic partner" of the U.S. This special title gave Israel more military and economic benefits (Smith 89).

One of the biggest effects of this law was increasing U.S. military aid to Israel. It expanded defense cooperation between the two countries and provided more money for Israel's missile defense systems, including the Iron Dome. This system helps Israel stop rockets and missiles before they hit cities or towns. AIPAC worked hard to convince U.S. lawmakers that this funding was necessary because helping Israel's security also protected U.S. interests (Johnson 45).

The law also helped Israeli businesses work with American companies, especially in technology and energy. It gave Israel easier access to advanced U.S. weapons and defense technology. AIPAC argued that this would benefit both countries by making their economies and militaries stronger (Williams 102).

Many members of Congress supported the bill, and it passed with a huge majority. The Jewish lobby played a key role by arranging meetings between U.S.

lawmakers and pro-Israel activists. They convinced politicians to vote for the bill by saying it was good for both Israel and the U.S.

However, some critics believed the law gave too many benefits to Israel without thinking about other U.S. foreign policy interests. They argued that such strong support for Israel could make it harder for the U.S. to stay neutral in Middle Eastern conflicts (Brown 77).

Even with some criticism, the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act remains a big example of how AIPAC influences U.S. policy. By supporting this law, AIPAC made sure that U.S. military and economic aid to Israel continued to grow, making Israel one of America's closest allies.

2.2.1.2. Iran Sanctions Act :

The Iran Sanctions Act was made to punish Iran for its nuclear program and its support for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. AIPAC has strongly supported this law and worked to make it even stricter over the years.

AIPAC argued that Iran was a big danger to Israel's security and that the U.S. should use economic pressure to weaken Iran's government. The organization pushed Congress to pass strict sanctions that made it harder for Iran to sell oil and use international banks (Johnson 78).

In 2017, the U.S. passed a new law called Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). This law made the economic pressure on Iran even stronger. AIPAC supported this new law and said harsher

sanctions were needed to stop Iran from getting more power in the region (Brown 110).

2.2.1.3 .Other Key Legislative Outcomes :

a. The Taylor Force Act (2018) :

The Taylor Force Act, passed in 2018, was a law aimed at cutting U.S. financial aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA). It was named after Taylor Force, an American citizen killed by a Palestinian citizen . The goal of the law was to stop the PA from providing financial assistance to the families of Palestinians who carried out attacks against Israel.

AIPAC strongly supported this law and lobbied members of Congress to pass it. The organization argued that U.S. taxpayer money should not be used to support individuals involved in violence against Israel. The law passed with strong two major parties support (Williams 130).

b. The Jerusalem Embassy Act (1995) and Its Implementation (2018) :

In 1995, the U.S. Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which said the U.S. embassy in Israel should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. But for more than 20 years, U.S. presidents did not make this change because they worried it could cause problems in the region.

In 2018, President Donald Trump officially moved the embassy to Jerusalem. AIPAC had supported this move for a long time and was very happy with Trump's decision. The group said that recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital was an important way to make U.S.-Israel relations even stronger (Davis 55).

2.2. 2 AIPAC's Influence During Key Conflicts, Including the Gaza War:

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has played a significant role in shaping U.S. responses during conflicts between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. By lobbying U.S. policymakers, it ensures strong support for Israel during these times.

2.2.2.1. AIPAC's Response During the 2014 Gaza Conflict :

In 2014, a serious war broke out between Israel and freedom fighters of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The fighting continued for 50 days and caused a high number of deaths and injuries, especially in Gaza. Reports said that over 2,000 Palestinians and more than 70 Israelis were killed. The war also destroyed many homes, hospitals, and schools. During this conflict, AIPAC increased its actions in Washington, D.C. It asked U.S. officials to support Israel and approve more military aid. AIPAC also organized letters signed by members of Congress to show strong support for Israel's military operations. The group helped to shape how the war was talked about in the media by giving talking points and updates that explained Israel's point of view. AIPAC's efforts during the 2014 conflict show how the group tries to build strong U.S. political and public support for Israel during major crises.

a . Lobbying for Military Aid :

AIPAC urged Congress to approve additional funding for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system, which protects against rocket attacks from Gaza. Through its lobbying efforts, the U.S. provided emergency financial support to strengthen Israel's defense capabilities. This funding was seen as essential in reducing civilian casualties by intercepting incoming rockets before they could reach populated areas.

b . Shaping Public Opinion :

AIPAC also played a key role in influencing public opinion during the conflict. The organization worked closely with media channels and launched public campaigns to emphasize Israel's right to self-defense. These efforts highlighted the security threats posed by Hamas and framed the conflict in a way that reinforced U.S. political and public support for Israel's actions.

2.2.2.2. Influence During the 2021 Gaza Conflict :

The 2021 Gaza conflict was a period of intense violence between Israel and Palestinian freedom fighters . Many people in Gaza were killed, and there was a lot of damage to buildings and homes. During this time, AIPAC became very active in trying to influence U.S. government actions. The group asked American lawmakers to support Israel's right to defend itself. It also pushed for continued U.S. military aid to Israel and spoke out against any statements that were critical of Israel. AIPAC shared its message through public statements, social media posts, and direct communication with members of Congress. The group wanted to make sure that U.S. leaders stood with Israel during the conflict and did not call for strong action to stop the attacks. This shows how AIPAC tries to shape U.S. responses during times of conflict in the Middle East.

2.2.3. Long Term Policy Changes Resulting from AIPAC's Influence :

a . Securing Political Support :

AIPAC lobbied U.S. lawmakers to publicly support Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas rocket attacks. As a result, many U.S. officials issued statements

backing Israel's military actions and reaffirming the U.S.-Israel alliance. These efforts helped ensure that Israel continued to receive strong political support from the U.S. government.

b. Advocating for Continued Military Assistance :

Following the conflict, the Zionist group pushed for the reconstruction of the Iron Dome missile defense system, which had been heavily used during the fighting. Through its lobbying efforts, the U.S. Congress approved significant funding to reload Iron Dome's interceptors, ensuring that Israel maintained its defense capabilities.

2.2.3.1. How AIPAC Has Shaped Broader U.S. Policy in the Middle East :

Over the years, AIPAC's influence has led to major policy decisions that align U.S. interests with Israel's security and strategic goals. Some key areas of impact include military aid, U.S. policy toward Iran, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

a. Consistent Military and Financial Support for Israel :

AIPAC has successfully lobbied for billions of dollars in U.S. military aid to Israel. The U.S. currently provides Israel with approximately \$3.8 billion annually in military assistance, ensuring its qualitative military edge in the region. This funding has strengthened Israel's defense systems, including Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow missile defense programs (Sharp 2).

b. U.S. Policy on Iran and Sanctions :

The organization has been a strong advocate for sanctions against Iran, arguing that Iran's nuclear ambitions pose a serious threat to Israel's security. The Iran Sanctions Act and later economic restrictions imposed under the Trump administration were heavily influenced by lobbying efforts from AIPAC and other pro-Israel groups (Malka 56). By shaping U.S. strategy toward Iran, the lobbying group has ensured that American foreign policy remains aligned with Israeli concerns about regional threats.

c . U.S. Position on Israeli-Palestinian Peace Efforts :

AIPAC has influenced U.S. positions on peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. While publicly supporting a two-state solution, it has also backed policies that favor Israeli settlement expansion and stricter conditions on Palestinian leadership. Under the Trump administration, it supported the implementation of the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which led to the U.S. formally recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and relocating its embassy there in 2018 (Ross 112).

2.3 .Analysis of Key Literature :

AIPAC's role in U.S. foreign policy has been widely examined in academic and policy studies. Many researchers highlight the success of its lobbying efforts, while others criticize the broader implications of lobbying in democratic systems. This section reviews key perspectives on AIPAC's power, focusing on its political contributions, legislative impact, and ethical concerns.

2.3.1.Critiques of Lobbying Practices in Democratic Systems :

Lobbying is a normal part of democratic governance, allowing interest groups to present their views to policymakers. However, critics argue that powerful lobbying organizations like AIPAC can create imbalances in political representation, giving more influence to special interest groups rather than the general public (Smith 45).

a. Influence on U.S. Elections and Policymaking :

AIPAC's strong connections with U.S. lawmakers have raised concerns about excessive influence on foreign policy. Scholars argue that large financial contributions to pro-Israel candidates create a political environment where support for Israel becomes a requirement for electoral success (Baker 78).

b. Impact on Policy Objectivity :

Some critics suggest that AIPAC's power leads to biased U.S. policies that do not always align with broader national interests. Studies indicate that unquestioned support for Israel can negatively affect U.S. relations with other Middle Eastern nations, particularly in matters like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Williams 101).

c. Ethical Concerns in Lobbying Practices :

Another major critique is the lack of transparency in lobbying activities. While AIPAC does not officially endorse political candidates, it has strong ties with Political Action Committees (PACs) that provide financial support to pro-Israel politicians. Some analysts argue that this creates loopholes in campaign finance regulations, allowing AIPAC to exercise greater influence without direct responsibility (Jones 89).

2.3.2. Figures of AIPAC's Political Contributions Over Time :

AIPAC's financial influence has grown significantly over the past decades.

The following trends illustrate its increasing role in U.S. elections and policymaking:

- **2010-2020:** AIPAC and its associated Political Action Committees (PACs) contributed over \$100 million to congressional campaigns, supporting candidates who align with pro-Israel policies (Center for Responsive Politics).
- **Presidential Elections:** In every major election cycle, AIPAC-affiliated donors provide large financial contributions to both Democratic and Republican candidates to ensure continued bipartisan support for Israel.
- **Legislative Influence:** AIPAC's lobbying efforts have helped secure the passage of key bills such as the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act (2014) and continued military aid packages to Israel.

2.3.3. Table of Summary of Legislative Outcomes :

Legislation	Year	AIPAC's Role	Policy Outcome
U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act	2014	Strong lobbying for passage	Strengthened U.S.-Israel defense and technology ties
Iran Sanctions Act	Multiple years	Advocacy for tougher sanctions	Increased economic restrictions on Iran
Military Aid Package	Ongoing	Lobbying for \$3.8 billion annually	Ensured Israel's military edge in the region

Conclusion :

AIPAC has become a very powerful group in American politics. It influences U.S. policies by lobbying, giving money to election campaigns, using the media, and building strong relationships with politicians. This chapter showed that the group does not only support Israel. It also helps shape U.S. laws, diplomacy, and decisions during conflicts.

The examples in this research show that its influence is long-lasting. It is not just a temporary group. It has been part of the U.S. political system for many years and has helped create important policies. It has been successful in getting military aid for Israel, pushing for sanctions against Iran, and controlling public discussions about the Middle East. During wars like the ones in Gaza, AIPAC's role was very clear. It influenced U.S. government statements, financial aid, and foreign policy decisions.

There is a big debate about foreign policy lobbying. Some people believe that groups like AIPAC have too much power and can affect decisions that should focus on America's national interests. Others think that lobbying is a normal part of democracy and that different groups have the right to push for their causes. This research shows that the Jewish lobby is more than just a lobbying group ; it is an important part of U.S. foreign policy. Understanding its role is very important when studying how the U.S. makes decisions about the Middle East.

Chapter Three:

3- The War on Gaza 2014 and 2021 as a Case Study .

Introduction :

In this chapter, I will study the war on Gaza and show the role played by the pro-Israel lobby during these conflicts. I will focus on two main events: the war in 2014 and the war in 2021. First, I will give some background about what happened in Gaza during those years. After that, I will explain what the Jewish lobby did to support Israel during the fighting. I will also show the reaction of the U.S. government and what steps it took during these hard times. In the last part, I will speak about the results of this support and how it affected U.S. decisions and the opinion of the American public. This chapter will give a better understanding of the lobby's actions during war and the kind of effect it can have in such serious situations.

3.1 .Overview of the 2014 and 2021 Gaza Conflicts :

The Gaza Strip is a small, crowded area along the Mediterranean Sea. More than 2 million Palestinians live there, many of them refugees from 1948. Daily life is very hard due to poor infrastructure and a strict blockade that started in **2007**. Gaza faces high poverty, lack of clean water, and weak healthcare systems (Johnson 214).

In **2014** and **2021**, two major wars broke out between **Hamas** and **Israel**. The fighting led to high numbers of deaths, mostly among civilians in Gaza. Airstrikes destroyed homes, roads, and hospitals. The United Nations and many human rights groups said the situation in Gaza was a humanitarian crisis (Ross 201).

The U.S. government showed strong support for Israel during both wars. Most American leaders defended Israel's right to defend itself. At the same time, AIPAC worked hard to protect Israel's image in the U.S. and helped shape political support during the conflict (Altman 59).

3.1.1. Key Events Leading to the 2014 and 2021 Wars

The wars in 2014 and 2021 were not sudden events. They came after years of tension, failed peace talks, and deep political problems. The blockade on Gaza, which started after Hamas took control in 2007, continued to make life harder for people. This barricade limited the flow of fuel, medical supplies, and building materials. Many international reports described Gaza as "unlivable" (Sharp 7).

There were also many smaller events that added pressure. For example, in 2021, the planned evictions of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem and clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque made tensions worse (Williams 154). Hamas responded by launching rockets, and Israel began air attacks. In both wars, thousands were injured or killed most of them from Gaza strip.

Years of distrust also played a big part. Peace efforts, like the Oslo Accords, failed to bring lasting results. Violence replaced dialogue. Each side blamed the other, and hope for a solution became weaker (Ross 189; Mearsheimer and Walt 115).

Finally, international actors such as the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar tried to calm the situation. But political pressure, media narratives, and lobbying made peace very hard to achieve. In the U.S., AIPAC worked to ensure strong political support for Israel and to counter voices critical of the war (McCarthy 54).

3.1.1.1 Historical Context of the Gaza Conflict :

The roots of the Gaza conflict go back to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. After this event, many Palestinians lost their homes. Around 700,000 refugees were forced to leave. Some of them moved to Gaza, which became crowded

and very poor. At first, Gaza was controlled by Egypt. But in the 1967 war, Israel took control of the area (Hook and Spanier 102).

In the 1990s, there was hope for peace. The Oslo Accords were signed in 1993 between Israel and the Palestinian leadership. These agreements said that Palestinians could govern themselves in some areas, like Gaza and the West Bank. But over time, trust was lost. Peace talks failed, and violence returned. As Ross explains, “the peace process fell apart as both sides lost confidence in each other’s promises” (Ross 189).

In 2005, Israel removed its soldiers and settlers from Gaza. Many people hoped this would lead to peace. But in 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian elections, and in 2007, it took full control of Gaza. This led to a strong siege by Israel and Egypt. The reason given was to stop weapons from entering Gaza. But the blockade also blocked food, medicine, fuel, and other basic goods. Life for the people became harder every day (Mearsheimer and Walt 115).

This history shows why the wars in 2014 and 2021 were not unexpected. They were the result of long years of occupation, failed talks, and anger on both sides. It also helps explain why outside groups like AIPAC became more involved in shaping how the United States reacted to these wars (McCarthy 53).

3.1.1.2 Major Players Involved and Their Interests :

The Gaza conflict involves several key players. Each one has different goals and reasons for taking part. Understanding these players helps explain why the conflict continues and why it is hard to solve.

a. Hamas :

Hamas is a Palestinian group that controls Gaza. It is both a political party and an armed movement. Hamas says it wants to defend Palestinians and end the occupation of their land. It does not accept Israel as a state. Many countries, including the U.S. and the EU, call Hamas a terrorist group. But Hamas says it is fighting for freedom and justice (Johnson 118).

b. Israel :

Israel was created in 1948, and it sees itself as a state that must protect its people. Israel says it has the right to defend itself from rocket attacks. When Hamas fires rockets, Israel responds with military force, including airstrikes and artillery. Some Israeli leaders believe strong action is needed to stop future attacks (Ross 173). However, critics say these responses are often too strong and cause many civilian deaths in Gaza.

c. The United States :

The U.S. is one of Israel's closest allies. It gives large amounts of financial and military aid to Israel and supports it in international forums like the United Nations. During the Gaza wars, most American leaders defended Israel's actions. The U.S. often said that Israel had the right to respond to Hamas rockets. But many Americans, especially younger people and rights groups, started to ask why the U.S. gives so much support to one side (McCarthy 55; Sharp 4).

d. AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) :

AIPAC is one of the most powerful lobbying groups in the U.S. It works to make sure that American leaders stay loyal to Israel. It meets with politicians, gives campaign donations, and publishes statements in the media. During the Gaza

conflicts, AIPAC quickly responded to support Israel. It pushed for military aid, praised pro-Israel lawmakers, and criticized anyone who questioned Israeli actions (Altman 560; Brown 121).

e. Other Countries and International Organizations :

Other players like Egypt, Qatar, the United Nations, and the European Union try to help. Egypt and Qatar often help with ceasefire talks. The UN sends aid and reports on the humanitarian situation. But these groups have limited power. Final decisions are often made by Israel, Hamas, and their main allies (Williams 160).

In short, the Gaza conflict is not just a local fight. It includes political, military, and economic interests from many sides. Each actor has its own view of justice and security. This makes peace very hard to reach.

3.1.2 Humanitarian Impact and Global Reactions :

In this part, I will explain how the wars affected people in Gaza and in what way the world reacted.

3.1.2.1 Public Opinion in the U.S. and Worldwide:

During the Gaza wars in 2014 and 2021, people around the world reacted strongly. In the United States, public opinion started to change. For many years, most Americans supported Israel. They believed Israel had the right to defend itself. This view was very common in the media and among older generations (Ross 175). However, during the 2021 war, many young Americans, students, and human rights groups began to speak out. They asked why the U.S. gives full support to Israel, even when many civilians are killed in Gaza (McCarthy 59).

Surveys showed that younger Americans were more likely to feel sympathy for Palestinians. A growing number of people began to question U.S. military aid to Israel. They also criticized U.S. politicians who did not speak about Palestinian suffering. These changes created tension between older pro-Israel voices and younger voices asking for balance (Brown 135).

Outside the U.S., support for the Palestinian people was much stronger. In many countries, especially in the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America, large protests took place. People marched in the streets to call for an end to the attacks on Gaza. Some governments, like those of Turkey and South Africa, condemned the violence and asked the international community to act (Johnson 221).

Social media played a big role in shaping opinions. Videos and photos of bombings in Gaza were shared online. This made more people see what was happening and express their support for Palestinians. Some U.S. lawmakers, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders, also spoke about the need to protect civilians and limit U.S. military aid (Altman 567).

This shift in public opinion shows that people are starting to ask harder questions about U.S. foreign policy. While most politicians still support Israel strongly, many citizens are beginning to see both sides of the conflict. This may lead to political changes in the future, especially as new generations become more active in politics.

3.1.2.2 . Response from International Organizations :

During Gaza wars, many international organizations reacted to the growing crisis. Most of them asked for a ceasefire and called for both sides to protect civilians.

The United Nations (UN), especially the Human Rights Council and the Secretary-General, warned that the violence in Gaza could break international law. They also said that some Israeli attacks on homes and schools might be seen as “unequal,” meaning the force used was too strong compared to the threat (Sharp 9).

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** reported that many hospitals in Gaza were damaged or had no electricity. Ambulances could not reach people, and doctors worked with very few supplies. WHO also said that treating the injured and stopping the spread of disease became almost impossible under these conditions (Johnson 224).

Groups like **UNICEF**, **UNRWA**, and the **International Red Cross** helped by sending food, water, and medicine. But they said that the blockade made it difficult to enter Gaza and deliver the aid. They also asked for the protection of aid workers, who were sometimes caught in the fighting (Brown 140).

Human rights groups such as **Amnesty International** and **Human Rights Watch** released reports saying that both Israel and Hamas may have committed war crimes. They said that Israel used heavy bombs in areas where civilians lived, and Hamas fired rockets into Israeli towns. These actions put innocent lives at risk and broke the rules of war (McCarthy 60).

Even though many international organizations spoke out, their power was limited. They could not stop the war. Decisions were mostly made by the strongest countries, like the U.S. and Israel. Lobbying groups in the U.S. also worked to defend Israel and push back against reports that criticized it (Altman 568).

This shows that while international organizations try to protect people and promote peace, they often cannot change the decisions made by powerful states. Their voices are important, but they are not always enough to stop the violence or protect human rights during war.

3.2 AIPAC's Role During the Conflict :

The wars in Gaza gave AIPAC a chance to increase its influence in U.S. politics. This section explains what the group did during the 2014 and 2021 wars, and how it helped shape American support for Israel during these times.

The group is known as one of the most powerful pro-Israel lobbying groups in the United States. During times of conflict, it becomes very active. In both wars, AIPAC quickly released public statements, held meetings with U.S. lawmakers, and encouraged Congress to defend Israel and approve military aid (Altman 560; Brown 122).

The organization described Israel as a country under attack and said that the U.S. must stand with its ally. AIPAC's messaging focused on Israel's right to defend itself, a phrase that appeared in many speeches by U.S. politicians during the wars (McCarthy 55). This language helped reduce public criticism of Israeli actions, even when civilian deaths in Gaza were high.

AIPAC also pushed for funding for Israel's defense systems, especially the Iron Dome, which protects Israeli cities from rocket attacks. In both 2014 and 2021, U.S. lawmakers voted to send more financial support for this system. AIPAC praised lawmakers who voted in favor and criticized those who asked questions about the high number of civilian deaths in Gaza (Sharp 11).

The group's influence was not just in the media. It also worked behind the scenes by organizing letters from members of Congress, holding private briefings, and using its political action committees (PACs) to support pro-Israel politicians during elections (Smith 94). These strategies helped make sure that the U.S. response during the wars remained strongly in favor of Israel.

In short, AIPAC's actions during the Gaza conflicts were fast, organized, and very effective. The group used its strong connections in Washington to defend Israel, push for aid, and block voices that criticized the war. The next section will look more closely at specific moments when these lobbying efforts had a clear impact on U.S. policy.

3.2.1 Immediate Response from AIPAC and Its Allies :

When the fighting in Gaza began in both 2014 and 2021, AIPAC responded very quickly. The group released strong statements saying that Israel was under attack and needed full U.S. support. In both cases, it asked American leaders to stand with Israel and to speak clearly in its defense (Altman 561).

One of AIPAC's main goals was to control the message early. It pushed the idea that Hamas was fully responsible for starting the conflict. It said that Israel had no choice but to protect its people. Many U.S. lawmakers used these same words in their speeches and media interviews. The lobby also gave these lawmakers materials, reports, and talking points to help them defend Israel in public (Brown 124).

At the same time, AIPAC's allied organizations, such as pro-Israel advocacy groups and think tanks, also became active. They wrote opinion articles, appeared on U.S. news shows, and used social media to share messages supporting Israel.

Together, they worked to build public and political pressure against any criticism of Israel's actions in America (McCarthy 56).

The group was very successful in getting quick support from Congress. Within a few days of the conflict starting, members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate released letters and passed decisions defending Israel's right to self-defense. These actions matched exactly what AIPAC was asking for (Smith 96).

This fast reaction is not surprising. AIPAC has long-term relationships with many U.S. politicians. It uses its political action committees (PACs) to help elect pro-Israel candidates and to pressure others who might oppose its views. During the Gaza wars, these connections helped the lobby move fast and speak with a powerful voice in Washington (Davis 88).

In short, AIPAC and its allies acted quickly and clearly to protect Israel's image and to shape how U.S. leaders responded to the war. The next section will explain how these efforts influenced real policy decisions.

3.2.1.1 AIPAC's Statements and Lobbying Efforts During the Conflict :

AIPAC made sure its voice was heard quickly and clearly. The group released official statements saying that Israel was facing terrorist attacks and needed American support to protect its people. These public messages repeated one strong idea: Israel has the right to defend itself (Altman 561).

These statements were not only for the public. AIPAC also worked directly with members of the U.S. Congress. It sent them letters, fact sheets, and ready-made

speeches. These materials helped lawmakers explain why they stood with Israel and why the U.S. should continue giving aid, especially military support (Brown 123).

One of its biggest goals during the wars was to defend Israel's use of force and stop criticism. When news showed civilians dying in Gaza, some lawmakers began to ask hard questions. AIPAC responded by organizing private meetings and lobbying sessions to remind politicians of the long U.S.-Israel friendship and to explain Israel's actions as necessary and defensive (McCarthy 54).

At the same time, it used social media and its website to repeat the message that Hamas was a terrorist group, and that Israel was targeting only military threats. These talking points were later used by many American officials during speeches and interviews (Davis 91).

The group also worked hard to protect U.S. aid for Israel. In 2021, when some members of Congress questioned the \$1 billion Iron Dome funding, AIPAC lobbied heavily to make sure the vote passed. It sent out alerts to its supporters, thanking those who voted yes and criticizing the few who voted no (Smith 97).

Its efforts during the wars show that it is more than just a group that supports Israel. It is an organized political force with tools, networks, and media power. Its quick lobbying actions helped shape how the U.S. responded, what Congress said, and what kind of aid was approved.

3.2.2 Lobbying Efforts to Shape U.S. Policy Decisions :

Lobbying during wartime is not just about public statements , it is also about actions that lead to real political decisions. During the 2014 and 2021 Gaza

wars, it worked hard to shape how the U.S. government responded. The group focused on Congress, where it had strong relationships with many lawmakers.

The Jewish Lobby pushed for military aid, especially for the defense system. In both wars, it asked Congress to approve emergency funding. In 2021, the group lobbied for a bill that gave \$1 billion to support Israel's defense. The bill passed with strong bipartisan support. AIPAC later praised the lawmakers who voted yes and criticized the few who voted no (Sharp 10).

Another lobbying method was the use of letters and resolutions. During both wars, members of Congress signed joint letters that showed full support for Israel's actions. These letters often used language provided by AIPAC, including phrases like "unbreakable alliance" and "self-defense against terrorism" (McCarthy 55). These statements helped give the impression that support for Israel was strong and united.

AIPAC also helped block efforts that could have pressured Israel to stop the war early. When some lawmakers tried to call for a ceasefire or asked for an investigation into civilian deaths, AIPAC responded quickly. It met with key leaders and reminded them of the risks of losing political support or being seen as anti-Israel (Davis 93).

Because of these efforts, the U.S. response during the Gaza wars was mostly one-sided. Israel received weapons, money, and political support. Very few voices in Congress spoke about Palestinian suffering. AIPAC's influence helped create this result by controlling the conversation and guiding political choices in the U.S (Altman 563).

This shows that lobbying during war can go far beyond words. It can shape votes, block change, and keep one side politically protected, even during a humanitarian crisis.

3.3 Analysis of the Outcomes :

it became clear that the actions of the pro-Israel lobby in the U.S. had real effects. Their efforts helped shape what American leaders said and did.

3.3.1 . U.S. Political Support for Israel :

Most U.S. officials avoided speaking about Palestinian victims. Their statements stayed close to the message promoted by lobbying groups that Israel was only defending itself from terrorism. This created a one-sided response, where Palestinian suffering was often ignored or explained away as part of Israel's security needs (McCarthy 57).

This section shows that lobbying influence worked well during the crisis. It helped keep U.S. support for Israel strong and reduced political space for any critical voices. As a result, U.S. foreign policy during the Gaza wars focused mainly on defending the Jewish State, while paying little attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

3.3.2 Long-Term Implications for U.S.-Middle East Relations :

The strong support that the United States gave to Israel during the 2014 and 2021 Gaza wars had long-term effects. Many people in the Arab world, and even in other parts of the globe, began to see the U.S. as unfair in this conflict. They believed that the U.S. always stood with Israel, even when civilians in Gaza were suffering or

being killed. This view hurt the image of the United States, especially in countries that support the rights of Palestinians (Johnson 227).

Inside the U.S., a slow change also started to happen. Young people, especially university students and human rights activists, began asking difficult questions. They asked why the government sends billions in aid to Israel but says very little about the destruction in Gaza. These voices were not very loud at first, but after each war, they grew stronger (McCarthy 58).

More members of Congress also started to show a different opinion. Some of them said that the U.S. should not give “blank check” to Israel. They wanted more focus on peace, justice, and human rights. This was a small shift, but it showed that political lobbying no longer controls the entire conversation as it did before (Brown 132).

Still, the influence of pro-Israel lobbying groups like AIPAC remains very strong. They continue to support candidates, write policy ideas, and shape the media message. So even though more people are asking for balance, the official U.S. policy has not changed much (Altman 565).

This section shows that lobbying does not only affect what laws are passed ; it also affects how the world sees the United States. The more the U.S. supports only one side, the harder it becomes to act as a fair and trusted partner in the Middle East. If this continues, it may hurt U.S. interests in the region in the long term .

3.4 Analysis of Key Literature :

3.4.1. Recent Studies and Articles on the Gaza Conflict :

Many researchers have studied the U.S. response to the Gaza wars and tried to understand what shaped its decisions. A common idea in these studies is that **lobbying groups**, especially those that support Israel, have a big influence on American foreign policy.

In their book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, **John Mearsheimer** and **Stephen Walt** argue that groups like **AIPAC** help push the U.S. to support Israel in almost every situation. They say this support continues even when it does not always match U.S. national interests in the Middle East. These scholars believe that lobbying groups can change how U.S. leaders act by applying strong political pressure (Mearsheimer and Walt 110).

Another important study comes from **Niamh McCarthy**, who wrote an article in 2015 titled “*Lobbying for Israel: The AIPAC and U.S. Foreign Policy.*” She explains how many **members of Congress** are influenced by campaign donations and political pressure. According to her, some lawmakers stay silent during conflicts like the Gaza wars because they fear losing support or facing criticism from pro-Israel groups (McCarthy 53).

Recent research and media reports also show that public opinion in the U.S. is slowly changing. Younger Americans are more likely to ask questions about Israel’s actions in Gaza and the large amount of U.S. aid it receives. However, despite this shift in public views, AIPAC and similar organizations still hold a powerful

position in Washington, D.C., especially when it comes to influencing foreign policy (Brown 129).

This literature shows that the U.S. response to the Gaza wars was not based only on government interests or facts from the ground. It was also shaped by organized lobbying efforts and political relationships that have been built over many years. These studies help us understand the deeper reasons behind U.S. foreign policy and why certain decisions were made during the 2014 and 2021 conflicts.

3.4.2 . Public Opinion Trends Regarding U.S. Support for Israel :

Surveys and opinions in the United States show that public views on the Gaza conflict are slowly changing. While many Americans still support Israel, younger generations and Democrats are beginning to question U.S. actions and policies in the region.

A **Pew Research Center** report from 2021 showed that only 43% of Americans under the age of 30 supported Israel more than the Palestinians during the 2021 Gaza war. This was a big difference compared to older adults, who continued to show strong support for Israel (Johnson 230).

In a 2022 Gallup census, 55% of Americans still said they sympathized more with Israel. But this number had dropped compared to earlier years. It shows a slow shift, especially among younger and more progressive groups (Brown 134).

The same study found that 38% of Democrats supported the Palestinian side; the highest number ever recorded for that group. This is important because the

Democratic Party is one of the two main political parties in the U.S., and this trend may influence future policy decisions (McCarthy 60).

These numbers suggest that public opinion is changing, even if slowly.

More Americans, especially the youth and those who follow human rights issues, are starting to speak out. They want U.S. leaders to listen to both sides of the conflict, not just Israel. However, strong lobbying efforts, like those led by AIPAC, still shape how Congress and the White House respond to these wars.

If the gap between public opinion and official policy grows wider, it may create pressure for change in the future.

3.4.3 Table: Summary of AIPAC's Influence on Congressional Actions :

The table below gives examples of how U.S. Congress reacted during the 2014 and 2021 Gaza wars. These actions were not random. Many of them happened after strong lobbying from AIPAC, which worked closely with lawmakers during both conflicts.

Year	Congressional Action	Effect
2014	Resolution supporting Israel's right to self-defense	Passed with large majorities in both House and Senate
2014	\$225 million approved for Iron Dome	Increased funding for Israel's missile defense system
2021	House voted to give \$1 billion to Iron Dome	420 members supported; only 9 voted against

Year	Congressional Action	Effect
2021	Statements blaming Hamas for violence	Over 80 Senators signed pro-Israel letters after AIPAC's lobbying

These actions show that Congress responded quickly and strongly in support of Israel during both wars. AIPAC's influence was clear ; it helped write talking points, pushed for emergency aid, and helped block efforts that criticized Israeli actions (Sharp 13; Altman 564).

The fact that so many lawmakers from both parties supported these actions also shows how successful lobbying efforts were in keeping the U.S. response focused only on Israel's side. Very few members of Congress spoke about Gaza's humanitarian crisis or called for a ceasefire. AIPAC's strong presence in Washington made sure that criticism of Israel stayed limited during both wars (McCarthy 61).

Conclusion :

After studying the 2014 and 2021 wars on Gaza, it is clear that U.S. support for Israel was not simply automatic or accidental. This support was shaped by many factors, and one of the most powerful influences came from political lobbying groups, especially AIPAC. This organization used many tools; such as private meetings with lawmakers, public campaigns, and election donations to keep U.S. leaders on Israel's side (Altman 566).

The case studies in this chapter show that this influence turned into real actions. These included military aid, new resolutions, and public statements in support of Israel. Even when many civilians were killed in Gaza and international groups

raised concerns, most members of Congress stayed silent or blamed Hamas. This silence shows the strength of lobbying pressure during times of war (McCarthy 61).

At the same time, U.S. public opinion is beginning to change. More young Americans, activists, and even some elected officials are starting to question this one-sided support. They ask why so much aid is sent to Israel while very little attention is given to the suffering of Palestinians. These new voices are still small, but they are growing louder with each new conflict (Brown 137).

This chapter shows that during war, lobbying groups can shape the actions of powerful countries like the United States. Their influence is not only about words ; it affects laws, spending, and international positions. This raises serious questions: Should foreign policy be guided by public interest, or by groups with money and political power? And how can the U.S. promote peace and fairness, while still supporting its allies?

These are not easy questions, but they are important for the future of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

General Conclusion :

This research has shown that the **American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)** has a strong and organized influence on **U.S. foreign policy**, especially in the Middle East. By looking at the **Gaza wars of 2014 and 2021**, it became clear that lobbying is not just a background activity. It plays an important role in shaping how political decisions are made. AIPAC is not a simple group that shares opinions. It is a powerful actor that uses political donations, media messages, and close relationships with members of Congress where it has the most control, helping to pass laws, push for military aid, and stop any political action that questions support for Israel. (Altman 556; McCarthy 53). This support remained strong even during times of heavy violence and high numbers of civilian deaths in Gaza.

During both wars, the U.S. gave full military and political support to Israel. This did not happen by chance. The research showed that the Jewish Lobby worked hard to push for military aid, official statements, and laws that defended Israel's actions. At the same time, there was very little attention given to the suffering of Palestinian civilians (Sharp 10–11; Smith 94). The findings suggest that one of the reasons for this is that some voices in U.S. policy ; such as human rights groups or independent experts are not as strong or connected as AIPAC. In American foreign policy, the groups that have money, access to lawmakers, and experience in lobbying often have the most power. This creates an imbalance, where only one side of a conflict is heard or supported (Mearsheimer and Walt 115; Davis 88).

Even with this strong influence, the research also found signs of slow change. Some recent surveys show that many **young Americans**, especially those in progressive political groups, are starting to think differently. More people are now

asking why the U.S. gives so much support to Israel without asking deeper questions.

Public opinion is beginning to shift, and more media coverage is showing the human cost of war in Gaza (Johnson 230; McCarthy 60; Brown 134). This means that the gap between what the government does and what the public feels is slowly growing. Although these new views have not yet led to big political changes, they show that AIPAC's power is not unlimited.

This study also showed that strong lobbying can cause problems. When one group controls how a country reacts to war by sending weapons, giving public statements, and guiding the news and when other voices are ignored, it makes democracy weaker. Foreign policy should reflect justice, fairness, and balance, not just the goals of one political group. The U.S.-Israel relationship is built on deep history, shared values, and long-term cooperation. But the research shows that lobbying has made this relationship even stronger in ways that leave no space for public debate or criticism. Supporting Israel has become expected, and criticizing its actions, even during war, has become politically risky.

The wars on Gaza made this clear. While thousands of civilians in Gaza lost their homes, were injured, or killed, most U.S. officials focused only on defending Israel's actions. AIPAC worked fast to make sure this response stayed the same. This creates a serious issue in U.S. policy. When foreign policy decisions support one side completely, while ignoring the suffering of the other, the country's values of fairness and human rights come into question. The study shows that it is important to rethink how these decisions are made and whose voices are included in them.

In the end, this thesis concludes that AIPAC's influence is deep, well-organized, and very effective in shaping U.S. foreign policy. However, it is not impossible to challenge. The rise of new opinions among the public, growing awareness of the situation in Gaza, and different voices in Congress all show that change is possible. The current foreign policy is not fixed forever. There is room for new discussions and better decisions based on justice, peace, and equal treatment of all sides in a conflict.

Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy :

The results of this research suggest that U.S. foreign policy must become more balanced, especially in times of war and humanitarian crisis. Policymakers should take care not to rely too much on one group or one narrative. More attention should be given to human rights, international law, and the voices of people affected by conflict. Foreign policy should reflect many sides of a problem, not only those with access to power. To keep its credibility and democratic values, the U.S. must include more diverse opinions, including those from Palestinian communities, independent experts, and peace organizations.

Recommendations for Future Research :

This study focused only on AIPAC and two wars in Gaza. But lobbying in foreign policy is a wide topic. Future research could look at other lobbying groups, such as **Arab-American, Christian Zionist, or oil-based lobbies**, to compare their influence. It would also be helpful to study how **new media and online activism** are changing the way the public sees U.S. foreign policy. Another idea is to compare how the U.S. reacts to other Middle East conflicts, like those in **Syria, Yemen, or Iran**,

where lobbying pressures are different. Also, studying the legal and ethical sides of lobbying can help make the process more fair and open. Finally, future research could explore how **new political leaders** in the U.S. might change old policy habits and bring more balance to foreign decisions.

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