



**Islamabad
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Supporting Dialogue for Peace & Development

The Israel Lobby

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“Great is the guilt of an unnecessary war,” warned John Adams, one of the founding fathers and subsequently, the second president of the United States (US).

But, long gone are the days when the American Revolution was correlated with a beacon of hope for the wretched nations all around the world. The US, once considered as a product of enlightenment and a driving force behind revolutions bringing down ferocious dictators, has now lost its credibility. There could be myriads of reasons that can be attributed to the US falling from grace in recent past, but, the rising influence of Israeli lobby on American foreign policy stays on top of the list.

Israel operates its influence in US through a diverse group of organizations and individuals all of which work to keep the US policies, specifically its Middle East policy, aligned with Israeli interests. Most prominent and influential among those working for Israeli interests in Washington is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee or commonly known by its acronym AIPAC.

AIPAC is a Zionist organization, which is undoubtedly the strongest Jewish lobby group in the United States and second to none in the world. Not to compare AIPAC with Evangelical Christian groups which are by far the most-staunch supporters of Israel in every single way. AIPAC holds its annual conferences in Washington DC hosting thousands including the US President, US establishment, Republican and Democrat Leaders, Presidential Candidates, Congressmen, Israeli politicians and military elites, and military officers from across the globe.

There is no lobbyist group other than AIPAC that gets such an extensive media coverage and sits at the heart of US Politics. It is very much evident that US politics runs on money pipelined into the system by individuals and co-operations which push forward their agenda. Similar is observed in AIPAC’s case which openly confesses paying Congressmen and those in charge to prioritize Israel in policy making and strengthening US-Israel relationship. AIPAC credits itself for being an influencer in \$30 Billion US aid to Israel in the last 10 years. Their sole focus has been on Israel and combatting Iran and its increasing influence in the Middle East. AIPAC’s website quotes, “AIPAC's efforts have enhanced U.S.-Israel defense cooperation by securing hundreds of millions of dollars each year for key U.S.-Israel defense programs, including the Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow missile defense systems.”

Many in US Congress hold dual citizenship of Israel, which jeopardizes the interests of the American people. There have recently been voices against AIPAC, like Ilhan Omar – a Democrat Representative from Minnesota who was deemed an anti-Semitic by her Congress mates as well as by the media for criticizing AIPAC role in undermining the interests of American people and for filthy nature of money in politics. This year’s AIPAC conference hosted Vice President of the United States, Prime Minister of Israel, Secretary of State, Senate Majority Leader, US Ambassador to the UN, Senate Democrat Leader, Speaker of the House of

Representatives, House Majority Leader, House Republican Leader, 20th Chief of General Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces and Leader of Far-Right Fascist Party, and Ambassadors.

In previous years, massive protests have been organized outside the White House and AIPAC conference center by thousands of activists including many Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Atheists which is counteracted by dozens from the Jewish Defense League (JDL) known to carrying out terrorist attack inside and outside the United States including hate towards Muslims and burning religious scriptures such as the Qur'an. The trickledown effect of AIPAC's lobbying can be felt in the United States as well as in Palestine and across the globe.

The claim that Israeli lobby affects US policy decisions can be corroborated by touching upon a few foreign policy decisions the US has executed vis-à-vis the Middle East.

First, Israeli consternation gathered pace in 2015 when former president of US Barack Obama tried to bury the hatchet with the Islamic Republic of Iran and signed a nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Seeds of discord between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Barack Obama were sown in the follow-up to the deal. However, a severe blow to the deal was delivered when in 2018 the newly elected pro-Israel president of the US, Donald Trump, succumbed to the pressure of Israeli lobby and, ultimately withdrew the US from the deal leaving the tremendous prospects of the agreement dead. In fact, Israel had already initiated in 2014 a propaganda campaign in the aftermath of Hassan Rouhani's whopping triumph in Iranian presidential elections of 2013. Israeli lobby wields so powerful influence in the US Congress that it maintained a two-pronged strategy targetting both houses of the Congress: the Senate and the House of Representatives. A pro-Israel pressure group the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) made 76 senators sign a letter calling for maximum sanctions on Iran. The House of Representatives, likewise, also then passed a house resolution with 420 votes demanding a confrontational behaviour towards Iran. Surprisingly, the resolution was backed by 378 co-sponsors. It speaks volumes for the indomitable role of Israeli lobby in the US foreign policy.

Second, it is Syria where the US has constantly found itself at a crossroads. Israel, since the early days of the Syria Civil War, has been propelling the US administration to wage a full-fledged war on Syria which, Israel believes, is a close ally of Iran. AIPAC and other pro-Israel groups, like the Christians United for Israel, instigated the US lawmakers to accuse Syrian President Bashar al-Assad of using chemical weapons against its civilians and, ultimately, using it as a pretext to attack Syria. President Obama, who had come to the corridors of power by promising that he would get American forces out of sanguinary quagmires in Afghanistan and Iraq, was extremely reluctant to go ahead, notably when its main allies, like Germany and the United Kingdom (UK) also had expressed their unwillingness. The horrible memories of Libya where the US-led intervention in 2011 had fallen short of expectations also acted as a stumbling block to American aims at pouncing on an already-exhausted Syria. However, the lobby prevailed on Trump to launch airstrikes in April 2018 on the pretext of chemical attack in

Douma, although subsequently there were multiple reports that suggested that Douma chemical attack was staged.

Third, Israeli lobby has immensely shaped the US policy towards Egypt as well. When former Egyptian president and an ally of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Morsi, was ousted in Abdel Fattah el-Sisi-led Coup d'état in 2013, President Obama tried to rein in Sisi from unleashing horror on pro-Morsi Egyptians. Then Israeli lobby swung into action and thwarted moves aimed at bringing Sisi to book for his heinous crimes and bloodbath. The US not only winked at it, but it also continued extending aid to Egypt which is the second major non-Nato receipt of US foreign aid after Israel. The Muslim Brotherhood was conceived as a grave threat to Israeli existence, so Israeli lobby played an instrumental role in installing a pro-Israel military dictator in Cairo.

Fourth, Israeli lobby has greatly molded the US foreign policy towards the Palestine crisis. Every single US president since 1967 had been vociferously opposing the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, like West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. US long believed that any unconditional support to Israel could bring American security in jeopardy as was also proven the 9/11 Commission Report, which clearly stated that the attackers were at odds with the US for its support for Israel. However, American volte-face on its commitments towards Palestine, like accepting East Jerusalem as Israeli capital; accepting Israeli occupation of Golan Heights, which were later renamed as Trump Heights; and lately, stating that 'America no longer considers settlements in the occupied West Bank as illegal' are clear signs that Israeli lobby is proving extremely detrimental to peace and prosperity in the region.

An American political scientist John J. Mearsheimer rightly noticed that if there had been no Israeli lobby in the US, Washington would have pursued totally different policies in the Middle East. It remains to be seen whether US will continue to follow the tortuous route guided by Israeli lobby or will pay a considerable heed to its former president Jimmy Carter who once boastfully claimed: 'Human rights is the soul of our foreign policy, because human rights is the very soul of our sense of nationhood.' The US, however, should always keep in mind its glorious Declaration of Independence which states 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' are guiding principles of American policies.

About Author:

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