

**American Foreign Policy within the
United Nations: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

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Abstarct :

The United Nations' crucial role in maintaining peace and stability since its creation seems to be no more than an idealistic value, which is far from being respected and worked with, especially when it comes to the United States and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The USA, through its foreign policy and financial contributions, manipulates and influences the decisions and outcomes of the United Nations' subsidiaries, namely the Security Council. The discourse analysis of the different samples of the Security Council's resolutions and draft resolution disclose the American attitude towards the Israeli Palestinian conflict and confirm the American manipulation of the UN.

Key words : Security Council, funding, General Assembly, United States, United Nations

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1. Introduction

The mirror that reflects the American identity is the American foreign policy, through which the United States protects its interests and those of its allies. In this case, the stage floor to perform the American foreign policy is the international organization, in other words the United Nations in which the United States influence the United Nations' decisions and acts in different cases depending on which move best serve their political, economic and military interests (Ruggie, 1985, p350). In fact, the influence of the United States goes back to the early creation of the United Nations. This is explained in part by the big American financial contributions to the United Nations. Threats to withhold these contributions in case of 'non-conformity' with the US decision can lead the United Nations or its agencies to unprecedented consequences. (Shendruk et al., 2020)

The aim of this paper is to identify the American foreign policy and its influence on the United Nations, on the light of their special relationship. This influence is studied via the discourse analysis of a selection of issues concerning the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which the positions of the United Nations and the United States toward both Israel and Palestine will be clarified.

2. American Foreign Policy

From the early times of the American Revolution, and even earlier, the seeds and principles of the American foreign policy were pointed out within the Declaration of Independence (Pestritto & West, 2006, p266). Then, established effectively in and after the Great Wars, throughout the American contributions in the creation of the United Nations as an international 'theatre' of different countries' foreign policies. Simultaneously, the emerge of International Relations as a new discipline within political sciences has helped interpret and analyse the countries' foreign policy in relation to the international political spectrum. (Reus-Smit & Snidal, 2010, p03)

Accordingly, and through times, the United States developed a special foreign policy which stands on two major principles: Isolationism and

Interventionism (Johnstone, 2011). First, Isolationism is the traditional policy introduced by the fifth American President James Monroe (1758-1831) in his speech in December 02nd, 1823, where he introduced and started to apply his concept of “the Americas for the Americans”. His declaration unfolds layers of policies that shaped American behaviour and explicitly insinuate a total rejection of external interference in American affairs and vice versa (Schulzinger, 2002, p3-4).

The second principle implies an opposition of the previous one, interventionism is therefore a paradigm that makes the American foreign policy an executive responsibility. This policy can be read in the example of the bipartisan efforts of the United States president Harry S. Truman and the congress in the Marshall Plan¹ where they decided to provide foreign aids to other European countries amid the Great War, thus, deepening the existing conflict between the world’s polarities i.e. USA and USSR (Riggenbach, 2009, p118), and expressing one form of American potential involvement and intervention in foreign affairs. Truman ended the Second World War through his foreign interventions and gave the international community a hint on the American financial, military, technological and economic supremacy foreshadowing an eventual American hegemony.

Each president implicitly or explicitly, shapes the American foreign policy depending on his political affiliation; religion and ideology (McCormick, 2012, p12). Nowadays, the American foreign policy is considered among the most effective policies when many political analysts and historians qualify it according to the theory of the world’s policeman in which the United States is represented as the police officer of the world, who is maintaining law and order, helping and rewarding

¹ The Marshall Plan, officially called the European Recovery Program, it was a plan of the United States of America to rebuild the Allies countries after the Second World War, it was named after the American secretary of state George Marshall, the plan started in 1948, with a cost of \$ 13 billion of economic and technical help.

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some countries on the one hand and penalizing and punishing other countries, on the other hand.

2.1 The United States-United Nations Special Relationship

The performance of the American foreign policy through the United Nations has been the subject matter of several scholars who investigate and hypothesises the potential subjugation of the United Nations by the United States, for instance, in discussing a sample of a significant performance of the American foreign policy within the United Nations, Noam Chomsky in his conference in MIT says: “US power was so overwhelming that many issues were off the table. For example, Vietnam was never brought up [...], if it had, it would have meant the end of the UN” (Chomsky cited in Mukherji, n.d.).

Within this statement, Chomsky criticizes the American hegemony, and its negative influence on the proper functions of the United Nations, while highlighting the potential collapse of the latter in case the American attitude and behavior were not respected. Chomsky further declared that: “The principle is clear: the UN and World Court are wonderful as long as they follow orders” (Chomsky cited in Mukherji, n.d.). This conditional harmony implies American hegemony over the United Nations’ branches and disclose an implicit manipulation that can be distinguished as a special relationship.

In the same token, in the press conference of Heinz Foundation, the ex-Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to the special relation between the United Nations and the United States in 2003: “The United Nations is an association of sovereign states, one which is the United States. In that association, for a number of reasons, the United States holds a unique position.” (Kofi, 2003). This ‘unique position’ as declared by Kofi Annan is an official implicit recognition of the special relation between the United States and the United Nations. To argue for the US special position, Annan illustrates that through a flashback to the creation of the United Nations and the crucial decisive role which is assumed by the American president F.D Roosevelt who sets the first stones of this organization, as he says “*It is no surprise that we owe the very existence of the United Nations to a great American President Franklin D. Roosevelt.*” (Kofi, 2003).

These official declarations on the one hand unveil the growing value of the United States and its emergence as a leading power in the world, in addition to its special status as a privileged powerful country within the United Nations. On the other hand, the declarations bind the United Nations to the United States and more precisely to the interests of the United States.

In order to investigate the special relation between the United States and the United Nations, financial funding as an instrument of control among many others were the subject matter of several studies that highlights the different rates of each country's contribution to the United Nations and its specific subsidiaries. Luisa Blanchfield, Specialist in International Relations illustrates in her annual reports to congressional committees and Members of Congress these different contributions and the growth as well as the reduction of the different budgets (Blanchfield, 2020). Marjorie Ann Browne illustrates in her book the congressional discussions and outcomes of the funding of voluntary and special programs (Browne, 2010).

Accordingly, as far as the Israeli Palestinian conflict is concerned the United States uses funding as a tool of control over the Palestine Liberation Organization². It withholds from the United Nations regular budget the share of the Palestine Liberation Organization which is designed for humanitarian and non-humanitarian activities and programs related to help the Palestinians people and attempt to ensure their basic needs (Browne & Blanchfield, 2013, p11-12). The American blocks of funds are not contested by the United Nations, in the contrary they are implicitly accepted and approved as long as the cuts are applied on one program – the funding of the Palestinians- rather than the entire funding of the United Nations and its actions.

Besides the funding of the United States of the United Nations which is considered as an apparent and quantified means of influence that can be proven via numbers and statistics in the several studies aforementioned,

² The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is a Palestinian organization that works to create an independent state for the Palestinians. The organization was created in 1964.

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the United States uses other indirect and less detected methods to influence the United Nations decisions, for instance both entities' silence and pacificism towards breaches of the United Nations approved Resolutions is considered as a significant complicity between the two and an anomaly in the proper functioning of the United Nations as a supposed neutral Organisation. Numerous examples of the different breaches of United Nations Resolution on the Israeli Palestinian conflict confirm the previous claim, for instance, some resolutions are more known and debated in media than others, Resolution 242 is a case in point.

United Nations Resolution 242 adopted by the Security Council in November 22, 1967 on establishing a cornerstone for a just and lasting peace between the different parts of the Arab - Israeli conflict emphasizes on the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories as follows:

Affirms that the fulfilment of charter principals requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle east which should include the application of both the following principles

- (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict
- (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

(S/RES/242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 1967)

Within this article, a direct obligation for Israel to withdraw from the occupied lands, and respect the integrity of each neighbouring country and its territories in order to maintain peace and stability in the region is required and mandated by the United Nations. However, the words of this article do not specify exactly the limits of this withdrawal and

how much land Israel should give up (Bard, n.d.), a forgotten detail that may be seen as a loophole in the article. Yet, and since the article do not state and require a complet Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, and do not specify how much land should be given back. The Israeli government disregard the articles of the resolution and ignore its recommendations despite its ratification and approval.

Accordingly, the refusal and disobedience of Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and respect the article are considered as a breach to the resolution and a violation to the international charter and laws. Interestingly, this infraction was neither condemned nor sanctioned by the Security Council, on the contrary, Israel benefited and still benefit from the American financial and military support and protection as can be read in the different presidential discourses through several administrations.

The United States ‘unfair behaviour’ and ‘illegal practices’, which are against the United Nations’ principles stated in the ratified Chart, in addition to the financial withdrawal of contributions to the different organizations that acknowledge the Palestine Liberation Organization or support it are interpreted as a substantial influence and direct manipulation performed by the American foreign policy in the United Nations, the all reveals the United States supportive attitude to Israel despite its rebellious and revolutionary spirit that contends UN Resolution as well as Palestinian’s basic human rights.

For instance, the United Nations complicity is clear not only in its silence when the Israeli breaches resolutions or when they breach the United Nations Charter as an international law, but also in the total absence of actions and unwillingness to restore the authority of the world organization to sanction such behaviour or at least condemn it. The recurrence of these events since the creation of Israel formed a specific pattern that follow and identified algorithm, this pattern stand on the American absolute protection of the Israeli on the one hand, on the other hand, the silence of the united nations after the Israeli preachments of UN draft resolutions and resolutions. This unconditional protection that fuel the pattern can be described as a

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privileged or a special relationship between both the United States and Israel and The United States and the United Nations.

This Special Relationship was the subject matter of several scholars alike Chomsky who tackled it in a lecture delivered in 2001 at MIT in which he said: “There are plenty of valid criticism against the United Nations, but the major issue is that the United Nations can only function in so far as the great powers permit it to” (Chomsky cited in Mukherji, n.d.).

As explained by Chomsky, this organization relies on some ‘great powers’ to function properly, however, those powerful countries are the ones that draw the United Nations editorial line in the world and direct its functioning. As a result, the powerful countries influence and manipulate the United Nations decisions for several variable raisons. For instance, according to the scale of assessments of the General Assembly’s members’ financial contributions, the United States is classified as the first contributor country with a rate of contribution of more than 22% of the United Nations general contributions and by far the larger contributor comparing to the other powerful countries or in other words, the Security Council permanent members. For this reason, the United States is considered as the most powerful and influential country that influences and controls the decisions and attitudes of the United Nations.

3. The United States and United Nations Recognition of Israel

A historicity of the origins and nature of the relation between both the United States and Israel as well as the United Nations and its fast recognition of the emerging unfolds layers of complex relations and lobbying to ensure a prestigious special position fir the latter, for instance in 1945, the American president Franklin D Roosevelt assured the Arabs that the United States would not intervene in the Arab-Jewish conflict without consulting the Jews and the Arabs. Meanwhile, the British were holding a mandate to administer the territory of Palestine taken from the defeated Ottoman Empire in the Post First World War

Era. This mandate³ was formalized by the League of Nations in 1923 (Grief, 2008, p196). In October 1946 the American President Harry. S. Truman (1945–1953) declared publicly his support for the creation of a Jewish State, after receiving the recommendations of a special committee that he ordered to create in order to study the case of Palestinian territory. In 1947, the United States was part of the United Nations' special commission on Palestine, where they examined and recommended the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab States (Grief, 2008, p156).

From the early times, and even before the end of the British mandate, the United States presidents supported the idea of creating a new homeland for the Jewish people. In fact, the idea was rejected by the British in order to maintain their interests in Palestine and benefit from the strategic location since it is considered as a gate to Asia, and a point of transition from Britain to Asia and also to have a close control of the Arab oil. The United States support to the new Jewish land is based on more than few explicit interests, for instance stopping the Soviet Communist spread in the area, and control the potential restriction of the Arab oil were among the United States priorities in the area. The United States quest to spread capitalism through the new window on the Asian continent falls with the heightened cold war between the world polarities and lead to a break of the communist spread in the Middle East through the establishment of Israel as an eternal Middle Easter ally to the West.

Both of the United States and the United Nations -or the League of Nations formally- supported the creation of an Israeli state in the

³ A mandate is a binding obligation issued from an inter-governmental organization to a country which is bound to follow the instructions of the organization or another country.

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Balfour Declaration⁴ of 1917 (Adelman, 2008, p182); in which the British government promised the land of Palestine to the Jewish people living in England and in Europe in general. The land was the subject matter of many draft resolutions, such as the Draft Resolution confirmed by the council of the League of Nations on July 22nd, 1922 (Kaufman & Macpherson, 2005, p136). The Palestinian territory was under the British mandate, it was offered as a reward for the Jews who survived the Nazi Holocaust in Europe (Karsh, 2003), and who supported and provided help to the allies during the Second World War. This Jewish contribution to end up the war was the key to the acceptance and recognition of the newly emerged Israel by many western namely European countries.

In November 29th 1947, a special session of the United Nations General Assembly was organized at the request of the British Mandatory Power to constitute a special committee in order to prepare the Partition Plan since the Jewish people started to buy houses and territories in Palestine. Unsurprisingly, the Arabs reacted against such an event which led to the creation of local conflicts with the British mandatory. A request to the Security Council was submitted in order to take the necessary measures due to the critical situation in the territory during the transitional period where the British were leaving Palestine for the new settlers, the situation required the interference of the Trusteeship Council who was requested to maintain peace and stability and save civilians from the atrocities of the conflict (A/RES/181(II) of 29 November 1947, 1947).

⁴ The Balfour Declaration of 1917 was a policy by the British government to discuss the partition of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The declaration also confirmed that Britain supported plans for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Eventually, the United Nation Resolution 181 (II) gave a deadline to the mandatory power in order to quit the occupied territory in August 1st, 1948 in order to approve the partition plan which involves the creation of two separate independent states: The Jewish and the Arab state. Interestingly, the city of Jerusalem was left under the United Nations control in order to preserve the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith and interests (Hammond, 2010) in an attempt to neutralise the its governing authority and avoid further conflicts.

This resolution paved the way for the creation of a Jewish independent state that already received major powers support and recognition (Quigley, 2010, p91-92). A support that was provided on the bases of historical, economic and social factors. The Jews were supported by some countries more than others, this support contributed in the rise of a local conflict between two states that were claiming the same land, then developed to a bitter large scale conflict where the Arabs supported the state of Palestine against the West who supported the newly emerged Israel, particularly, the United States and some European countries which are considered as the “great powers” and who influence and eventually to some extent control the United Nations that admittedly recognized the creation of the latter.

Thus, the United Nations contributed in the proper establishment of the latter through providing the required technical and logistic help besides the financial and military support, as explained by Benjamin Miller: “Israel especially was compensated for its major territorial concessions by generous financial and security assistance. Thus, the United States assisted Israel to build new airfields in the Negeva” (Miller, 2007, p243). Professor Miller of the School of Political Sciences at the University of Haifa, points out the nature of the support and its use by illustrating how the United States assisted Israel to build a new airport after the lose of the old one in the desert of Sinai. Such an example pinpoints the unlimited support provided by the great powers namely the United States to Israel.

3.1 The United States and United Nations Recognition of Palestine

Days before the partition plan elaborated in the United Nations Resolution 181 (II) was adopted, the United Nations General assembly held a session where the United Nations 3236 Resolution was ratified in November 22, 1947 (Hillier, 1998, p128-129), the ratified resolution stipulates the Palestinian people's right of self-determination and decision without any external interference as can be read in this resolution excerpt:

Reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including:

- (a) The right to self-determination without external interference;
- (b) The right to national independence and sovereignty (Moore, 2014, p148).

Self-determination without external interference and the right to a complete independence were clearly stated within the resolution. Furthermore, the General Assembly's awareness of the conflict's danger and particularity motivated it to add the question of Palestine to the United Nations agenda and classified it in the zone of international conflict which needs special care (Soar, 1997). Interestingly, the United Nations recognised the Palestine Liberation Organization as a representative organization of the Palestinian people, thus PLO gained the status of an observer entity which generally has a limited ability to participate and to speak at United Nations General Assembly meetings but cannot vote or suggest resolutions (Shukman, 2012).

Unlike the creation of Israel that was announced in 1948 with a direct recognition of the United States, the state of Palestine was officially declared decades later in a foreign country -Algeria- rather than in Palestine in November 15, 1988. This setting of the creation are the

outcomes of the restrictions applied by Israel in Palestine and for other political reasons. The official establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization was in Algeria, the same location where the independence of the Palestinian people was proclaimed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (Tessler, 1994, 772). Not surprisingly, immediately after the declaration of the establishment of the state of Palestine, many countries from Africa such as Tunisia, Egypt and from Asia like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Emirates recognized the state of Palestine, in addition to many intergovernmental organizations like the Arab League and the Organization of Islam Conference that acknowledged also the state of Palestine (Charter of Arab League, 1945).

Then again, and through time, the Palestine Liberation Organization made many attempts to acquire a permanent membership in many world organizations and organs or agencies related to the United Nations in order to claim their full rights and have a better life conditions in all fields from economy to health care to education. However, and as expected, the attempts failed due the American interference by threatening to withhold funding from any organization or agency that recognizes the state of Palestine or any Palestinian organization or association (Quigley, 1990, p231) in an attempt to preserve Israel and maintain the Palestinians in an unofficial status. Eventually, these threats to stop the big contributions of the United States to these organizations and agencies pushed them not to recognize or admit the state of Palestine nor develop working links with this entity according to the dictates of the United States.

4. Results and discussion

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The United States foreign policy is applied in two distinguished forms whenever the Israeli Palestinian conflict is the case in point: direct and indirect. First, the direct way appears in threatening to stop funding or to veto resolutions, in the example of the resolution that was withheld in November 1989 where the Arab League submitted a proposal to the United Nations General Assembly in order to formally recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the legitimate government that represents the Palestinians. The United States responded through threats to stop and cut off its funding for the United Nations in general (Quigley, 2005). Second, the indirect way appears in influencing and discouraging other allied countries and international organizations to help the Palestinians, such as the rejected attempt of the Palestine Liberation Organization to join the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization in May 23rd, 1989 (Sabasteanski, 2005, p47-48) during its session in Paris. (Request for the Admission of Palestine into UNESCO - UNESCO Gen. Conf. 25th Session - Resolution - Question of Palestine, n.d.)

Despite these obstacles, the Palestine Liberation Organization struggles to establish its presence and prove its sovereignty. First, through the Oslo Accords⁵ in September 1993 and 1995 where it was agreed to establish the Palestinian National Authority as a self-governing Palestine, then in November 11th, 2012 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted resolution 67/19 to change the statute of the Palestinians from an entity to a non-member observer state (General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine ‘Non-Member

⁵ The Oslo Accords are a set of agreements between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): The Oslo I Accord signed in Washington, D.C., in 1993 and the Oslo II Accord, signed in Taba in 1995. The Oslo Accords marked the start of the Oslo process, a peace process that is aimed at achieving a peace-treaty based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and 338, and to fulfill the “right of the Palestinian people to self-determination”.

Observer State' Status in United Nations | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2012).

Whereas the strong American refusal and blocks through its foreign policy in direct or indirect ways to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian state. The Palestine Liberation Organization keep endeavouring in order to gain a permanent seat in the United Nations and get all the political, social and economic rights without any interference of foreign countries in the internal affairs of Palestine the country, in other words, its status as a sovereign state. The recognition of the state of Palestine is an issue that was and is still introducing political and diplomatic activities in different countries in an attempt to recognize the state of Palestine symbolically but not officially by their respective parliaments and/or governments and political leaders.

Many European countries' parliaments for instance, recognized the state of Palestine symbolically in a wave of sympathetic support to the Palestinians who still suffer from the scourge of war. Yet, these behaviours and decisions are not welcomed by the American and Israeli administrations since it is a step toward full international recognition. The American president Barak Obama⁶ implicitly refuses in his speech with the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas⁷ the full recognition and suggests an alternative solution that consist on the peace talks and negotiations between Israel and Palestine (General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State'

⁶ Barack Hussein Obama born August 4, 1961, is the 44th and current President of the United States and the first African-American to hold the office. He is a Democrat. Obama won the 2008 United States presidential election, on November 4, 2008. He was inaugurated on January 20, 2009.

⁷ Mahmoud Abbas, born March 26, 1935 also known by the Kunya Abu Mazen, was elected President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) on January 9, 2005. He took office on January 15, 2005.

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Status in United Nations | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2012)
In other words, the full recognition and the proper conceptions of these talks are considered far-reaching due to the conflictual relation between Israel that assumes the colonisers role and Palestine which is colonised and subjugated.

5. Conclusion

The strong presence of the United States in the United Nations is performed in a direct way by financing the organization and its agencies, and in an indirect way through the influence and discouragement of some influential leading countries or even through threats to other resilient ones.

The United States and the United Nations attitudes and policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been the subject matter of many United Nations draft resolutions and resolutions. These policies are subjective and, in an inconformity with the United Nations Charter, on the one hand, the 67/19 resolution and the 181 resolution for instance, stipulate actions and decisions in favour of Israel and its recognition. Both the United States and the United Nations contributed in the foundation and functioning of Israel through financial and military aids. On the other hand, the Palestinian people have been struggling for a long journey toward recognition, from the struggle to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization to the non-member state statutes and then toward having a permanent seat in the United Nations as a sovereign country. The American blocks and effective influential foreign policy are not in terms of threats and funds only, but also through the use of the Veto right in the Security Council when needed to serve the United States interests and those of its allies.

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