

**ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND UNITED STATES GEO-STRATEGIC INTERESTS
IN THE MIDDLE EAST. (2020-2025)**

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JULY, 2026

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BY

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**A PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD
OF DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc) IN INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS.**

SUPERVISOR:

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JULY, 2026

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled “*Arab–Israeli Conflict and U.S. geo-Strategic Interests in the Middle East 2020–2025*” submitted by me to Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu State, is an original piece of academic work carried out by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Science degree in International Relations (B.Sc). I further declare that this work has not been submitted elsewhere, either wholly or in part, for the award of any degree or qualification in any institution, under the guidance and supervision of Rev. Sr. Dr. Lucy Umeh.

Nnamdi Precious Amarachi

Date

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APPROVAL PAGE

I hereby certify that this research work "Arab-Israel conflict and U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East, 2020-2025" is an original project report carried out and written by Nnamdi Precious Amarachi with the registration number GOU/U22/IRE/575, which has been examined and approved as a meeting of requirements for the award of bachelor of sciences (B.Sc) degree in International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Godfrey Okoye University.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Almighty God for His goodness, love, mercy and faithfulness throughout my academic journey. He has been my source of strength, wisdom, knowledge and understanding and through His grace; I was able to successfully complete this four-year journey. With a humble heart filled with gratitude, I say all glory and honor be unto Him.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Arab–Israeli conflict and U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East between 2020 and 2025. The study was motivated by the persistent nature of the conflict and the increasing role of the United States in shaping political, military, and diplomatic developments within the region. The objectives of the study were to examine how U.S. geo-strategic interests influenced its policies and actions in the Arab–Israeli conflict and to analyze how U.S. support for Israel affected the dynamics of the conflict between 2020 and 2025. The study adopted the realist theory propounded by Hans Morgenthau in 1948 and later developed by Kenneth Waltz in 1979. An ex-post facto research design was employed, while data were collected through secondary sources. Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Findings from the study revealed that U.S. geo-strategic interests significantly shaped its involvement in the Arab–Israeli conflict through diplomatic initiatives such as the Abraham Accords, military cooperation, and regional alliance-building aimed at preserving American influence in the Middle East. The study further found that continuous U.S. support for Israel influence the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It therefore recommends that the United States adopt a more balanced diplomatic approach capable of addressing the root causes of the conflict while promoting sustainable peace and regional stability.

Keywords: Arab–Israeli conflict, U.S. geo-strategic interests, Middle East, Israel, Palestine, realism, regional security, U.S. foreign policy.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been considered by scholars of international relations as one of the longest, complex and most contentious conflicts of the modern era (Roberts, 2014). Its roots go back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time marked by the weakening of imperial powers, the emergence of nationalist movements, and growing intervention of external actors in the Middle East (Lesch, 2018). In its essence, the conflict was a result of nationalist claims to the same territory, historic Palestine by Arab nationalism and Jewish nationalism, or Zionism (Bickerton&Klausner, 1991). While the Arab nationalism was aimed at gaining political sovereignty and self-rule after centuries of Zionism, Ottoman domination was geared towards the creation of a safe home to the Jewish nation reaction to centuries of persecution, especially in Europe (Lesch, 2018).

The progressive weakening of the Ottoman Empire left a political vacuum which enhanced nationalism ambitions in the region (Bickerton&Klausner, 1991). Arab nationalism was formed in a wilder anti-imperialist movement focusing on independence, cultural revival, and opposition to European domination (EBSCO, n.d.). At the same time, Zionism began to gain momentum with European Jews and in Eastern Europe there were pogroms, discrimination, and insecurity which led increased demands to establish a Jewish state (Lesch, 2018). The point of convergence of these conflicting desires was Palestine, with its historical, religious, and symbolic value (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). The possibility of two nationalist movements

existing in the same geographical area provided the structural basis of future conflict (Bickerton&Klausner, 1991).

Another pivotal moment was in World War I with the Balfour Declaration which was given in the year 1917 wherein Britain indicated that they were interested in creating a “national home to the Jewish people” in Palestine (Balfour Declaration, 1917; Schneer, 2010). Though the declaration contained a promise that the rights of the non-Jewish communities existing at the time would not be prejudiced, its ambiguity instilled a lot of mistrust amongst the Palestinian Arabs. The interwar period saw the further immigration of Jews into trends and amplified the Arab worries of displacement. The statement reflected the increased influence of foreign powers in shaping the political destiny of Palestine and it is still a key point of contention of the legitimacy and sources of war. The Ottoman Empire failed, and in 1920, Britain was awarded the Mandate on Palestine by the League of Nations: The term of mandate was very destabilizing, with the Britain being the ones in question, officials tried to make incompatible promises relying on Zionist desires and guarantees to Arab leaders both in terms of political growth and on indigenous rights safety. These policies and contradictions were sources of chronic instability, which was reflected in an endless series of violence, strikes, and rebellions, the most remarkable of them, the Arab Revolt in 1936-1939.

British attempts to control unrest by limiting immigration, land laws and partition proposals were not acceptable to both groups and this decreased trust in the colonial rule (Bickerton&Klausner, 1991). By the culmination of World War II, the ability Britain to govern Palestine had greatly been diminished (Cleveland &Bunton, 2016). With the Holocaust, the world developed greater sympathy towards Jewish survivors and gave greater support to the Jewish people to have a Jewish state whereas the Palestinian Arabs grew stronger against any

further immigration or political marginalization (Lesch, 2018; United Nations, 1947). Failing to reach a consensus over conflicting demands, Britain took the case to the United Nations that suggested partitioning of Palestine into independent Jewish and Arab states in 1947 (United Nations, 1947). Although the Jewish leaders welcomed the plan as a means to statehood, Arab leaders rejected the plan, they turned it down on the ground that it was a violation of the self-determination of the majority in the Arab world (Cleveland & Bunton, 2016). The departure of Britain in 1948 left the society polarized and in the brink of war (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). In May 1948, when the state of Israel was declared, it was a turning point in the history of the Middle East and triggered the first Arab-Israeli war.

The very next minute, other Arab countries had to intervene on the ground and the first Arab-Israel war took place in 1948 (Lesch, 2018; Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). Israel appeared victorious and their territorial boundaries laid out in the UN partition plan (United Nations, 1947; Cleveland & Bunton, 2016). To the Palestinians, the war brought about the deportation of over 700,000 inhabitants, what is remembered as the Nakba (disaster) (Pappe', 2006; Khalidi, 2020). The Palestinian refugee crisis turned into an inseparable part of the conflict entrenching unresolved grievances, which still permeate the regional politics (UNRWA, n.d.; Cleveland & Bunton, 2016). The decades that followed, the Arab-Israeli conflict was a territorial issue was transformed in the decades into an issue of International politics, especially within the context of the Cold war (Westad, 2005). The strategic positioning of the Middle East between Europe, Asia and the African continent, coupled with the importance of the Middle East economically, drew the attention of world powers (Halliday, 2005). The United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) had a perspective of regional conflicts as part of ideological confrontation, wherein they allied against each other to extend their influence (Westad, 2005). As the Soviet Union continued

to support Arab nationalist governments like Egypt and Syria, the United States continued to give side to Israel, which they saw a stable, pro-western, ally in a region otherwise unstable (Lesch, 2018; Quandt, 2005).

The United States Israeli relations were greatly enhanced with the decisive victory of Israel during the Six-day War in 1967 (Quandt, 2005; Cleveland & Bunton, 2016). The occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula by Israel altered the geographical and political composition of the conflict (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). The Occupation fueled arguments concerning international law, self-determination and human rights, and further strengthening Palestinian resistance movement (Khalidi, 2020). To the United States, the military success of Israel solidified its strategic importance as a regional ally that could check Soviet influence, despite the strain this placed on U.S. relations with Arab states (Quandt, 2005).

In addition to the ideological reasons, the identification and exploitation of enormous oil fields brought the Middle East into a new dimension in U.S. foreign policy (Yergin, 1991). By the middle of the twentieth century, Western economies were so reliant on Middle Eastern oil that the stability of the region was a strategic priority (Yergin, 1991). The Arab Oil Embargo of 1973, the response to the Yom Kippur War to American assistance to Israel, Western vulnerability to political events in the region was revealed (Cleveland & Bunton, 2016; Yergin, 1991). The energy crisis that ensued changed the American strategic thinking to focus on the necessity to secure provides energy and still has allies in Israel and with key Arab oil-producing states (Quandt, 2005). The United States responded by pursuing a two-pronged policy: offering military, economic, and active cooperation with Israel and at the same time forging relationship with conservative Arab monarchies, especially in the Gulf (Gause, 2010; Quandt, 2005). This

strategy was to strike a balance among competing interests- The protection of Israel, energy security, and the steadiness of the region while restricting foreign influence. With time, the U.S. military bases, weapons sales, and security collaboration became an entrenched region, connecting the Arab Israel confrontation to the overall American geo-strategic aims (Lesch, 2018). America's presence in the Middle East became more intense in the aftermath of the Cold War instead of decreasing. Being the hegemony across the region, the American government was aimed at influencing a regional order that would correspond to it.

The interest of the U.S. in the Arab-Israeli conflict has been intertwined with the strategic interests in the Middle East (Gause, 2010; Quandt, 2005). It became the leading peace broker in the peace process, funding key efforts like the Camp David Accords and Oslo Accords (Quandt, 2005). Regardless of these initiatives, some fundamental challenges such as, Israeli settlements, the status of Jerusalem, security concerns, and the Palestinian refugee issue have not been solved (Khalidi, 2020; Cleveland & Bunton, 2016). Critics say that the U.S. strategic alignment with Israel has hampered its mediation efforts because it cannot act as a neutral broker (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). This apparent bias has undermined the goodwill and efficiency of its peace operations especially as viewed by the Arab countries and Palestinians. New security issues complicated U.S. calculations in the region (Gause, 2010).

The 1979 Iranian Revolution made Iran a key enemy of the United States and Israel, (Halliday, 2005) the non-state actors supported by Iran and its nuclear ambitions compelled the intensification of the tensions in the region and strengthened the collaboration with U.S.-Israeli (Gause, 2010). More recent events, such as the Abraham Accords, and the U.S. acknowledging Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, are indicative of changing priorities which prioritize strategic

alignment over conflict resolution, often marginalizing Palestinian interests (Lynch, 2020; Quandt, 2005).

To summarize, The Arab-Israeli conflict is still strongly inter-connected with U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East (Gause, 2010). It continues to influence regional alliances, create instability and impact the perception of American power and legitimacy (Halliday, 2005). Knowing how the conflict has historically developed and the reasons why the U.S. is involved is crucial to evaluating previous strategies and to be able to plan future strategies to foster stability and sustainable peace in the region (Quandt, 2005; Khalidi, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been one of the longest-running and complicated conflicts in world politics and has lasted over seven decades (Lesch, 2018; Cleveland & Bunton, 2016). In spite of all the peace efforts, diplomatic talks and even international interventions, the conflict has kept on creating cycles of violence, territorial tussles, humanitarian crisis, and high levels of mistrust in one another between Israel and Arab forces, especially the Palestinians (Quandt, 2005; Khalidi, 2020). Its durability has not only upset the immediate region but has also attracted foreign forces that have strategic interests that are closely attached to the Middle East (Halliday, 2005).

The United States has been a major high profile and powerful foreign protagonist in the complicated Arab-Israeli conflict, intruding into the conflict as an intermediary, provider of security services and no-strings-attached partner of the state of Israel (Quandt, 2005). A combination of geo-strategic interests within the rogue geography of Middle East has fueled most of this diverse array of United States involvement. These interests include energy reserves,

stem rivals that could turn into threats in the region, prevention of the spread of terrorist, preservation of a fragile regional balance and its global dominant influence (Guase, 2010; Yergin, 1991). Despite its active and aggressive diplomacy, huge military assistance, and unshaken political support to Israel, the subtle policies of the United States have virtually done little to create a durable, inclusive solution to this unbearable conflict (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007; Quandt, 2005).

Rather, Critics believe that the U.S. intervention tends to increase tensions, as it has strengthened power unevenness, weakened Palestinian self-determination, and acted in American strategic interests instead of balancing conflict resolutions (Khalidi, 2020; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). The United States activities, including unconditional military assistance to Israel, the exercise of the veto power in the United Nations, selective mediation, and changing peace structures have cast doubts on its apparent ability to act as a neutral facilitator (Quandt, 2005). The policies have at some point led to more polarization of the region, anti-Americanism and radicalization of non-state actors (Halliday, 2005; Guase, 2010).

Also, the Arab-Israel war has been linked with the global dynamics such as the U.S. relations with Arab countries, Iran and militant groups not based on state (Guase, 2010). The fact that the conflict remains is still a threat to U.S. security interest as it contributes to instability, upsetting alliances, and making American foreign policy goals in the Middle East more difficult (Yergin, 1991; Halliday, 2005).

In this context, it is essential to explore the U.S. geo-strategic agenda and assess whether it is in line with the goal of sustainable and inclusive regional peace. The understanding of this

link is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of the U.S. engagement and other options that can help achieve a more equitable and enduring solution (Quandt, 2005; Khalidi, 2020).

1.3 Research Questions

1. How has the U.S. geo-strategic interests shaped its policies and actions in the Arab-Israel conflict, 2020-2025?
2. How has the U.S. support for Israel influence the dynamics of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East, 2020-2025?

1.4 Objectives Of The Study

1. To analyze how the U.S. geo-strategic interests have shaped its policies and actions in the Arab-Israel conflict, 2020-2025.
2. To interrogate how the U.S. support for Israel has influenced the dynamics of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East, 2020-2025.

1.5 Significance Of Study

This study is important both theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, this study will add to the existing literature on Arab-Israel conflict and the U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East, 2020-2025. Specifically, Students and Scholars of International Relations will benefit from this study as it will enrich their knowledge on how the U.S. geo-strategic interests have shaped its policies and actions in the Arab-Israel conflict, 2020-2025. It will equally broaden their horizon on the nature and impact of the U.S. political, military and economic support on the dynamics of the conflict, 2020-2025.

Practically, the study will be useful to policy-frameworks for decision-makers across the Middle East and United States by clarifying the role of geo-strategic interests in influencing

conflict dynamics. It provides useful information that can help policymakers understand the conflict better, which can be used to develop more balanced and effective conflict management and de-escalation strategies. It also aids in security and foreign policy planning by looking at the implications of military aid, alliances and regional power shifts. It offers practical guidance in enhancing the U.S. involvement with a particular focus on the sever between strategic interests and sustainable peace efforts.

1.6 Scope Of Study

This study covers both Geographical and Content areas.

The focus is on the Middle Eastern area and special attention will be paid to the primary actors of the conflict both directly and indirectly involved in the conflict between Israel and the Arab world. They are Israel, Palestine and major Arab nations – Egypt, Jordan, The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia – and the external actor but high influence United States. The Middle East is selected because of its significance for the world, particularly in reference to its energy reserves, security issues and geopolitical conflicts. The study also considers how regional alliances and security relations affect the conflict.

Content wise, the paper discusses the Arab-Israeli conflict in the context of 2020-2025, with particular reference to the role of United States geo-strategic interests. It examines the effects that political, military and economic involvement of the United States in the conflict dynamics, persistence and escalation of the conflict. Major areas of interest are U.S. foreign policy choices, military support, diplomatic involvement, and the efforts to normalize such as the Abraham Accords. Another aspect that the study examines is how the dynamics of regional security interacts with the U.S. strategic objectives to influence the results in the conflict.

In general, the area of focus is confined to modern developments of the conflict under consideration within the given timeframe and does not extend to a complete historical account of the conflict in question.

1.7 Limitations Of The Study

This study has several limitations.

First, the geo-graphical scope of the study within the Middle East and the U.S. meaning that the study findings might not be generalize to all other parts of the world (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Secondly, the researcher could have obtained primary data through interviews but lacked the capacity to visit the Middle East and the U.S. to obtain firsthand information. This primary data could have enriched the study findings but was inaccessible based on the researcher's limited capacity in terms of resources (Yin, 2018).

Even though this study focuses only on the Middle East and the U.S., this limitation was managed by using well-known academic works and comparing similar situation in other parts of the world. This makes the findings relevant to similar situations outside the study area (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Since the research did not use firsthand data (like interviews and surveys), the study relied on trusted secondary sources such as academic journals, policy reports, and official government publications (Bryman, 2016). The sources of information used were academic and government sources, which made the study more reliable.

To make the research more accurate, different sources were compared with one another. Comparing different sources helped the researcher check for consistency and reduce bias (Patton,

2015). Also, the study focused mainly on recent materials (from 2020-2025) so that the findings reflect current development and realities.

1.8 Operational Definition Of Terms

1. **ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT:** It is a protracted political, territorial and ideological conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors and Palestinian people/groups claiming the same territory, sovereignty and national identity. It includes interstate wars, uprising, and ongoing diplomatic tensions.

It is used to denote the central phenomenon under investigation, specifically examining how U.S. geo-strategic interests influence the dynamics, persistence and escalation of the conflict between 2020 and 2025.

2. **GEO-STRATEGIC INTERESTS:** They are strategic goals a state pursues in a particular geo-graphical region in order to secure its resources or influence. The concept is applied in this study to investigate the conditions outlined above influencing U.S. involvement in the Middle East conflict between the Arabs and Israelis in the period 2020-2025.
3. **MIDDLE EAST:** In this study, the Middle East is viewed as a strategically important region made up of countries in Western Asia and parts of North Africa, including key states such as Israel, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Iran and neighboring Arab countries, where major political, economic and security issues continue to shape global affairs. In this study, the term is used to denote the regional context within which the Arab-Israeli conflict unfolds and where U.S. geo-strategic interests are actively pursued and analyzed (2020-2025).

4. **ARAB NATIONALISM:** The occurrence of unity, identity and Arab' interests, due to the similar language, cultural characteristics and historical experiences is called Arab Nationalism. It aims at strengthening the unity of the Arab world and its resistance to foreign dominations. The purpose of this study is to use the concept of Arab nationalism to analyze the history and ideology, and also to guide the course of Arab states in the Arab-Israeli conflict and their sentiments towards U.S. involvement and regional alignments between 2020 and 2025.

5. **JEWISH NATIONALISM:** Also known as Zionism, Jewish nationalism is the political and ideological movement in support if the national rights of the Jewish people to self-determination, including at least Sinai-territory sovereignty over their homeland of Israel. It speaks of the need for the Jewish people as a nation, for their security, for ensuring the welfare of their political and cultural interests.

Jewish nationalism helps explain Israel's security policies and political actions in the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as to illuminate the interaction between Israel and U.S. geo-strategic interest and influence in this conflict between 2020 and 2025.

6. **U.S. – ISRAELI RELATIONS:** U.S.-Israeli relations describe the longstanding strategic, political, military and economic relationship between the United States and Israel, originating in ongoing diplomatic ties, security cooperation and aid. The concept is explored in this study to see how this bilateral relationship affects U.S. involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict and how it impacts on the nature of this conflict between 2020 and 2025.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a thorough review of existing literature relevant to the study. It aims to place the research within existing scholarly debates, identify important areas of contention, and highlight gaps that justify them. The review is divided into four major categories, namely conceptual review, thematic review, theoretical review, and empirical studies.

2.0 Introduction

This review is structured in the following sub-headings:

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Arab-Israeli Conflicts

Many international relations scholars describe the Arab-Israeli conflict as a prolonged struggle shaped by territorial disputes, nationalism and external interventions. According to AviShlaim(2001) confrontation between Zionist settler-colonialism and Arab opposition via the role of the powers. This strategy places the conflict not just in the region, but in international politics.

Historically, Rashid Khalidi (2020) has characterized the conflict as a "hundred years' war on Palestine", highlighting the power inequality and the role in Palestinian dispossession. Khalidi's work helps to reframe the discussion from a "two-sided" view of the conflict to one highlights inequality and imperial interventions. Similarly, Benny Morris (2008) provides an account of 1948 war, how the establishment of Israel involved Palestinians, expelling over

700,000 Palestinians. Morris recognizes expulsions, but also gives emphasis to Arab military involvement, presenting a more "traditional" security-focused analysis.

The conflict is also connected with ideological differences such as the conflict of origin – the Zionist and Arab. Jewish settlement in Palestine was based on Theodor Herzl's ideas from *The Jewish State* (1896) to establish a Jewish state. In contrast, the emphasis of Arab nationalism (Albert Hourani, 1991) was on national sovereignty and anti-imperialism. This competition of the ideology in one geographical area has been an important factor in the development of what is still a zero-sum attitude. British imperial policy is a key focus of most analyses. James Gelvin (2014) states that “the 1917 Balfour Declaration established both contradictory promises of a Jewish home and of political rights for Arabs.” It is this commitment that Gelvin believes set the stage for an institutional conflict. The most radical view, advanced by Ilan Pappé (2006), is that the events of 1948 were an "ethnic cleansing" and that the expulsions were intentional. Pappé's views are controversial but influential among critical and post-colonial scholars. The territorial aspect of the conflict was magnified after the Six-Day War. Israel is often described as the 'occupation' of the West Bank, Gaza strip and East Jerusalem by William B. Quandt (2005), who suggests that Israel's occupation had transformed the conflict into a ‘long term occupation problem’ and shifted the character of the conflict from a ‘border dispute’ Such shifts extended from inter-state to a more complex state–non-state relations An important point in grasping the issues of today, including settlements and resistance.

Other scholars have also studied the subject of peace negotiations including the Oslo Accords. According to Edward Said (1995), the Oslo process was very problematic, it hardened Israeli dominance and it took away the right of the Palestinians to sovereignty. However, Dennis Ross (2004) sees the accords as a 'real politics compromise' of the conflict, a compromise

between the two extremes of diplomatic attempts and violence in a polarized society, a longstanding question among critical and realist theorists of the process.

Theories of international relations offer differing interpretations of the conflict, those of Realists' security dilemmas and power unevenness, while constructivists emphasize on identities and narratives, security dilemmas and power imbalances are emphasized by security scholars and perceptions of the legitimacy.

Alexander Wendt (1999) has also described the effect of identities and norms on state behavior, which can explain the continuation of conflict despite material transformations. Post-colonialist theorists highlight the legacies of imperialism and interventionism by Britain and subsequently the United States.

More recently, the conflict has come to be seen as a combination of issues, including occupation, statehood, and international law. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt (2007) discuss the strategic aspects of U.S. policy, suggesting that Israel's U.S. support stems from geo-political and domestic political considerations. They are relevant for connecting the conflict with geo-strategic issues, which are a focus of your research.

Overall, the conflict is complex and influenced by many historical factors. The work of seminal scholars shows that the conflict cannot be explained from a single perspective; it demands a multi-faceted approach that links historical, political and international relations analysis.

2.1.2 U.S Geo-strategic interests

U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East refer to the collection of long-term political, economic and security goals that inform U.S. policy in the Middle East. These interests stem from the Middle East's strategic significance in the international system, especially regarding energy security, geo-political positioning and regional stability. BledarPrifti (2017) argues that U.S. policy in the Middle East has been astonishingly consistent since the Cold War, largely because of structural factors such as power relations and geography. Prifti has brought offensive realism to bear on explaining why the United States strives to maintain its dominance and block the rise of potential rivals.

Energy security, especially oil transit routes, is a key component of U.S. geo-strategic interests. Daniel L. Byman (2016) highlights oil as America's most important historical interest, arguing that the Middle East produces a significant proportion of the world's energy resources and holds strategic choke points, such as the Strait of Hormuz. More recent studies, such as that by SaadiaGouasmia and AbdelhakElaggoune (2025) have supported this. Nevertheless, greater emphasis by Erik B. Gustafon et al. (2025) is placed on the fact that the Middle East remains a vital region for the United States due to its impact on global energy markets and economic security and that energy security is a global concern and not an exclusively national concern.

Related to energy issues is the goal of regional security and stability. AbuzarKhpalwakZazai and FawadJamili (2015) contend that the United States presence in the Middle East is motivated by the desire to control conflicts, deter instability and secure positive political outcomes. Their piece highlights the tensions between geo-strategic and normative concerns, such as security versus democracy promotion.

Another key element of U.S. geo-strategic interests is the security of its allies, predominantly Israel and Gulf states. Conventional analyses of U.S. strategy, as outlined by Adam Garfinkle (2008), consistently identify Israel's security as a key component of U.S. strategy in the Middle East. Garfinkle provides a historical analysis, indicating how U.S. strategy has long focused on a triad of concerns: oil security, Israel's security and the containment of other great-power ambitions. This remains true today, albeit in different ways.

Also, terrorism and non-proliferation have emerged as priorities since 9/11 world. Gouasmia and Elaggoune (2025) point to the effects of transnational terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) on U.S. policies in the Middle East. They point out the global impacts of security challenges in the Middle East, thus confirming the geopolitical relevance of the region for U.S. foreign policy.

From another perspective, U.S. geo-strategic interests are also characterized by efforts to maintain its global leadership, and limit the influence of other global players, especially Russia and China. Prifti (2017) suggests that the Middle East is still a place of great-power rivalry: "All control over resources, control over alliances, means control over influence" (p. 135). This view is in line with realist theories of international relations, which view U.S. efforts as a way to preserve its status in the international system.

More recent studies have also expanded the focus on U.S. interests to economic and geopolitical interdependence. Oyekanmi et al. (2024) argue that U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East include trade routes, investment and economic power, in addition to oil. Their analysis provides a Nigerian academic perspective on linking U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East to global economic dynamics and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In recent times (2020-2025), United States geo-strategic interests have been slightly adjusted. Although there is a geo-strategic "pivot" to the Asian region, the Middle East remains a critical focus of U.S. foreign policy because of its continued importance to global energy and security dynamics and alliance politics. Many scholars now agree that United States policy towards the region has been consistent and inconsistent, characterized by lower direct intervention and higher diplomatic, economic and security engagement.

So, U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East are multifaceted and ingrained in the world affairs. These include energy security, regional stability, alliance security, counter-terrorism and inter-power rivalry. The work of leading intellectuals shows that these interests change with global political developments, but still reflecting constant strategic contemplations. It is crucial to grasp these interests in order to understand the United States' role in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in the Middle East more largely.

2.2 Thematic Review

2.2.1 United States Geo-strategic interests and the Arab-Israeli conflict

The connection between U.S. geo-strategic interests and the Arab-Israeli conflict is a conspicuous topic in the field of international relations. The U.S. has long played a strategic and mediatory role in the conflict but its policies are often seen as more driven by geo-strategic considerations than by impartial conflict resolution. A growing trend in recent literature (2020-2025) is the recognition that U.S. policies on the Arab-Israeli conflict occur within the broader geo-strategic frameworks of regional hegemony, alliances and international competition.

In this sense, Urom, Okigwe and Okpara (2025) suggest that U.S. involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict is driven by geo-strategic factors such as regional hegemony, Israel's

security, and energy security. Their realist analysis demonstrates that U.S. policy has prioritized power and security interests over a peaceful and justifiable settlement of the conflict, and has contributed to preserving asymmetries between Israel and Palestine. The authors are especially noteworthy for their depiction how U.S. strategic objectives affect the course and the duration of the conflict.

A third point of agreement is Israel with regard to U.S. Middle East policy. Aljabary (2023) recommends that the U.S. – Israel relationship can be a factor, such as threat perceptions and concerns. Aljabary's insights indicate that U.S. support for Israel is not just ideological but integral to regional strategic is based on a combination of strategic, security political and ideological considerations dynamics in which Israel serves as a strategic partner to maintain the balance of power. This analysis explains why U.S. policy seems to be more oriented toward security concerns than to the prospects for peace, despite the fact that it may make that more difficult.

Over the last few years (2020-2025), the Arab-Israeli issue has become more intertwined with the wider regional security threats, particularly Iran. Iran's nuclear program and regional influence is a very real threat to U.S. interests, which bolsters U.S. support for Israel, argue Hasrat and Wali (2025). What they add to the debate is an understanding of how the Arab-Israeli conflict is no longer a localised issue but part of an ongoing geopolitical competition between state and non-state actors in the Middle East.

In addition, recent policy assessments suggest that U.S. policy in the Middle East is in a phase of realignment rather than retreat. Brian Katulis (2025) of the Middle East Institute explains that U.S. policy remains committed to managing conflict, maintaining alliances and

stability, despite efforts to minimise military commitments. Katulis' analysis offers empirical evidence on how U.S. policy from 2020 to 2025 is being recalibrated to maintain influence while avoiding a "quagmire" in the region, especially in the case of the Gaza conflict and other regional tensions.

A related trend is the emergence of a U.S.-backed regional order based on alliances between Israel, Gulf States and others. Mohammed A. Salih (2025) suggests that this emerging order is part of a U.S. approach to regional stability through indirect power, using regional actors to achieve its goals. His work is valuable in demonstrating how the Arab-Israeli conflict is increasingly intertwined with alliances that advance U.S. interests, including containments of Iran and other challenges to U.S. influence in the region.

At the policy level, we can see the impact of changing U.S. strategies in recent national security strategies. The 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy exhibits a relative "de-prioritization" of the Middle East in global affairs, while still prioritizing key interests including Israeli security and stability. This indicates a change in priority from the broad approach to a more specific one, that is, to assert the influence without the large military presence. The evolution of the conflict's significance in U.S. policy is a continuity that is highlighted by this development. This is not a change in the significance of the Arab–Israeli issue in U.S. policy, but rather an ongoing trend.

Importantly, many specialists say that U.S. geo-strategic interests have kept the conflict alive, in accord with Israeli security concerns. Urom et al. (2025) argue that the United States' approach has contributed to the institutionalization of these imbalances, constraining the possibilities for a just peace. This approach is in accord with realist and critical perspectives that

do not attribute impartiality as the reason behind the limits of U.S. mediation, but rather its geo-strategic interests.

Last but not least, the theme of the interconnections between power, security and diplomacy is captured in the relationship between U.S. geo-strategic concerns and the Arab-Israeli conflict. New studies reveal that U.S. engagement is not just motivated by a desire for peace, but is also closely linked to geo-strategic considerations like regional stability, alliance obligations, and rivalry amongst great powers. It is therefore not surprising that the conflict still continues, partly a realization of these geo-political realities.

2.2.2 The Impact of U.S political support and the Arab-Israeli conflict

U.S. political involvement with the Arab-Israeli conflict is a central issue in the field of international relations, particularly in the study of the ongoing nature and dynamics of the conflict. True, the U.S. political backing, in the form of diplomatic backing, military assistance, and continuous support to Israel in international bodies, has been instrumental to the development of the conflict and the possibility for peace.

One of the major academic schools of thought is that U.S. political backing of Israel has been constant and largely unconditional, and has influenced the power balance in the conflict. Jerome Slater (2020) claims that "with rare exceptions" the U.S. has been Israel's ally since 1948. This has given Israeli governments an excuse to look the other way when it comes to outside calls for compromise, which has inadvertently limited the chances for peace, Slater says. His work is valuable as an accentuation of the importance of big-power support in fueling resistance in asymmetric conflicts.

Likewise, ZuhourAljabary (2023) examines the "U.S.-Israel Systemic Relations in the Middle East. U.S. political support strengthens Israel's hand, and has a regional alliance and perception impact, Aljabary argues. She provides a systems approach, and demonstrates how U.S. support for Israel impacts regional dynamics and diplomacy.

A factor in U.S. political support is the protection that Israel receives from the U.S. in the international community, particularly at the United Nations. Others, however, argue that the U.S. blocked UN resolutions against Israel, so that the world does not criticize the Jewish state. The political commitment behind U.S. relations with Israel has resulted in administrations in the U.S. having varied views on Israeli policy on certain matters, but not having imposed any significant pressure on Israel. The political commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship has, in turn, led to different views among U.S. administrations regarding Israeli policy on various issues, but not to any significant pressure.

However, the conflict has been extended and exacerbated by political support from the U.S., according to critical scholars. U.S. policy is seen as exacerbating the gap between Israel and the Palestinians as a result of its contribution to the strengthening of the military and political power of Israel. This view is in line with larger realist and critical theories that claim backing of one side in a conflict tends to reinforce power imbalance and to render compromise less feasible.

The contribution of U.S. political support has been even more pronounced in recent years (2020-2025) significant. The U.S.'s strong backing in recent escalations, particularly in Gaza, has reinforced the sense of bias and the U.S.'s role as an impartial broker. One example is the analysis of policies that have led to decreased U.S. backing of Israeli military action, which has strained relations with Arab allies and led to anti-American attitudes in the region.

In the meantime, international backing for the region, including the United States, has fostered peace agreements, including the Abraham Accords that have normalised relations between Israel and other Arab states. These agreements are considered a diplomatic success, but researchers note that they do not really pay attention to the Palestinian issue and as a result do not resolve the underlying conflict. This creates a dilemma for U.S. policy: political backing for Israel can make region partnerships more binding, but can also drive away important conflict participants, and can sustain conflict.

The second big scholarly dispute concerns the determinants of political support in the United States. Slater (2020) cites several factors, such as public opinion, shared values, and the advocacy efforts of pro-Israeli groups, as influential in U.S. policy. This is an important variable in explaining the continuity of political support from one administration to another, despite changing international circumstances.

Another point is, U.S. political support plays a critical role in peace and conflict resolution. Some scholars contend that the United States' bias towards Israel negatively affects its legitimacy as a mediator (Pressman, 2014). This has resulted in distrust from Palestinian leaders and undermined U.S. negotiation efforts. As a result, alternative models of multilateral mediation have been suggested but with limited impact (Quandt, 2005).

Theoretically, the effects of U.S. political support can be analysed from various perspectives. Realist approaches highlight the strategic rationale for U.S. support for Israel, seeing it as an avenue for influence and control (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). In contrast, constructivist theories stress the importance of identity, culture and history in U.S. decision-

making. Critical and post-colonial perspectives, meanwhile, emphasise the power asymmetries between the two countries and its consequences for justice and self-determination (Said, 1979).

Finally, political support from the U.S. is critical to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It contributes to Israel's security and to the achievement of U.S. political objectives in the region, but it also reinforces existing power differentials, undermines peacemaking initiatives, and shapes regional perceptions of the U.S. As such, the ongoing nature of the conflict can be seen - in part - as a consequence of these dynamics, in which political support is both a source of stability as well as instability (Indyk, 2009).

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Regional security complex theory

Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) is one of the most important theories in international relations, authored by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, and fully elaborated in their book *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (2003). It is a product of the Copenhagen School of security studies and offers a regional approach to the analysis of international security, sitting between systemic-level and domestic-level theories of security.

In essence, RSCT claims that security relations are primarily regional, not global, and that states' security is primarily affected by threats from its nearest neighbourhood. Buzan and Wæver (2003) define a regional security complex as "a set of units whose major processes of securitization and desecuritization are so interlinked that their security problems cannot be analyzed separately". This definition emphasises the notion of security interdependence, which is the unit-building block of the theory.

Buzan and Wæver's innovation is to focus security research on regions in addition to the global system. By demonstrating that threats are more likely to spread over short distances, they claim that the security of neighboring states is more relevant to one another than to great powers. In turn, a security complex can exist independently of great power politics, although great powers might intervene.

The theory suggests a number of features of a regional security complex. These include:

- a. Boundary: defines a security complex
- b. Anarchic structure: lack of an overarching authority among states
- c. Polarity: pattern of power within the region
- d. Patterns of amity and enmity: relationships of cooperation and conflict among actors

The characteristics enable us to examine the evolution of security relations in a region. Importantly, RSCT brings together the material (such as military strength) and the social (such as identity and threat perceptions), as a result of its constructivist underpinnings.

The theory's other key contribution is to acknowledge great power involvement in regional security. Despite its emphasis on region-specific dynamics, RSCT recognises the presence of external actors that can "penetrate" a regional security complex through alliances or conflict involvement. But this doesn't displace the regional nature of security relations. It is crucial in the Middle East, with the involvement of external actors (particularly the United States).

RSCT has also been rolled out to other regions and settings. The versatility and generalizability of RSCT can be demonstrated through the use of it in the study of post-Cold War regional security (as done by Lake and Morgan, 1997 and later). The recent studies are based on

articles in GSQ and further developed the concept of RSCT by examining the process of the emergence and development of regional security complexes, the process of an action of securitisation and regional identity construction.

RSCT is particularly relevant to the Middle East. It is a quintessential security complex with high levels of interdependence, recurring conflicts and alliances. For example, the Arab–Israeli conflict is inextricably linked to regional security relations with states like Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab states. RSCT helps to explain the persistence of conflicts in the region despite international attempts to resolve them: they are deeply embedded in regional security dynamics and historical legacies.

Another point is, RSCT helps to understand the role of the United States in the Middle East. The U.S. is an external great power, and is regarded as a penetrating rather than constitutive part of the regional security complex. Its actions - military deployments, alliances with Israel and the Gulf states, and diplomacy - influence but do not overarch the regional security structure. This is especially significant to your research because it ties U.S. geo-strategic reasons to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Although it has its positive aspects, RSCT has also attracted criticism. Others argue that proximity is not as influential in the theory as globalization and transnational threats, such as terrorism and cyber security. Others state that the emergence of the global powers could make the distinctions between regional and global security more complex. RSCT is still a very effective tool for the study and analysis of regional security issues and remains a useful framework in unstable regions like the Middle East.

In summary, Regional Security Complex Theory is used to provide a comprehensive analysis of the regional security dynamics. Its focus on security interdependence, proximity and the role of regional and global actors provides important insights into the recurrence of conflicts like the Arab-Israeli conflict and the influence of external actors, such as the United States. Its use in your research allows a greater appreciation of the inter-relationship between U.S. geo-strategic policies and the regional security environment in the Middle East.

2.3.2 Liberalism

Liberalism is one of the founding theories in international relations (IR), countering realist perspectives by focusing on the positive role of cooperation, institutions and interdependence in world affairs. Liberalism originated in the Enlightenment and was later developed as an approach to IR, with the aim of understanding the possibilities for cooperation and peace in an anarchical international society. For Immanuel Kant, who laid the philosophical groundwork for liberalism in his work *Perpetual Peace*, the rise of republican (democratic) governance and cooperation could lessen the prospects of war. This normative goal persists in liberal thinking in modern IR.

The liberal perspective rejects the realist view that war is inherent. Rather, it posits that it is possible to establish and sustain cooperation through institutions, economic interdependence, and norms. As Jeffrey W. Meiser (2018) explains, liberalism adds factors to the study of international politics, such as domestic actors, international institutions, and economic interdependence, thus broadening the field of IR beyond state-to-state relations.

A key development in contemporary liberal theory is the notion of complex interdependence put forth by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye. They show that states are

interconnected in multiple ways (economically, politically and socially), and that this limits the effectiveness of military action and enhances the benefits of cooperation. According to liberal theorists, in a complex interdependent system, states focus on absolute gains (mutual gains) rather than relative gains, making cooperation more advantageous than war.

Additionally, liberalism focuses on the impact of institutions in reducing anarchy. The United Nations and other international institutions offer negotiating, adjudication and enforcement forums. Institutions can alleviate uncertainty, provide information and establish norms for states to follow. As liberal institutionalist theory suggests, states establish rules and regimes to coordinate their behaviour and reap the mutual benefits, which enhances the prospects of continued cooperation.

A second important liberal belief is the democratic peace theory, which holds that democracies are unlikely to fight each other. The hypothesis that refers to Kant has received a wide range of empirical evidence in International Relations. Liberal theorists argue that democratic practices, openness and accountability reduce the likelihood of war, further the process of peace through negotiation. Similarly, commercial liberalism claims that economic interdependence, particularly in trade, results in the mutual economic benefits of interdependence and that war would be undesirable since it would damage economic concerns.

Furthermore, liberalism focuses on the importance of non-state actors like transnational advocacy groups, NGOs and multinational corporations. Such shape state preferences and help shape global governance, contributing to the state-centric international relations model. This is particularly relevant today, a world that is globalised where social and economic interactions are transnational. Contemporary liberalism has given rise to various sub-disciplines, such as

neoliberal institutionalism (linked to Keohane) and liberal theory of international politics (linked to Andrew Moravcsik). Moravcsik's work underlines the idea that state interests are determined by domestic societal preferences, rather than by systemic factors. By bringing domestic politics into analyses of the international system, liberalism is especially suited to explain foreign policy.

Moravcsik's liberalism has not been without its critics. Realist analysts claim it downplays the importance of power and security competition, especially in conflict-prone areas like the Middle East. Also, institutions may represent the preferences of powerful states, rather than impartial umpires. But liberals counter-argue that, although not perfect, institutions nonetheless help facilitate cooperation and mitigate conflict.

For your research, liberalism offers a useful theory to explore the Arab-Israeli conflict and U.S. geo-political interests. It can account for U.S. actions in terms of institution-building, alliance-building and economic interdependence, and attempts to establish peace through negotiation. But the conflict also shows the limits of liberalism, especially in places where historical animosity and security competition is prevalent.

2.3.3 Realism

Realism is one of the major theories used in international relations to explain states behavior that focuses on power, national interest and the absence of an international governing authority. Since the middle of the 20th century, realism is a dominant and pessimistic but effective approach to explaining state conduct, especially in volatile areas like the Middle East. For Hans Morgenthau, international politics is a "struggle for power" in which states rationally pursue their interests in a competitive environment (Morgenthau, 1948).

Realist scholars make several assumptions about international politics. First, the international system is an anarchic one, in which there is no overarching authority to enforce rules and maintains security. In this environment, states must fend for themselves, with security as the highest priority for all parties. As contemporary scholarship highlights, this situation makes states prioritize power and security over morals and ideology. Second, realism sees states as the primary actors in world affairs, acting rationally to enhance their security and power. Third, realists stress the inevitability of conflict in world affairs because of power and resource competition

The origins of realism can be traced back to classical authors like Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes, who emphasise the constancy of power politics. But realism was formalised in the 20th century by writers like E. H. Carr and Morgenthau. Carr (1939) challenged liberal idealism, suggesting that power, not moral considerations, drives international politics. Morgenthau elaborated on this view by defining "interest defined in terms of power" as the central category of political thought.

Realism took different forms, such as classical realism and neorealism (structural realism). Classical realism, such as that of Morgenthau, explains conflict as arising from human nature, particularly humans' thirst for power. Neorealism, on the other hand, as articulated by Kenneth Waltz (1979), emphasises the structure of the international system. Waltz contends that the anarchic international system creates a similar behavior among states, regardless of their domestic features. This structural approach to realism brought a more systematic approach to the discipline.

Another iteration of realism is offensive realism, put forth by John J. Mearsheimer (2001), which holds that states seek not only security but also power maximization to gain regional or even global hegemony. Mearsheimer's work is especially pertinent for explaining the actions of great powers, such as U.S. foreign policy, because it implies that great powers are expansionist in their efforts to achieve security.

Realist theory is defined by several concepts. Foremost among these is the balance of power, which involves states banding together and arming themselves to counter any one power from becoming too powerful. This is viewed as a crucial element for preserving stability in an anarchic system. Another important concept is that of the security dilemma, in which states' efforts to improve their own security (such as by building arms) are interpreted by others as threatening, creating tensions and conflict. This is especially the case in highly competitive environments, such as the Middle East.

Realism can also give insights into the behaviour of great powers. Realists argue that great powers work to preserve the status quo and to prevent another power from emerging. This perspective is especially useful in an understanding of U.S. geo-strategic interests as it allows for the explanation of why it still invests so much in the Middle East despite shifting geo-strategic interests. From the realist point of view, the U.S. policy to favor Israel and U.S. participation in the Arab-Israeli conflict may be interpreted as a way of maintaining its influence and balancing other powers in the region.

But there are those who oppose realism. They may underestimate international institutions, international norms and economic interdependence as means of cooperation. Realism is also more likely to focus on conflict, and power, than on the potential for peace and

stability. However, in international relations realism is a fundamental approach, particularly in terms of security and geo-politics.

Realism is a good foundation for understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict and U.S. Geo-strategic policy in your research. It explains why the conflict has been so enduring, in terms of the power imbalance, security concerns, and inter-state rivalry, and highlights strategic motivations for U.S. engagement. Its focus on national interest, alliances, and balance of power provides valuable insights into the relationship between regional conflicts and global geopolitics.

2.3.4 Constructivism

Constructivism focuses on how ideas, identity and norms influence international relations, which outlines the influence of ideas, norms, identities, and interactions among actors in defining the nature of states' action (Wendt, 1999). Interpretation of the world is used in Constructivism to classify a system as social constructionist, due to the fact that Realism and Liberalism are based on material power and institutional cooperation, respectively, as features of the international system (Onuf, 1989; Katzenstein, 1996).

Alex Wendt (1999), Nicholas Onuf (1989), and Peter Katzenstein (1996) are some of the scholars credited with laying the foundation of constructivism. In his seminal work *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt argues that the nature of the structure of human association is endowed mainly through ideas shared rather than material forces, and the interests of a given State will be influenced by these ideas (Wendt, 1999). It continues the 'discourses of neorealism' and 'neoliberalism', but with a counter-assumption: Identities and interests are not "natural," but rather emerging from social interaction (Checkel, 1998).

One fundamental conviction of constructivism is that “anarchy is what states make of it” (Wendt, 1992), and in other words, international relations do not have to be warlike, as it depends on the interpretation and interpretation-challenge of one state to another. As for how states act, it is not only their material resources that matter, but also what they collectively believe, what they collectively think is normal, what they collectively feel they are, and what these collectively held values and identities mean for political processes. (Finnemore&Sikkink, 1998)

Constructivism also emphasizes the significance of norms and the socialization processes in international politics. The processes of Inductivism lead States to take up certain behaviors, not only due to calculations, but because they are shaped by normative and conventional factors in the international system (Finnemore, 1996). This angle focuses on the influence of concepts of sovereignty, legitimacy and rights on relations in the world.

Constructivism also offers an important perspective on the Arab–Israeli conflict: it offers insight into the roles of historical actors through their identities, ideology, and accounts of the conflict. Land, legitimacy, and statehood are at stake, among others in ideas such as Arab nationalism and Jewish nationalism that shape the conflict. Such personalities affect regional actors and also the U.S. – foreign policy that is deeply influenced by common values, historical ties, and strategic notions of the partnership with Israel (Katzenstein, 1996; Wendt, 1999).

Also, constructivism facilitates an understanding of the prolonged conflict despite all the diplomatic efforts. Compromise is difficult, because actors see actions in terms of entrenched belief systems (Wendt, 1999), and the belief systems of insecurity and resistance as well as of legitimacy that are embedded in the entrenched identities make it hard to get along. This

complements realist approaches to power politics by demonstrating that besides being driven by material factors, conflict can be sustained by structured ideational factors.

Secondly, constructivism can be employed when explaining U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East. Beyond strategic calculations, the support for Israel by the Americans may be perceived as the result of the convergence of norms, democratic values and elements of identity, which influence the policy decision making process and the conduct of American diplomacy toward Israel (Wendt, 1999; Checkel, 1998).

2.3.5 Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST)

Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST) is one of the major theories in the field of International Political Economy and International Relations explaining the worldwide order in terms of the powerful presence of a hegemon. The theory suggests conditions of interstate dynamic are most stable, predictable, and open when one state has a material capacity—military, economic, and institutional—strong enough to construct rules, supply the public goods, and regulate interstate dynamic. Without such a hegemon, the international system can be destabilized, conflict prone and economically split (Kindleberger 1973, Gilpin 1981).

The moral lessons of HST are mostly due to Charles Kindleberger who, in his study of the Great Depression credited its failure to be stabilized by a leader to the global economic collapse. Smaller states have the danger of free-running problems, in that they may not provide a variety of public goods on which international order depends, such as financial liquidity, trade openness or systemic coordination, that larger states are free to provide as a matter of aggressiveness. (Kindleberger, 1973; Webb & Krasner, 1989)

Robert Gilpin took over from Kindleberger to develop HST into a more comprehensive theory of international politics that focused more on the rise and fall of hegemonic powers in cycles. Gilpin said that hegemonic states produce and maintain international orders through the development and maintenance of institutions, norms and security structures based upon state strategies. However, as time passes, the challengers become increasingly powerful and transform the system for systemic change, sometimes causing instabilities (Gilpin, 1981).

HST is based on three main suppositions. This might seem obvious to some, but international systems are by definition anarchic: They each have their own rules and no central authority that can compel adherence to them. Second, international stability calls for a conspicuous state which can offer international public goods like security commitments, free trade and financial stability. Third, in the absence of hegemonic leadership, States end up competing and protectionism, which leads to conflict and system disorder.

The last two centuries have seen a succession of apparent eras of hegemonic stability, as noted by advocates of the HST, including the Pax Britannica (in the 19th century) and the Pax Americana (post-1945). During these times Britain and, eventually, the United States, held relatively good global control via their naval power and their economic systems, which included Bretton Woods, NATO and the UN framework (Kindleberger, 1973; Gilpin, 1981).

HST is an interesting prism to look at U.S. involvement in the Middle East, and for the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular. The United States has been the main external actor in the region, influencing regional diplomacy, delivering military support and supporting regional strategic partnerships, particularly with Israel and with key Arab actors, for the past six years (2020–2025). US involvement from an HST view point is seen as hegemonic (subversion) of the

region, to secure energy, security interests, and to maintain the status quo of their global power role.

But, as HST points out, hegemonic influence "has its limits. U.S.-led order in the Middle East is being challenged by emerging powers like China and regional players like Iran, who want more autonomy. This is an argument similar to Gilpin's, suggesting that the hegemonic system has an inherent characteristic of cycling, since a slowly encroaching challenger will eventually take away the power from the incumbent hegemon and change the regional and global status quo (Gilpin, 1981).

For this reason, Hegemonic Stability Theory has relevance in this study to give a structural explanation to the U.S. geo-strategic behaviour in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It does not call U.S. interventions 'ideological' or humanitarian anymore, but systemic, one in which the U.S. is the principal agent for international stability.

2.4 Empirical review

Empirical literature regarding the Arab- Israeli conflict and U.S geo-strategic interests display a constant pattern: the United States intervention plays a significant role in the direction, continuity and change of the conflict. Themes of contemporary studies (2020-2025) include mediation, military assistance, normalization agreements, and the geopolitical competition.

Firstly, AbdullahiAbiodunOyekanmi et al. (2024), in their article "United States Geopolitical Interests and the Arab-Israeli Conflict", use the qualitative case study design based on the content analysis and historical review of the policy to investigate the influence of U.S. interests in the conflict. The authors rely on the diplomatic documents, secondary sources, and geopolitical information to prove that the U.S. alliances with Israel are largely related to the

energy security, the dominance in the region, and the maintenance of the Western influence in the Middle East. Their conclusions are that the U.S interventions are not neutral but they are incorporated in the long term strategic calculations thus contributing to the long term nature of the conflict. The methodological approach used in the study, interpretive content analysis, permits a profound contextual insight into policy motives.

In another article by GoodluckChigozieOkeh and Edmund Felix Obomanu (2024), “United States Mediation in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Historical Assessment”, the authors use a historical-comparative study design with process tracing to assess major peace efforts like Camp David, Oslo and the Abraham Accords. Through a process of comparative analysis of these diplomatic initiatives over time, the authors demonstrate patterns of U.S. strategic bias. Their results indicate that neutrality is less influential in mediation outcomes than alliance preservation hence restricting the effectiveness of the peace processes. It is methodologically thorough as it follows the causal mechanisms through various historical episodes.

“American Diplomacy in the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Twenty-First Century” by Salim Mohammad et al. (2025), qualitative policy analysis with the help of document analysis and evaluation of elite discourse is used. They conclude that U.S. diplomacy has shifted towards resolution-based strategies to conflict management strategies that aim at ensuring stability in the region. The authors use speeches, policy documents and diplomatic engagements to show that strategic pragmatism has taken the place of transformative peace initiatives.

In “U.S. Involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Solution or Problem?” FadhilaInasPratiwi et al. (2020) use a combination of a case study approach and qualitative content analysis of diplomatic documents. Their results indicate that U.S. mediation is

institutionally limited by its alliance with Israel, which disables the neutrality of the U.S. mediation. The research adds to the literature by providing empirical evidence of the role of strategic alignment as a constraint on the effectiveness of mediation.

In a work by Jennifer C. Olmsted (2025) “The Political Economy of U.S. Aid to Israel and Palestine” follows a mixed-method approach involving quantitative analysis of aid flows and interpretation of the political economy qualitatively. Based on longitudinal aid data, she demonstrates that U.S. aid is a systematic strengthening of Israeli military and economic superiority and a heightening Palestinian dependency. The paper has pointed out the role of aid as a form of strategic power, as opposed to being a form of humanitarian assistance.

In their article, Aswin Ariyanto Azis and Hemalia Kusumadewi (2024) use a mixed-method approach to research that combines quantitative defense spending data with qualitative policy analysis, namely, “Weaponization of Aid: U.S.–Israel Relations and Conflict Dynamics”. Their results show that U.S. military assistance has a direct impact on the nature of battles, the dynamic of their escalation, and the strategic decisions, supporting asymmetrical power relations.

His article, “The Abraham Accords and Middle East Geopolitics (2025)”, Henelito Jr Arias Sevilla qualitatively analyzes geopolitics and evaluates the strategic policies of normalization agreements. The paper concludes by stating that the Accords are mainly motivated by national and U.S. strategic interests as opposed to a true interest in settling the Palestinian question.

In their article on “Normalization without resolution,” Nadya Fitri Budiargo and Arie Kusuma Paksi (2025) utilize both the methods of critical discourse analysis and policy analysis in order to analyze the discourse of normalization. They find that through such

agreements regional priorities are re-oriented towards economic and security cooperation at the cost of core conflict issues.

In his article, “Post-2020 Arab 3866 Israeli Normalization and Regional Security,” Hasan P. Abdullayev (2024) uses comparative analysis of the region and qualitative content analysis to evaluate alliances. He concludes that normalization boosts the integration of Israel in the region marginalizing the interests of the Palestinians.

In” Geo-economic Strategies in the Middle East,” Manal Allan (2025) takes a geo-economic analytical approach to policy analysis with a qualitative focus to investigate such initiatives as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. The research shows that economic projects strengthen geopolitical orientations.

In the article “U.S. Israel Strategic Relations and Military Superiority,” by Sonia Sánchez Diaz and Guillem Colom-Piella (2025) perform a longitudinal qualitative study where the analysis of defense policy is applied together with the analysis of the historical comparison. They find that U.S. continued assistance guarantees the qualitative military advantage of Israel and influences the nature of regional security.

“U.S. Policy and the Gaza Conflict,” Rob Geist Pinfold (2025) uses process tracing and qualitative analysis of policy to trace the change in U.S. behavior. He concludes that the U.S. policy is becoming more and more permissive of Israeli military action, which helps to fuel an escalation.

In his article, “U.S. Policy in the Middle East: Strategic Priorities and Challenges,” Daniel L. Byman (2022) applies the methodology of qualitative strategic analysis and security

studies, using policy documents and threat analyses. He contends that U.S. involvement is motivated by counterterrorism and alliance maintenance that put Israel in a strategic position.

Marc Lynch (2021) “The New Arab Wars and U.S. Policy,” uses the comparative regional analysis and qualitative synthesis of regional conflict data. He shows that the change in U.S. priorities has changed alliances without decreasing the dependence on Israel.

In “Blind Spot: America and the Palestinians,” KhaledElgindy (2022) engages institutional analysis and qualitative policy critique, relying on the archival information and diplomatic records. He says that U.S. diplomacy is systematically biased in favor of Israeli interests to the detriment of the peace process.

William B. Quandt (2021) in “Peace Process Revisited,” considers the patterns of long-term mediation through a historical-institutional analysis and process tracing. He concludes that the structural bias has always worked against the U.S. effectiveness as a mediator.

In “Public Opinion in the Arab World and U.S. Policy,” ShibleyTelhami (2022) employs quantitative survey research and statistical analysis, which is based on massive opinion polls. His results show that there is a decreasing trust in U.S. neutrality, which undermines its legitimacy in the region.

In their article, “Global Discourse and the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” Antonakaki and Ioannidis (2025) use the methods of big data analytics and sentiment analysis to analyse discourses around the world. Their analysis emphasises that there is polarisation of discourse along geopolitical lines, which is indicative of wider power forces.

In their article, *Economic Effects of Peace Agreements*, Kovac and Spruk (2025) employ econometric modeling and regression analysis to evaluate economic outcomes of peace processes. They discover that the economic benefits are based on the actual resolution of conflicts, which is not present.

In “Rethinking U.S. Strategy in the Middle East,” Steven A. Cook (2021) utilizes the policy analysis and strategic evaluation approach relying on the U.S. foreign policy documents and regional security statistics. He maintains that the U.S. should remain in the support of Israel as it is the key to keeping order in the region despite changing world priorities.

In his article “U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel,” Jeremy M. Sharp (2023) employs policy analysis and budgetary data analysis, with emphasis on Congressional reports and appropriations data. His research indicates that the long-term financial obligation shows a deep-rooted strategic interest, strengthening the role of Israel in the conflict.

The empirical literature shows that the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be explained without the U.S. geo-strategic interests. A number of studies indicate that the political, military, and diplomatic assistance of U.S. has not only influenced but also perpetuated the conflict, and has also changed regional alliances and geopolitical forces. Even though there have been some minimal achievements of the U.S. led efforts including normalization deals, they have mostly been unsuccessful in addressing the underlying problems of the conflict. This strengthens the thesis that the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict is intertwined with more predominant strategic considerations, and not a local issue.

2.5 Gap in Literature

Although the existing body of scholarship is rich, there are still some key gaps.

To begin with, the fusion of the U.S. geo-strategic interests with the modern dynamics of conflicts (2020-2025) are limited. Although much literature has evaluated how the past U.S. participation has been transformed, there is limited literature that systematically analyzes how recent developments such as the renewed Gaza conflicts, the changing U.S. foreign policy priorities, and changes in the global power competition have overturned the relationship between U.S. interests and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Much of the literature is historically based and the absence of current empirical analysis.

Second, the literature is highly theoretical biased in realism, which pays a lot of attention to power, security, and strategic interests with little consideration of other perspectives, like liberalism and constructivism in the context of empirical studies. Despite the theoretical diversity, there is a lack of empirical research of the theories in elucidating recent developments in the conflict.

Third, it is observed that there is a significant methodological gap as the majority of studies are based on qualitative methods such as historical accounts and content analysis. The scarcity of survey data and quantitative approaches limit the opportunity to address the opinion of people, the dynamics of perception, and quantifiable effects of policy choices. This implies that there is a necessity of having more data-driven and mixed-method research designs.

Fourth, the existing literature tends to consider the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as the U.S. geo-strategic interests as two analytical entities, instead of looking at how these two combine in a single framework. The lack of comprehensive study, which integrates the dynamics of conflict, strategic behavior of the United States and changes in the region as a whole, has not

been covered by any study yet. However, recent studies (including Urom et al., 2025) are attempting to fill this gap.

Fifth, much of the literature is biased regionally and has a Western-centric point of view. Research on conflict and international relations generally tends to favour western ideas and samples which may be inadequate to reflect local and regional views, which are necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of the conflict. This gap represents the need for more in-depth and situationally informed studies. Lastly, the implications of the new geopolitical development, including the Abraham Accords, changes in U.S. engagement strategies, and the emergence of digital and information warfare as a shaper of conflict narratives have not yet been adequately addressed in the literature. Although recent research recognizes these trends, there has been little systematic analysis of the interaction of these trends with long-standing structural concerns.

Overall, despite the given literature being a rather comprehensive overview of the Arab-Israeli conflict and U.S. geo-strategic interests, it remains rather fragmented, historically oriented, and limited in terms of methodology. The current research is aimed at filling these gaps by presenting a contemporary (2020-2025), integrated, and theoretically undergirded study of the connection between U.S. geo-strategic interests and the Arab-Israeli conflict. In doing so, it helps in more comprehensively understanding how global power relations have continued to play out in one of the longest-standing conflicts in the world.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical framework

3.1.1 Realism

Among IR theories, realism stands out for grounding state behavior in power, security, and the pursuit of national interest within an anarchic international order (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). The theory is that the state would be the primary players of the international scene and that these players are driven by the dominant principles of international politics – power and strategic interest – rather than morality and ideology (Waltz, 1979). In Realist view, international politics is fundamentally competitive and there would be no authority to control states' action everywhere (Mearsheimer, 2001).

3.1.2 Exponents of Realism

Realism as a theory has been extensively developed by several scholars who emphasize power, national interest, and state survival in international politics.

Hans J. Morgenthau (1948), one of the major exponents of classical realism, argues that international politics is governed by the struggle for power and that states pursue their national interests primarily in terms of power. Kenneth Waltz (1979), structural realism argues that because the international system has no overarching authority, states are pushed to put security and survival first which in turn drives both rivalry and alliance-building.

Similarly, John J. Mearsheimer (2001), in his theory of offensive realism, contends that great powers constantly seek to maximize their influence and dominance because uncertainty in the international system makes conflict unavoidable. These realists assumptions are relevant to

the Arab- Israeli conflict and U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East, as they explain U.S. support for Israel as a strategic effort to maintain regional influence, protect security interests, and preserve the balance of power within the MiddleEast.

3.1.3 Assumptions of Realism

There are many basic propositions which are the starting point for the realism in international relations.

First, the international system has no central authority above sovereign states, which means every state must ultimately depend on its own capabilities for survival and security (Waltz, 1979).

Second, states remain the dominant actors in world politics. Non-state actors and international organisations do exist, but they operate within limits set by states, which retain the greater share of power and influence (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001).

Third, the state acts based on national interest with special reference to security and survival. Accordingly, foreign policy is determined by strategic considerations, and not moral ones (Morgenthau, 1948).

Fourth, realism has made the assumption that power plays a key role in international politics. States always strive to gain military, economic and political power for sake of protecting their own interests and gaining influence (Morgenthau, 1948; Mearsheimer, 2001).

Fifth, realism stresses the idea of self-help; that is, states should look to their own powers and connections to ensure their own protection, not to any outside control.

Finally, realism sees conflict and competition as permanent fixtures in IR as states are faced with environments of uncertainty and mistrust between them (Mearsheimer, 2001).

The relevance to the study

This study draws on realism because it offers a strong lens for examining the Arab-Israeli conflict and the U.S. geo-strategic interests in the region between 2020-2025. The basic tenets of realism are that international politics is a zero-sum contest for power in an anarchic international system in which there is no central authority to govern state action. Under this scenario, states are primarily rational actors that act in the interest of survival, security and national interest improvement (Waltz, 1979). It is an angle to be considered especially in the Middle East, which is marked by many years of conflict, changing alliances, and a high level of competition between regional and global powers (Gause, 2010; Halliday, 2005).

Realism is useful to explain the continual presence of U.S. in the Arab–Israeli conflict as a means to strategic self-interest and not necessarily ideological and humanitarian concerns in the context of this study (Mearsheimer& Waltz, 2007). The U.S. backing of Israel with military assistance, diplomacy and technological aid may be seen as a matter of strategy to guarantee a steady supply of a dependable ally in a strategically important area (Mearsheimer& Waltz, 2007; Byman, 2022). From a realist perspective, Israel is a pivotal regional force that supports the U.S. and is helping to maintain a favorable balance of power in the Middle East, counterbalancing competing powers (Mearsheimer& Waltz, 2007).

In the same way, realism can be used to explain the actions of regional actors like Israel, Iran and a number of Arab nations, who have policies foisted out of security concerns and power maximization (Urom, Okigwe, &Okpara, 2025). The ongoing conflict between the Arabs and

Israelis is an example of the realist idea that insecurity and mistrust is endemic to an anarchic system and states must carry out military buildup, alliances and counter-alliances (Waltz, 1979). For example, changing of regional balances and normalisation pacts can be interpreted as a strategicalmanoeuvre to enhance relative power situations and not as a convergence of ideologies (Sevilla, 2025; Budiargo&Paksi, 2025).

The theory is used in a realistic manner in analyzing this study by viewing geo-strategic interests of the United States in the larger framework of power politics. It enables the research to go beyond a superficial analysis of causes to deeper ones of motivations, including energy security, domination of the region, containment of rival powers, and the safeguarding of world trade routes (Yergin, 1991; Gause, 2010). The relevance and necessity of realism is thus not only an important consideration, but the only one, when it comes to explaining the continuity of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the ongoing interest-driven U.S. involvement in shaping its dynamics from 2020 to 2025.

3.1.4 Criticism of Realism

Yet, realism's pertinence has been questioned for its focus on conflict and power and its perceived oversight of other factors in international relations such as cooperation and international institutions and morals.

Realists also claim that the role of ideology, identity, and domestic politics in foreign policy decision-making is under-emphasized by realist theory (Wendt, 1999; Katzenstein, 1996). Realism is descriptive and ignores the importance of the role of religion, nationalisms, and historical narratives for the conflict in the Arab–Israeli case (Khalidi, 2020; Said, 1995).

In addition, liberal scholars hold that they either underestimate the potential of diplomacy, international organizations and economic cooperation to cool down tensions and keep people happy (Finnemore&Sikkink, 1998).

3.2 Hypotheses

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

- 1:** U.S. geo-strategic interests significantly shape its policies and actions in the Arab–Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025.
- 2:** U.S. support for Israel influence the dynamics of the Arab–Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025.

3.3 Research Design

The kind of research designed used in this study is an ex-post facto research. In general, the design is deemed appropriate because the study uses events and policy actions that have already been experienced and has no manipulation of the variables by the researcher. In practice, the ex-post facto design has been popularly used in International Relations (IR) and social science literature owing to the fact that one cannot experiment over a political action, a conflict or an event in diplomacy.

The study examines the Arab-Israeli conflict and the geo-strategic interests of the U.S. in years 2020-2025 while taking political realities into account. The design allows the researcher to explore those linkages between U.S. strategic interests and the evolution of the conflict in a post hoc sense.

In addition, the ex-post facto methodology enables analysis of U.S. foreign policy, military aid, and diplomatic contact trends as well as regional security trends in a systematic fashion. It also advocates the use of the secondary source materials like scholarly articles, policy reports, government publications, and institutional records.

Another benefit of the design is that it is congruent with the theoretical approach used in this research, realist theory that focuses on observable behavior of states, competition and power relations in the international system.

The data in this study was collected using the extract method.

The research method of obtaining data for the study is basically secondary information. The sources of data were academic journals, books, policy papers, government publications, reports from international organizations, diplomatic records and credible online databases pertaining to the Arab–Israeli conflict and the role of the U.S. in the Middle East.

Issues concerning Foreign Policy, strategic interests and International conflict are sensitive and hard to study exclusively by means of Primary methods hence Secondary methods are apt in such studies. The reference and the use of scholarly and institutional materials thus support well established, verifiable and comprehensive information required in the study.

This study accounted for the developments between the time period of 2020 and 2025 to assure relevance and contemporateness of these with the data utilization.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

This study relies primarily on secondary sources of data collection. Data were obtained from academic journals, textbooks, policy documents, government publications, reports from

international organizations, diplomatic records, and credible online data bases related to the Arab-Israeli conflict and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

Issues of Foreign Policy, Strategic interests and International conflict are sensitive and cannot be investigated from primary data alone, hence secondary data is suitable for these. Therefore, such use of scholarly and institutional materials offers a reliable, verifiable and complete information that is needed for the study. The data used in this study focus on developments between 2020 and 2025 to be relevant and up-to-date.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The qualitative content analysis method was used in this study along with historical and comparative method of analysis.

Content analysis is an analytical method that systematically categorizes and analyzes pertinent themes that align with the U.S. strategic interests, military assistance during the period of the armistice, diplomatic involvement, alliance formation in the region and conflict escalation.

Historical analysis can focus on the shifts in the United States' involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict from 2020 to 2025, while comparative analysis can explore the nature of the conflict, the actors involved, and the policies that have been enacted. To establish reliability and validity, data triangulation method in this study is used with multiple good quality sources.

3.6 Logical Data Framework

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables	Empirical Indicators	Method of Data Collection	Sources of Data	Method of Analysis
How has the U.S. geo-strategic interests shaped its policies and actions in the Arab-Israel conflict, 2020-2025?	U.S. geo-strategic interests significantly shape its policies and actions in the Arab-Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025.	Independent Variable(X): U.S. Geo-strategic interests Dependent Variable(Y): policies and actions in the Arab-Israel conflict	U.S. foreign policy decisions, diplomatic engagements, military alliances, regional strategic positioning, policy statements	Documentary method (Secondary Data)	Academic journals, policy reports, government publications, books, international organization reports	Content analysis supported by historical analysis
How has the U.S. support for Israel influence the dynamics of the Arab-Israel conflict in the Middle East, 2020-2025?	U.S. support for Israel influence the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025.	Independent Variable(X): U.S. support Dependent Variable(Y): Conflict dynamics	Military aid volume, arms transfers, diplomatic backing, economic assistance, frequency of conflict escalation	Documentary method (Secondary Data)	Congressional reports, academic literature, UN records, policy documents, institutional publications	Content analysis supported by comparative analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA REPRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of data relating to the Arab–Israeli conflict and U.S. geo-strategic interests in the Middle East between 2020 and 2025. The chapter examines how U.S. strategic interests influenced its policies, diplomatic engagements, military support, and regional alliances within the conflict. The analysis is guided by the study’s hypotheses and anchored on the realist theoretical framework, with emphasis on the implementation of the Abraham Accords and the countering of Iranian regional influence as major dimensions of U.S. involvement in the Middle East.

4.1 U.S. Geo-Strategic Interests and Its Policies and Actions in the Arab–Israeli Conflict (2020–2025)

The Middle East has remained one of the most strategically important regions in global politics due to its geopolitical location, energy resources, military significance, and security dynamics. Consequently, the United States has consistently pursued strategic interests in the region through military alliances, diplomatic interventions, economic engagements, and security cooperation. Between 2020 and 2025, U.S. involvement in the Arab–Israeli conflict was significantly influenced by the desire to preserve regional influence, protect Israel’s security, contain rival powers such as Iran, maintain access to strategic trade and energy routes, and reinforce its global leadership position (Mearsheimer& Walt, 2007).

From a realist perspective, U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East reflects the pursuit of national interest and power maximization within an anarchic international system. Realists argue that states pursue strategic alliances and military superiority in order to preserve security and maintain influence (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). In this regard, Israel occupies a central position within U.S. Middle East policy because it is viewed as a reliable strategic ally capable of advancing American political, military, and intelligence interests within the region.

The period under study witnessed significant geopolitical developments, including the implementation of the Abraham Accords, intensified tensions involving Iran, the expansion of regional normalization agreements, the Gaza conflicts of 2021 and 2023, and increased strategic competition involving global powers such as China and Russia. These developments significantly shaped U.S. policies and strategic calculations within the Arab–Israeli conflict.

The study argues that U.S. geo-strategic interests significantly influenced the direction, nature, and outcomes of American policies toward the Arab–Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025. This supports the first hypothesis of the study which states that U.S. geo-strategic interests significantly shape the nature, direction, and outcomes of its policies and actions in the Arab–Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025.

4.1.1 Implementation of the Abraham Accords to Resolve the Arab–Israeli Conflict

One of the most important diplomatic developments in the Middle East during the study period was the implementation of the “Abraham Accords**”, brokered by the administration of Donald Trump in 2020. The Accords facilitated normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab states, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. The U.S.

government described the agreements as a diplomatic breakthrough capable of promoting regional peace, economic cooperation, and stability in the Middle East (Miller, 2021).

However, beyond diplomatic rhetoric, the Abraham Accords reflected deeper U.S. geo-strategic interests within the Middle East. The accords were carefully crafted to reinforce America's regional dominance, bolster Israel's regional standing, and create a regional alliance framework that can check Iran's growing influence in the region (Khalil, 2022). This reflects the realist premise that states join alliances for the most part to advance a national interest and security interest.

In the past, the Arab states have insisted that the movement towards normalisation with Israel must be linked to the solution of the Palestinian issue by the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state within the framework of the two-state solution. The Abraham Accords, however, were a move away from such a traditional stance, as they were an agreement to normalize relations with Israel without addressing key Palestinian concerns like occupation, settlements, refugees and Jerusalem (Lustick, 2021). This change marked a change in priorities, as for several Arab states, strategic and security considerations now took precedence over ideological concerns governments.

The United States was directly involved in encouraging Accords participation. The Trump administration, for instance, acknowledged Moroccans' sovereignty over Western Sahara soon after Morocco normalized relations with Israel, and Sudan has been taken off the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism because of its agreement to join the Accords (Byman, 2021). The diplomatic benefits they can offer suggest that the accords were not simply peace efforts but tools for strategic leveraging and geopolitical maneuvering.

In addition, the Abraham Accords increased security ties between Israel and Gulf Arab nations. Since normalization, the sharing of intelligence, cyber security, cooperation, military coordination, and arms deals have risen substantially (Telhami, 2023). This cooperation was welcomed by the U.S. and was a strengthening of a regional security system desirable to U.S. interests.

The Accords also opened up new opportunities for the signatory states in relation to trade, investment, tourism, and technological cooperation. Economic integration was seen by the United States as a way of stabilizing ties and decreasing direct U.S. reliance on military engagement in the region. Others see the Accords as part of a more general American policy of exercising control over the region through indirect means instead of a full-scale military campaign (e.g., Steven Cook 2022).

Yet, all of these changes have not yet resulted in the solution of the root causes of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Palestinian leaders highly condemned the agreements, which they claimed cut Palestinian interests out of the picture and violated the “Arab consensus” in favor of Palestinian statehood. The reports of the United Nations showed that conflict over Israeli settlements, territorial occupation and humanitarian issues continued throughout the study period.

In 2021 and 2023, the resurgence of violence in Gaza again highlighted the shortcomings of the Accords as an overall peace mechanism. In these conflicts, the United States has always reiterated Israel's right to self-defense and at the same time urged de-escalation. This would be a two-pronged strategy, which critics say hurt American credibility as a neutral mediator and played into U.S. strategic bias in favor of Israel (Pinfeld, 2024).

Saudi Arabia was another player in the game that was shaping the implementation of the Abraham Accords. Saudi Arabia remained silent during the earliest stages of implementation, but it was an active partner in aspects of regional normalisation and cooperation between the Gulf countries and Israel. The factors of Iran, regional security, and relations with the United States (Gause, 2022) were important to Saudi strategic considerations. It shows how wider regional security issues influenced the successful operation and development of the Accords.

During this era, the part of China in the Middle East has been growing more and more prominent as well. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) facilitated China to deepen economic ties and develop infrastructure in the region. As a result, U.S. engagement in strengthening regional alliances via the Abraham Accords was seen as a means to maintain American presence in Middle Eastern politics and economics as China increased its footprint (Allison, 2023).

In this realist sense, the Abraham Accords can thus be seen not as humanitarian peace efforts, but mostly as tools for strategic alliance building. The pacts added to Israel's regional legitimacy, bolstered anti-Iranian partnerships, ensured continued U.S. regional dominance, and provided Israel with the opportunity to foster regional security cooperation that would benefit American geopolitical interests.

Therefore, the study's hypothesis that U.S. geo-strategic interests has been a significant influence in the nature and direction of U.S. policies and actions in the Arab-Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025 is well supported by the implementation of the Abraham Accords.

4.1.2 Countering of Iranian Regional Security Threat

The overriding geopolitical goal of the U.S. during the Arab-Israeli conflict between 2020 and 2025 was to limit the region's influence by Iran. Iran's strategic shift toward being a

nuclear power, a missile development program, support of armed non-state actors, and growing influence in the Middle East make it a great geopolitical threat to the United States and Israel.

After the Trump administration pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, the United States made its containment policy towards Iran more aggressive. Policymakers in the United States worried more and more about the threat posed by Iran in the region, to Israel's security, and to U.S. strategic interests during the study period (Walt, 2021). The United States, as a result, stepped up its diplomatic, military and intelligence ties with Israel and other Arab nations in order to neutralize Iran.

The military power, intelligence network, and strategic alliance with the United States were among Israel's attributes that played a major role in this tactic. U.S.-Israeli ties grew much closer during the 2020-2025 period with a number of advanced arms sales, missile defense systems, coordination in cyber security, and military exercises (CRS 2024). The U.S. also continued to supply Israel with large amounts of military assistance, thereby maintaining Israel's qualitative military superiority in the area.

Another key factor in the growth of Arab–Israeli normalization was the Iranian threat perception. Other Arab nations like the UAE and Bahrain saw Israel as a valuable strategic ally, able to help them counterbalance Iran's regional influence. (Gause, 2022). This cross-over of interests spurred security ties to grow between Israel and several Arab governments, under U.S. auspices.

Moreover, regional tensions increased in the study period due to the rising Iranian support for all these parties, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and regional militias in Syria and Iraq. Israel repeatedly struck targets it suspected were being operated by Iran in Syria and voiced fears

about Iran's nuclear program. The United States has consistently backed Israel's security measures and criticized Iranian regional activities, which it considers destabilizing (Quandt, 2023).

The 2023 Gaza conflict escalated the conflict between Israel and Iran, as well as between Iran and the United States. The Gaza conflict of 2023 further exacerbated the conflict between Israel and Iran and between Iran and the U.S. American politicians blamed Iran for indirectly supporting armed Palestinian organizations, and Iran condemned U.S. military and diplomatic support to Israel. As a countermeasure, the United States also stepped up its naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf, aiming to prevent the region from descending into further conflict. (CSIS, 2024) This is the realist "might is right" principle as it is applied in an anarchic international system.

Russia was another key player in these developments. Russia had strong military ties with Iran and the Syrian government and was actively involved in diplomatic relations with Israel. As Moscow has grown more active in Syria, U.S. strategic calculations in the Middle East became more complicated and added another layer of great-power competition to the region's politics (Trenin, 2022). This led to U.S. backing of Israel also being integrated into a more comprehensive policy of maintaining American influence in the Middle East against the expansion of Russia and China.

Furthermore, the emergence of another actor in the region, namely Turkey, was also noticed during the study period. Turkey's foreign policy was independent, and sometimes clashed with the U.S. and Israeli regional goals, especially regarding the Gaza Strip and Palestinian issues. Turkey also had strategic ties with NATO, and remained diplomatically active

with Israel and regional Arab players, though. This illustrates the nature of regional entanglements and security perceptions in the Middle East.

The U.S. policy of countering Iran has been blamed for further polarization of the Middle East, the persistence of proxy wars, and increased militarisation in the region. International interest in Iran took a back seat to the Middle East core issue of Israel and Palestine, and this has furthered the instability in the region, according to scholars like Achcar (2021).

But from a realist point of view, U.S. opposition to Iran was an example of power politics. The U.S. wanted to retain control of the region, secure its allies, build military superiority, and make sure there is no rival regional hegemon. So containment of Iran became so enmeshed with U.S. support for Israel and general Middle East security policy that it was impossible to separate the two.

The study thus shows that U.S. policies and actions in the Arab-Israeli conflict during 2020-2025 were greatly influenced by countering Iranian regional influence. This confirms the first hypothesis, that U.S. geo-strategic interests played a significant role in how and in what direction the United States became involved in the conflict.

4.2 U.S. Support for Israel and the Dynamics of the Arab–Israeli Conflict (2020–2025)

Political, military and economic support have kept Israel the most important strategic ally in the Middle East, the United States. In the period 2020-2025, the support for Israel in America had a significant impact on the dynamics of the Arab-Israel conflict through its reinforcement of Israel's military strength, its influence on diplomatic developments and its impact on security relations in the region. The support for U.S. was expressed in military support, arms transfers, diplomatic assistance in intergovernmental bodies, intelligence cooperation and economic

assistance. Such support, from a realist point of view, is the result of strategic alliance politics and the interest of the nation in a competitive international system (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979).

The United States treats Israel as a strategic partner with the capabilities to safeguard American interests in the Middle East, such as regional stability, counterterrorism, intelligence gathering and balancing various actors such as Iran, Russia and extremist groups (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). As a result, U.S. backing for Israel has not waned, despite the criticism of the Israelis' human rights practices and the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

The study supports the thesis that U.S. backing of Israel played a key role in strengthening the power imbalance and driving the escalation and longevity of the Arab–Israeli conflict from 2020 to 2025. This corroborates the second hypothesis of the study.

4.2.1 Disproportionate Supply of U.S. Weapons to Israel in the Middle East

During this study period one of the most visible aspects of the United States' support for Israel was the large and frequent provision of sophisticated military arms and defense systems. The United States was Israel's chief arms supplier, and has always guaranteed the nation's qualitative military superiority in the Middle East. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, 2024) estimates that the United States supplied some 69% of Israel's major arms imports between 2020 and 2024.

Military relations between the two countries strengthened considerably in terms of arms sales, Missile defence, intelligence sharing and joint military exercises. The U.S. has supplied Israel with sophisticated fighter planes (Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II), precision-guided munitions, missile defense technology, drones, armored vehicles, and surveillance technology

(Congressional Research Service, 2024). The military transfers greatly helped bolster Israel's war-fighting capabilities in Gaza, Hezbollah and Iranian-backed warfare.

The amount of U.S. military aid to Israel is in line with U.S. geo-strategic calculations. In 2016, under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the United States and Israel, the United States has agreed to provide Israel with some \$38 billion in military aid over ten years. (Sharp, 2023) Lots of this agreement was put into practice by the annual military aid and emergency defense funding allocations, as well as by additional military packages during times of conflict escalation between 2020 and 2025.

Table 1: Estimated U.S. Military Assistance to Israel (2020–2025)

Year	Estimated Military Aid (USD Billion)	Major Components
2020	3.8	Missile defense, F-35 jets, precision weapons
2021	3.8	Iron Dome support, intelligence systems
2022	3.8	Joint military exercises, defense systems
2023	14.3 (supplementary included)	Emergency wartime assistance
2024	3.8+	Air defense, ammunition replenishment
2025	3.8 (projected allocation)	Security cooperation programs

Source: Congressional Research Service (2024); Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI (2024)).

U.S. support brought about an imbalance in the forces, which was a large factor in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel's military superiority allowed it to wage military operations in Gaza and in neighboring areas using technologies which were not advanced enough for the Palestinian groups. Critics say this imbalance played a part in prolonging the conflict by diminishing the

benefits of compromise and perpetuating the unequal power dynamics between Israel and Palestinian actors (Pappe, 2022).

In addition, there was a greater flow of U.S. arms, which helped to fuel perceptions of imbalance and favoritism in the region. American military aid is often seen as continued military support for Israel, a view shared by Arab governments and region actors. This perception undermined the credibility of the U.S. as a mediator, and led to anti-American feelings across portions of the Middle East (Achcar, 2021).

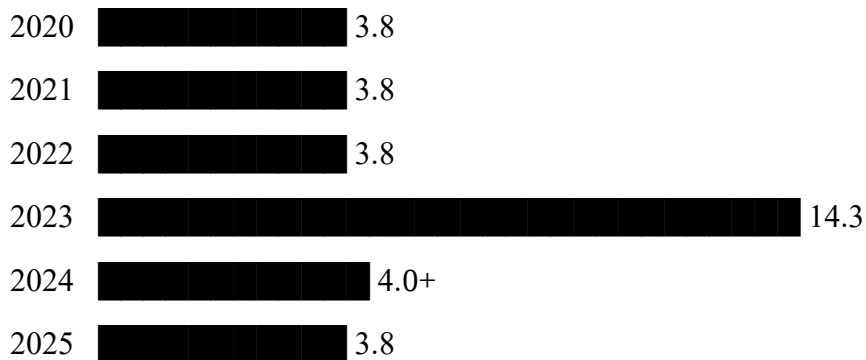
In the recent Gaza war of 2023, there was more focus than ever on the Palestinian conflict and U.S. military support to Israel. In the course of the war, the United States authorized emergency weapons transfers to Israel and accelerated deliveries of ammunition to the country, while rejecting and watering down some U.N. Security Council (UNSC, 2024) ceasefire proposals (Stern, 2023; Tzfati, 2023). The critics said the moves indirectly allowed continued military escalation and humanitarian devastation in Gaza.

Seeing it from the realist perspective, however, military support to Israel by the U.S. is driven by a range of strategic considerations that include, but are not limited to, the need to sustain alliances, the threat from Iran and the need for the U.S. to maintain influence in the region. Realists contend that states sponsor allies that can serve them further their security and geopolitical interests without regard to any normative objections (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Lockheed Martin was another key player in this military tie that profited greatly from the U.S.-Israel defense alliance, especially regarding the export and manufacturing of cutting-edge weapons systems. In U.S. Middle East policy, defense-industrial interests also crossed over with the strategic and political aspects.

Table 2: U.S. Military Support to Israel (2020–2025)

Military Support (Approximate USD Billions)



Source: Illustrated by the researcher using data compiled from Congressional Research Service (2024) and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (2024).

For this reason, the analysis confirms that large and unequal military contributions from the United States greatly strengthened Israel's strategic position and had a significant impact on the escalation and nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict from 2020 to 2025.

4.2.2 U.S. Support for Israel Exacerbate Regional Tensions in the Middle East

In addition to military aid, U.S. support for Israel also added to the regional tensions in the Middle East between 2020 and 2025. American diplomatic support, political support, economic support and military support influenced regional relationships, increased geopolitical tensions and relations with Arab and Islamic actors in the region.

In the political field, the United States as a whole consistently stood up for Israel in international forums, especially at the United Nations. The U.S. has exercised its veto in the Security Council on a number of occasions against resolutions he didn't like but which were unfavorable to Israel (UN Security Council Records, 2024). Some of these actions undermined international accountability processes and furthered the sense of selective diplomacy, critics say.

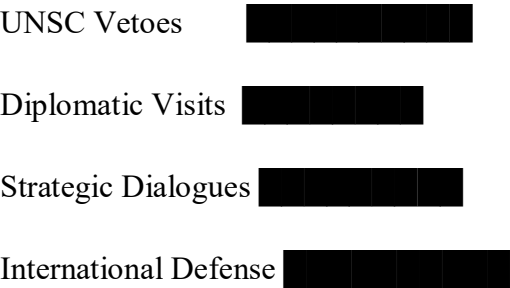
Table 3: Examples of U.S. Political Support for Israel (2020–2025)

Area of Support	Examples
Diplomatic backing	U.S. vetoes on UNSC ceasefire resolutions
Recognition policies	Continued recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital
Bilateral cooperation	Strategic dialogues and defense agreements
International advocacy	Defense of Israel in global institutions

Source: United Nations Security Council Voting Records (2024); U.S. Department of State Reports (2024); Council on Foreign Relations (2023).

Illustration of Political Support

Political Support Indicators



Source: Illustrated by the researcher using data from United Nations Security Council Records (2024) and U.S. Department of State Reports (2024).

In the economic sphere, the U.S. remained Israel's major source of aid and trade support. Economic relations grew in technology, cyber security, defense production and innovation

cooperation, among other areas. In the course of the study, bilateral trade between both countries was more than \$50 billion per year, according to the U.S. Department of State (2024).

Table 4: Dimensions of U.S. Economic Support to Israel

Sector	Nature of Support
Technology	Joint innovation programs
Defense Industry	Defense production partnerships
Trade	Bilateral trade agreements
Research	Scientific and technological cooperation

Source: U.S. Department of State (2024); World Bank Middle East Economic Reports (2024); Congressional Research Service (2024).

Illustration of Economic Support

Economic Cooperation Areas



Source: Illustrated by the researcher using data compiled from U.S. Department of State Reports (2024), World Bank Economic Reports (2024), and Congressional Research Service Publications (2024).

But U.S. backing for Israel also added to the polarization in the region. U.S. policies were often derided by Iran and its allies, including Hezbollah and Hamas, as politically motivated and

undermining. The ongoing American assistance in the Gaza wars of 2021 and 2023 exacerbated anti-American protests and tensions in various Middle Eastern countries (Achcar, 2021).

The regional rivalry between Israel and Iran was further exacerbated by U.S. strategic tilt towards Israel. Throughout the study period, the United States tightened its sanctions on Iran, deployed more military forces in the Persian Gulf and enhanced intelligence sharing with Israel. These moves helped to solidify the sense of a regional bloc against Iran (Walt, 2021).

Russia was another key player in the tensions in the region. Russia was closely involved with Iran and Syria and diplomatic relations were established with Israel. Russia's growing role in Middle Eastern politics added to regional security challenges and geopolitical competition between the US and Russia (Trenin, 2022).

Likewise, during the study period, the Chinese economy and its influence in politics grew in the Middle East. Growing Chinese involvement raised new strategic challenges for the United States, which wanted to maintain its regional dominance, in part by bolstering Israel and its allies (Allison, 2023).

Ongoing violence also led to further criticism of U.S. policy on its humanitarian impact. In the Gaza conflicts, Israel and Palestinian armed groups were accused of rights violations, and critics stated that unconditionally supporting Israel made peace-building efforts more difficult (2024, Human Rights Watch).

But from a realist point of view the United States was more interested in strategic issues than in normative ones. American policymakers saw support of Israel as vital to a preservation of influence, deterrence and strategic alliances in the Middle East.

Accordingly, the analysis shows that U.S. political, military, and economic backing of Israel markedly helped to create tensions, power imbalance, and the enduring Arab–Israeli conflict in the region between 2020 and 2025. This validates the second hypothesis of the study.

Overall, the study presented here shows that the U.S. engagement in the Arab–Israeli conflict was guided by a geo-strategic agenda that is broadly in line with the realist views on international politics. The results revealed that the successes of several key U.S. initiatives – especially the Abraham Accords and the long-term policy of U.S. opposition to Iranian penetration into the region – were more strategic than peace-oriented in nature, and were motivated by a desire to maintain regional dominance, to ensure Israel would continue to be a key ally, and to balance against other regional players like Iran, Russia, and China.

In addition, the chapter demonstrates that the political, military, and economic assistance provided by the United States to Israel played a key role in the dynamics of the conflict, enhancing Israel's military strength and regional alliances. These moves fostered short-term co-operation and security ties, but they also further deepened the polarization in the region and kept the Arab–Israeli conflict alive.

In conclusion, the results of the study support both the hypotheses, with the evidence showing that U.S. geo-strategic interests influenced its policies and actions in the area as well as being a significant factor in perpetuating power imbalance and complexity of the Arab–Israeli conflict over the time period studied.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study made a detailed analysis of the Arab–Israeli conflict and geo-strategic interests of the United States in the Middle East from 2020 to 2025. It stemmed from the indomitable character of the Arab–Israeli conflict, despite several international attempts to resolve it, including under the auspices of the United States and other parties.

The study called on the United States to avoid strategic factors such as the security of Israel as “one of the most important regional allies,” keeping U.S. dominance in the region, ensuring energy security, counterterrorism concerns, and containment of other powers, like Iran, Russia, and China, as “factors that play a large role in U.S. involvement in the region.”

The study drew its guidance from the two theories namely Realism and Hegemonic Stability Theory that determine the action of the state based on the principles of power, national interest and influence in an anarchic international system. These were the frameworks with which to explain U.S. foreign policy action in the Middle East.

The study explored various significant events and trends in the region from 2020 to 2025, such as the Abraham Accords, U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, conflicts in the Gaza Strip, and shifting geopolitical alliances in the Middle East, using qualitative and explanatory analysis.

The results showed that the U.S. geo-strategic interests had a great influence on their policies and actions in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The USA, which claimed to be a neutral broker,

consistently acted in Israel's favor, diminishing their claim to neutrality and reducing the chances of a viable peace. The study thus ends with the conclusion that strategic interest goals generally dominated the objectives of conflict resolution in U.S. interaction with the area.

5.2 Conclusion

The Arab–Israeli conflict is one of the longest-standing and most complex conflicts in modern international relations, marked by long-standing grievances and conflicting national identities, as well as repeated cycles of violence. The fighting has not ended in more than three decades of peace efforts, talks and international brokering, and the unrest and disunity in the Middle East ongoing.

Based on this study it is concluded that the dynamics of the conflict have been influenced by the United States to a great extent, which is a central and influential country in the region on the basis of geo-strategic interests. These interests involve protecting Israel's security and military edge, retaining regional influence, ensuring energy and trade routes, fighting terrorism and countering the influence of rivals from within and outside the region, including Iran.

Additionally, U.S. foreign policy has always seen an alliance with Israel, expressed via military aid, protection in international bodies, and intelligence sharing. The bilateral measures have helped improve bilateral ties, but at the same time, they have fostered the feeling of bias among the Arab countries and among the Palestinians, weakening the United States' credibility as a fair mediator. While the Abraham Accords and other bilateral agreements between Israel and a number of Arab nations gained diplomatic success (normalization), they avoided the main issues of the conflict. These encompass Palestinian statehood, territorial issues, the rights of

refugees and Jerusalem's status. Consequently, such efforts added little to the actual process of conflict resolution but were more about the strategic re-alignment of the region.

The study also concludes that sustainable peace in the Middle East is not possible through power politics, military alliances or selective diplomacy. Rather, it must entail inclusive negotiations, respect for international law, and a balanced approach which takes into account legitimate concerns of Israelis and Palestinians. If left unchecked, the war will continue in various forms, impacting regional and global security.

5.3 Findings

1. The study found that U.S. geo-strategic interests, including regional security, oil protection, and maintaining influence in the Middle East, greatly shaped its policies and actions in the Arab-Israeli conflict from 2020–2025. This was seen in its strong diplomatic and military support for Israel and involvement in regional agreements like the Abraham Accords.
2. The study also found that continued U.S. support for Israel increased Israel's military and political strength while creating more tension and distrust among Palestinians and some Arab states. This contributed to ongoing conflict and weakened peace efforts in the region.

5.4 Recommendations

1. The United States should adopt a more balanced approach in the Arab-Israeli conflict by encouraging fair dialogue and peaceful negotiations between both sides.
2. International organizations and Arab states should strengthen joint peace efforts through diplomacy, humanitarian support, and respect for international law to promote lasting peace in the Middle East.

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