

ULB- LUISS Double Degree

Master's Degree in International Relations, Major in:

Political violence and Security Practices (ULB)

Geopolitical Scenarios and Political risk (LUISS)

Master's dissertation:

***THE ISRAELI STRATEGY VIS-À-VIS THE US FOREIGN
POLICY IN THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL***

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*Alla mia famiglia,
A Davide e a mio Padre,
a chi non smette di credere.*

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I spent the last two years working on my thesis, which has been one of the main intellectual challenge that I have experienced. I don't know how much I have successfully achieved the goal, but I am sure of how much efforts, commitment, passion, pleasure and surprise I have put in it. It has been something that has enriched me, regardless of academic contingences that institutions and society put on it. But I had the possibility of doing this academic path in Rome and Brussels and this study thanks to several people that have contributed to this work.

I must thank you my ULB Supervisor, professor Christian Olsson for every advice and remark. He taught me to see where others do not, to look every time one step forward what I see. Every single remark has been an inspiration, regardless of distances. Thank you to Pro. Scognamiglio and Prof. Alegi and I am sorry for my faults in keeping in touch. Thank you so much to Sara Chiaretti, who has helped me in building this work. She has given me the confidence when I was missing it. I really hope we will meet again in our professional life.

Thank you to professor Trita Parsi for his kindness and his consideration in every work. Every time he reminds me why I decided to study political science and international relations. He has been always ready to any kind of explanation with messages, e-mails and calls.

Thanks to my University, ULB, and thank you to LUISS, because they allowed me to do this double degree. In particular, thank to Madame Necochea and Teresa, they have been always kindly available for any explanation or help when necessary through this last year. .

Thanks to my big family, my nephews, my sisters, my brothers and my parents, they are my heaven in this land. They stand always behind me by pushing for the best regardless of my questionable choices.

Thanks to Marta for their constant help whenever I need. Thanks to Alessandra and La tavola la Rotonda, my dearest, always next to me. Thanks to Camille, Camille, Mehmet, Stann, Hugo and Julien, with whom I shared this beautiful experience and discussions about politics. Thanks to Eleonora, because without her I could have never finish this work. Thanks to Andrea and Giuseppe for having supported me.

Thanks to my father, because he left me the passion for these studies and the curiosity in this life.

Finally, thanks to Davide, my soul mate and true love without whom this goal will not be possible.

Michela.

ACRONYMS/ LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

ADL: Anti-Defamation League
AIEF: American Israel Education Foundation
AIPAC: American Israel Public Affair Committee
AJC: American Jewish Committee
BDS movements: The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement
BESA: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies
BPC: Bipartisan Policy Center
CBI: Central Bank of Iran
CISADA: Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010
CPD: •Committee on the Present Danger.
CUFI: Christians United for Israel
EU: European Union
FDD: Foundation for defense of democracies
FPI: Foreign Policy Initiative
GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council
GOP: Grand Old Party (the Republican Party
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
IC: Intelligence Community
IDF: Israel Defense Force
IFCA: Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012
INARA: Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act
INKSCA: :Iran, North Korea, and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act
IPC: Iran Policy Committee
IREA: Iran Sanctions Enabling Act
IRGC: Islamic Revolution Guard Corps
IRPSA: Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act
ISA: Iran Sanctions Act of 1996.
ITRSA: Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act
JCPOA: Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action
JDAM: joint direct attack munition
JINSA: Jewish Institute for National Security of America
JPOA: Joint Plant of Action.

JTA: Jewish Telegraph Agency
MFN: Most favorite Nation clause
MOU: Memorandum of Understanding
NDAA: National Defense Authorization Act
NDAA: National Defense Authorization Act,
NIAC: National Iran American Council
NIC: National Intelligence Council
NID: National Intelligence Department
NORPAC: North Jersey PAC.
NPT: Non- Proliferation Treaty
NSC: National Security Council
OFAC: Office of Foreign Assets Control part of the Treasury Department
PAC: Political action committee
PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization
PRF: Project for the Republican Future
RJC: Republican Jewish Council
SDN List: Specially Designated Nationals And Blocked Persons List- Human Readable Lists
TIP: THE Israel project
UANI: United Against Nuclear Iran
UN: United Nations
UNGA: United Nations General Assembly
UNSC: United Nations Security Council
WINEP Washington Institute of Near East Policy

SUMMARY.

In an interdependent world, the relationship between Israel and the US has always been important for both States. Indeed, it has remained always strong throughout the succession of numerous administrations, several wars and diplomatic tensions at the international and national level. Nevertheless, the relation suffered when Barack Obama became the new US President, who tried to establish a new path of peaceful diplomatic relations with Iran over its nuclear program. The nuclear diplomacy reached its maximum splendour with the JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal between P5+1 and Iran in 2015, which regulated the Iran nuclear program in exchange for sanctions and economic' s relief. The deal has been contrasted by Israel, i.e. by Netanyahu and his establishment as well as by US pro-Israel organizations. However, the diplomatic path has been reversed with the new US President Donald Trump, who from 2017 seats at the White House. Trump dismantled the JCPOA and repristinated heavier sanctions over Iran. Indeed, in line with Israel, the new President took a series of decision in foreign policy in a pro-Israel key, among which the end of JCPOA and peaceful relations with Iran.

In the light of the events concerning Israel-US and Iran nuclear deal, I have formulated the research question: *“How Israel has acted vis-à-vis the US foreign policy in the Iran nuclear deal?”* by considering the two Obama administrations and the Trump's mandate until 2018. Indeed, the research analyzed which strategies and through which behaviors, Israeli has acted on US administration and society to push the US' decision near to Israeli position. Therefore, the main question led me to the other two sub-questions: *how Israel State and pro-Israel entities have contributed to US foreign policy decisions in the Iran nuclear deal affair? And, what if Israel has changed some strategy, what it has changed from 2009 to 2017?*

The research question stems in the light of the literature than has increasingly focused on Israeli actions vis-à-vis the US foreign policy, since 2006, when Mearsheimer and Walt published their book *“The Israel lobby and The US foreign policy”*. However, fewr works had been made concerning this precise theme because of its contemporaneity, which is why the analysis is partially based on articles from newspapers, interviews and reports.

Since I do believe that domestic features may shape foreign policy decisions with the same weight of the international environment, I decided to answer the questions by using Putnam's theory of two- levels' game. Indeed, it allows me to focus on two levels, domestic and international, which both shape foreign policy decisions and international negotiations by giving importance to every actor in the scene. Therefore, I looked at pro-Israel organizations, i.e. AIPAC, that acted in US institutions, mainly on Capitol Hill and within the US society. At the same time, I looked at the action made by the Israeli prime minister and his establishment at level 1.

The research does not want to reach general conclusions verifiable for all cases, neither the one to verify if Israel had successfully reached its goals and impede or influence the Iran nuclear negotiations by acting on these two levels. On the contrary, my case study is aimed to test three main hypotheses:

1. A greater lobby influence in institutional and non- institutional actors in the Iran nuclear issue conditions the US national.

Concerning this hypothesis, one remark has to be made. National interest is a changeable concept, meaning that they can be redefined by the President or the leaders of the County according to the period and the international surrounding. Indeed, usually, *national interest* referred to the State's ambition in economic, security, trade, cultural or social field. Hence, it is the framework within which leaders guide their actions in foreign or national policies¹. In this case, both Obama and Trump had different national interests than the Middle East. Indeed, for diverse reasons, both Presidents wanted a disengagement from the region, fewer troops involved and fewer money expenditures in the region.

2. A broader AIPAC network in US institutional and non- institutional environment does not imply a more influential action in pushing for a pro-Israeli foreign policy.

In this case, the concept of "influence" is difficult to limit and to measure with certainty, in particular, the influence among States and non-State or State actors. Indeed, the research considered influential an action when it is effective, meaning successful since the pro-Israel actor reached the goal to which was pushing for.

3. Stronger is the Israeli prime minister's action at level 1, stronger and more influential is the pro-Israel lobby position in carrying on common policies against Iran nuclear deal and vice-versa.

To test these three hypotheses, the research departs from theoretical premises that must be taken into account to understand States' relations in a globalized world. Indeed, I developed the research in the complex interdependence framework as pointed out by Nye, where coalitions in one State are not affected by States' borders. Second, agencies from other governments can be included in the State's decisions. Even more, if hard power continued to play an important role in States' relations, also soft power is fundamental to shape action, however under certain conditions. In this case, I used qualitative analysis of informational tools, behaviours' analysis and discourse through framework effect and prospect theories. Nevertheless, the case study method implied allows me to use also quantitative analysis through pools and statistics.

The dissertation is divided into four main parts following a chronological time, which are preceded by the explanation of theoretical framework and the theory used, as well as the methodology, the operational concepts and literature review.

The literature review is separated into two main parts following the two-levels theory. One part focuses on the international actions carried on by Netanyahu and his relations with Obama. In the first part, the I have considered Trita Parsi's book "*Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*". Then, I R.J. Reardon with his monograph "*Containing Iran. Strategies for Addressing the Iranian Nuclear Challenge*". Finally, R.O. Freedman who focused on the erosion of US-Israeli relations during Obama's second mandate. The second part focuses on the literature that analyzed the Israeli action vis-à-vis US foreign policy on level 2. In this case, the research has been broader, since few literatures focus on the specific case of the Iran deal.

¹ Liotta P.H., Lloyd R. M, "To Die For: National Interests and Strategic Uncertainties, Strategy and Force Planning", *Naval War College Press*, 2004, p. 114.

Therefore, since strategy and way of actions are usually consolidated throughout the time, I have considered previous studies on AIPAC's role and its structure. The first main work has been the one of M.S. Morris in 1993, *"The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)"*, in which he described the origins of the pro-Israel lobby. However, Ido Oren focused on the Secretary of Defense's role in the JCOPA and its relations with AIPAC. A watershed in the literature has been the Mearsheimer and S.M. Walt's book: *"The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy"*. They focused on pro-Israel lobby influence in US foreign policy from a realist point of view, taking into account four main cases and concluding that the lobby shapes the US national interests. The book has raised many critics but also many favors among academics, who from 2007 onwards increasing focus on the Israel actions vis-à-vis the US foreign policy. One of the main debates has been between Foxman and Mearsheimer and Waltz since the former accused the professors of false authoritative charges accusing them of anti-Semitic ideas. J. Newhouse, a senior fellow at World Security Institute, argues that AIPAC has been a model of influence for other lobbies, and he explains how its actions are focused on Capitol Hill. Another important contribution has been given by G.F. Smith, who made a large quantitative analysis looking at AIPAC connections to understand how really works the pro-Israel lobby, that he defined as IAOs, Israel Affinity Organizations. Indeed, he argued that AIPAC is only one of the numerous pro-Israel organizations through which Israeli national interest is promoted in the US institutions. However, AIPAC is the main important one because of its history and its broader network, its bipartisan actions that allow reaching successful goals most of the times.

Nevertheless, before to go in details in the explanation of the chapters, some remarks must be done as far as concern the pro-Israel lobby. Firstly, the concept of "lobby" refers to a group of people who try to promote and defend private interests, or State's interests by acting and pressuring public political institutions that are in charge of State's decisions². Even if it can refer to an activity with a negative meaning, i.e. a group that interfere and influence political decision-making in favor of private interests³; in the US, it does not have any positive or negative connotation. But lobbies are institutionalized with a fiscal tax regularization under 501(c) (4) and 501(c) (3) the fiscal status⁴, legally enregistered and positively supported by citizens since they represent a guarantee for the republicanism following a pluralistic view of State. Second, the pro-Israel lobby has not any ethnic connotations, as I explained in the first chapter. The pro-Israel lobby is a broader association of groups and organizations. I focus here on the second most powerful and influential lobby in US as ranking the Fortune Magazine: AIPAC⁵, the main engine of the opposition to the Iran Nuclear Deal in the US. However, AIPAC is made by people from different ethnicity and religions: Hispanic, evangelical protestant, Christians, but not necessarily Jewish, and it would be wrong to call it "the Jewish lobby". For this reason, the thesis is stripped of any religious or ethnic attitudes, but I refer to Israel or Israeli as people who had links with the State of Israel.

² Farnel F., *Le lobbying: stratégies et techniques d'intervention* (Editions Organisation), 1994.

³ David C.P., Balthazar L., Vaïsse J., *La politique étrangère des États-Unis : Fondements, acteurs, formulation*, (Presse de Sciences Po, Paris), 2003.

⁴ Riccardo De C., *Le Mani Sulla Legge": Il Lobbying Tra Free Speech E Democrazia*, (Ledizioni, 2017).

⁵ Geler, B., "Here's Why AIPAC and the Israel Lobby Will Be Critical to 2016 Elections", *Fortune magazine*, March 21, 2016

By considering the analyses, the first chapter is dedicated to the context of Iran nuclear deal and the positions of the main actors considered in the study: the US, Israel and Iran and their positions vis-à-vis the deal. In particular, I focus on the relations between Netanyahu and Obama, that I found fundamental to understand Israeli actions. Indeed, this relationship started already with some difficulties and distance of political views, not only on how to deal with the Iran nuclear program but also Palestine has been soil of discord between Obama and Netanyahu. Moreover, I focused on AIPAC, I dedicated one part to the latter by describing its structure, its main tool of action and its position vis-à-vis the Iran nuclear deal.

The second chapter is dedicated to the first Obama's mandate, from 2009 to 2012. I divided the chapter into three parts. One is dedicated to Israeli action at level 1, by focusing on Netanyahu's strategy vis-à-vis international community and the US. Here, two main strategies are envisaged through frame effect theory and the artificial link between Iran and Palestine to maintain the former a US top priority. Indeed, he framed negatively Iran as the greatest threat, by pointing out a clear division between "us" Vs "them", meaning "western" vs "Muslim" world, through which he wanted to push to a heavier action against the Iran nuclear power. Plus, he linked the Palestine issue and Iran in a moment in which Palestine took distance from Iran. The strategy has been mainly a way to keep Iran as a US priority since Obama's doctrine was oriented towards disengagement from the Middle East. Then, the chapter focuses on domestic action made by AIPAC on Congress through the introduction of bills to increase sanctions as well as pressures on the president and executive's appointments. The action has been made by AIPAC in several ways: delivering money for lobbying activities, sending letters and e-mails but also through its Policy conference that is held every year in Washington. The "Special Thursday" is a forum where lawmakers, common people, students, Jewish billionaire and experts meet each other and speak about a pro-Israel US action or how Israel and US improved their relations, and how to do better. In the end, I focus on the military strategy at both levels, domestic and international. At level 2, AIPAC acted on Congress and the executive, whereas at level 1, Netanyahu implied several relations: direct relations between executive, mainly Secretaries of Defense, Panetta and Barak had intense contacts; but Intelligence ties did matter. The main Israeli action has been based in instilling fears through a highly likely military option, something for which Obama's administration was not prepared. A military strike would cause an escalation in the region, a broader US' involvement on the soil, meanwhile, Obama was trying to disengage US troops, especially in the light of recent failures.

The third chapter is dedicated to second Obama's mandate, from 2013 until 2014, when the JCPOA was reached and implemented. The chapter is divided into two main parts. One focuses on Israeli action before the interim deal of November 2013. At level 1, Israel has used the informational flow to national interest, by delivering false information of Syria's use of chemical weapons to provoke a US intervention. On domestic level, the main action has been made by AIPAC on executive and legislative power by following its traditional pattern. In particular, AIPAC has influenced the Hagel's appointment as Secretary of Defense. The second part considers the time from the interim deal until his implementation. Here, we note a change of patterns: internationally isolated, Netanyahu started new relations with States that have been always considered

dangerous, enemies or friends of enemies, specifically Russia and Saudi Arabia. In the latter case, we focus on the action made by Netanyahu at level 1 and by AIPAC at level 2. Indeed, both tried to fear the US administration through new relations with Saudis against Iran and its nuclear program. Considering the domestic level, AIPAC continued its main pattern of action upon Congress and executive, but its actions became ineffective. Indeed, the division between Obama and AIPAC was clear, but instead of public debates, AIPAC preferred an apparent softer approach, and it started to rely on other Conservative or Hawkish pro-Israel organizations, i.e. WINEP, FBI, BPC, FDD, ECI, TPI, UANI, CPD and IPC. The broader network has been characterized by the common personalities and experts that shared. Truly, AIPAC could have a bigger audience through them thanks to important media with whom they were connected, such as POLITICO, NYT, Washington Post among others. Nevertheless, the network was a closed group that did not allow to enlarge in an effective supportive way the audience. It must be said that during this period, 2014, Israel and the pro-Israel action was focused on another theatre: Gaza's war since Israel was fighting against Hamas and other militias in Gaza. Accordingly, also AIPAC actions in capitol hill started to focus on bills that promoted US military assistance.

The last chapter analyzed the time from 2015 to 2018. It is divided into two main parts. One stresses the end of Obama's mandate, 2015-2016, during which Netanyahu lost all leverage on Obama and he talked directly before US Congress, overcoming presidential powers. At the national level, AIPAC acted outside and inside of Capitol hill. About the former strategy, it created a new pro-Israel organization to influence its negotiations and contrast the JCPOA. Whereas, within Capitol Hill, once republicans won the midterm elections, AIPAC push towards heavier actions against Iran and the final deal, which put Obama in a state of fear since new sanctions would stop international negotiations. Therefore, the President threatened a veto power and a formal expedient, according to which the JCPOA should not be conceived as a US treaty. This would imply that Congress would not have power in foreign policy since according to the constitution it has the right of expressing its vote in case of the international treaty. Accordingly, AIPAC changes bill's content, by asking a precise role for the Congress vis-à-vis the foreign policy in the Iran deal. After the JCPOA's approval, the deal must be approved or disapproved by the Congress. Another change of contents in AIPAC's bills has been registered after the deal, since they pushed for new sanctions due to non-nuclear Iran's activities. The last part is dedicated to Trump's mandate, the first two years of his mandate. Here, the main focus is on chief negotiator's relations, Trump and Netanyahu, who shared the same political vision against Iran. I try to demonstrate how the personal links between Presidential establishment and Israeli society and personalities have been the main channel of Israeli action. In the end, I highlight which strategies did not change with the new President, on the contrary, they have been stronger, i.e. the relations with Saudis.

The analysis at the two level's theory, in a context of mutual and complex interdependence, has given to me the possibility of understanding Israeli actions vis-à-vi the US foreign policy in the nuclear deal.

Even more, it gave to me the possibility to test my three hypotheses. Indeed, by considering them, as far as concern the first hypothesis:

1. A greater lobby influence in institutional and non- institutional actors in the Iran nuclear issue conditions the US national.

The hypothesis is partially demonstrated by the analysis.

I have shown throughout the chapters that Obama's leading from behind doctrine was aimed at a disengagement from the Middle East and a peaceful solution over the nuclear deal. Truly, he achieved the goal with Iran, because of two reasons. Firstly, a change in Iran government with Rouhani as President, in line with Obama's diplomacy and solution; secondly, an international community who stand with Obama. Indeed, Obama did not conclude the deal alone but with the P5+1. Nevertheless, Obama has been not immune from Israeli actions, mostly during his first mandate and half of the second. As showed in Chapter 1, AIPAC's pressure on Congress and executive, the threat of military action carried out by both levels, has influenced Obama to pass new heavier sanctions against Iran avoiding a peaceful solution. Furthermore, in this period did count electoral campaign, since Obama wanted a new mandate and AIPAC's favor in the electoral campaign would be fundamental for him. However, instead of disengagement as Panetta announced through a military expenditure cut, the wider AIPAC's lobbied activities on congressmen, senators and executive on which acted by sending letters but as well as through its conference pushed the administration to supply military furniture to Israel, increasing their expenses in the region. Even more, it has been fundamental the AIPAC action in Hagel's appointment, since though it did not impede the nomination, AIPAC lawmakers tore up promises for a more hawkish approach against Iran more in line with Israel. De facto, by pushing and acting on the process, in the end, AIPAC had influenced the results as far as concern the change in Hagel's goals, from which he started.

Besides, in 2016, after JCPOA implementations, when relations between Israel and US were at minimum, Obama decided in favor of a new MOU, the largest in history. Regardless, we cannot be sure on how much Israeli pressures did matter in the decision, we should evaluate that, at the end, the pro-Israel decision has been taken against Iran's power in the region and with Khamenei in disagreement. Finally, the hypothesis needs to be corrected taking into account Trump. Indeed, in the last chapter, it has been reported how the direct contacts between Israeli leadership and Trump as well as Trump's business ties have been more relevant vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iran deal than AIPAC's actions.

As far as concern the second hypothesis:

2. A broader AIPAC network in US institutional and non- institutional environment does not imply a more influential action in pushing for a pro-Israeli foreign policy.

The hypothesis is confirmed.

Precisely in chapter 3, I have demonstrated how AIPAC has broader its network by relying on non-institutional actors, i.e. other pro-Israel organizations that shared the same hawkish views concerning Iran and the JCPOA. Indeed, once it was aware of less effectiveness in Congress, in 2014, the pro-Israel lobby strengthened its action on congressmen but also through think tanks and advocacy groups. It relied mainly on WINEP, its spin-off, but also on FBI, BPC, FDD, ECI, TPI, UANI, CPD and IPC. However, the major deficit

of AIPAC's network was that it was a closed network with overlapping directors' boards. For instance, founders of one organization, such as UANI, were already experts or directors or others, such as WINEP. Or, hawkish pro-Israel lawmakers already in line with AIPAC were part of the board of these organizations. These ties have constituted a closed circle that along with the ongoing polarization between the two main parties (Democrats more liberals and Republicans more Conservative) at that time it has prevented AIPAC from enlarging its network to gain new support, that was what it needed to push for a pro-Israel foreign policy against Iran. Truly, we can note that when Israel decided to open towards Saudis and AIPAC followed Netanyahu through an action at the domestic level, Obama feared an alliance between them in anti-Iranian perspective. Despite the fact, AIPAC did not make an alliance with Saudis, at least no evidence is provided yet, they were pushing in the same direction against the deal; something that Obama feared, putting pressure on him, more than a broader closed network of relations.

Finally, the last hypothesis:

3. Stronger is the Israeli prime minister's action at level 1, stronger and more influential is the pro-Israel lobby position in carrying on common policies against Iran nuclear deal and vice-versa.

The hypothesis is not completely confirmed since it is confirmed when the influence goes from domestic to international level.

To better say, it is confirmed with the formulation: "*stronger is the pro-Israel lobby action, stronger is the Israeli prime minister action at level 1 in carrying on common policies against Iran nuclear deal*", whereas it is not true the opposite. Indeed, when in a strong position AIPAC has supported Netanyahu strategy vis-à-vis the US policy, as in the case of military strike (chapter 1 and 2), it has been successful in influencing Obama and it has enforced Netanyahu's actions. The same happened in maintaining the Iran threat of the top of US priorities by framing it as "*urgent threat*" as stressed also by Ido Oren⁶. On the contrary, when AIPAC has a weak and weak has been its actions, then also Netanyahu's position in carrying policies against Iran has been weak, as demonstrated in the case of Syria redline in chapter 3. It is true that AIPAC is "the pro-Israel lobby" as it affirmed, but it is an American pro-Israel lobby, born and raised in the US. The organization knows the US system as well as its society and the best approach to achieve its goals through a broader role. Then, it is quite natural that AIPAC action reinforced Netanyahu's once. Whereas, the opposite is not confirmed. As stressed in the last chapter, during Trump administration until 2018, Netanyahu has taken a strong position vis-à-vis US policies in the Iran deal, with friendly relations with the new President. Indeed, AIPAC has had a defiled role in the matter since Trump, due to Israel- Trump personal links. Even more, since the new President arrived, AIPAC seemed to have lost the main source of influence, its bipartisanship, whereas Netanyahu acquired stronger leverage on his new friend.

In conclusion, even though it does not concern properly my hypotheses, I consider this last point one of the main important conclusion for the literature. Indeed, it has been stressed in the literature that AIPAC

⁶Ido Oren, "Why has the United States not bombed Iran? The domestic politics of America's response to Iran's nuclear program", 659-684.

acted to promote the Israeli interests also at the expenses of the US' national interests. However, the Iran deal has shown how the main concern for AIPAC has been its bipartisanship, especially from 2015/2016, when the deal has been signed and implemented.

INTRODUCTION.

In an interdependent world, the relationship between Israel and the US has always been important for both States. Indeed, it has remained always strong throughout the different administrations and diplomatic tensions at the international and national level. Nevertheless, the relation suffered when Barack Obama became the new US President since he tried to establish a new path of peaceful diplomatic relations with Iran over its nuclear program. Nuclear diplomacy reached its maximum splendour with the JCPOA between P5+1 and Iran in 2015. The Iran nuclear deal allowed controlling Iran nuclear enrichment in exchange for sanctions and economic' s relief. However, the deal has been highly contrasted by Israel, i.e. by Netanyahu and his establishment as well as by US pro-Israel organizations. The diplomatic path has been reversed with the new US President, Donald Trump, who from 2017 seats at the White House. Trump dismantled the JCPOA and repriminated heavier sanctions over Iran. Indeed, in line with Israel, the new President took a series of foreign policy decisions in a pro-Netanyahu key, among which the end of JCPOA.

In the light of the events concerning the relations between Israel-US in the Iran nuclear deal, I have formulated the research question: *“How Israel has acted vis-à-vis the US foreign policy in the Iran nuclear deal, during Obama's mandates and the first part of Trump administration?”* The research wants to analyze which strategies and through which behaviors Israeli has acted on US administration and society to push the US' decision near to Israeli position. Therefore, the main question led me to the other two sub-questions: *how Israel State and pro-Israel entities have contributed to US foreign policy decisions in the Iran nuclear deal affair? And, what if Israel has changed some strategy, what it has changed from 2009 to 2017?*

The question stems in the light of the literature increasingly focused on Israeli actions vis-à-vis the US foreign policy, especially since 2006 when professors Mearsheimer and Walt published their book *“The Israel lobby and The US foreign policy”*. However, fewer works studied the precise case of the Israeli behavior vis-à-vis US foreign policy in the Iran deal. Indeed, because of its contemporaneity, the analysis is partially based on articles from newspapers, interviews and reports.

Since I do believe that domestic features may shape foreign policy decisions with the same weight of the international environment, I decided to answer the questions by using Putnam's theory of two- levels' game. Indeed, it allows me to focus on two levels, domestic and international, which both shape foreign policy decisions and international negotiations by giving importance to every actor in the scene. Therefore, I looked at pro-Israel organization, i.e. AIPAC, that acted in US institutions, mainly on Capitol Hill and within the US society. At the same time, I looked at the action made by the Israeli prime minister and his establishment at level 1.

The aim of the research is no to create a general theory verifiable for all cases, neither to verify if Israel had successfully reached its goals and impede or influence the Iran nuclear negotiations, by acting on US foreign policy decisions. On the contrary, my case study is aimed to understand how Israel has acted in order to verify three main hypotheses:

1. A greater lobby influence in institutional and non- institutional actors in the Iran nuclear negotiations conditions the US national.

Concerning this hypothesis, one remark has to be made. National interest is a changeable concept, meaning that they can be redefined by the President or the leaders of the Country according to the period and to the international surrounding. Indeed, usually, *national interest* referred to the State's ambitions in economic, security, trade, cultural or social field. Hence, it is the framework within which leaders guide their actions in foreign or national policies⁷. In this case, both Obama and Trump had different national interests than the Middle East. For diverse reasons, both Presidents wanted a disengagement from the region, fewer troops involved and fewer money expenditures in the region.

2. A broader AIPAC network in US institutional and non- institutional environment does not imply a more influential action in pushing for a pro-Israeli foreign policy in the Iran nuclear deal.
3. Stronger is the Israeli prime minister's action at level 1 more influential is the pro-Israel lobby position in carrying on common policies against Iran nuclear deal and vice-versa.

The concept of "influence" is difficult to limit and to measure with certainty, in particular in case of States' relation and non-State- State actors' relations. For this reason, the research considers as influential an action that has been effective in changing behaviors. In the case, an action is considered influential when effective in promoting pro-Israel goals and interests. Hence, the Israel action should not be considered influential only if the final goal is reached, but it could be influential also in the decision-making process, by changing the initial actors' position.

To test these three hypotheses, the research departs from theoretical premises that must be taken into account to understand States' relations in a globalized world. Indeed, the research started from the theoretical premises of a complex interdependence world as pointed out by Nye, where coalitions in one State are not affected by States' borders. Second, agencies from other governments can be included in the State's decisions. In this context, although hard power continued to play an important role in States' relations, soft power is fundamental to shape action under certain conditions.

I implied a qualitative analysis of informational tools, behaviours' analysis and discourse through framework effect and prospect theories. Nevertheless, the case study method allows me to use also quantitative analysis through pools and statistics.

The dissertation is divided into four main parts following a chronological time, which are preceded by the explanation of theoretical framework and theory, methodology, operational concept and literature review.

Then, the first chapter is dedicated to the context of Iran nuclear deal and the relations between the different States involved: the US, Israel and Iran and which are their positions in the deal. In particular, I focus on the relations between Netanyahu and Obama, that I found fundamental to understand Israeli actions. Moreover, since the main actor on which I focused have been Israel state and AIPAC, I dedicated one part to the latter by describing its structure, its main tool of action and its position vis-à-vis the Iran nuclear deal.

⁷ Liotta P.H., Lloyd R. M, "*To Die For: National Interests and Strategic Uncertainties, Strategy and Force Planning*", (Naval War College Press, 2004) 114.

The second chapter is dedicated to the first Obama's mandate, from 2009 to 2012. I divided the chapter into three parts. One is dedicated to Israeli action at level 1 that focused on Netanyahu, chief negotiator, strategy vis-à-vis international community and the US. Here, two main strategies are envisaged through frame effect theory and the artificial link between Iran and Palestine to maintain the former a US top priority. Then, the chapter focuses on domestic action made by AIPAC on Congress through the introduction of bills to increase sanctions; as well as pressures on the president and executive's appointments. In the end, I focus on the military strategy at both levels, domestic and international.

The third chapter is dedicated to second Obama's mandate, from 2013 until 2014, when the JCPOA was reached and implemented. The chapter is divided into two main parts. One focuses on Israeli action before the interim deal of November 2013. At level 1, the use informational flow to shape national interest, by delivering false information of Syria's use of chemical weapons to provoke a US intervention in the region. On national level, the main action has been made by AIPAC on executive and legislative power. The other part considers the time from the interim deal until his implementation. Here, we note a change of patterns: internationally isolated, Netanyahu started new relations with States that have been always considered dangerous, enemies or friends of enemies, specifically Russia and Saudi Arabia. In the latter case, we focus on the action made by Netanyahu at level 1 and by AIPAC at level 2. Indeed, both tried to fear the US administration through new relations with Saudis against Iran and its nuclear program. Considering the domestic level, AIPAC continued its main pattern of action upon Congress and executive, but since its actions became ineffective, it started to rely on other pro-Israel organizations.

The last chapter analyzed the time from 2016 to 2018. It is divided into two main part. One stresses the end of Obama's mandate, 2015-2016, during which Netanyahu lost all leverage on Obama and he talked directly before US Congress, overcoming presidential powers. At the national level, AIPAC acted outside and inside of Capitol hill. About the former strategy, it created a new pro-Israel organization to influence its negotiations and contrast the JCPOA. Whereas, looking at its action on Congress, it changes the main requests: it wanted a precise role for the Congress vis-à-vis the foreign policy in the Iran deal. After the JCPOA's approval, the deal must be approved or disapproved by the Congress. Another change of contents in AIPAC's bills has been registered after the deal since they pushed for new sanctions due to non-nuclear Iran's activities. The last part is dedicated to Trump's mandate, the first two years of his mandate. Here, the main focus is on chief negotiator's relations, Trump and Netanyahu, who shared the same political vision against Iran. I try to demonstrate how the personal links between Presidential establishment and Israeli society and personalities have been the main channel of Israeli action. In the end, I highlight which strategies did not change with the new President, on the contrary, they have been stronger, i.e. the relations with Saudis.

Eventually, I end with the conclusions about the demonstration or falsification of my hypothesis. After, I attach annexes to clarify some explanation made throughout the analysis.

In conclusion, some remarks must be done as far as concern the pro-Israel lobby. Firstly, the concept of "lobby" refers to a group of people who try to promote and defend private interests, or State's interests, by

acting and pressuring public political institutions in charge of State's decisions⁸. Even if it can refer to an activity with negative connotations, i.e. a group that interfere and influence political decision-making in favor of private interests⁹; in US, it does not have any positive or negative connotation. But lobbies are institutionalized with a fiscal tax regularization under 501(c) (4) and 501(c) (3) the fiscal status¹⁰, legally enregistered and positively supported by citizens, since they represent a guarantee for the republicanism following a pluralistic view of State. Second, the pro-Israel lobby has not any ethnic connotations, as I explained in the first chapter. The pro-Israel lobby is a broader association of groups and organizations. I focus here on the second most powerful and influential lobby in US as ranking the Fortune Magazine: AIPAC¹¹, the main engine of the opposition to the Iran Nuclear Deal in US. However, AIPAC is made by people from different ethnicity and religions: Hispanic, evangelical protestant, Christians, but not necessarily Jewish, and it would be wrong to call it "the Jewish lobby". For this reason, the thesis is stripped of any religious or ethnic attitudes, but I refer to Israel or Israeli as people who had links with the State of Israel.

⁸ Farnel F., *Le lobbying: stratégies et techniques d'intervention* (Editions Organisation), 1994.

⁹ David C.P., Balthazar L., Vaïsse J., *La politique étrangère des États-Unis : Fondements, acteurs, formulation*, (Presse de Sciences Po, Paris), 2003.

¹⁰ Riccardo De C., *Le Mani Sulla Legge": Il Lobbying Tra Free Speech E Democrazia*, (Ledizioni, 2017).

¹¹ Geler, B., "Here's Why AIPAC and the Israel Lobby Will Be Critical to 2016 Elections", *Fortune magazine*, March 21, 2016

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PREMISES AND THEORY.

The dissertation starts from several theoretical assumptions based on complex interdependence, as defined by Keohane and Nye¹². Firstly, coalitions are not limited by national boundaries, but they are affected by transnational relations that strike groups. These transitional ties may link groups directly to foreign actors in other societies or governments; and, they can benefit from this network with consequences on patterns of political action. The multiple channels of contacts between governmental and non- governmental actors led to trans-governmental coalitions. Indeed, governments agencies try to include actors from other governments in their decision-making process¹³. This is common in foreign policy decision making, where it is possible to regulate State's behaviour according to other's national interests¹⁴. Secondly, domestic, transnational and trans-governmental actors shape the political action within a State. Asymmetrical interdependence, transnational actors and international organizations could be a source of power¹⁵. Thirdly, the politicization of issues can be made to shape foreign governments' agenda-setting also by domestic groups¹⁶. Finally, international organizations do matter in world politics: they contribute to creating coalitions, to shape the agenda-setting; they allow small States to be influential punching above their weight in the international forums. This is true especially in foreign policy's decisions, conceived as "*a continuous changing process where states co-operated with other states on its own grounds or sometimes modified policies regarding the international environment or pressures*".¹⁷ The concept of foreign policy as a continuous process means that it never ends when one government ends, but "*governments through individual policymakers aspire to bring by wielding influence abroad and by changing or sustaining the behavior to other states*"¹⁸.

In opposition to the international relations' realist, these theoretical assumptions have been chosen as premises because they can better explain the object of my study, which considers several actors in a multidimensional interdependence's context¹⁹. On the contrary, the traditionalist paradigm assumes that the state is a unitary predominant actor in world politics²⁰. Plus, it considers the military force the most effective means of wielding power, at the top of the world politics²¹, by looking at the US-Israeli relations in terms of geostrategic utility to the US. Truly, foreign policy's decisions are guided by States' national interests

¹² Keohane R. O., Nye J.S., *Power & Interdependence*, (Princeton University, 2012).

¹³ *Ibidem*, 28-29

¹⁴ A. Mubeen, "Foreign Policy and Domestic Constraints: A Conceptual Account", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No.2, (July - December 2014): 657-675.

¹⁵ Keohane R. O., Nye J.S., *Power & Interdependence*, (Princeton University, 2012), 26.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp.27

¹⁷ A. Mubeen, "Foreign Policy and Domestic Constraints: A Conceptual Account", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No.2, (July - December 2014): 658.

¹⁸ Holsti, K., Englewood Cliffs N.J., *International Politics A Framework for Analysis* (Prentice Hall, 1997).

¹⁹ Interdependence as Keohane and Nye explain means: "mutual dependence" and "reciprocal effects among countries or actors in different countries".

Keohane R. O., Nye J.S., *Power & Interdependence*, (Princeton University, 2012), 7.

²⁰ Waltz, N. K., *Theory of International Politics*, (Mass McGraw-Hill, 1979).

²¹ *Ibidem*.

according to their means, since foreign policy's formulation "*is an exercise in the choice of ends and means on the part of a nation-state in an international setting*"²² according to the state and time. However, a State interacts with other States for different ends and reasons, which have not necessarily a geostrategic or military nature, but also "*...for economic resources, natural resources, military armaments, political, trade, cooperation or alliance and so forth*"²³.

Therefore, though the realist approach can explain the reasons of a foreign policy's success, it does not take into account the different source of power that State can have acting in world's politics, without focusing on domestic elements as a contributor to foreign policy decision-making. Whereas an "*adequate account of the domestic determinants of foreign policy...must stress politics: parties, social classes, interest groups... legislators, and even public opinion and elections, not simply executive officials and institutional arrangements*".²⁴ De facto, the foreign policy is perceived, here, according to Roscoe's conceptual definition "*...the use of political influence in order to induce other states to exercise their law-making power in a manner desired by the state concerned*"²⁵. It is understood as an interaction between international and domestic policy²⁶, and as the result of these two forces entangled influences each other, "*the influence of the domestic system on the process of foreign policy is so dominant that it becomes difficult to make a distinction between the domestic and foreign policies.*"²⁷

Someone may oppositate that the theoretical assumptions of interdependence and transnationalism, here considered, slip out of the analysis the domestic factors in the foreign policy decision making. However, the study is informed by Putnam's two-level game theory²⁸, which suits well in considering domestic and system's elements, representing a new way of looking at the subject²⁹. Indeed, the theory allows considering the developments of international relations, which must take into account practitioners with a role in States' interactions. And, in a world of complex interdependence, not only States matter in shaping international policies but also other actors, such as think tanks and lobbies. Secondly, it recognized the importance of domestic factors and conflicts on "national interests" in foreign decision making. Not only domestic causes and international effects or international causes and domestic effects must be considered to understand the interactions between countries³⁰, but both dimensions must be considered. Indeed, considering only one of

²² Shahid. K., *International Relations and Political Theory*, (Lahore : Ferozsons, 2006), 66

²³ A. Mubeen, "Foreign Policy and Domestic Constraints: A Conceptual Account", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No.2, (July - December 2014): 659.

²⁴ Putnam R.D, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game", *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3, Summer, 1988: 432

²⁵ Roscoe Pound, quoted in "The Foreign Policies of the Powers", ed. by F. S. Northedge, Faber and Faber (paperback ed.) 1969, 11

²⁶ A. Mubeen, "Foreign Policy and Domestic Constraints: A Conceptual Account", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No.2, (July - December 2014): 657-675.

²⁷ Kogan, N., *The Politics of Italian Foreign Policy*, (The Free Press NY, 1963).

²⁸ Putnam R.D, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game", *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (Summer, 1988): 427-460

²⁹ Previous works have used different theoretical approaches in the study of the relations between Israel and US in foreign policy decision, mainly realist point of view as Mearsheimer and Walt.

³⁰ Waltz, N. K., *Theory of International Politics*, (Mass McGraw-Hill, 1979)

these two aspects, we will have a “partial equilibrium” and a partial representation³¹. Therefore, the theory allows us to consider different branches of the State domestically and international involved in trumping the policy decision. Thirdly, the two-level game theory represents a bridge between internal and international politics, by reconciling them to understand how they interact with each other. The interactions between these two politics levels can explain the relations between two States, involving several actors in the operational environment of decision making. These interactions are illustrated in the scheme made by Smith, that can be found in Annex 1. The foreign policy decision-making has consequences on the domestic level, decision’s formulation, on the actions taken and on the implementation of the policies. At the same time, the implementation of these policies will have consequences on the external dimension.

By considering in detail the two-level game theory, some points must be highlighted to better understand the lenses through which the analysis has been made. Firstly, social and political domestic groups pressure governments to adopt specific policies favourable for them, including activities in foreign policy; whereas politicians seek power creating an alliance among these groups³². The study points out that not only politicians seek alliance among domestic groups, but whatever their nature is, also interest groups are coalition seeker. Secondly, “*at the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments*”.³³ At the national level, political conditions are fundamental in the decision -making process, since they determine what government can or cannot do, especially through opposition, “*public opinion, pressure groups acting as lobbies, media have their part to play in the decision-making process*”³⁴. Not only domestic entities, but also tacit or explicit transnational alignments may emerge and “*pressure their respective governments to adopt mutually supportive policies*”³⁵. Since action has to be accepted at both levels, the theory fits with the aim of this study of understanding how Israel acts on different branches and transnational instruments in order to trump US foreign policy. An important role is assumed by who straddles between these two levels, that is the *chief negotiator*, the formal joint point. The chief negotiator, usually the executive power, has to face homogeneous or heterogeneous conflicts at both levels. In the former case, the main problem to face is a “*discrepancy between constituents’ expectations and the negotiable outcome*”³⁶. Whereas in the heterogeneous conflicts, the main problem is the risk of defection that makes the agreement impossible, because of domestic divisions³⁷.

³¹ Putnam R.D, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (Summer 1988): 427-460

³² Putnam R.D, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3,(Summer 1988)

³³ *Ibidem*, 434.

³⁴ A. Mubeen, “Foreign Policy and Domestic Constraints: A Conceptual Account”, *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No.2, (July - December 2014): 661.

³⁵ Putnam R.D, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988): 444.

³⁶ *Ibidem*,444

³⁷ *Ibidem*

Besides, another fundamental point to understand is the concept of State's "win- set" concept. On domestic level, the win-set "will affect the distribution of the joint gains from international gains"³⁸. At the international level, a large win- set makes agreements likely, because more likely they are to overlap; while a small win-set makes likely a failure in negotiations. The smaller the win-set is, the greater is the risk that negotiations break down, even if a small win set can be a bargaining advantage³⁹. The win-set depends on preferences, coalitions and the political institution at level II, negotiations' strategies a level I, the size of "isolationist" (antagonist to international cooperation in general) and "internationalist" (supporters of "all - purpose").⁴⁰ However, States tend to preserve their status quo. They prefer a "no-agreement situation" rather than a change, because of asymmetry of interests or because of the influence acquired in a specific domain⁴¹. Since the option has lower costs when the win-set is small (at least for one country) ⁴², it makes likely a no agreement (at least for the State with lower costs), though it can cause a worst situation⁴³.

Complementarily, I have considered Iida's⁴⁴ work of two-level games in situations of uncertainty and asymmetry of information at national and international level⁴⁵. According to Iida, the international asymmetry of information about domestic constraints can enhance the bargaining power of domestic negotiator, without putting in danger the agreement, unless for a delay. While under domestic asymmetric information and domestic constraints, international agreements are difficult to achieve.

METHODOLOGY.

The analysis is based on the "case study approach" through a diachronic comparison. The method has been chosen since it allows understanding complex issues throughout the study of documents, reports and previous studies.⁴⁶ According to Yin's division, an explanatory case study examines through a deep and surface analysis a phenomenon by collecting different data⁴⁷. On one hand, it allows a qualitative analysis of behavioral conditions through actors' perspective⁴⁸. Since "one case study is done in a way that incorporates the views of the "actors" in the case under study"⁴⁹, it fits our theoretical point of view as well as the object of the analysis. In particular, I use the frame effects theory and prospect theory⁵⁰. On the other hand,

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 440.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 438

⁴⁰ *ibidem*

⁴¹ Jervis, R., *The meaning of the nuclear revolution*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁴² Romer, T., Rosenthal, H., "Political Resource Allocation, Controlled Agendas, and the Status Quo" , *Public Choice*, Vol 33, no. 4 (1978) 27-44.

⁴³ Putnam R.D, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game", *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988).

⁴⁴ Keisuke Iida is a professor at Tokyo University, expert in International political economy.

⁴⁵ Keisuke, I., "When and How Do Domestic Constraints Matter? Two-Level Games with Uncertainty", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 37, no. 3 (1993): 403-26.

⁴⁶ Zaidah Z., "Case study as a research method", *Jurnal Kemanusiaan bil.9*, June 2007.

⁴⁷ Yin, R., "Case study research: Design and methods", *Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing*, 1994.

⁴⁸ Tellis, W. M, "Introduction to Case Study", *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1997): 1-14

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 4

⁵⁰ Levy, J. S. "Prospect Theory and International Relations: Theoretical Applications and Analytical Problems", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (June, 1992), 283-310

quantitative analysis allows explaining the process and outcomes of one phenomenon through the reconstruction of the case⁵¹. Moreover, case study “...satisfy the three tenets of the qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining”⁵², going beyond pure quantitative results. Hence, throughout the application of the two methods, the study allows explaining process and outcomes. Specifically, the process throughout which Israel has acted vis-à-vis US foreign policy in the Iran Nuclear deal. Besides, throughout this approach is possible to focus not only on actors and its view, but also on “*relevant groups of actors and the interactions between them*”⁵³, which would be on the main subject of level one’s analysis.

Although case studies have received criticism by scholars because of its lack of general conclusion due to its microscopic sample⁵⁴ and because of lack of rigor⁵⁵, Hamel et al. demonstrated that the goals set are more important than the sample size⁵⁶. Despite the micro-level and its selective nature, which concentrates on few specific issues, the case study works towards a holistic understanding of systems⁵⁷. Indeed, it could be a practical solution when big samples are difficult to collect⁵⁸, giving a better understanding of actors’ behavior through an examination of data within a specific area and a limited number of subjects⁵⁹. Lastly, one of the greater advantages of the case study is that, by focusing on a single case, it “*can be intensively examined when the research resources at the investigator's disposal are relatively limited*”.⁶⁰

However, the case study must have boundaries⁶¹; indeed, far as concern the time, we consider the years from 2009 to 2018. The period taken into account is characterized by three different mandates in US government and establishment: the first from 2009 to 2012, the second from 2012 to 2016, the third from 2016 to 2018 (not ended at the time of writing).

The work considers how Israel has acted in a diachronic comparison, meaning that it looks at the same object at different times. The diachronic comparison “*offers a better solution to the control problem than comparison of two or more different but similar units at the same time, although the control can never be perfect; the same country is not really the same at different times*”⁶². Although this method has different limits, such as the fact that it has many variables and a small number of cases⁶³, the comparative method is “*one of the basic methods of establishing general empirical propositions*”⁶⁴. Secondly, it allows discovering

⁵¹Tellis, W. M., “Introduction to Case Study”, *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1997):

⁵² *Ibidem*, 4

⁵³ *Ibidem*, 8.

⁵⁴Tellis, W. M., “Introduction to Case Study”, *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1997).

⁵⁵ Yin notes that “too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions”.

⁵⁶ Hamel, J., Dufour, S., Fortin, D., *Case Study Methods*, (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1993).

⁵⁷ Feagin, J., Orum, A., Sjoberg, G., *A case for case study*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

⁵⁸ Zaidah Z., “Case study as a research method”, *Jurnal Kemanusiaan bil.9*, Jun 2007.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*

⁶⁰ Lijphart A., “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3, (September 1971): 691.

⁶¹ Stake, R., *The art of case research*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995).

⁶² Lijphart A., “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.65, No. 3, (September 1971): 689.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, 685

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 682.

“...empirical relationships among variables, not as a method of measurement”⁶⁵. Thirdly, the comparative method suits well when “...the number of cases available is small”.⁶⁶

OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS.

Coherently with the theoretical framework, two operational definitions are considered: Track one and multitrack operational concepts⁶⁷. The former is taken into account on international level analysis, which focuses on official State’s actors. Indeed, the complexity of the relations between States cannot be limited at diplomatic relations. On the contrary, all State’s official actors do matter to achieve a deal at the international level: military relations, CIA- Israel military apparatus, executive relations matter, relations between chiefs. Truly, the international bargaining position of a State depends mainly on the negotiator’s status, since foreigners prefer negotiating with higher status negotiators (head of government) rather than lower official⁶⁸. However, according to the two-level analysis, *ceteris paribus*, stronger State’s autonomy from domestic pressure “weaker its relative bargaining position internationally”.⁶⁹

Concerning the domestic table, around which sits “party and parliamentary figures, spokespersons for domestic agencies, representatives of key interest groups, and the leader's own political advisors”⁷⁰, I consider the operational concept of multitrack diplomacy⁷¹. It allows considering the unofficial and informal contacts among members of different groups, that are used to develop strategies to achieve their interests

LITERARY REVIEW.

The literature review is the guideline of my work. To cover the matter following my theoretical framework, I divide the description of previous works in two parts. The first focuses on Israeli actions vis-à-vis the US foreign policy in Iran nuclear deal at level 1. The second is dedicated to Israel’s strategy level 2, taking into consideration the American Israel Public Affair Committee, the pro- Israel lobby that acts within the US institutional framework. The literature considered as far as concern level II is not limited to Obama and Trump mandates, allowing us to better understand the action made from 2009 to 2018. I have enlarged

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, 683

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 684

⁶⁷ Tobias Boehmelt, “The effectiveness of tracks of diplomacy strategies in third-party interventions”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 47 no. 2, 2010: 167–178,

⁶⁸ Putnam R.D, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988).

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 449.

⁷⁰ Putnam R.D, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Game”, *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988): 434

⁷¹ Notter, J., Diamond,L., “Building Peace and Transforming Conflict: Multi-track Diplomacy in Practice”, *Institute for multi-track diplomacy*, Occasional Paper 7 (October 1996).

the researches to a previous period, since there is not literature that analyzed my case study, the action of domestic entities on JCPOA; but, strategies of influence should be considered structured in time and not fixed on the short term.

I. LITERARY REVIEW AT LEVEL 1.

An important contribution has been given by Professor T. Parsi⁷², founder of NIAC. His first book *“Treacherous Alliance: the Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and The United States”*⁷³ is a complete analysis of the relations between US, Iran and Israel from the pre-cold era until Bush administrations. Parsi illustrates the shift from a relation between Iran and Israel independent from the US to a situation in which US represents the needle of the balance between the two States, where Israel started to influence US foreign policy in its favor. He points out one of the main strategies used by Israel since 1992: the exaggeration of the Iranian threat, which *“reinforced Israel’s other objectives, it undermined any warm-up in U.S.-Iran relations, it compelled Washington to take stronger measures against Iran...”*⁷⁴.

A second Parsi’s contribution is his third book, *“Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy”*⁷⁵. The book focuses on Obama diplomacy towards Iran, by describing in detail all the Iran nuclear deal’s phases, as well as the different stages and impediments of Obama diplomacy in the JCPOA. To demonstrating that normalization of US-Iran relations is reachable, he focused on Israeli behavior to influence US foreign policy at the diplomatic level. Firstly, Parsi retakes into account the Israeli isolation strategy, since Israel could not confront Iran alone *“...the Israelis put forward a message that Iran wasn’t a danger just to Israel, but to the entire Western world”*⁷⁶. Second, indirectly he described the use of international forums i.e. UN, the place of discussing over Middle East situations. In international arenas, along with the US, Israel tried to marginalize Iran.

Parsi demonstrates how Obama wanted a new diplomatic path with Iran, that for a long time has been *“coerced into sanctions by Congress, by Israel and by a lack of alternatives”*⁷⁷. But, the main obstacle for this diplomacy has been Israel, who acted through four main strategies. First, Israel pushed to a zero-enrichment redline committed concerning Iran nuclear program, in this way *“Iranians categorically rejected the demand and refused to engage in a diplomatic process”*⁷⁸. The second strategy was the pro-Israel organizations’ pressures on Congressman to promote sanctions. The third consisted in the possibility of a military strike against Iran, that instilled fear in US establishment because the option would have caused an escalation and *“could eventually lead to U.S. military action against Iran”*⁷⁹ and *“...to a wider regional conflict involving*

⁷² Trita Parsi is an Iranian-Sweden political scientist. He is the founder and president of the National Iranian American Council, expert on US-Iranian relations, and Iranian foreign politics, and the geopolitics of the Middle East. For more information about Trita Parsi his website: <https://www.tritaparsi.com/about>

⁷³ Parsi, T., *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, (Yale University Press, 2007)

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 180.

⁷⁵ Parsi, T., *Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*, (Yale University Press, 2017), Kindle edition.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 25.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, 99

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, 7

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 152

the US”⁸⁰. Even if the Parsi’s book is a complete analysis of Obama diplomacy and some Israeli strategies, the author did not dedicate the same attention to domestic factors. Plus, he focused mainly on Israeli pressure through the possibility of a unilateral military strike against Iran⁸¹, but there are some aspects that Parsi has missed. For instance, how Israel has been able to reflect the Iran nuclear issue on the Ukraine crisis; or, the relations between Obama and Netanyahu, their different vision of the world.

Another contribution concerning the military option has been made by Robert J. Reardon⁸². In the RAND monograph “*Containing Iran. Strategies for Addressing the Iranian Nuclear Challenge*”, the professor identifies the strategy as a way to Israel to keep the Iran issue “*at the top of the United States’ list of priorities and the threat of unilateral military action furthers that*”⁸³. The research allows understating the actors’ positions in relation to Iran nuclear deal in the international context, by investigating the main forces that shape the Iran’s nuclear decision. Moreover, Reardon lists the different pro and cons of the Iran nuclear deal for the US, the positive and negative effects of other alternatives against a nuclear Iran. For instance, the Israeli military option: “*Airstrikes would affect both Iran’s capabilities [without destroying them] as well as its decision-making process*”⁸⁴. However, the military option has been deeply stressed by Gil Merom from different point of views (i.e. reasons of unilateral preventive military option, possibilities of its success and so on)⁸⁵.

The relations between Netanyahu and Obama has been analyzed by Robert O. Freedman⁸⁶ in his paper: “*The erosion of US–Israeli relations during Obama’s second term*”. The professor stressed the breaking points between the two Presidents during the second Obama mandate, where Iran has been one among others. Freedman focuses on US-Israel at the UN, in particular during the Ukraine crisis that has been used strategically by Israel. Moreover, he takes into account the “*Netanyahu’s behaviour during the election campaign... [which] further alienated the Obama administration*”⁸⁷. Finally, he highlights two main points. One is the military relationship between Israel and the US, on which the former relies. The second is the fact that “*...the Obama administration’s second term was the increasingly partisan nature of US support for Israel*”⁸⁸, which has been fundamental for the pro-Israel actions against the JCPOA at the domestic level. However, the last point is more a declaration rather than a demonstration, since he does not go into deep to understand the weight of Israel has had.

II. LITERARY REVIEW A LEVEL 2.

⁸⁰ Reardon, R., “Containing Iran: Strategies for Addressing the Iranian Nuclear Challenge”, *RAND Corporation*, 2012: 129.

⁸¹ Parsi, T.. *Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*, (Yale University Press, 2017), Kindle edition.

⁸² Robert J. Reardon is an assistant professor of Political Science in the Scholl of Public and international affairs at North Carolina State University.

⁸³ Reardon, R., “Containing Iran: Strategies for Addressing the Iranian Nuclear Challenge”, *RAND Corporation*, 2012: 129. 91.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, pp124

⁸⁵ Meron, G., “The Logic and Illogic of an Israeli Unilateral Preventive Strike on Iran”, *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 71, No.1, (Winter 2017): 87-110.

⁸⁶ Robert O. Freedman is an American political scientist that works at Baltimore Hebrew University and Johns Hopkins University, an expert in Middle East policy and international relations.

⁸⁷ Freedman, R.O., “The erosion of US–Israeli relations during Obama’s second term”, *Israel Affairs*, Vol.23, No.2, (2017): 265

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, 268.

The literature about the Israeli actions on US domestic level takes into account several American pro-Israel organizations, but I focus mainly on one: AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby. Although it can be difficult to identify the influence of one lobby/organization in US politics and its weight in the decision making, several studies demonstrated the influence of the pro-Israel lobby. However, few works concern its actions vis-à-vis US foreign policy in the Iran nuclear affair, which is why I consider previous work on AIPAC to understand how it acted.

The first research has been made by Morris S. Solomon in his paper in 1993: *“The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”*⁸⁹. The paper describes AIPAC’s origins, its structure and how its departments promote the pro-Israel attitude in US politics. He analyzed how it became the most powerful lobby in the US in supporting Israel, through donations and private investment from US firms and thanks to other Zionist organizations. Solomon explained how AIPAC aimed only to support Israel and Israeli interest by lobbying Capitol rather than exercise pressure on executive power, who can be lobbied when AIPAC is in line with President’s ideology or it could be difficult.

As Ido Oren⁹⁰ claimed: *“AIPAC is virtually the only pressure group that persistently lobbies Congress for a tough stance towards Iran”*.⁹¹ From a bureaucratic politics’ conceptual model that refers to Graham Allison, Oren investigates the reasons why the US has not bombed Iran, stressing the role of domestic elements in foreign policy decision making. In particular, he focuses on AIPAC’s role and important personalities within the establishment, on the intelligence community and the department of the state. According to the Professor, in the case JCPOA, the Secretary of Defense had a pivotal role in shaping the decision to do not strike Iran.

In previous work, Paul Findley⁹² describes the importance of domestic elements in the foreign policy decision- making towards the Middle East. In his book, *“The Dare to Speak Out”*⁹³, the Congressman provides his personal experience with the Israel lobby, which saw him as the enemy number one of Israel. His contribution is important because he made clear the weight of the Israel lobby in shaping the foreign policy decisions acting on Congress. As he said: *“...in matters pertaining to Middle East policy, members of Congress generally paid attention only to what Israel wanted”*⁹⁴. Also, he described AIPAC pressures on Pentagon, executive power, university professors and journalist who are prone to the Arab and Islamic world and hence critical to Israel. The book can be defined as a travel through different moment in times of his career, in which he demonstrated through examples how *“the lobby groups function as an informal extension of the Israeli government”*⁹⁵. This last point has been demonstrated also by Oren in the specific case of Iran nuclear deal. According to the professor, AIPAC has continued internally what Netanyahu was making at the international

⁸⁹ Solomon, M.S, “The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”, *The Industrial College of the Armed Forces National Defense University*, Executive Research Project S.70 (1993)

⁹⁰ Ido Oren is an associate professor of political science and international relations at the University of Florida.

⁹¹ Ido Oren, “Why has the United States not bombed Iran? The domestic politics of America's response to Iran's nuclear program”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24 no. 4, (2011): 659-684, 665.

⁹² Paul Findley has been an important politician in the US, a Republican representative from Illinois from 1961 until 1983. For more information look at the bio in Congress website. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=F000123>

⁹³ Findley, P., *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby*, (Chicago Review Press, 2003)

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 2.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 28

level: promoting and keeping the military strike against Iran on the table through executive's powers relations⁹⁶.

The main contribution has been the book of 2007 by professors J.J Mearsheimer⁹⁷ and S.M. Walt⁹⁸: "*the Israel lobby and US foreign policy*", after their first article "*The Israel lobby*"⁹⁹. They demonstrated how the US provides unconditional support to Israel in money and military assistance, even when against US national interest, by criticizing this dependence. According to them, the huge US assistance could not be justified after the cold war, when Israel was not a strategic asset for US¹⁰⁰, but it became more a liability¹⁰¹. The pro-Israel lobby "*is the principal reason for that support, and this uncritical and unconditional relationship is not in the American national interest*"¹⁰². They define the lobby as "*the loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction*"¹⁰³, which is made by different organizations. In their analyses, they found two main ways used by the lobby to shape US foreign policy: institutional actors and non-institutional actors. The former includes congress, executive power and establishment; whereas, the second includes media, think tanks and universities. To prove it, they go through the main significant event in the Middle East, where the US participated and on which AIPAC has had a role: the Israel- Palestinian conflicts, the Iraq war (2003), the relation between US and Iran and the Lebanese war in 2006. Moreover, they identified some key players in the lobby: "*...the former AIPAC official and the former U.S. ambassador to Israel, the pro-Israel Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Middle East forum.*"¹⁰⁴

The contribution has been fundamental and from 2007 onwards it increased the interest in the relation between AIPAC and US foreign policy with many critics¹⁰⁵. Indeed, they open the debate among experts between those agree with them and who criticized for errors and omissions¹⁰⁶. Two main critics have been made by Abraham Foxman¹⁰⁷, ex-national director of the ADL, important component of Israel Lobby¹⁰⁸. Foxman frames Mearsheimer and Walt as a "*compilation of old, false, and authoritatively discredited charges*

⁹⁶ Ido Oren, "Why has the United States not bombed Iran? The domestic politics of America's response to Iran's nuclear program", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24 no. 4, (2011): 659-684.

⁹⁷ John J. Mearsheimer is the R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. He is an expert in security studies and international relations and founder of defensive realism. For more information look at his website <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/biography.html>

⁹⁸ Stephen M. Walt is the Robert and Renee Belfer Professor of International Affairs. He usually serves editorials on foreign policy and he is an expert in foreign policy, security studies and more general in international relations. For more information: <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/stephen-walt>

⁹⁹ Mearsheimer, J.J; Walt, S.M., "The Israel Lobby", *The London Review of Books*, Vol. 28, No. 6, (March 2006).

¹⁰⁰ Mearsheimer, J.J; Walt, S.M. , *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 49.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, 62.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, 6.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, 112

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, 152.

¹⁰⁵ For instance Noam Chomsky has written an answer to the article on internet: Noam Chomsky, "The Israel Lobby?", (2006) Accessed November 18^h 2018 <https://chomsky.info/20060328/>

¹⁰⁶ For instance, they cite Bin Gurion out of context, or they make mistakes in the description of Israel citizenship.

¹⁰⁷ Abraham Foxman is an American lawyer and activists, director of ADL from 1987 to 2015 and today he is the League's National Director Emeritus.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, G, *Big Israel: How Israel's Lobby Moves America*, (Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy 216) Kindle edition: 148-150.

dressed up in an academic garb”¹⁰⁹ by promoting anti-Semitic ideas. Although he justified the American support to Israel in moral terms focusing on Carter’s Palestine peace, he did not succeed in demonstrating the limits of Mearsheimer and Walt’s theory. Neither he succeeded in demonstrating that AIPAC does not have powers within the US system since he stressed mainly the ADL role. Another important critic to Mearsheimer and Walt has been made by professor R. Lieberman¹¹⁰, who wrote in 2009 “*The "Israel Lobby" and America Politics*”¹¹¹. By focusing only on Pro-Israel lobby’s actions on American policymaking institutions, he showed limits of Mearsheimer and Walt¹¹², although he recognized the relevant power of the lobby.

Also J. Newhouse, Senior fellow at the World Security Institute, with the research paper “*The Influence of Lobbies on U.S. Foreign Policy*” The argues that “*AIPAC is the model for other lobbying groups and for lobbying firms that aim to influence' U.S. foreign policy... in a game of five-dimensional chess*”¹¹³. In his opinion, the main instrument through which AIPAC operates in the State system is the power of lobbyists and not the diplomacy. Within the States’ institutions “*the most effective lobbying is done on Capitol Hill*”¹¹⁴, since the executive branch faces limits on what it can do for lobbyists (establishment does not depend on elections) . He points out a new strategy: AIPAC focuses on internal congress rivalries or between groups involving political parties, which “*...have trained themselves to listen to AIPAC first and act accordingly*”.¹¹⁵

The main contribution in terms of data collection and practical demonstrations is given by Grant F. Smith¹¹⁶, with the research “*the Big Israel: how Israel’s lobby moves America*”. The director defines the Israel lobby “*...as the collective of Israel Affinity Organizations...considered to be a powerful lobbying force, with some caveats*”¹¹⁷. By providing a detailed explanation of pro-Israel lobby’ s structure, he demonstrated through quantitative data AIPAC contributions to political parties and Congress’ expenditures to aid Israel. He clarifies the AIPAC’s roll in the broader lobby system, the Israel Affinity Organizations. Indeed, he categorizes the different organizations that composed the pro-Israel lobby according to what they do or their legal status. Each organizations have multiple tactics “*...from taking influential Americans on trips to Israel, media pressure campaigns, hosting on-campus Israel advocacy programs, publishing [....] academic studies, editorials and op-eds in elite and hometown newspapers...*”.¹¹⁸ Among these activities, AIPAC “*concentrates its efforts on lobbying Congress for massive foreign aid packages and foreign policies that benefit Israel*”¹¹⁹. Thus, the author points out the strict collaboration between the lobby and Israel government. In his view, the

¹⁰⁹ Foxman, A. H., *The Deadliest Lies: The Israel Lobby and the Myth of Jewish Control* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 53.

¹¹⁰ Robert Lieberman is a distinguished political scientist and former academic administrator at Columbia University, where he is a professor in the Department of Political Science.

¹¹¹ Lieberman, R.C. "The Israel Lobby and American Politics", *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 7, No. 2 (2009)235-257.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 235

¹¹³ Newhouse, J., Diplomacy Inc., “The Influence of Lobbies on U.S. Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, (2009), 73- 92: 75

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 74

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 81

¹¹⁶ Grant F. Smith is the director of the Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy in Washington.

¹¹⁷ Smith, G, *Big Israel: How Israel’s Lobby Moves America*, (Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy 216) Kindle edition: 101

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 208-215.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 218.

key of AIPAC success, and more generally the pro-Israel lobby, is due to the collective action in line with Israel government.

One more time, Parsi has given to us a contribution in the second part of the book *“Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy”*. He stressed links between pro-Israel domestic entities and Netanyahu¹²⁰. He demonstrates that Netanyahu’s strategies relied on the activation of pro-Israel organizations *“...from AIPAC to evangelical churches, to pressure lawmakers through constituency lobbying”*.¹²¹ AIPAC has been the main arm of Israel by pressuring Congressman from both parties, democratic and republican; by using television and social media to cease the Iran nuclear deal and to have people support. Although AIPAC is the most active and powerful organization, Parsi describes a new pro-Israel organization, J Street, which stand on Obama side in the Iran nuclear deal, by slecting the Jewish American community. On one hand, *“AIPAC and other hawkish pro-Israeli groups have been drivers behind the policy of sanctioning and confronting Iran”*¹²² by standing in hawkish position. On the other, the more critical J Street has acquired more support from the community, by providing *“...crucial political cover to lawmakers who wanted to support the nuclear deal but did not want to come across as anti-Israel and feared AIPAC”*.¹²³

¹²⁰ Parsi, T.. *Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*, (Yale University Press, 2017), Kindle edition, 274.

¹²¹ *Ibidem* 325

¹²² *Ibidem*, 337

¹²³ *Ibidem*, 338.

CHAPTER I:

THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ISRAEL ACTION.

The chapter is a descriptive contextualization of the Iran nuclear issue in an interdependent context. It describes the different positions of those actors that I take into account in the second part of the dissertation: The US, Israel and Iran's position. Then, I focus on AIPAC, its structure and its way of action in the US institutional and non-Institutional surrounding; then, I describe its position vis-à-vis the Iran deal. Finally, I explain the relations between the chief negotiators, Obama and Netanyahu, which are relevant to understand the Israeli action.

1.1.THE INTERNATIONAL ACTORS' POSITION.

The nuclear weaponization of Iran has always been a warm issue for Israel and the US. Unless for a few periods of amity, Iran and Israel have been competitor regional powers¹²⁴. Indeed, Israel has made continuous efforts to prevent Iran's nuclear capability by threatening the use of military force¹²⁵; or, pushing for international sanctions with the assistance of the US and EU¹²⁶. If the US-Israel relation has always been marked by the Iranian's issue, in a reciprocal way US- Iran relations had the Israeli shadow behind. From 2009 onwards, with changes of US and Israeli governments with, respectively, Obama and Netanyahu, the Iran issue became the warmest issue between them.

1.1.1. IRAN: ITS POSITION AND ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

Iran started its nuclear program in 1957 with a huge aid from the US, who provided to Iran the first research nuclear reactor¹²⁷. The US' aids to Iran stopped in 1979 with the "hostage crisis", when the relations got complicated and Iran started developing its nuclear capacity independently, including sophisticated enrichment capabilities that have been the object of international negotiations between 2002 and 2015. In 2002-2003, Iran showed itself open to negotiations to the IAEA and the EU-3¹²⁸ to guarantee a more transparent nuclear program and suspend the enrichment 's program¹²⁹. With the highest Iranian ranks' approval, Iran proposed concessions to Western countries through the Swiss ambassador¹³⁰. Concerning its nuclear program, Iran offered intrusive international inspections with two aim: long-understanding relations

¹²⁴ Parsi, Trita. *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (Yale University Press, 2007).

¹²⁵ Parsi, T.. *Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*, (Yale University Press, 2017), Kindle edition; Kaye, D.D., "Israel's Iran Policies After the Nuclear Deal. Santa Monica", *RAND Corporation*, 2016.

¹²⁶ Samore, G., "Sanctions Against Iran: A Guide to Targets, Terms, and Timetables", *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, (June 2015).

¹²⁷ Inskeep, S., "Born In The USA: How America Created Iran's Nuclear Program", National Public Radio, September 2018, 2015. <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/09/18/440567960/born-in-the-u-s-a-how-america-created-irans-nuclear-program?t=1569619630432>

¹²⁸ The EU 3 are France, Germany and the UK.

¹²⁹ Sanam Vakil, "Obama's Iranian Gamble", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 49, No., 3, (2014): 8-13.

¹³⁰ The draft was written by Sadegh Kharrazi and approved by Iran's supreme leader. Hence, it has been examined and reviewed by the Iran UN Ambassador Zarif, then send to the US.

with Americans and decreasing western's fears of Iranian weaponization¹³¹. Hence, Iran would guarantee full transparency and a peaceful nuclear program, signing an Additional Protocol to the NPT, in exchange for sanctions' relief. Whereas the IAEA and EU agreed with the Iran proposal; the Bush administration refused under Israeli and AIPAC pressures¹³².

After having declined the Iranian offer to mitigate and abandon its nuclear program¹³³, when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won the elections, he started a hawkish policy against Iran and US without possibilities of negotiation over its Nuclear enrichment program¹³⁴. Withdrawing from international engagements, the new Iran President restarted the uranium enrichment program. As a consequence, from 2009 to 2013, US increased sanctions over Iran, who refused invitations to talks¹³⁵. In 2010 and 2012 efforts have been made by Turkey, Brazil, Russia, US and EU; and meetings between Iran and the P5+1¹³⁶ have been arranged in Istanbul, in late January 2011, with Iran insisted on lifting all sanctions as a condition for a deal¹³⁷.

Once they failed¹³⁸, other meetings were arranged in Baghdad, Moscow to re-opened discussions on Iran nuclear program with the IAEA and with the P5+1¹³⁹. However, the diplomatic and economic sanctions were not enough to stop Iran nuclear, who restarted Khamenei's opposition to direct talks with US since "*he believes Iran can ride through the present set of sanctions...and does not need to make potentially humiliating concession to the US*"¹⁴⁰. Indeed, IAEA's report showed that sanctions did not prevent Iranian from enrichment by 20%¹⁴¹.

The turning point has been 2013 with the election of Rouhani as President of Iran. He had to face several challenges on national and international level: economic, diplomatic and social problems; the decline of Iran influence in the region; and the nuclear crisis. Hassan Rouhani, who had a leading role in the nuclear negotiations from 2003 to 2005¹⁴², was in favor of a new diplomatic approach in foreign policy, in particular concerning the nuclear program, making diplomacy the main theme of his presidential campaign, near to Obama's approach¹⁴³.

¹³¹ Parsi, Trita. *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (Yale University Press, 2007)..

¹³² *Ibidem*.

¹³³ *Ibidem*

¹³⁴ Sanam Vakil, "Obama's Iranian Gamble", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 49, No., 3, (2014): 8-13.

¹³⁵ Crail, P., "World Powers Invite Iran to Nuclear Talks", *Arms Control Association*, May 8, 2019.

¹³⁶ The P5+1 refers to the UN security council's 5 permanent members, China, France, UK, US, Russia, plus Germany.

¹³⁷ Erlanger, S., "Little progress is seen in Iran talks", *New York times*, January 21st 2011.

Erlanger, S. "Talks on Iran's Nuclear Program End with No Progress," *The New York Times*, January 23rd 2011.

¹³⁸ D'angelo, S, Grisorio. A. M., "Iranian nuclear talks: Has the time for diplomacy run out?", *EU Parliament policy department*, June 21st 2012.

¹³⁹ Global Security Newswire, "Russia Proposes 'Phased' Resolution of Iran Nuclear Standoff", Accessed October 2018.

¹⁴⁰ George Mason, at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholar' conference, "Is an Iranian Nuclear Deal Possible?", *Washington report of Middle east affair*, accessed by October 2018. <https://www.wrmea.org/013-march/waging-peace-is-an-iranian-nuclear-deal-possible.html>

¹⁴¹ In 2012 there were 4 reports by Director General on Iran: "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran" of February, May, August and November.

¹⁴² "History of Iran: Dr. Hassan Rohani", *Iran Chamber Society*, accessed May 2019. http://www.iranchamber.com/history/hrohani/hassan_rohani.php

¹⁴³ "Profile: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani", *Aljazeera News*, (May 21st 2017), accessed May 2019 <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/06/2013616191129402725.html>

Indeed, thanks to his new Iranian diplomatic path, the interim nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 should last for 6 months¹⁴⁴. After the first conference in Almaty (Kazakhstan), where the different sides made their respective proposals, the agreement was signed in Geneva in October 2013. The JPOA previewed limitations of Iranian nuclear program and a rollback of enrichment capabilities, ensuring a peaceful nuclear program. In exchange, the US, UN and EU have to start economic relief¹⁴⁵. Although time-bounded, the agreement was “renewable by mutual consent, during which all parties will work to maintain a constructive atmosphere for negotiations in good faith”¹⁴⁶. The interim agreement’s implementation started in 2014, drawing an important for US-Iran relations¹⁴⁷. The change was also due to the new Iranian establishment with Rouhani as President and Zarif as foreign minister, the main engineers of the future Iran deal¹⁴⁸. They presented a proposal for a comprehensive agreement with precise steps in the implementation for each part¹⁴⁹. The final agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the so-called “the Iran nuclear deal”, has been signed on 14th July 2015, approved by both US and Iranian parliament it has been implemented from January 2016¹⁵⁰. In exchange of economic relief by stopping sanctions, the JCPOA regularized the Iran nuclear program in different ways: by reducing its enrichment program and legitimizing its nuclear threshold state; by establishing IAEA inspections regime for 25 years; by converting enrichment facilities to peaceful purposes¹⁵¹.

In 2016, with Trump arrival at the White House and his decision of dismantle the nuclear deal, Iran maintained the international engagements through which it has been reintegrated in the international community¹⁵². President Rouhani tried to preserve the deal along with the P5+1¹⁵³ in continuation with the path started during Obama administration, without the intention of abandoning the deal or renegotiate it¹⁵⁴. Nevertheless, the US decision of imposing new sanctions and of ceasing JCPOA implementation lead the Iranian foreign minister Zarif to warn about a new restart of the Iran nuclear program, if US would not implement the deal.¹⁵⁵

1.1.2. US POSITION.

¹⁴⁴ “Nuclear, Iran, May 2018”, Nuclear Threat Initiative, <https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/iran/nuclear/>

¹⁴⁵ “Interim nuclear agreement between Iran and six powers”, *REUTERS*, (November 24, 2013), accessed August 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-agreement-text/interim-nuclear-agreement-between-iran-and-six-powers-idUSBRE9AN0FS20131124>

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁷ For more about the relations between Iran and US look at Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*.

¹⁴⁸ Wright, R., Netan “Javad Zarif on Iran’s Nuclear Negotiations”, *The New Yorker*, May 21, 2014.

¹⁴⁹ “Implementation of the Joint Plan of Action At A Glance”, *Arms control Association*, accessed February 2019.

¹⁵⁰ “Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action”, US Department of State, accessed January 2018. <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/jcpoa/>

Office of the Press Secretary “Statement by the President on the Adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action”, *White House Press secretary*, October 18, 2015.

¹⁵¹ Samore G., Allison G., Arnold A, Bunn M., “The Iran Nuclear Deal: A definitive Guide”, *Belfer Center for Science and international Affairs*, August 2015.

¹⁵² Geranmayeh, E., , “The coming clash: why Iran will divide Europe from the United States”, *European Council on Foreign relations*, October 2017.

¹⁵³ Serjoie, K.A., “The Americans Cannot Be Trusted. How Iran Is Reacting to Trump's Decision to Quit Nuclear Deal”, *TIME*, May 9, 2018.

¹⁵⁴ Azimi, A., “Iran left with limited options to respond to Trump decision”, *BBC News*, May 9, 2018.

¹⁵⁵ Majidyar, A., “Javad Zarif: Iran “Completely Ready” to Resume Nuclear Program”, *Middle East Institute*, March 21, 2017.

The relations between Iran and the US already complex, for the hostage crisis, when diplomatic relations have been broken and sanctions imposed over Iran¹⁵⁶, got worst with the Iran-Iraq war, when Americans on Saddam Hussein's side¹⁵⁷. After 30 years of sanctions, especially with Clinton's "dual containment"¹⁵⁸, only with Bush, there have been little improvements in Iran-US relations, since Iran helped the US in its war against Taliban¹⁵⁹. However, the idyll ended in 2002, when Bush took a hard-line position towards Iran, listing it in the *axis of evil's list* with accusations of supporting terrorism and persuading nuclear weapons¹⁶⁰.

From 2009 until 2013, US administration changed its position vis-à-vis the Iran nuclear deal, increasing sanctions over Iran together with EU and UN¹⁶¹. During the 2008 presidential campaign, at the AIPAC conference, Obama remarked his pro-Israel position, describing Israelis as "*Friends who share my strong commitment to make sure that the bond between the United States and Israel is unbreakable today, tomorrow and forever.*"¹⁶² Indeed, he did not change completely the Bush's line of international sanctions against Iran, who was considered "*the danger from Iran is grave, it is real, and my goal will be to eliminate this threat*"¹⁶³, for which he would do whatever it takes to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear bomb¹⁶⁴. Granting "*unshakeable commitment to Israel's security*", once at the White House, Obama continued to increase new sanctions: sanctions over the ICB, foreign financial institutions for transactions related to oil/petroleum products, over people or companies that had business with Iranian companies and government¹⁶⁵. However, Obama's peaceful will was clear in March 2009, when he promised a new beginning by confirming what he said in Cairo speech¹⁶⁶. If on one hand, Obama was looking for new diplomatic relations with Iran; on the other hand, the Iranian nuclear ambitions were the starting point for any rapprochement. The possibility of talks came in 2013, with the new Rouhani's government, with whom Obama started secret peaceful negotiations to reach an agreement over the nuclear program, signed in 2015¹⁶⁷. The agreement has been presented as a successful diplomatic achievement, which prevented a nuclear-armed Iran avoiding a military action¹⁶⁸.

¹⁵⁶ Salmore, G., "Sanctions Against Iran: A Guide to Targets, Terms, and Timetables Addendum to: Decoding the Iran Nuclear Deal", *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs Harvard Kennedy School*, April 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Parsi, T., *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* Vaki, S., "Obama's Iranian Gamble", *The International Spectator*, Vol. 49, No.3 (2014): 8-13,

¹⁵⁸ Gregory Gause III, "The Illogic of Dual Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1994.

¹⁵⁹ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*.

¹⁶⁰ Bush, G., "The 'Axis of Evil' Speech", *New York Time*, video 2002: <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/politics/10000004021075/the-axis-of-evil-speech.html>

¹⁶¹ UN Security Council, *Resolution 1929*, United Nations, 9 June 2010: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9948.doc.htm>

¹⁶² Transcript: Obama's Speech at AIPAC", *npr*, (June 2998) accessed February 2019. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=91150432&t=1557652307993>

¹⁶³ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁴ Castiglioni C., "Obama's Policy Toward Iran: Comparing First And Second Term", *ISPI*, Analysis No. 220, December 2013

¹⁶⁵ Salmore, G., "Sanctions Against Iran: A Guide to Targets, Terms, and Timetables Addendum to: Decoding the Iran Nuclear Deal", *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs Harvard Kennedy School*, April 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Rhodes, B., "President Obama's Nowruz Message to the Iranian People", *White House*, 18 March 2009.

¹⁶⁷ Parsi, "*Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*";

Sanam Vakil, Obama's Iranian Gamble, *The International Spectator*, 49:3, 8-13, 2014

¹⁶⁸ Obama, B., "Iran Nuclear Agreement: President Obama's FULL SPEECH", *ABC News*, April 2nd 2015.

In truth, since the beginning, Obama had a clear foreign policy agenda with defined pivotal points through his Obama doctrine¹⁶⁹. For instance, the US disengagement in the Middle East, which has lost its geostrategic importance and because of previous failures in the region (i.e. Libya)¹⁷⁰. Even though the secular friendship with Israel remains a pillar for Obama, it caused deep breaks in the US-Israel relations. On one hand, Obama tried to maintain strong relations with Israel, who considers Iran the enemy number one in the region and who promoted heavier sanctions without conditions¹⁷¹. On the other, Obama tried to create friendly relations with Iran acting through nuclear diplomacy to control the Iranian enrichment program. At the beginning, Obama seemed to agree with Israel on policies towards Iran. He refused any kind of nuclear deal “...to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons” and he wanted “the toughest sanctions ever on the Iranian regime”¹⁷². However, the relationship changed when Obama decided to negotiate and implement the deal, despite the Israeli pressures. Indeed, signed the JCPOA in 2015, in contrast with Republicans and Israel, he lobbied democrats’ congressmen, who successfully blocked the GOP opposition and a possibility of a veto by the President¹⁷³. Indeed, when the vote came on September 10, Democrats blocked the Republicans’ resolution that disapproved the deal with a vote 58 to 42 (majority required to pass a bill is 60)¹⁷⁴.

The US position changed in 2016 with Trump’s elections. Already during his campaign, he made clear his “number-one priority to dismantle the disastrous deal with Iran”¹⁷⁵. Indeed, once at the White House, President Trump announced a new strategy vis-à-vis the Iran nuclear deal: “by imposing tough sanctions on IIRGC preview”¹⁷⁶ and the intention of amending the INAA to prevent Iran from developing nuclear activities and intercontinental ballistic missile program¹⁷⁷. Considering the deal as “...one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into...”¹⁷⁸, the US strategy has been implemented in 2017 with new sanctions¹⁷⁹. While on May 8th2018, Trump announced the US’s withdrawal from the JCPOA, by imposing the “highest level” of sanctions over Iran and over those Countries that do business with¹⁸⁰. Truly, the decision of ceasing the deal was a pro-Israel decision, but it was not the only one. On the contrary, it

¹⁶⁹ Allin, D.H., Simon, S., “Obama's Dilemma: Iran, Israel and the Rumours of War”, *Survival*, Vol. 52, No. 6, (2010): 5-44.

¹⁷⁰ Goldberg, J., “The Obama doctrine”, *the Atlantic*, April 2016.

¹⁷¹ Heller, J., “Netanyahu draws “red line” on Iran's nuclear program”, *REUTERS*, September 27, 2012.

¹⁷² Obama, B., “Remarks by the President at the AIPAC Policy Conference 2011”, *The White House*, May 2011

¹⁷³ “Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy With Iran”, *Arms Control Association*, accessed August 2019 <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/Timeline-of-Nuclear-Diplomacy-With-Iran#2015>

Broader J., “How the Iran Nuclear Deal Weakened AIPAC, Washington's Most Powerful Interest Group”, *Newsweek*, September 2015

¹⁷⁴ “The Final Tally: How Congress Voted on Iran”, *the Iran Primer*, accessed January 2019. <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2015/sep/11/congress-votes-deal>

Steinhauer, J., “Democrats Hand Victory to Obama on Pact With Iran”, *New York Times*, 11 September 2015

¹⁷⁵ Begley, S., “Read Donald Trump's Speech to AIPAC”, *TIME Politics*, March 21, 2016 <https://time.com/4267058/donald-trump-aipac-speech-transcript/>

¹⁷⁶ D. Trump, “Transcript: Trump's Remarks On Iran Nuclear Deal”, *National Public Radio*, October 13, 2017.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷⁸ “Remarks by President Trump to the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly”, *The White House*, accessed February 2019.

¹⁷⁹ The Associated Press, “Trump Orders Review of Iran Sanctions”, *the Iran Primer*, April 19, 2017.

¹⁸⁰ Allen, J., Moe, A., Thorp V, F., “Trump announces withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal”, *News*, May 8, 2018.

Donald Trump, “Trump announces decision to withdraw from Iran nuclear deal”, *PBS NewsHour*, may 8, 2018

seemed part of a broader pro-Israel foreign policy¹⁸¹. In conclusion, Trump's new policy brings back US- Iran relations to pre-Obama equilibrium.

1.1.3. ISRAEL POSITION.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has always been in hawkish position against Iran. He considers Iran the greatest danger for Israel and his first goal has always been to thwart the Iran nuclear threat¹⁸². The Israeli hostility to Iran has deep roots¹⁸³, and it did not change in 2013 with Rouhani's government, which has been defined by Israeli Prime minister defined the new President Rouhani as "*Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*"¹⁸⁴.

The first Israeli answer to the Iran nuclear program has been the reaction to the interim nuclear agreement¹⁸⁵ defined by Netanyahu as a "*historic mistake for the world*"¹⁸⁶. From Israel point of view, the agreement will allow Iran to focus on other non-nuclear programs by improving its power, such as the missile development that would increase its power in the region. Besides, implicitly the deal recognized Iran as a nuclear power in the region. The main Israel concern was the Iranian uranium enrichment, which allows making nuclear weapons, representing a danger for Israel's security¹⁸⁷. Plus, Israel was worn for what Iran could do in the "*gray zones*"¹⁸⁸ and that Teheran would establish a powerful hegemony over the Middle East¹⁸⁹. In the light of history, Israel has always tried to marginalize Iran, interposing itself between Iran-US relations in order to avoid an Iranian regional power that could challenge the Israeli power¹⁹⁰. Another Israel's concern was the economic relief that Iran would have from the agreement, which would allow financing terrorist groups in the region¹⁹¹. Accordingly, Netanyahu lobbied against the emerging agreement through any diplomacy means. Although part of military staff and the chief of Mossad Halevy did not see the agreement as negative as Netanyahu did¹⁹², Israel's response to the Iran Nuclear deal was hostile, becoming more hostile after the agreement's implementation.

¹⁸¹ Annex the trump's pro-Israel choice: Annex 3.

¹⁸² The Associated Press, "Elections 2009 / Netanyahu: Iran Won't Get Its Hands on Nuclear Weapons", *Haaretz*, January 01, 2009.

¹⁸³ Parsi, T. "*Treacherous Alliance*".

¹⁸⁴ "Netanyahu: Rouhani is a 'Wolf in Sheep's Clothing' | Israel/Iran Conflict", Wall Street Journal, Youtube video, October 1, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCtC_uGg3rk

¹⁸⁵ "The Interim Nuclear Deal", the Iran primer, accessed January 2019. <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/interim-nuclear-deal>

¹⁸⁶ Pileggi, T.; Beck, J., "Netanyahu Calls Iran Deal 'Historic Mistake for World'", *Times of Israel*, July 14, 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Netanyahu, B., "NY:PIERS MORGAN NETANYAHU ON ROUHANI", interview by Piers Morgan, *CNN*, 21 July 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYPzLnEOb4I>

¹⁸⁸ The "gray zone" describes a state of human conditions between war and peace, where state and non-state actors try to defeat their opponents without extensive or sustained military activity. These zones in the Middle East area are Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. Wilson III, I., and Scott, S., "Solving America's Gray-Zone Puzzle," *Parameters* 46, no. 4 (Winter 2016-2017), 57; Heras, N., "Gray Zones in the Middle East", *Center for a new America Security*, September 18, 2017. <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/gray-zones-in-the-middle-east>

¹⁸⁹ Smith, G, "*Big Israel*"; Parsi, T., "*Losing an Enemy*"

¹⁹⁰ Parsi, T. "*Treacherous Alliance*".

¹⁹¹ Erlanger, S., "Netanyahu Asserts Israel Will Be Iran's Watchdog", *New York Times*, January 17, 2016.

¹⁹² Efraim Halevy, "Expecting Iran to cheat is why we need this deal, says former Mossad chief", interviewed by Judy Woodruff, *PBSO NEWS HOUR*, August 21, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=th34DB2Ftck>

Indeed, the prime minister affirmed that Israel was not bounded by the treaty and the cabinet rejected the deal¹⁹³. Israel would not permit any agreement that allows Iran to enrich uranium with Netanyahu's proposal to new heavy sanctions on Iran without conditions¹⁹⁴. For this reason, negotiations of the deal were considered a danger for its security, since they would allow Iran to keep an amount of enriched uranium for a research reactor. Indeed, Netanyahu would not accept an Iran-western powers agreement over Iranian nuclear program, since *"deal that falls short of ending the Iranian nuclear weapon drive, or that meets America's "red lines" but not Israel's, which are more stringent"*¹⁹⁵. According to Israel, the interim deal did not prevent Iran from nuclear weapons, because of concession given to Iran, such as the fact that nuclear facilities would not be demolished, disconnected or destroyed; or, the 10 years expiration date.

Despite the Netanyahu's opposition, the agreement has been implemented during Obama's administration. Consequently, Israeli political agenda remains in its position by strengthening its defences¹⁹⁶. Once after the JCPOA, Netanyahu described the deal as *"bad deal (that) grants Iran exactly what it wanted: both a significant easing in sanctions and preservation of the most significant parts of its nuclear program."*¹⁹⁷ The deal would make *"the world a much more dangerous place, because the most dangerous regime has taken a significant step toward attaining the most dangerous weapon in the world"*¹⁹⁸. When Trump arrived at the White House, Israel opposition to the deal has been strengthened since the two chief negotiators share the same ideas against Iran.

1.1.4. CHIEF NEGOTIATORS' RELATIONS: OBAMA AND NETANYAHU

The relation between Chief negotiators has to be considered to understand the way how Israel acted vis-à-vis the US foreign policy in the Iran nuclear program. Although realism dismisses the possible weight of trust and mistrust between leaders¹⁹⁹; personalities, characters and political ideas do matter in decision-making and States' relations²⁰⁰. As history demonstrated, differences in characters, ideologies and political approaches in foreign policy do matter²⁰¹. This is particularly true in the US, where the President is a fundamental figure *"per se"* for the Presidential form of State, which allows shaping policies and institutions

¹⁹³ Herzog, M., "Israel Confronts the Iran Nuclear Deal", *The Washington Institute*, July 24, 2015. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/israel-confronts-the-iran-nuclear-deal>

¹⁹⁴ Parsi, T., *"Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy"*

¹⁹⁵ "Putin and Syria; Iran and Israel: Hard Questions, Tough Answers with Yossi Alpher", *Americans for Peace now*, accessed May 2019.

http://archive.peacenow.org/entries/putin_and_syria_iran_and_israel_hard_questions_tough_answers_with_yossi_alpher_september_23_2013

¹⁹⁶ Erlanger, S., "Netanyahu Asserts Israel Will Be Iran's Watchdog", *The New York Times*, January 17, 2016.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁸ Sherwood, H., "Israel condemns Iran nuclear deal as 'historic mistake'", *The Guardian*, November 24, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/24/israel-condemns-iran-nuclear-deal-binyamin-netanyahu>

¹⁹⁹ "Conversations in International Relations: Interview with John J. Mearsheimer (Part II)." *International Relations*, Vol. 20, no. 2 (June 2006): 231-43.

²⁰⁰ Hermann, M. G. "Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders." *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1980): 7-46.

²⁰¹ For instance, in the relations between UK-US- USSR during the IIWW, personal relationship between the three head of States had counted as well as their political orientation.

according to Presidents' political beliefs²⁰². Hence, divergencies can create mistrust between leaders and may affect States' relations²⁰³, as happened to Israeli-US relationship during Obama administration²⁰⁴.

As far as concern their political goals and approach vis-à-vis Iran, Obama and Netanyahu started from two different points. The former considered Iran and its nuclear deal as a “*game-changer in terms of Iran itself*”²⁰⁵; whereas, Netanyahu considers it as “*a game-changer in the region*”²⁰⁶. From the beginning, “*Obama promoted an agenda of achieving a nuclear accord with Iran, which policies would have put him at odds with any Israeli leader*”²⁰⁷. In 2009's Cairo speech, Obama made clear his goals about a reconciliation between Arab and Muslim world²⁰⁸. The *new beginning* was announced during his presidential campaign, made in favor of multilateralism, cooperation, nuclear non-proliferation, diplomatic solution, withdrawal from Middle East²⁰⁹ and new US interests towards Asia²¹⁰. These elements have formed the Obama doctrine so-called “*leading from behind*”, which put Obama's national security priorities in collision with Israeli preferences²¹¹. It looked like that the new administration was pursuing a pure American interest: they wanted good relations with Israel, but they do not want an agreement with Israel on a set of key issues, such as Iran. Indeed, this could hurt the American interest or led to US engagements in the region, distance from Obama's strategic goals²¹².

If the Obama's *ratio* was the use soft power²¹³ to achieve his goals and restore confidence in US' allies and enemies²¹⁴; the main distinctive line of Netanyahu's *ratio* is to act in historical perspective, by combining Israeli historical mission and future history without limits in tools to achieve the goal²¹⁵. As Zvi Hauser²¹⁶ has explained: “[*Netanyahu*] considers how it will read in another 100 years and in another 500 years”²¹⁷. When Obama was receiving the Peace Nobel Prize²¹⁸, Netanyahu was lacking in the self-discipline with “*an*

²⁰² Rosenfeld, M., Sajo, A., “*The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law*” (Oxford University Press 2012)

²⁰³ Hermann, M. G. “Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders.” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1980): 7–46.

²⁰⁴ Rothkopf, D., “The Amazing Decline of America's Special Relationships”, *Foreign Policy*, 8 May 2015.

²⁰⁵ Goldberg, J., “Explaining the Toxic Obama-Netanyahu Marriage”, *The Atlantic*, 9 October 2005. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/dennis-ross-iran-obama-netanyahu/409420/>

²⁰⁶ *ibidem*

²⁰⁷ Oren, M. B., “How Obama Abandoned Israel,” *Wall Street Journal*, 16 June 2015.

²⁰⁸ “The President's speech in Cairo: a new beginning”, The White House, accessed February 2019. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/foreign-policy/presidents-speech-cairo-a-new-beginning>

²⁰⁹ Ackerman, S., “The Obama Doctrine”, *The American Prospect*, March 19, 2008. <https://prospect.org/article/obama-doctrine>

²¹⁰ BRÁNDÁ, O.-E., “Changes in the American foreign policy: from Obama to Trump”, International Conference KNOWLEDGE-BASED ORGANIZATION, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, 2018.

²¹¹ Fawaz, A.G., “The Obama approach to the Middle East: the end of America's moment?”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, Issue 2, March 11, 2013.

²¹² Trita Prasi, personal interview, March 2019.

²¹³ The soft power refers to the “*the ability to shape the preferences of others*”, meaning other's tools than force and military power in order to persuade others' behaviors, mainly on three sources of power: culture, political values and the foreign policy itself. The concept refers to the one elaborated by Nye, J.S. Jr., “*Soft power: the means to success in world policy*” (Public Affairs New York 2004), 192, Chapter I.

²¹⁴ Nünlist, C., “The Legacy of Obama Foreign Policy”, *CCS Analyses in Security Policy*, No.188, March 2016.

²¹⁵ Shavit, A., “Zvi Hauser Tells Haaretz What Israel Is Doing Wrong”, *Haaretz*, August 16, 2013.

²¹⁶ Zvi Hauser has been the former cabinet secretary of the State of Israel from 2009 to 2013, when he was simultaneously Secretary of The Ministers Committee on Security Affair.

For more information about him: <http://www.goldfarb.com/our-attorneys/zvi-hauser>

²¹⁷ Shavit, A., “Zvi Hauser Tells Haaretz What Israel Is Doing Wrong”, *Haaretz*. August 16, 2013.

²¹⁸ “The Nobel Peace Prize for 2009”, The Nobel Prize, accessed February 2019. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2009/press-release/>

overdose of sectarianism”²¹⁹. While Obama decided to respect the US constitution as far as concern any possible military intervention in Syria²²⁰, although the practice have given to the executive the power in the matter, eclipsing the legislative power²²¹; on his hand, Netanyahu does not delegate powers, but centralized all in his figure²²². Therefore, the distance between Obama and Netanyahu is not a consequence of the Iran nuclear deal, rather the deal is one of the main elements of distance among others²²³. Nevertheless, in a certain moment, it became the main one by deteriorating the US-Israeli relationship, which shaped Netanyahu’s behaviors vis-à-vis US foreign policy decisions²²⁴ on which he lost all leverage on the White House²²⁵.

1.2.DOMESTIC ACTOR: THE PRO ISRAEL LOBBY.

One important role in influencing the US decision on the Iran nuclear deal has been taken on Israel side by pro-Israel Jewish organizations, which constitute an important part of American society²²⁶. The Israeli lobby is comprehensive of several associations and organizations with the main aim of supporting Israel and Israeli interests²²⁷, which is why Smith called it “*Israel Affinity Organizations*”²²⁸. Among the 775 pro-Israel organizations with different political views, geographically distributed on the West and the Ouest and in the big cities²²⁹. On one hand, there are pro-Israel organizations, such as J Street, more critic to Israel government and in favor of JCPOA as of Obama’s diplomacy²³⁰. On the other hand, there are the *establishment organization*, more hawkish and on in line with Netanyahu’s policies, usually against the Iran nuclear deal and in favor of a military option against Iran²³¹.

The leader organization of the “establishment” is AIPAC, who is on the top 10 most powerful and influential Lobby in US²³² and the most influential “pro- Israel lobby”²³³. Created in 1951, AIPAC called itself “*the Americans’ pro-Israel lobby*” and its main objective is to “*strengthen, protect and promote the U.S.-*

²¹⁹ *Ibidem*

²²⁰ He asked to the Congress the authorization of an intervention in Syria, despite the practice throughout time made it not necessary. Iannuzzi, R. “*Geopolitica del collasso: Iran, Siria e Medio Oriente nel contesto della crisi globale*”, (Castelvecchi 2014) Kindle edition.

²²¹ Masters, J., “US foreign policy powers: congress and the president”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 2, 2017. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-foreign-policy-powers-congress-and-president>

²²² Shavit, A., “Zvi Hauser Tells Haaretz What Israel Is Doing Wrong”, *Haaretz*. August 16, 2013.

²²³ Other disagreements were on Palestine and Gaza.

Hasan, H., “Remembering the 2014 Israeli offensive against Gaza”, *MEMO: Middle East Monitor*, July 8, 2018. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180708-remembering-the-2014-israeli-offensive-against-gaza/>

Balmer, C., “Israel wrong-footed by Obama; tensions ahead”, *Reuters*, May 20, 2011. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-obama-mideast-israel/israel-wrong-footed-by-obama-tensions-ahead-idUKTRE74J42I20110520>

²²⁴ Brânda, O-E., “Changes in the American foreign policy: from Obama to Trump”.

²²⁵ Chemi, S., “Mutual Mistrust Makes Obama-Netanyahu Clash on Iran Even Riskier,” *Haaretz*, 8 July 2015.

²²⁶ Kaspi, A. “*Les Juifs américains*” (Plon, Paris 2008).

²²⁷ Smith, G., “*Big Israel: How Israel’s Lobby Moves America*”

²²⁸ *Ibidem*

²²⁹ A database of all pro-Israel associations is available thanks to “Israel science and Technology Directory: <https://www.science.co.il/jewish/Youth-organizations.php> ; Kaspi, A. “*Les Juifs américains*” (Plon, Paris 2008).

²³⁰ Belin, C., “AIPAC : contes et légendes du lobby pro-Israël aux États-Unis”, *Diplomatie 75*, Juillet - Août 2015.

²³¹ Pelouard M., Zarifian J., “Le lobby Juif pro-Israélien des États-Unis et la (difficile) validation de l’accord sur le nucléaire iranien par le Congrès en 2015”, *L’Harmattan- Politique américaine, Vol.2*, No. 31: 127-156

²³² Hastley, R., “10 of the Biggest Lobbies in Washington”, *Business Pundit*, April 26, 2011. <http://www.businesspundit.com/10-of-the-biggest-lobbies-in-washington/>

²³³ Pelouard M., Zarifian J., “Le lobby Juif pro-Israélien des États-Unis”, 135.

Israel relationship in ways that enhance the security of the United States and Israel”²³⁴, by acting on Capitol Hill. It is composed by several bodies that operate on different US institutions: Congress, think tanks, Pentagon offices, public opinion, education and mass media on a bipartisan base, which represents its strength by allowing the organization acting on a wide-spread network ²³⁵. Indeed, it has assumed a relevant role in all issues affecting Israel interest and military issues²³⁶, but in particular the Iran nuclear deal, since it made Iran the top priority of its legislative agenda²³⁷ that includes also the support assistance for Israel and Foreign Aid and the opposition boycotts of Israel²³⁸.

1.2.1. STRUCTURE AND CHANNELS OF ACTION.

To understand how AIPAC has acted vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iran affair, it is important to look at its structure. The main activity of the powerful lobby is made in Capitol Hill, through a soft power ²³⁹. Indeed, AIPAC observes and pressures lawmakers in order to shape foreign policy’s decision in a pro-Israel way in line with the policy of Israeli government²⁴⁰. Although some failures during the years²⁴¹, its actions have been efficient and successfully most of the time thanks to its bipartisan nature that allows trumping both Democrats and Republican at the same time. The bipartisanship is “*the only proven way to secure the US-Israel relationship for the long term*” as said by AIPAC official²⁴².

One of the main AIPAC’s strength is its multiple-ethnicity base, since several communities are part of the organization and contribute to its cause: Christian, African American, Jewish and Hispanic. This is particularly true during the Iran nuclear deal struggle, when the pro-Israel lobby increased its ties with others ethnic or foreign organizations and lobbies, such as the pro-Israel Christian lobby, the CUFI who have been identified as the Christian version of AIPAC²⁴³ and the Saudi Arabia lobby in US.

A substantial element to bear in mind is that AIPAC is not a PAC, but it has a public affairs committee’s legal status. A PAC is whatever organizations legally registered as it, which can freely contribute to finance and support federal candidates, with whom they share the same positions on political issue²⁴⁴. As a matter of fact, throughout PACs, everyone can participate as a contributor to electoral campaigns delivering money to candidates. Since they have a tax exempted status, they must respect Internal Revenue Service restrictions and norms of transparency (i.e. list the names of contributors and their members), and they cannot direct lobbying Congress nor Executive Branch²⁴⁵. AIPAC has never acquired the legal status of PAC; hence, it is not allowed

²³⁴ “Our mission”, AIPAC American’s pro-Israel lobby, accessed January 2018. <https://www.aipac.org/about-aipac/mission>

²³⁵ *Ibidem*; Smith, G, “*Big Israel: How Israel’s Lobby Moves America*”

²³⁶ *Ibidem*

²³⁷ Kampeas, R., “AIPAC policy conference to push Iran bill”, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 27 April, 2009.

²³⁸ “Our Agenda- Legislation”, AIPAC , accessed January 2018. <https://www.aipac.org/learn/legislative-agenda>

²³⁹ Nye, J.S. Jr., “*Soft power: the means to success in world policy*”, 192,

²⁴⁰ Smith, G, “*Big Israel: How Israel’s Lobby Moves America*”.

²⁴¹ During Reagan presidency, AIPAC tried to block the sale of AWACS airplanes to Saudi Arabia but it failed; as well as it failed during Bush administration as far as concern the conditions for the bank loans for migrants’ installation in the colonies.

²⁴² Kampeas, R., “ What is AIPAC’s role in the age of Trump?”, *The telegraph Agency*, February 27, 2018. <https://www.jta.org/2018/02/27/politics/aipacs-role-age-trump>

²⁴³ Chaim, I., « Evangelicals to launch ‘Christian AIPAC’ », *The Jerusalem Post*, 2 February 2006.

²⁴⁴ “What is a PAC?”, Open Secret, accessed March 2018. <https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacfaq.php>

²⁴⁵ *Ibidem*; Riccardo De C., “*Le Mani Sulla Legge*”: *Il Lobbying Tra Free Speech E Democrazia*”.

contributing directly to federal candidates but with member's private donations and through affiliate PACs or organizations²⁴⁶.

The main AIPAC's influence is exercised in writing bills and legislations through several tolls on Congressmen, who will propose those bills, after that, the organization has financed their electoral campaigns²⁴⁷. Although it is not possible to see how much AIPAC delivered to lawmakers, because not obliged to disclose their expenditures, the organization is one of the top contributors among pro-Israeli lobbies, especially for US electoral system²⁴⁸.

The AIPAC's structure gives to the organization the power it has. Firstly, it has an executive body with the executive director ahead, who is an administrative chief responsible for the organization's daily activities²⁴⁹. Yet, the main AIPAC's action is directed by the legislative branch. The legislative body is competent to lobby congressmen and candidates in order to pursue its pro-Israel foreign policy agenda's goals on the bases of three main key points: a bipartisan sponsorship, standing behind the legislation, pressuring the congress and acting indirectly on the President²⁵⁰. Indeed, by comparing the lobbying activities with other ethnic lobbies, AIPAC did deliver a higher amount. For instance, the Arab lobby has spent around \$17,500 in 2018²⁵¹ compared to AIPAC's \$3,518,028 (on a total expenditure \$5,142,028)²⁵². The main influence on Capitol Hill is made upon the House Foreign Affairs Committee through the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, whose members are automatically AIPAC's members²⁵³. The Presidents are part of the executive committee that elects AIPAC's officers and they represent the American Jewish organizations²⁵⁴. Indeed, the conference has the aim of advancing American Jewish community's interest, support Israel-US relations and it is a "*forefront mobilizing support to halt Iran's nuclear program*"²⁵⁵. Plus, the organization's members have personal and private links with congressman and senators, which is relevant AIPAC can act trough unofficial channels. Whatever and whomever AIPAC finances, the choice is based on observations pro-Israel lawmakers. Indeed, a third branch is AIPAC's research department with the duty of monitoring on daily base Congress and Committees' activities, by providing information throughout position papers and analysis of bills in the Israel's interests perspective²⁵⁶.

AIPAC 's strength is its network of association and organizations on which it relies for its activities. Particularly, it is relevant the link between AIPAC and NORPAC, the North Jersey PAC, with whom AIPAC

²⁴⁶“AFP Political Action Committee Fact Sheet and Q&A”, AFP, accessed February 2018. <https://afpglobal.org/afp-political-action-committee-fact-sheet-and-qa>

²⁴⁷ Smith, G, “*Big Israel: How Israel's Lobby Moves America*”.

²⁴⁸ Every two years the congress is renewable as well as 1/3 of the senate, meaning that every two years elections are held in the US.

²⁴⁹ Solomon, M.S, “The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”, *The Industrial College of the Armed Forces National Defense University*, Executive Research Project S.70 (1993): 5.

²⁵⁰ *ibidem*.

²⁵¹“Arab American Pac expenditures”, Open secret, accessed May 2018. <https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/expenditures.php?cycle=2018&cmte=C00346239>

²⁵²“Pro-Israel lobby”, Open Secret, accessed February 2018. <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/lobbying.php?cycle=2018&ind=Q05>

²⁵³ Smith, G, “*Big Israel: How Israel's Lobby Moves America*”.

²⁵⁴ Solomon, M.S, “The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”:

²⁵⁵ “About the Conference”, Conference of President, accessed May 2019. <https://www.conferenceofpresidents.org/about>

²⁵⁶ Solomon, M.S, “The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”.

share and overlap priorities and techniques of pressure. NORPAC is a Non-Partisan Political Action Committee that legally raises funds and support candidates, who “*demonstrate a genuine commitment to the strength, security, and survival of Israel*”²⁵⁷. Despite NORPAC is a different organization from AIPAC, it is instrumental for the second. For instance, it provides to AIPAC lists of pro-Israel Congressmen that they can support in political campaigns and upon who exercise pressure. Plus, AIPAC’s donors, such as ex- Presidents D. Steiner and M. Kassen have been contributors to congressman campaigns through NORPAC²⁵⁸. AIPAC’s private investors give contributions to a political candidate, respecting the amount for the law, through NORPAC, who combines all donations for that candidate. This guarantees an effective influence since the different donations coming from different paths are channeled in a one single way. Furthermore, an important non-PAC affiliate organization is the AIEF a “*charitable organization affiliated with AIPAC*”²⁵⁹, which provides support to educational programs, materials for university student, as well as promotes trips for Congressman to Israel²⁶⁰. Indeed, the organization is an alter ego of AIPAC with tax exempt status, so a sham AIPAC organization²⁶¹.

At the same time, AIPAC relies on high specialized staff, experts and think tank, or bipartisan friendship through a “*disproportionate level of activism*”.²⁶² In fact, AIPAC members are usually in key positions within political staff, think tanks and institutions. For instance, ex-AIPAC executive director, Kohr, was assistant of the AJC and a fellow of Defense Department²⁶³. Martin S. Indyk, deputy research director for AIPAC, founded the Washington institute for Near Policy²⁶⁴, an Israel-centric think tank. US ambassador to Israel and Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, he has been Vice President and Director for Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution. In 2018, he left to join the Council on Foreign Relations²⁶⁵.

AIPAC has an important appeal also on schools and universities by organizing events, protests or conferences. The most important event is the Annual Policy Conference, made every year during spring that worth around \$40 million²⁶⁶, where common people, students, lawmakers, experts, administration’s staff and Presidents take the floor and make speeches²⁶⁷. The Conference is an important tool of influence aimed of educating participants to a pro-Israel’ view of issues that are important for Israel²⁶⁸. Indeed, members and

²⁵⁷“NORPAC-about”, NORPAC promoting US-Israel relations, accessed May 2019. <http://norpac.net/about>

²⁵⁸ This has been shown by The Center for Responsive Politics’ Open Secrets: “Donor lookup”, <https://www.opensecrets.org/donor-lookup/results?name=Steiner%2C+David&state=&zip=&employ=&cand=NORPAC&old=Y&sort=D&capcode=b4dtq&submit=Submit+your+Donor+Query>

Open Secret, Michael Kassen: <https://www.opensecrets.org/donor-lookup/results?name=+Michael+Kassen&page=2>

²⁵⁹“Mission Statement”, American Israel Education Foundation, accessed by June 2019 <http://www.aiefdn.org>

²⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

²⁶¹<https://www.irmep.org/09092011AIEF.pdf>

²⁶² Solomon, M.S, “The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”, 7- 14

²⁶³ Forwards staff, “Salary Survey 2017: Howard Kohr Of The American Israel Public Affairs Committee”, *Forwards*, December 11, 2017. <https://forward.com/news/388986/salary-survey-2017-howard-kohr-of-aipac/>

²⁶⁴“ Martin Indyk – Biography”, JewAge , accessed by June 2019. http://www.jewage.org/wiki/he/Article:Martin_Indyk_-_Biography

²⁶⁵“Martin S. Indyk”, Brookings Institute, accessed June 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/author/martin-s-indyk/>

²⁶⁶ Smith, G, “*Big Israel: How Israel’s Lobby Moves America*”.

²⁶⁷ During this conference many activists, journalist et members of congress and politicians as presidential candidates or ex- president participate. Among other: Secretary of State Clinton in 2010, Kerry in 2014; Susan Rise, national security advisor. For more about AIPAC Policy conference: <http://www.policyconference.org>

²⁶⁸ Solomon, M.S, “The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)”: 23.

activists, politicians, experts and important personalities speak in front numerous lawmakers, experts and common people trying to persuade them to behave towards an Israeli's interests. Through AIPAC, candidates could reach a large portion of the electorate, regardless of their ethnicity, but in line with Israeli interests. Truly, it is a two ways' path: on one hand, politicians used AIPAC to reach the electorate and catch more votes; on the other, AIPAC used it to influence decision making. If the conference is important, more important is knowing how to behave and what to say at the conference as well as how to grasp pro-Israel vote, which is made by involving AIPAC professional personnel in the administration or candidates' staff²⁶⁹.

In practical terms, AIPAC reduces distances between the world of politics and the common people, thanks also to its regional structure²⁷⁰. Yet, the lobby is active not only in US, but it has one office also in Israel, in Jerusalem²⁷¹, which testifies the interstate structure that it has. Throughout the regional division, the lobby is nearest to representatives of every States and it is easier for people to "*establish relationship with your member of Congress and strengthening the bond between US-Israel relationship in your community*"²⁷².

1.2.2. AIPAC AND THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL.

In line with Netanyahu conservative position, AIPAC has always been in strong opposition to Iran. Since 1990, AIPAC pressured and co-sponsored sanctioning bills against Iran, considered a destabilizing power in the region because of its nuclear ambitions and because its support to terrorist proxy groups²⁷³. This position never changed throughout the time, on the contrary it radicalized its position against Iran, which is a top issue on AIPAC's legislative agenda based on four key "*talking points*"²⁷⁴. Indeed, AIPAC's pressures on legislative power increased with Ahmadinejad's election in June 2009, after when he decided to restart with the nuclear enrichment program²⁷⁵.

Consequently, AIPAC opposed to the JCPOA revolving around some criticisms. Firstly, in line with Netanyahu, AIPAC would not permit any Iran nuclear capability, neither a small one (such as a nuclear enrichment program with 3,67% of limitations). It would allow only a complete end of the Iran nuclear program, since the only way to contrast the sponsor of terrorism, its regional power and a threat of Israeli security²⁷⁶. Indeed, accepting a small Iranian nuclear capability would have mean accepting the possibility of an Iranian enrichment program in the future, once the deal has expired²⁷⁷. A second criticism has been the *sunset clause* for its short-time limitations to the nuclear program. The JCPOA lasts 10 years, after which

²⁶⁹ Newhouse, J., "The Influence of Lobbies on U.S. Foreign Policy", 73- 92

²⁷⁰ It has 10 regional offices, departments and active staff in every US' States

Solomon, M.S., "The Agenda and Political Techniques of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)": 6

²⁷² "AIPAC events", AIPAC, accessed by April 2019. <https://www.aipac.org/act/attend-events/events>

²⁷³ "Our agenda- Iran", AIPAC, accessed May 2019. <https://www.aipac.org/learn/issues/issue-display/iran>

²⁷⁴ *Ibidem*: The main talking points are: Iran must not be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapons capability, Iran remains the leading state sponsor of terror, Iran's regional aggression is a direct challenge to the United States and Israel, Iran is a gross violator of human rights.

²⁷⁵ Chapter II

²⁷⁶ "Our agenda- Iran", AIPAC, accessed May 2019

²⁷⁷ Pelouard M., Zarifian J., "Le lobby Juif pro-Israélien des Etats-Unis et la (difficile) validation de l'accord sur le nucléaire iranien par le Congrès en 2015", 127-156

engagements and restrictions would collapse with ballistic missiles' production, excluded from the deal²⁷⁸. In other words, the agreement will give to Iran a future enrichment capacity. Finally, even if Iran accepted the IAEA inspections, these inspections must be communicated to Iranian authorities 24 days before the access time previewed²⁷⁹. On its part, AIPAC considered that the clause would give to Iran the time to dissimulate its nuclear and other illicit operations²⁸⁰. Therefore, to prevent Iran from nuclear weapons and to contrast the Iran nuclear deal, it acted in line with Israeli government, according to its bipartisan nature throughout its network made by Republicans and Democrats²⁸¹.

CHAPTER II

FROM INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC TO MILITARY ACTION: US FEARS AND THE INCREASING IRAN SANCTIONS.

2.1. INTRODUCTION.

The chapter considers the Israeli action during the first Obama mandate. The first part focuses on Israeli and US relations from a diplomatic and formal State's relations point of view. During this period, two main strategies are stressed: the discursive strategy that used rhetoric in two ways. One is the artificial link between Palestine and Iran, made by Netanyahu to maintain the Iran nuclear issue on US agenda. Secondly, the ability to frame Iran and the deal in negative terms. On the other hand, the possibility of a unilateral military strike against Iran by and from Israel. By following the one-track diplomacy's concept, I focus on the relations

²⁷⁸ Takeyh, R., "How Iran Can Game the Deal Unless Kerry fills in a lot of holes, Tehran will figure a way through them", *POLITICO MAGAZINE*, April 3, 2015

²⁷⁹ "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance", *Arms Control association*, May 2018.

²⁸⁰ Takeyh, R., "How Iran Can Game the Deal Unless Kerry fills in a lot of holes, Tehran will figure a way through them", *POLITICO MAGAZINE*, April 3, 2015

Satloff, R., "What's Really Wrong with the Iran Nuclear Deal", *New York Daily News*, July 14, 2015

²⁸¹ Smith, G., "*Big Israel: How Israel's Lobby Moves America*".

between Defense ministers, Pentagon and IDF, the Mossad and US intelligence. Concerning this option, also a domestic action has been made by AIPAC over the Congress and executive. Finally, I consider other domestic elements that contributing to understand how Israel has acted and how the pro-Israel lobby seems to change its influence throughout time.

2.2. NETANYAHU'S ACTIONS AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

From 2009 to 2012, the geopolitical situation has been internationally less complicated compared to the future one, since the line-up among Israel, Iran and the US was clear. Albeit the differences between Netanyahu and Obama in politics, the alliance was more alive than ever. Whereas in international forums, the Iran President Ahmadinejad continued his inflammatory rhetoric against Israel and US, calling Israel “*insult to all humanity*”²⁸²; the Israel and US were on the same line against Iran, heaving sanctions with UN and EU support.

At the international level, the first strategy used by Netanyahu has been developed within international forums and through public speeches. How leaders frame issues have an important weight as long as it can influence the perception that counterparts could have of that issue²⁸³. Throughout the so-called “*framing effect*”, the decision-maker can control, at least partly, habits or personal characteristics²⁸⁴. The strategy shall be considered a soft power, since it presents an issue in a non-violent way, through speeches, with the purpose of influencing somehow other State's behavior vis-à-vis that issue²⁸⁵. The strategy's success depends on who frames and who is framed: when a President of democratic State, such as Israel, frames negatively non-democratic State or what is perceived as if, like Iran, it would be likely for the former to achieve his goal²⁸⁶. There are several techniques for framing²⁸⁷, but in our case, Netanyahu used *a thematic framing* in two main ways, involving communication, attributes, policies and policy debates²⁸⁸. On one hand, he linked semi-artificially in speeches two different Israeli problems: Iran and Palestine. On the other, he portrayed in negative terms Iran throughout an *interactive and structural framing*, acting on information processing.

2.2.1. IRAN AND PALESTINE: A STRATEGIC LINK?

Netanyahu's conservative hawkish position led him to consider the Middle East in negative terms and always in the worst-case scenario in which war is always likely²⁸⁹. When he took power in 2009, he had two

²⁸²McGreal, C., “ This article is more than 7 years old Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's UN speech prompts diplomatic walkouts”, *The Guardian*, September 22, 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/22/mahmoud-ahmadinejad-united-nations-speech>.

²⁸³Mintz, A.; Redd, S.B., “Framing Effects In International Relations”. *Synthese*, vol.135, No.193 (2003); Garrison, J. A., Hoyt, P. D., Wituski, D. M. “Managing Intragroup Relations in Foreign Policy: Prescriptions, Assumptions and Consequences”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 32, no. 3, (1997), 261–286.

²⁸⁴Tversky, A., Kahneman, D., “The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice”, *Science*, Vol.211, (January 30, 1981): 453–458, 453.

²⁸⁵Garrison, J. A., Hoyt, P. D., Wituski, D. M. “Managing Intragroup Relations in Foreign Policy: Prescriptions, Assumptions and Consequences”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 32, no. 3, (1997), 261–286.

²⁸⁶Mintz, A.; Redd, S.B., “Framing Effects In International Relations”. *Synthese*, vol.135, No.193 (2003);

²⁸⁷*Ibidem*.

²⁸⁸*Ibidem*

²⁸⁹Shavit, A., “Full Interview: Zvi Hauser Tells Haaretz What Israel Is Doing Wrong”, *Haaretz*, August 16, 2013.

main challenges. One was the peace with Palestine, on which the Israeli Prime minister seemed to accept the two-State idea, but according to Israeli interests²⁹⁰. The second was the Iran nuclear program. During this time, the Palestinian peace process seemed the top one concern, whereas the Iranian nuclear program looked important but not fundamental. Indeed, Netanyahu dedicated the two-third of his inaugural discourse to the two-State solution proposed by Obama and to Palestinian demilitarization; whereas Iran issue took few words to underline one of the three Israeli main challenges²⁹¹.

However, Netanyahu started to link discursively Iranian and Palestine threats through their links with terrorism. For instance, in 2009, after the Bar Ilan discourse, Netanyahu took the floor at the UNGA, answering to the Iranian President's claims that the Holocaust was a lie²⁹², he linked the right of Israel to exist as a State to the Iranian threat, described as "*primitive fanaticism*". Then, he linked Palestinian and Iranian issues through their ties with terrorist groups: "*We don't want another Gaza, another Iranian backed terror base...perched on the hills a few kilometers from Tel Aviv...I believe...a peace can be achieved. But only if we roll back the forces of terror, led by Iran, that seek to destroy peace, eliminate Israel and overthrow the world order.*"²⁹³ Netanyahu made a comparison with Iran, putting both on the same level of importance. The fact that Iran was under US and UN sanctions led us to think that the main aim of the strategy was to maintain Iran one top concern for all States, in particular on the US agenda. This was clear in 2011 at the UNGA, where Netanyahu used the same pattern²⁹⁴: "*The Palestinian Authority now could build a peaceful state in Gaza. But...We got war. We got Iran. Palestinians are armed...supplied by Iran*"²⁹⁵.

One may oppose that political issues are linked in an interdependent world politics, especially in the Middle East, where cultural, historical and political intra-regional conflicts are strictly connected²⁹⁶. Truly, it could be not denied that Iran and Palestine shared common strategic interests as non-Arab States; neither can be denied Iran's role in PLO creation, in the Palestine intifadas and its links with Hamas²⁹⁷. However, it must be considered the position of the Palestinian authority, Mahmud Abbas, until 2012. During this period, Abbas' attitude towards Ahmadinejad was not positive, since he kept the distance from the new Iranian President. As Abu Mazen's spokesman, Nabil Rudeineh, said: Ahmadinejad "*is not entitled to talk about Palestine...The Palestinian leadership did not repress their people as did the system of Iran led by Ahmadinejad.*"²⁹⁸ Therefore, Palestine and Iran should not be seen always as two loyal friends, but as two different concerns for Israel in this period. The former was a concern for the recognition of Israel as a Jewish State; whereas Iran

²⁹⁰ Netanyahu, B., "Second speech to a Joint Session of Congress", *American rhetoric online speech Bank*, update October 12, 2017. <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/benjaminnetanyahujointsession2011.htm>

²⁹¹ Netanyahu, B., "Full text of Netanyahu's foreign policy speech at Bar Ilan." *Haaretz*, 2009.

²⁹² McGreal, C., "Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's UN speech prompts diplomatic walkouts", *The Guardian*, Sep. 2011.

²⁹³ *Ibidem*

²⁹⁴ "Binyamin Netanyahu Speech to the United Nations General Assembly", *American Rhetoric online speech bank*, accessed February 2019. <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/benjaminnetanyahuunitednations.htm>

²⁹⁵ Netanyahu, B., "Full Transcript of Netanyahu Speech at UN General Assembly", *Haaretz*, September 24, 2011. <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5182294>

²⁹⁶ Stivachtis, Y., "conflict and diplomacy in Middle East", *E-International Relations*, October 4, 2018. <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/10/04/conflict-and-diplomacy-in-the-middle-east/>

²⁹⁷ Brandenburg, R., "Iran and the Palestinians", *The Iran Primer, United State Institute of Peace*, 2010. Update Jan 2016 <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-palestinians>

²⁹⁸ *Ibidem*.

was a concern as a nuclear neighbor and regional competitor for Israel power. Hence, the ties made by Netanyahu in this period seemed semi-artificial, an Israeli strategy to maintain Iran on the US foreign policy agenda.

Besides, Netanyahu was acting according to the bargaining logic of giving up on one issue, but not on the other. Apparently, he showed himself for Palestine two-State solution, but on Iran side, he could not accept any compromise on Iran's nuclear activities. In truth, Netanyahu was bluffing on Palestine, as confirmed by Obama reporting Netanyahu's word before his elections: "*a Palestinian state would not happen under his watch, or [when] there [was] discussion in which it appeared that Arab-Israeli citizens were somehow portrayed as an invading force that might vote, and that this should be guarded against*"²⁹⁹. The bluff would allow Israel to reach the support of Arab Countries, who opposed to the non-Arab Iran³⁰⁰, in likely future Israeli operations against Iran, improving its regional power³⁰¹.

In conclusion, the strategy works as far as US foreign policy stayed in hawkish position against Iran and alongside US and UN sanctions, when they shifted in a diplomatic approach, Israel government changed perspective and strategy since Palestine issue became "*irrelevant and unimportant in the face of the Iranian nuclear threat*"³⁰².

2.2.2. RISK SEEKING IN NEGATIVE TERMS: AVERSION TO WORLD LOSSES.

The other framing strategy has been the negative description made by Israel against Iran, considered a "*repressive regime*" and "*a totalitarian State that threatens everybody*"³⁰³. In public speeches and institutional forums³⁰⁴, Netanyahu frames Iran as a dangerous power for everyone: "*to Israel, to the moderate Arab regimes in our region, to Europe, to US and...to many other powers in the world*"³⁰⁵. The main concern on Iran was "*the marriage between religious fanaticism [Iran] and the weapons of mass destruction. The most urgent challenge is to prevent the tyrants of Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons*"³⁰⁶. Indeed, Netanyahu identified as the same threat the extreme fundamentalism and the Iranian regime³⁰⁷, who nuclear-armed would provide to terrorists a nuclear umbrella.

²⁹⁹ Goldberg, J., " 'Look ... It's My Name on This': Obama Defends the Iran Nuclear Deal", *The Atlantic*, May 21, 2015.

³⁰⁰ Cafiero G., "Iran and the Gulf states 40 years after the 1979 revolution", *Middle East Institute*, February 8, 2019, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/iran-and-gulf-states-40-years-after-1979-revolution>

³⁰¹ This was fundamental for Israel since support from other regional states or at least favorable relations would mean concession of these States in a future competition with Iran.

³⁰² Sherwood, H., "Netanyahu's bomb diagram succeeds – but not in the way the PM wanted", *The Guardian*, September 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/27/binyamin-netanyahu-cartoon-bomb-un>

³⁰³ Glor, J., "Benjamin Netanyahu Interview: Full Text", *CBS*, June 15, 2009. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/benjamin-netanyahu-interview-full-text/>

³⁰⁴ Netanyahu, B., "Text Of Pm Binyamin Netanyahu's Speech To The US Congress", *The Jerusalem Post*, 24 May 2011. <https://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Text-of-PM-Binyamin-Netanyahus-speech-to-the-US-Congress>

³⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁰⁶ Netanyahu, B., "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech to the UN General Assembly", *Haaretz*, September 2009. <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5397187>

³⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

Moreover, Netanyahu spoke throughout an *interactive frame*³⁰⁸, meaning that he divided between “us”, Israel and Western Countries, *versus* “them”, Iran and the Muslim World. The strategy aimed to marginalize Iran internationally has been embittered in 2012 and 2013, when the Israeli military option lost enamel for Americans. The Netanyahu’s speech at the UNGA in 2012, known as the “*red-line speech*”, has been dominated by a sense of urgency for Iran’s threat³⁰⁹. Throughout a diagram of three steps that described the Iran nuclear program, the President made a redline at the nuclear enrichment program’s second stage: “*to enrich enough medium enriched uranium*”³¹⁰. Netanyahu tried to persuade the international community through the identification of Iran regime with Militant Islam³¹¹. By describing Iran in negative terms, Netanyahu prospected a situation in terms of losses for all world, when and if Iran would enrich its nuclear program. Since States tend to preserve their status quo, by perceiving changes as a loss³¹², a shift in Iran-US relations, unless heavier sanctions, was perceived by Israel as a loss and unacceptable change of the status quo. This led Israel to overweight the threat and increase “*incentive to undertake excessive risks in order to avoid that loss*”³¹³. As prospect theory prescribes, by framing in terms of loss Iran nuclear deal, Netanyahu would put pressure on the international community trying to convince them that his losses were world’s losses in order to maintain the status quo. Indeed, he framed Iran nuclear power in terms of absolute losses, “*horrific cost*” and risk of insecurity for everyone.

Although it is difficult to affirm the certain level of influence that Netanyahu speeches could have had at level 1; the strategy seemed influential. Even if US administration did not share with Israel the deadlines, and despite China, Russia, Brazil in UNSC opposed to heavier sanctions on Iran, the international community and EU countries embitter sanctions until 2013³¹⁴. Truly, other elements were favorable to his strategy. Firstly, Netanyahu’s words came in the right moment, after the IAEA’s report that registered an Iranian development in its nuclear program. Second, the Netanyahu action has been made during US particular domestic moment, before US elections, a fundamental challenge for Obama who wanted a second mandate.

2.3. DOMESTIC ACTION.

On level 2, the main action has been made by the pro-Israel lobby, AIPAC, upon the Congress and the White House. Although the two institutions have an independent source of legitimation and different tasks, because of the checks and balances system, they influence and limit each other³¹⁵. Congress has a role in US

³⁰⁸ Mintz, A.; Redd, S.B., “Framing Effects In International Relations”. *Synthese*, vol.135, No.193 (2003);

Neuman, W. R., Marion R.J, Ann N. C., “*Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*”, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992)

³⁰⁹ “PM Netanyahu addresses UN General Assembly”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed May 2019. <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2012/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-addresses-UN-27-Sep-2012.aspx>

³¹⁰ *Ibidem*

³¹¹ *Ibidem*

³¹² Jervis, R., “*The meaning of the nuclear revolution. Ithaca*” (NY: Cornell University Press, 1989): .29-25.

³¹³ Levy, J.S., “Loss Aversion, Framing, and Bargaining: The Implications of Prospect Theory for International Conflict”, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2: “Crisis, Conflict and War” (April, 1996): 179-195,187.

³¹⁴ “Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran”, Arms Control Association, July 2019. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/Timeline-of-Nuclear-Diplomacy-With-Iran>

³¹⁵ Rosenfeld, M., Sajo, A., “*The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law*”.

foreign policy since it can block international negotiations and engagements³¹⁶. Indeed, it has the power to advise and pass engagements and responsibilities of those decisions that the President, the “chief navigator” makes.

2.3.1. LESS HOSTILE TO ISRAEL MORE INCLINE TO APPOINTED

The first AIPAC action has been taken when Obama arrived at the White House as far as concerning the appointment of his administration³¹⁷. The moment is fundamental since establishment’s key positions do shape US political line. In early 2009, the main attention was on the AIPAC lawmakers’ opposition guided Steven J. Rosen, AIPAC member³¹⁸, to the appointment of Former Ambassador Freeman as chair of NIC³¹⁹. The opposition was due to Freeman’s position vis-à-vis US foreign policy in favor of negotiation and an agreement on Iran³²⁰ as well as in favor of disengagement from the Middle East, by considering an intervention counterproductive for US interests³²¹. Plus, he had ties with Saudi Arabia, who in that moment was still an Israeli rival³²². Hence, his positions were in contrast with Israeli and AIPAC’s position, against whom he made equivocal statements³²³.

Accordingly, they could not risk the NIC key position in the establishment with the appointment of an experts “*too hostile to advocate of a strong US-Israel relationship*”³²⁴ as defined by AIPAC. Indeed, the NIC chair has a fundamental task in shaping strategic conversations within and beyond the US government and supporting the NID³²⁵. In the end, the Rosen and conservative lawmakers’ campaign was successful, since Freeman withdrawn from the NIC, despite liberals, intelligence and the diplomatic community’s support³²⁶.

³¹⁶ Masters, J., “US foreign policy powers: congress and the president”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, Mar. 2017.

³¹⁷ The Jewish Library published a list about all the personalities in the Obama administrations, who had more or less relevant links with the pro-Israel lobby “Barack Obama Administration: Jews in the Administration”, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed May 2019. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jews-in-the-barack-obama-administration>

³¹⁸ Rosen is a pro-Israel writer, ex-director of foreign policy issues for AIPAC from 1982 to 2005. For more information: “Steven J. Rosen Joins MEF as Visiting Fellow”, Press release of Middle East Forum, March 2, 2009.

³¹⁹ Blumenthal, M. “Obama Intelligence Nominee Withdraws”, *Daily Beast*, July 14, 2017 <https://www.thedailybeast.com/obama-intelligence-nominee-withdraws>; Smith, B., “Freeman facing resistance for NIC post”, *POLITICO*, February 23, 2009, <https://www.politico.com/blogs/ben-smith/2009/02/freeman-facing-resistance-for-nic-post-016270>;

Schoenfeld, G., “Obama’s Intelligence Choice”, *The Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 2009 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB123552619980465801>

³²⁰ Freeman, W.C.Jr, “Chas Freeman on the Geopolitics of the Iran Nuclear Negotiations”, *Middle East Policy Council*, September 20 2014. <https://chasfreeman.net/the-geopolitics-of-the-iran-nuclear-negotiations/>

³²¹ Bloomfield, D.M., “His Own Worst Enemy: Chas Freeman and the Israeli Lobby”, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 3, No. 2 (2009): 31-35.

³²² The Saudi royal family provided funds to the Middle East Policy Council, a think tank that Freeman headed, leading to allegations that he was “on the Saudi payroll”/“Saudi puppet.” By some journalists:

Goldfarb, M., “It’s Official: Saudi Puppet to Head NIC” , *Washington Examiner*, February 26, 2009. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/its-official-saudi-puppet-to-head-nic>

Mikkelsen, R., “U.S. intelligence candidate pulls out after objections”, *Reuters*, March 10, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-security-usa-freeman/u-s-intelligence-candidate-pulls-out-after-objections-idUSTRE5296QZ20090310>

³²³ Newhouse, J., “The Influence of Lobbies on U.S. Foreign Policy”; Bloomfield, D.M., “His Own Worst Enemy: Chas Freeman and the Israeli Lobby,”

³²⁴ *ibidem*

³²⁵ “National Intelligence Council - Global Trends”, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, accessed by April 2019. https://www.dni.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=398&Itemid=776

³²⁶ Lobe, J., Luban, D., “POLITICS-US: Freeman Withdrawal Marks Victory for Israel Lobby”, *Inter Press service*, March 10, 2009. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2009/03/politics-us-freeman-withdrawal-marks-victory-for-israel-lobby/>

2.3.2. CAPITOL HOME.

The organization has always pushed towards more sanctions on Iran and towards a military option by acting on Foreign affairs Committees³²⁷, who did not exclude the option in opposition to Obama's nuclear diplomacy with Iran³²⁸. If Obama trying to engage Iran by preventing the Congress to adopt tougher sanctions, AIPAC's lobbying activities on the two Chambers went on the opposite side. Indeed, when mistrust between Obama and Ahmadinejad³²⁹, AIPAC attacked Obama diplomacy, enhancing his limits and reducing the possibility of Obama's maneuver with Congress that increased pressures on the White House towards more sanctions³³⁰. Indeed, lobbying action in Congress is more effective compared to the action over the executive branch, since it has few restrictions compared to the administrative agencies, (i.e. fundraising or reelection; ministers and cabinet are presidentially depending, they are not elected). It means that congress is more open to be persuaded by external agencies and agent, which can represent industrial firms or foreign governments³³¹.

Congress is composed of two different chambers with different ways of taking decision. The House of Commons' rules enable the leaders of majority to shape the agenda and can decide which bills come to the fore. The Senate's discussions are possible when the majority's leaders have consensus; hence, not all issues come to the fore and it depends on Senate's majority. The system's structure helped to a certain extent AIPAC's actions on congressmen in order to enlarge US sanctions on Iran, since it depends on majority and bill discussed³³².

From 2009, AIPAC made Iran's sanctions the top priority of its legislative agenda. Indeed, among 25 bills that it sponsored, half concerns Iran's threat and its nuclear program³³³ for which AIPAC delivered \$2,769,721 to lobbying activities³³⁴. In March the Senator Kyl, speaker at AIPAC conference in 2008 against Iran nuclear threat³³⁵, proposed an amendment to "*Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009*"³³⁶ aimed to "*prohibit expenditure of amounts in a contract with any company that has a business presence in Iran's energy sector*".³³⁷ Although the amendment did not pass³³⁸, top recipients from the pro-Israel lobby, such as Senator

³²⁷ Hearing of Committee On Foreign Relations United States Senate, "Iranian Political And Nuclear Realities And United States Policies", Government information, March 3, 2009. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-111shrg52190/pdf/CHRG-111shrg52190.pdf>

³²⁸ Associated Press, Obama reaches out to Iran in new video message", *The Guardian*, March 20, 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/20/barack-obama-sends-video-message-iran>

³²⁹ The mistrust increased because of the irregularities during Iran's election, which led to protests that have been violently repressed by the police and condemned by US with Senate resolution 71.

³³⁰ Parsi, T., "*A Single Roll of the Dice*" (New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2012), 103.

³³¹ Newhouse, J., "The Influence of Lobbies on U.S. Foreign Policy";

³³² H14921, Congressional record- House, December 15, 2009. <https://www.congress.gov/crec/2009/12/15/CREC-2009-12-15-pt1-PgH14921.pdf>

³³³ "AIPAC lobbied bills in 2009", Open Secret <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientbills.php?id=D000046963&year=2009>

³³⁴ AIPAC expenditures' in lobbying activities in 2009, Open secret. https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/client_reports.php?id=D000046963&year=2009

³³⁵ "Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) AIPAC Policy Conference 2009 May 4, 2009", AIPAC <https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/speeches-and-interviews/speeches-by-policymakers/2009/05/senkylpc09.pdf>

³³⁶ S2789, "Congressional record- Senate", Congress government, March 5, 2009. <https://www.congress.gov/crec/2009/03/05/CREC-2009-03-05-pt1-PgS2789-3.pdf>

³³⁷ "Roll Call Vote 111th Congress - 1st Session", US Senate, March 5, 2009. https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=1&vote=00085#name

³³⁸ *Ibidem*

Lautenberg, who opposed to the amendment for political reasons³³⁹, did not receive funds for next elections³⁴⁰. Truly, Sen. Mikulsky opposed to the amendment and received money for 2010's elections³⁴¹, but in this case the opposition was motivated by Israeli security reasons, since the bill "...would further delay the delivery of \$2.48 billion in urgently needed security assistance to Israel which is contained in the bill".³⁴²

On this line other bills, it was introduced by Sen. Brownback and Sen. Casey the "*Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009*"³⁴³, which authorized "*State governments, local governments...to divest from, and to prohibit the investment of assets they control in, persons that have investments of \$20,000,000 or more in Iran's energy sector*"³⁴⁴. Whereas in the House, a compound bill was introduced by Barney Frank and Mark Kirk³⁴⁵, where it passed by a vote of 414-6³⁴⁶. Similarly, 8 Representatives³⁴⁷ who received money from AIPAC acted in the House by proposing "*Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act*"³⁴⁸. The bill sponsored by AIPAC amended "*the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996*" in order "*to enhance US diplomatic efforts with respect to Iran by expanding economic sanctions...*"³⁴⁹. The two actions showed a "*strong bipartisan backing for the president to implement tougher sanctions if Iran fails to suspend its nuclear program*"³⁵⁰, sanctioning companies who export to Iran refined petroleum (i.e. gasoline). The bill has been presented by 24 sponsors in Senate from both side Democrats and Republicans³⁵¹ with 77 cosponsors. The bill was introduced but not enacted until when the domestic and international pressure increased on Obama's executive was made.

The legislative pressures increased in the second half 2009, when a second uranium enrichment facility was discovered by international inspections³⁵². In October, members of congress send an AIPAC supported letter to Obama by asking for Iran sanctions³⁵³. In November, a report to the House presented by Mr. Berman

³³⁹ S2789, "Congressional record- Senate", Congress government, March 5, 2009.

³⁴⁰ Pro-Israel lobby in 2008 gave to Lautenberg \$272,333, whereas in 2010 only 1,000\$

³⁴¹ Mikulsky \$34,250 by pro-Israel lobby

³⁴² S2789, "Congressional record- Senate", Congress government, March 5, 2009.

³⁴³ "Brownback, Casey Introduce Iran Sanctions Enabling Act", Bon Casey website, May 19, 2009. <https://www.casey.senate.gov/newsroom/releases/brownback-casey-introduce-iran-sanctions-enabling-act>

³⁴⁴ "S. 1065 - Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009", 111th Congress, Congress government. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/senate-bill/1065/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Iran+Sanctions+Enabling+Act%22%5D%7D&r=2&s=9>

³⁴⁵ Mark Kirk has been the top recipient with \$627,310 for 2010 electoral campaigns \$524,906 from individuals, whereas \$114,904 from PACs affiliated to AIPAC (NorPAC³⁴⁵, WAL, WPAC, NAC, RJC)³⁴⁵.

"Rep. Mark Kirk - Illinois District 10 2009-2010", Open Secret, <https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/pacs?cat=Q05&catlong=Pro-Israel&cid=N00012539&cycle=2010&seclong=Ideological%2FSingle-Issue§or=Q;>

"Pro-Israel: top Recipients", Open Secret, <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/recips.php?ind=Q05%20%20&cycle=2010&recipdetail=H&Mem=Y&sortorder=U>

³⁴⁶ "S. 1065 - Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009", 111th Congress, Congress government; AIPAC, "BILL SUMMARY: Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009 (H.R. 1327 and S. 1065)". https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/bill-summaries/2009/11/bill_summary_iran_sanctions_enabling_act.pdf

³⁴⁷ Mr. Berman, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, Mr. Ackerman, Mr. Burton, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Royce, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Kirk

³⁴⁸ S.5102, "Iran sanctions", Congressional record senate, June 17, 2010. <https://www.congress.gov/crec/2010/06/17/CREC-2010-06-17-pt1-PgS5102.pdf>

³⁴⁹ S.908 - Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act, 111th Congress (2009-2010) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/senate-bill/908/text>

³⁵⁰ "The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act", AIPAC FAQs, May 2009. https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/issue-memos/2009/05/faqs_irpsa2.pdf

³⁵¹ Senate Cosponsors of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act (As of April 28, 2009), AIPAC. https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/bill-summaries/2009/04/co_sponsors_of_iran_refined_petroleum_act.pdf

³⁵² Bruno, G., "Iran's Nuclear Program", Council on foreign relations, March 10, 2010. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/irans-nuclear-program>

³⁵³ The letter can be found by following the link: AIPAC's media, https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/source-materials/congressional-action/2009/iran_sanction_letter.pdf

from the Committee of foreign affairs illustrated the Iran nuclear improvements with the relaunch of the enrichment program³⁵⁴. Consequently, in December, the House passed the IRSA by a bipartisan vote of 412 to 12, sponsored by Berman and Ros-Lehtinen, who received AIPAC'S contributions for their 2008's campaigns³⁵⁵. The bill expanded the economic sanctions on Iran imposed in 1996 and prevented Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability and suspend its uranium enrichment program³⁵⁶. The new sanctions were effective on the Iranian economy, since it had to import 25 to 40% of refined oil, lacking in refining capabilities for its domestic needs. Through sanctions on companies that provided "*refined petroleum to Iran or transporting, insuring, financing refined petroleum deliveries*": the bill cut Iran's imports. At the same time, it sanctioned all companies who helped Iran to expand its domestic capacity of producing refined oil; and, it gave to the President the power of implementing sanctions if fundamental for US national interests³⁵⁷. Once approved in the House, if Iran experts were concerns about the future of Iran, Israel and AIPAC appreciated the commitment of the Congress³⁵⁸.

However, the bill had to pass in Senate, where it delayed because of concerns about "*inefficient monetary thresholds, blacklisting that could cause unintended foreign policy consequences*"³⁵⁹. In the letter that Deputy Secretary of State Jim Steinberg sent to John Kerry³⁶⁰ in December 2009, the administration was concerned for sanctions that "*might weaken international unity and support for our efforts to pressure Iran*"³⁶¹. Plus, the bill was a way of limiting the president's flexibility of action³⁶², by removing the possibility to go back without the congress's approval; although the AIPAC presented strategically the bill as a tool that empowered Obama, who had the right to impose more penalties and sanctions³⁶³.

If one hand, Obama was trying to delay the bill in Senate to have more time to act on Senators to modify the draft; Congress increased pressure on the executive for unilateral sanctions³⁶⁴. And, from January 2010 Senators from both sides push on the President in order to take heavier sanctions over Iran. On the 27th,

³⁵⁴ "IRAN REFINED PETROLEUM SANCTIONS ACT OF 2009", House of representatives, 111th Congress, November 19, 2009. <https://www.congress.gov/111/crpt/hrpt342/CRPT-111hrpt342.pdf>

³⁵⁵ Ros-Lehtinen received \$137,372 by pro-Israel lobby: "Pro-Israel, money to congress, all members of the House", Open Secret. <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?ind=Q05&cycle=2008&recipdetail=H&sortorder=N&mem=Y&page=2>

³⁵⁶ "Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009 (H.R. 2194)", Bill Summary, AIPAC, December 2009. [https://www.aipac.org/~media/Publications/Policy%20and%20Politics/AIPAC%20Analyses/Bill%20Summaries/2009/12/Bill_Summary_IRPSA.pdf](https://www.aipac.org/~/media/Publications/Policy%20and%20Politics/AIPAC%20Analyses/Bill%20Summaries/2009/12/Bill_Summary_IRPSA.pdf)

³⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

The act can be found through the following link: <https://www.iranwatch.org/sites/default/files/us-congress-iranrefinedpetroleumsanctionsact-hr2194-121609.pdf>

³⁵⁸ Rozen, L., "Berman: Iran sanctions bill empowers Obama", POLITICO, December 15, 2009. https://www.politico.com/blogs/laurarozen/1209/Berman_says_Iran_sanctions_bill_empowers_Obama_Iran_policy.html

³⁵⁹ Rogin, J., "Exclusive: State Department letter to Kerry outlines "serious substantive concerns" with Iran sanctions bill", *Foreign Policy*, December 11, 2009, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/12/11/exclusive-state-department-letter-to-kerry-outlines-serious-substantive-concerns-with-iran-sanctions-bill/>

³⁶⁰ He was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

³⁶¹ Klein, P., "Obama's tortured history with sanctions against Iran", *Washington examiner*, November 26, 2013. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/obamas-tortured-history-with-sanctions-against-iran>

³⁶² Rogin, J., "Exclusive: State Department letter to Kerry outlines "serious substantive concerns" with Iran sanctions bill", *Foreign Policy*, December 11, 2009

³⁶³ "Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009 (H.R. 1327 and S. 1065)", Bill Summary, AIPAC, November 2009. https://www.aipac.org/~media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/bill-summaries/2009/11/bill_summary_iran_sanctions_enabling_act.pdf;

³⁶⁴ Rozen, L., "Berman: Iran sanctions bill empowers Obama", POLITICO, December 15, 2009

a bipartisan coalition, made by senators who received funds from AIPAC for mid-terms elections³⁶⁵, sent a letter to the President writing in opposition to diplomacy which had failed: *“You have repeatedly made clear that your patience with the Iranian regime is not unlimited... you indicated that you wanted to see “serious movement” by the Iranians by the end of 2009. This deadline has passed, we believe that it is imperative to put into action your pledge of increased, meaningful pressure against the Iranian regime “crippling sanctions”.*³⁶⁶ The letter was sent for Iran violations of the NPT³⁶⁷ and Ahmadinejad restarting uranium program³⁶⁸. Despite White House’s objections³⁶⁹, the Senate Banking Committee approved at unanimity the report on Iran³⁶⁹ and the sanctioning bill ³⁷⁰.

In Senate, Senators Dodd, Reid and Shelby sponsored the *“Dodd/Shelby Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (S. 2799)”*, the counterpart of the IRPSA, that passed on January 28th 2010 incorporating *“the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act”*. Dodd justified the importance of the legislation as a way to *“arm the Administration with critical tools to apply additional pressure on the Iranian regime and disrupt its proliferation...when Iran’s leaders continue to threaten the national interests of the U.S. and our strongest allies, including Israel.”*³⁷¹The high pressure made by AIPAC and lawmakers push the administration to leave the public opposition to the bill, allowing its passage. Likely the White House thought of introducing some amendments, i.e. to an exemption from Iran sanctions to companies based in *“cooperating countries”* working with the US on multilateral sanctions³⁷². However, the new legislation expanded heavier US sanctions without any amendments, whereas AIPAC *“strongly applauds Senator Reid’s commitment and that of the bill’s 76 cosponsors to passing this critical legislation without delay”*.³⁷³ Consequently, the pro-Israel donations to Reid increased from 500\$ to 35,000\$³⁷⁴.

To be enacted, a bill must be signed by the President. Instead of signing the bill, Obama tried to pursue peaceful diplomacy via different tools³⁷⁵, such as through Senate-House conference committee, until a deal would be reached at UN level for multilateral action. It increased bipartisan pressures, and in April

³⁶⁵“Pro-Israel: money to congress 2010, Open Secret. <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?ind=Q05&recipdetail=S&sortorder=N&mem=Y&cycle=2010>

³⁶⁶“ Casey, Bipartisan Coalition Urge President to Sanction Iran”, Bob Casey website, January 27 2010. <https://www.casey.senate.gov/newsroom/releases/casey-bipartisan-coalition-urge-president-to-sanction-iran>

³⁶⁷ On July 1, 1968, Iran signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Six years later Iran completed its Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

³⁶⁸“Iran ‘makes first batch of 20% enriched uranium’ “, *BBC news*, February 11, 2010. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8510451.stm ----- Siddique Haroon, “Iran begins enriching higher-grade uranium, says state TV”, *The Guardian*, February 9, 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/09/iran-enrichment-higher-grade-uranium>

³⁶⁹ Unanimity and unanimous consent means without debate and amendments.

³⁷⁰“Congressional Record 111th: PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION”, House of Representatives No. 12, January 29, 2010, <https://www.congress.gov/crec/2010/01/28/CREC-2010-01-28.pdf>

³⁷¹Congressional record-senate, S.274, January 28, 2010. https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/press/aipac-statements/2009/12/senate_to_move_iran_sanctions_upon_return_12_24_09.pdf

³⁷²Lake, E., “White House seeks to soften Iran sanctions” , *The Washington Times*, April 29, 2010. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/apr/29/wh-seeking-soften-iran-sanctions/>

³⁷³ “Senate Announces Move to Pass Iran Sanctions Upon Return”, Press Release, AIPAC, December 24, 2009. https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/press/aipac-statements/2009/12/senate_to_move_iran_sanctions_upon_return_12_24_09.pdf

³⁷⁴ Pro-Israel money to congress in 2008 and in 2010, Open secret.

³⁷⁵ For instance, the administration lift restrictions for internet companies, by allowing them to export online services, software and technologies (instant texting and chat); it would be harder for the regime to have an appeal on the Iranian population.

Representatives Jesse Jackson Jr. and Mike Pence with 366 House's signatures sent mail to Obama. Whereas Sens. Schumer and Graham, AIPAC's sponsored, send a letter with 80 signatures. Both, the letter and the e-mail, urged tougher sanctions in the short run, since preventing Iran from nuclear weapons was the first imperative for the US and Israel security. The bipartisan communications were one of the main pressures upon Obama, not so much for its contents, since they stressed the Obama's diplomacy failures³⁷⁶. The main pressure has been represented by the fact that they crossed the traditional loyalties and interests in favor of the US interests³⁷⁷. Indeed, both parties were pushing against Obama towards the implementation of the legislation passed months before in both chambers, since they "cannot allow those who would oppose or delay sanctions to govern either the timing or content of our efforts"³⁷⁸. At the same time, progress at UN towards new sanctions over Iran pushed Senators Dodd and Berman to delay the final sanctions until June³⁷⁹, under the AIPAC's approval: "public commitment to get tough, comprehensive Iran sanctions legislation on the president's desk before the July 4 recess. We urge President Obama to sign and implement that legislation immediately upon its arrival on his desk."³⁸⁰ The delay led to a multilateral action at UNSC level, since approved and expanded new sanctions against Iran.

Despite the UN sanctions, the Congress considered sanctions "quite tepid"³⁸¹ and AIPAC's lawmakers continued on its path of supporting heavier unilateral sanctions. Hence, Berman and Lethine proposed to wider Iran's sanctions and monitor these sanctions³⁸². And, at the end of June, Berman submitted the report of House foreign affairs committee in order to vote the IREA before July 4th recess³⁸³, with the support of Republicans. On 24th of June, the "comprehensive Iran sanctions, accountability, and divestment act of 2010"³⁸⁴ passed in the House by a vote 408 to 8³⁸⁵; whereas, sanctions against Iran's energy and banking industries passed in the Senate by a vote 99 to 0³⁸⁶. Through statements and press release AIPAC sustained the bill, considered a way

³⁷⁶ They affirmed the failures of Obama's attempts of engagement with Iran, who was "unresponsive to Obama Administration's unprecedented and serious efforts at engagement" Iran refused also the Tehran Research Reactor plan offered by the US. "H.R.2194", 111th congress: <https://www.iranwatch.org/sites/default/files/us-congress-iranrefinedpetroleumsanctionsact-hr2194-121609.pdf>

³⁷⁷ Johnson B., "House Iran sanctions letter going to be sent to Obama on Monday", *The Hill*, April 17, 2010. <https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/92821-house-iran-sanctions-letter-going-to-obama-on-monday?page=2#comments>

³⁷⁸ *Ibidem*

³⁷⁹ "Dodd, Berman Announce timing on Iran sanctions conference report", US of House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, accessed May 2019. <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/2010/5/dodd-berman-announce-timing-iran-sanctions-conference-report>

³⁸⁰ "CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP: IRAN SANCTIONS WILL PASS IN JUNE", AIPAC Press release, May 25, 2010. https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/press/aipac-statements/2010/05/aipac_statement_aipac_applauds_congressional_deadline_for_passage_of_iran_sanctions_5_25_2010.pdf

³⁸¹ Cornwell, S., "US imposes tough sanctions on Iran", *The Guardian*, June 25, 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jun/25/us-imposes-tough-sanctions-iran>

³⁸² "H2806", Congressional Record — House, April 22, 20 <https://www.congress.gov/crc/2010/04/22/CREC-2010-04-22-pt1-PgH2806-5.pdf>

³⁸³ The July 4 recess is the holiday of both chambers.

³⁸⁴ "Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, And Divestment Act Of 2010", Treasury department <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/hr2194.pdf>

³⁸⁵ Data about the Final Vote for ROLL CALL 394: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2010/roll394.xml>

³⁸⁶ "Roll Call Vote 111th Congress - 2nd Session on H.R. 2194", US Senate. http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=2&vote=00199

to increase pressure Iran to cease its nuclear enrichment³⁸⁷; and it succeeded in pushing the Congress to approve toughest sanctions until 2016. Indeed, the bill involved sanctions that would prevent Iran nuclear enrichment and sanction against people responsible for human rights' violation³⁸⁸.

Consequently, Obama failed to impose his diplomacy and to modify the original bill of 2009. Furthermore, he was facing an internal opposition from his own parties and losing control over Democrats as far as foreign policy dealings with Iran, on which there was a bipartisan agreement, in a time characterized by acrimonies between Republicans and Democrats³⁸⁹. in spite of Obama's efforts to soften sanctions with his ultimatum to Iran³⁹⁰, the domestic pressure was heavier that Obama signed the bill on July 1st 2010³⁹¹, and the "*comprehensive Iran sanctions, accountability, and divestment act of 2010*" became a law³⁹². The sanctions were presented by Obama himself as a consequence of Iranian not cooperative behavior³⁹³, which accelerated the collapse of any possible negotiations on the nuclear program with the failure of the diplomatic path³⁹⁴. In truth, the cost of domestic divisions in domestic and foreign policies "*did not pay off for the president's desire to resolve tensions with Iran through diplomacy*"³⁹⁵.

As a matter of fact, in a surrounding of mistrust between Iran and the US, the effectiveness of AIPAC actions on Capitol Hill increased. Nevertheless, not always the action has been successfully vis-à-vis the administration, such as in the case of "*Gulf Security and Iran Sanctions Enforcement Act*"³⁹⁶, approved but never enacted³⁹⁷. Or, "*the Iran Transparency and Accountability Act of 2010 (ITA)*"³⁹⁸, sponsored by the Repr. Ted Deutch³⁹⁹. It is interesting to note how AIPAC has acted on Deutch, who before 2010 did not receive funds from pro-Israel lobby. Whereas, from 2010 has been fundamental for AIPAC and pro-Israel action in

³⁸⁷"America Must Implement Tough Iran Sanctions Now", AIPAC; accessed June 2019. https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/issue-memos/2010/10/iran_next_steps.pdf

³⁸⁸"H.R.2194 - Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010", 111th Congress (2009-2010), <https://www.congress.gov/bills/111/house-bill/2194/text/pl>

³⁸⁹ Such as Obamacare reforms: Obama did not solve the US economy and he did not maintain his electoral promises: the public debt and deficit doubled, the core stone of its propaganda the health-care reform remains inefficient with 22 millions of people without insurance and not solution for the subprime crisis that originated in 2008.

De Carlo, C., "Elezioni di Mid Term 2010: un tè freddo per Obama", *ISPI*, October 28, 2010. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/elezioni-di-mid-term-2010-un-te-freddo-obama-545> ; Nelson, M, "Barack Obama: domestic Affair", *UVA; Miller Center*, <https://millercenter.org/president/obama/domestic-affairs>; "Doubts About Obama's Economic Policies Rise", *PEW Research Center*, June 7 2010.

<https://www.people-press.org/2010/06/07/doubts-about-obamas-economic-policies-rise/>

³⁹⁰Spillius, A., "Barack Obama gives Iran ultimatum over secret nuclear plant", *The telegraph*, September 25, 2009. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/6231396/Barack-Obama-gives-Iran-ultimatum-over-secret-nuclear-plant.html>

³⁹¹ "Iran sanctions bill signing", C-Span video, July 1, 2010. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?294343-3/iran-sanctions-bill-signing>

³⁹² H.R.2194 - Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010", 111th Congress.

³⁹³ "Iran sanctions bill signing", C-Span video, July 1, 2010.

³⁹⁴ Castiglioni, C., "Obama's Policy Toward Iran: Comparing First and Second Term", *ISPI*, Analysis No. 220 (December 2013), 5

³⁹⁵ T Parsi, T., "*A Single Roll of the Dice*" (New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2012), 147

³⁹⁶ The bill had the aim to restrict the participation in offshore oil and gas leasing by a person who engages in any activity that could be sanctioned according to the "*comprehensive Iran sanctions, accountability, and divestment act of 2010*".

³⁹⁷ "H.R. 6043 (111th): Gulf Security and Iran Sanctions Enforcement Act", government track, accessed July 2019, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/hr6043/text>

³⁹⁸"H.R. 5833 (111th): Iran Transparency and Accountability Act of 2010", government track, accessed by July 2019. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/hr5833>

³⁹⁹He is a pro-Israel activist and experts in Iran divestment issue.

"Congress Readies Next Steps for Strengthening Iran Sanctions", US congressman Ted Deutch, July 23 2010. <https://teddeutch.house.gov/news/email/show.aspx?ID=PASLONLTRL6IEQHJFH03AB6AA>

the House, receiving funds from AIPAC and taking position in contrast with its own party concerning Israel and Iran.

2.3.3. FROM THE HILL TO THE HOUSE CROSSING ELECTIONS FOR MORE SANCTIONS.

The AIPAC action in favor of heavier sanctions increased after mid-terms elections in 2010, when the president received a "shellacking" by the Republican party⁴⁰⁰. Indeed, Republicans held the House of Commons with 242 seats by gaining 63 seats; against 193 for Democrats⁴⁰¹; whereas in the Senate, Republicans acquired 5 seats with 42 seats, and Democrats hold 53 seats, a thin majority⁴⁰², if we consider that it needs 60 votes to present a bill in the forum. Therefore, Obama lost the House and he had a thin majority in Senate, which limited his initiatives by focusing on the defensive and cuts in domestic spending⁴⁰³. The defeat was important a step to overcome since no House's majority would mean a limited action in domestic policies (i.e. *Recovery act*⁴⁰⁴) and opposition on foreign policies concerning Iran. Further, an era of compromise with Republicans on several issues needed to start for Obama if he wanted to achieve his goals, especially in the view of a new mandate.

Indeed, Obama tried an agreement with his Republican counterpart throughout secret negotiations, such as those with the Republican John Boehner, Speaker of the House, who has been financed by AIPAC in his campaign⁴⁰⁵. Truly, the research of support in domestic politics, which was for Obama at the top of his agenda increased, letting aside international disputes⁴⁰⁶. Whether in face of his geostrategic interests, Obama put before internal problems⁴⁰⁷, aware that Obama needed a compromise for his reforms, AIPAC had higher margins of actions on congressmen. And, with the new members in Capitol Hill, the organization increased its funds for lobbying actions to sponsor 25 bills⁴⁰⁸, the majority concerning military expenditures and consolidation of Iran's sanctions already established⁴⁰⁹.

Maybe less numerous, the legislative action pushing for sanctions was heavier. In the House, on the 13th of May, Ros-Lehtinen⁴¹⁰ and Berman introduced "*the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights*

⁴⁰⁰MacAskill, E., "Barack Obama admits he needs 'to do a better job' after midterms defeat", *The Guardian*, November 3, 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/03/barack-obama-midterms-better-job>

⁴⁰¹Election results 2010: House- <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2010/results/house.html>

⁴⁰²Elction results 2010: senate map <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2010/results/senate.html>

⁴⁰³Nelson, M., "Barack Obama: domestic Affair", *UVA; Miller Center*,

⁴⁰⁴"Recovery Act" was adopted with only Democrats majority

Nelson, M., "Barack Obama: domestic Affair", *UVA; Miller Center*.

⁴⁰⁵"Rep. John Boehner - Ohio District 08 contribution 2009-2010", Open secret. <https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/contributors?cid=N00003675&cycle=2010&recs=100&type=I>

⁴⁰⁶Nelson, M., "Barack Obama: domestic Affair", *UVA; Miller Center*.

⁴⁰⁷Eilperin, J., "For Obama, domestic politics make foreign policy that much harder", *Washington post*, October, 4, 2013

⁴⁰⁸AIPAC gave \$2,850,400: "American Israel Public Affairs Cmte-summary-2011", Open secret. <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?id=D000046963&year=2011>

⁴⁰⁹"American Israel Public Affairs Cmte- bills", Open Secret, <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientbills.php?id=D000046963&year=2011>

⁴¹⁰Chairwoman of House Foreign Affairs Committee

*Act*⁴¹¹ sponsored by AIPAC⁴¹². The bill asked new sanctions “... to press Iran to abandon its illicit nuclear and repressive activities” as wrote AIPAC⁴¹³. After one year of discussion, the bill passed with in December with 410 votes to 10⁴¹⁴. It came to the Senate in 2012, where it has been approved by the Committee on Foreign Relations with unanimous consent, and a few months later it has been signed by the president and enacted. A companion bipartisan legislation supported by AIPAC has been introduced in the Senate during the same period⁴¹⁵: “*Iran, North Korea, and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act of 2011*”⁴¹⁶. The two bills should be considered as the same action. Indeed, both, S. 1048 and the H.R.1905, have been described with the same aim of strengthening and enforcing the sanctions on the IRGC “*which not only is the major instrument of regime repression in Iran, but also controls Iran’s nuclear program and much of the economy*” as AIPAC argued⁴¹⁷.

The INKSCA introduction was announced by one of the sponsors⁴¹⁸, Sen. Kirk, at AIPAC conference in 2011⁴¹⁹. After the announce, AIPAC’s activists started numerous activities and meetings with senators and their staffs, whereas AIPAC lobbyists prepared files that instructed lawmakers. Moreover, AIPAC set up an online platform that allowed AIPAC supporters to send their Senators an email urging them to support the bill. During the Policy conference, there were the interventions of relevant personalities of the establishment and of the pro-Israel lobby, such as Brad Gordon⁴²⁰, who in front of congressmen and the President Obama, argued in favor of harder US sanctions, because “*new sanctions allows us to refocus attention on Iran*” during a period of change in the region⁴²¹. The former CIA analyst put the attention on the credibility of the administration: “*If you don't pull the trigger on a sanction that's meaningful, eventually companies get the notion that we're not serious about this and begin to go back in*”.⁴²²

Moreover, basing on the Obama’s commitment in February 2009, i.e. US would use all powers to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, Senators asked for heavier sanctions on Iran, that was “*directly threaten several friends and allies of the US, especially Israel, whose very right to exist has been denied successively by every leader...and which the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, says should*

⁴¹¹H.R.1905 - Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012

112th Congress (2011-2012), congress record, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-bill/1905>

⁴¹²The Iran Threat Reduction Act of 2011, bill summary AIPAC, May 2011 <https://www.aipac.org/en/For%20Hil%20Staff/~media/D99BC82AC68A4016B889FF51C2AA2A4A.pdf>

⁴¹³*ibidem*

⁴¹⁴ Final votes on the motion to strengthen Iran sanctions laws for the purpose of compelling Iran to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and other threatening activities, and for other purposes

⁴¹⁵Iran, North Korea, and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act (S. 1048), AIPAC bill Summary, June 2011. <https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/bill-summaries/2011/iran-north-korea-syria-sanctions-consolidation-act.pdf>

⁴¹⁶The bill can be found following the link <https://www.congress.gov/112/bills/s1048/BILLS-112s1048is.pdf>

⁴¹⁷ The Iran Threat Reduction Act of 2011, bill summary AIPAC, May 2011; Iran, North Korea, and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act (S. 1048), AIPAC bill Summary, June 2011

⁴¹⁸ The other sponsors were: Sen. Menendez together with Sen. Lieberman, Sen. Casey, Sen. Kyl, Sen. Collins, Sen. Gillibrand and Sen. Kirk

⁴¹⁹ “US SENATORS INTRODUCE IRAN SANCTIONS BIL, muscatdaily, May 24, 2011. <https://muscatdaily.com/Archive/Stories-Files/US-senators-introduce-iran-sanctions-bill>

⁴²⁰ Gordon was a former CIA analyst on Iran and director of policy and government affairs for AIPAC.

⁴²¹ US SENATORS INTRODUCE IRAN SANCTIONS BIL, muscatdaily, May 24, 2011. L

⁴²² *Ibidem*.

be “wiped off the map”⁴²³. Although the new legislation was enacted; at the end, it should be considered successful for two main reasons. On one hand, the bill had 81 co-sponsors Senators⁴²⁴, the majority of the Senate, which confirmed that the AIPAC had an important pro-Israel majority in Senate vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iran issue. On the other hand, Obama issued an executive order⁴²⁵, “*Executive Order 13574: Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, as Amended*”⁴²⁶, valid for all US citizens, resident, entities under US law or jurisdiction in US territory. The order enforced the Secretary of Treasury authority by improving implementation’s powers of “ISA” sanctions. Consequently, the OFAC⁴²⁷ decided to add ISA entities to SDN List (i.e. Royal Oyster Group)⁴²⁸; whereas the Secretary of State imposed sanctions under CISADA⁴²⁹, enforced by the Treasury Department on seven foreign companies, which supplied or transported refined petroleum products (i.e. Petrochemical Commercial Company International)⁴³⁰. At the same time, more sanctions were imposed on new entities under Iran, North Korea and Syria Nonproliferation Act⁴³¹. Therefore, as a result of direct and indirect pressures on the administration, the executive power increased sanctions over Iran.

Despite the executive actions, the pressure from Senators did not stop and a bipartisan group of 92 Senators sent a first letter to Obama in August. The letter has been spearheaded by Senators Schumer and Kirk⁴³², who called for more economic pressure over Iran imposing “...*crippling sanctions on Iran's financial system by cutting off the CBI*”⁴³³ to limit Iran’s ability of international trade. The action has been supported by AIPAC, according to which CBI and Bank Markazi have a central role in Iran’s way to circumvent international sanctions against its nuclear program⁴³⁴.

⁴²³“ S. 1048 To expand sanctions imposed with respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran, North Korea, and Syria, and for other purposes”, 112th Congress, pp.6 <https://www.congress.gov/112/bills/s1048/BILLS-112s1048is.pdf>

⁴²⁴ “S.1048 - Iran, North Korea, and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act of 2011”, 112th Congress (2011-2012) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-bill/1048/cosponsors?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Strengthen+Sanctions+Against+Iran+2011%22%5D%7D&r=3&s=4>

⁴²⁵ An executive order is a federal act issued by the President that has forced of law, once signed and send to the official federal register. This power is up to the discretion of the President, who can decide how to enforce the law, how to manage resources on executive branch. Hence, the US President manages the executives branch through these kinds of acts.

⁴²⁶“ Executive Order 13574 Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, as Amended”, *Federal Register*, Vol. 76, No. 101, May 25, 2011. https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/2011_isa_eo.pdf

⁴²⁷ Office of Foreign Assets Control part of the Treasury Department enforces and manages economic and trade sanctions based on US foreign policy and national security, against regimes, terrorists, and international threats.

⁴²⁸ Specially Designated Nationals And Blocked Persons List lists of entities and individuals with whom US individuals not business: “Office Of Foreign Assets Control Changes To List Of Specially Designated Nationals And Blocked Persons Since January 1, 2011”, pp.83. <https://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/sdnew11.pdf>

“Multiple New Iran Sanctions Imposed and Proposed”, Wiley Rein, may 26, 2011.

⁴²⁹ the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010

⁴³⁰ Office Of Foreign Assets Control Changes To List Of Specially Designated Nationals And Blocked Persons Since January 1, 2011”, pp.83; “Multiple New Iran Sanctions Imposed and Proposed”, Wiley Rein, may 26, 2011.

⁴³¹Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act Sanctions (INKSNA), US department of State. <https://www.state.gov/iran-north-korea-and-syria-nonproliferation-act-sanctions-inksna/>

⁴³²“AIPAC Welcomes Senate Call to Sanction Iran’s Central Bank”, August 9, 2011 <https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/press/aipac-statements/2011/08/releaseaipac-welcomes-call-to-sanction-irans-central-bank.pdf>

⁴³³ Solomon, J. “Senators Press Obama on Iran's Central Bank”, *Iran Review*, August 10, 2011. http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Senators_Press_Obama_on_Iran_s_Central_Bank.htm

⁴³⁴“AIPAC Welcomes Senate Call to Sanction Iran’s Central Bank”, AIPAC, August 9, 2011 <https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/press/aipac-statements/2011/08/releaseaipac-welcomes-call-to-sanction-irans-central-bank.pdf>

2.4. A TWO LEVELS' GAME FOR A MILITARY OPTION.

The relations between Israel and the US are conceived as an alliance. However, the alliance should not be understood as an institutionalized and formal treaty in Potter's sense⁴³⁵, rather it is an alliance as far as mutual reciprocal support, assistance and exchanges in a realist way⁴³⁶. Although in an alliance strong allies tend to bound weaker parties for their superior resources⁴³⁷; higher capabilities do not guarantee always the acquiescence of smaller allies to stronger allies⁴³⁸. In fact, small and military-economically weaker States are able to punch above their weight, meaning that they can use dependence from stronger State in favor of their bargaining power and interests. Because of its importance, the weaker part could "*threaten collapse if not aided sufficiently*"⁴³⁹, especially in military relations. Specifically, this is true in Israel military relations with US⁴⁴⁰, who has always financed Israel⁴⁴¹ and cooperate in military innovations⁴⁴² as well as in intelligence partnership⁴⁴³.

The US-Israel military relations assumed more relevance in the Israeli strategy of prospecting a unilateral military strike against Iran from 2010, once Iran improved its nuclear program, since "*if Iranians continue to protect and harden their nuclear sites it will be more difficult to target them*".⁴⁴⁴ The military strategy seemed to be more likely, after diplomatic meetings between the P5+1 and Iran, when Iran insisted on lifting all sanctions as a condition for discussion on a nuclear deal⁴⁴⁵. Truly, Israeli calls for bombing Iran were not new, which is why experts started to think about an Israeli bluff⁴⁴⁶. However, in 2012 something changed since Israel was becoming more anxious about the Iran's nuclear program⁴⁴⁷.

2.4.1. A LONG FRIENDSHIP: PANETTA AND BARACK RELATIONSHIP.

⁴³⁵ Potter, B., "*introduction to the study of International organization*" (Appleton-Century-Crofts, NY 2008).

⁴³⁶ Morgenthau, H.J., "*Politics Among nations*" (Alfred H. Knopf, 1963)

⁴³⁷ Pressman, J., "Warring friends. Alliance in International Politics", Cornell University Press, 2008.

⁴³⁸ Robert O. Keohane, "The Big Influence of Small Allies," *Foreign Policy*, vol. 162, No.2 (1971): 161–72.

⁴³⁹ *Ibidem*, 162.

⁴⁴⁰ Dayan, I., "אובמה": תארו לעצמכם שהייתי מגיע לכנסת בלי לתאם עם ביבי", Mako, 2015.

https://www.mako.co.il/tv-ilana_dayan/2015-50ed0843c59ad410/Article-8280013c945bd41006.htm

⁴⁴¹ Report, "U.S. OVERSEAS LOANS AND GRANTS (GREENBOOK)" USAID, The American people, May 4 2019.

<https://www.usaid.gov/data/dataset/49c01560-6cd7-4bbc-bfef-7a1991867633>

For more historical information: "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel", EveryCRSReport.com, January 5, 2006 – April 10, 2018,

<https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33222.html#Content>

⁴⁴² For instance, the Iron Dome system has been developed by American defense companies but operationalized in Israel. For more information: Missile Defense Project, "Iron Dome (Israel)," Missile Threat, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, April 14, 2016, last modified June 15, 2018, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/defsys/iron-dome/>.

⁴⁴³ Bainerman J., "*Inside the Covert Operations of the CIA and Israel's Mossad*" (Paperback, 1994)

⁴⁴⁴ US embassy reported Israeli defense officials. Black, I., "Israel primed to attack a nuclear Iran", *The guardian*, November 28, 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/28/israel-primed-attack-nuclear-iran>

⁴⁴⁵ Erlanger, S., "Little progress is seen in Iran talks", *New York times*, January 21, 2011.

Erlanger, S. "Talks on Iran's Nuclear Program End with No Progress," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2011.

⁴⁴⁶ Parsi, T., "Is Netanyahu bluffing once again?" *CNN*, November 4th 2011.

<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/11/04/is-netanyahu-bluffing-once-again/>

⁴⁴⁷ The Netanyahu speech at UNGA in 2012 demonstrated the Israeli concern on Iran.

"PM Netanyahu addresses UN General Assembly", *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, September 27, 2012. <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2012/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-addresses-UN-27-Sep-2012.aspx>

Since the decision of military intervention in US is taken by the executive power, however constitutionally in the hands of the Congress⁴⁴⁸, Israel acted on the White House. Indeed, Iran nuclear program dominated the conversations between Ehud Barak⁴⁴⁹ and Panetta, Heads of Defense Department, and between Obama and Netanyahu⁴⁵⁰. The relationship between Barak and Panetta has been an Israeli tool of direct influence upon US administration for two main reasons. First, Obama had complete trust in Panetta⁴⁵¹, who has been chosen directly and personally by the President⁴⁵². Secondly, head of Department of Defense is fundamental, since he guides and advises the President in his policy decisions⁴⁵³, from which result a vital cooperation between executive and Pentagon to decide policy. Therefore, aware of Panetta's role, Ehud Barak acted upon him using official channels and personal ties⁴⁵⁴.

Though in 2011 they agreed that *"threat of an Iranian nuclear weapon wasn't imminent"*⁴⁵⁵, the progress made by Iran with its enrichment program⁴⁵⁶ led Barak to ask privately about the necessity of a preemptive strike against Iran⁴⁵⁷. Israel wanted to prevent penetration into the *"zone of immunity"*⁴⁵⁸, because in the case of Iran advancement, all Israeli attempts of retaliation would be inconsistent⁴⁵⁹. Throughout meetings and communications, Panetta tried to convince Barak that an Israel action alone would be not effective, while *"the US could act effectively, but preferred the diplomacy first"*⁴⁶⁰. Israel was highly reluctant in accepting any diplomatic option towards Iran, and he believed that unilateral strike was the only and *"last opportunity for coordinated, international, lethal sanctions that will force Iran to stop"*⁴⁶¹ even without *"...be sure our friend will show up"*⁴⁶². De facto, Barak was continuing Israel path started one year before, when his political-military director, A. Gilad, told to the US that diplomatic efforts persuading Iran to comply with international requests were its last chances⁴⁶³.

⁴⁴⁸ "Power to declare war", History, Art and Archives, united states house of representatives, accessed May 2019 <https://history.house.gov/Institution/Origins-Development/War-Powers/>

⁴⁴⁹ Ehud Barak has been Minister of Defense of Israel from 2007 until 2013. For more information: "Ehud Barak Biography", Academy of Achievement, January 22, 2019. <https://www.usaid.gov/data/dataset/49c01560-6cd7-4bbc-bfef-7a1991867633>

⁴⁵⁰ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., *"Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace"* (penguin Press 2014)

⁴⁵¹ "Panetta has earned the trust and confidence of Obama as leader of the CIA, and has name recognition"

.CNN Wire Staff, "Obama selects Panetta for defense secretary, Petraeus for CIA", *CNN politics*, April 28, 2011 <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/04/27/defense.panetta/index.html>

⁴⁵² *"Secretary of Defense is appointed from civilian life by the President"*, US Code Title 10, Armed forces, Subtitle A. General Military, Part I. Chapter 2. Department of Defense, Section 113. Secretary of Defense.

⁴⁵³ *ibidem*.

⁴⁵⁴ Barak and Panetta have personal ties before taking office as they said in their own biographies.

Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., *"Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace"* (penguin Press 2014) chapter 16; Barak, E., *"My Country, My Life"* (Pan Macmillan, 2018.)

⁴⁵⁵ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., *"Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace"* (penguin Press 2014) chap. 16.

⁴⁵⁶ Precisely with the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP) facility.

"Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant", James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies *NTI*, accessed May 2019 <https://www.nti.org/learn/facilities/165/>

⁴⁵⁷ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., *"Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace"*

⁴⁵⁸ The zone of immunity is considered a red-line, crossing the line would mean an Israeli military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities.

⁴⁵⁹ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., *"Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace"*.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibidem*

⁴⁶¹ Heller J., "Israel's Barak plays down talk of war with Iran", *Reuters*, November 8, 2011 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-israel/israels-barak-plays-down-talk-of-war-with-iran-idUSTRE7A724I20111108>

⁴⁶² Barak, E., *"My Country, My Life"* (Pan Macmillan, 2018), 433–34.

⁴⁶³ Black, I., "Israel primed to attack a nuclear Iran", *The guardian*, November 28, 2010

Aware of US reluctance for a military strike, Barak and Netanyahu acted on two elements: the US fears and the surprise of the military option. Truly, as Raed M. I. Qaddoura⁴⁶⁴ explained “*instilling fear is a technique used and manipulated by propagandist to achieve their message*”⁴⁶⁵. Indeed, Netanyahu pushed on US’s fears of a pre-emptive Israeli strike against Iran, because it would lead to an Iranian counter-answer, causing an escalation and a broader regional conflict affecting financial markets and oil prices⁴⁶⁶ and with an US involvement⁴⁶⁷. Even without direct involvement, Pentagon feared that Americans would have been a target in Middle Eastern, where it has troops and basis, i.e. the Persian Gulf⁴⁶⁸. Plus, an intervention in the region would have more costs than benefits and, in practical terms, US was not able to support the costs of bombing Iran to penetrate the nuclear site. Indeed, Obama needed to solve previous failures in Iraq, and he had the game still open in Afghanistan and Libya. On the other hand, an intervention would have risky consequences by releasing radioactive uranium in all region⁴⁶⁹. The US’s fears of being pulled in fights were confirmed by Panetta⁴⁷⁰ and Obama: “*we work in lockstep as we proceed to try to solve this, hopefully diplomatically*”.⁴⁷¹ Furthermore, military action would be in opposition with Obama’s doctrine⁴⁷² that previewed a disengagement from Middle East, putted in place since Panetta arrived at the Pentagon⁴⁷³.

The US fears increased because of lack of information delivered by Israel. Since Israel was not sure that US will show up in case of strike, the Defense apparatus started to do not inform White House of any development in military strategy. Indeed, Americans’ officials privately said that with a high probability Israel would not notice in advance the decision to strike Iran nuclear basis⁴⁷⁴. Moreover, Israeli diplomatic staff, leaders and chiefs of defense did not respond to all questions made by US about Israel’s intentions towards Iran, not in public nor privately. At the same time, there has been a reduction of Israeli statements on the Iranian issue⁴⁷⁵, particularly in two events. Firstly, after the bilateral meeting between Obama and Netanyahu in 2011, curiously Iran did not appear in Israeli Prime Minister’s remarks. On the contrary, it was considered by Obama, according to whom “*it is unacceptable for Iran to possess a nuclear weapon*”⁴⁷⁶. Secondly, E. Barak was vague in public statements during his interviews. He did not respond to questions concerning action against Iran, overcoming any information about a military strike saying: “*I don't think that is a subject for*

⁴⁶⁴ Raed M. I. Qaddoura is an expert in international relations and Politics and history, PhD at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

⁴⁶⁵ Raed M. I. Qaddoura “Israel’s propaganda strategies: case study of the protective edge operation in Gaza 2014”, *International Journal of Development Research*, vol. 7, no. 12, 17942, 2017.

⁴⁶⁶ Associated Press, “Just a bluff? Fears grow of Israeli attack on Iran”, *NDTV*, update February 6, 2012.

Perry, D.; Federman, J., “Just a bluff? Fears grow of Israeli attack on Iran?”, *Star advertiser*, February 5, 2012.

⁴⁶⁷ Amos, Y.; Avner, G., “If Attacked, How Would Iran Respond?”, *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 16, No. 3, October 2013.

⁴⁶⁸ Shanker T., Cooper, H., Bronner, E., “US sees Iran attacks as likely if Israel strikes”, *NYT*, February 29, 2012.

⁴⁶⁹ Marshall, R., “A Short-Term Victory With Long-Term Consequences”, *Washington report*, 2012.

⁴⁷⁰ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., “*Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace*”, chap. 16: “*I assured him (Barak), that the United State would stand with Israel, but that we did not believe Israeli military action was the best course*”.

⁴⁷¹ Perry, D.; Federman, J., “Just a bluff? Fears grow of Israeli attack on Iran?”, *Star advertiser*, February 5, 2012.

⁴⁷² Dennis, R., “Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama”, *NYT*, 2015.

⁴⁷³ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., “*Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace*”, chap.15.

⁴⁷⁴ Mazzetti, M., Shanker, T. “US war game sees perils of Israeli strike against Iran”, *The New York Time*, March 19, 2012.

⁴⁷⁵ Ravid, B. “U.S. Officials: Israel Refused to Commit to Withhold Surprise Attack on Iran”, *Haaretz*, November 6, 2011.

<https://www.haaretz.com/1.5206796>

⁴⁷⁶ Press Office, “Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel After Bilateral Meeting” *The White House*, May 2011. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/20/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-netanyahu-israel-after-bilate>

public discussion”⁴⁷⁷. The lack of information increased concerns in US and US European Command⁴⁷⁸ at end of 2011, when Israel tested-fires missile without advance notification to US⁴⁷⁹. The simulation of a long-range attack at the NATO bases with an air-to-air refueling component. After which Iran’s defense minister affirmed that Iran was prepared to answer⁴⁸⁰ and Khamenei framed Israel as “*cancerous tumor that should be cut and will be cut*”⁴⁸¹, increasing possibilities of escalation.

Moreover, Israel did not inform the administration about the new alliance of security cooperation with Azerbaijan. The alliance was important because of the Azeri strategic position on Iran’s northern border, fundamental for Israel in case of attack against Iran⁴⁸². Indeed, the agreement provided to Israel military bases in the Caucasus State; whereas it would give to Baku’s government 1.6\$ billion arms with sophisticated drones and missile-defense systems⁴⁸³. Although denied by Israel⁴⁸⁴, once delivered to public, the agreement was an effective toll of pressure on US, who strongly believed that Israel would attack Iran. Furthermore, on one hand, Azerbaijan’s behavior did not give assurance to US through contradictory government’s declarations⁴⁸⁵. On the other hand, Iran- Azeri relations became weaker meanwhile its ties with Tel-Aviv stronger⁴⁸⁶, improving Israel regional position and the possibility of a strike.

Israel defense send a clear message to Obama that the military strike would have come a reality with or without US involvement. Successfully Israeli leaders arise the perception of an imminent attack in US military officials⁴⁸⁷, as Secretary of defense wrote : “*Israel was seriously contemplating military action; we urged them to refrain and tried to back up our request with public statement and gestures that would reinforce their confidence that we would not abandon them*”⁴⁸⁸. The assurances were given through President’s speech at AIPAC conferences⁴⁸⁹, where he reaffirmed his beliefs in sanction as a method to stop Iran’s nuclear program and he affirmed that “*when it comes to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, I will take no options off the table. That includes all elements of American power: political effort (...) a diplomatic effort*

⁴⁷⁷Zakaria, F., “New Phase of Global Geopolitics; Interview with Ehud Barak; Interview with Bruce Bueno de Mesquita; A Look at Europe’s Far Right”, *CNN transcripts*, November 20, 2011. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1111/20/fzgps.01.html>

⁴⁷⁸ Blofield, A., “Israel raises fears of military action against Iran with missile test”, *The telegraph*, November 2 2011. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/8865289/Israel-raises-fears-of-military-action-against-Iran-with-missile-test.html>

⁴⁷⁹Williams, D., “ Israel test-fires missile as Iran debate rages”, *Reuters*, November 2, 2011 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-missile/israel-test-fires-missile-as-iran-debate-rages-idUSTRE7A11BR20111102>

⁴⁸⁰ Heller, J., “Israel’s Barak plays down talk of war with Iran”, *Reuters*, November 8, 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-israel/israels-barak-plays-down-talk-of-war-with-iran-idUSTRE7A724I20111108>

⁴⁸¹ “Iran: We will help 'cut out the cancer of Israel”, *the telegraph*, February 3, 2012. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9059179/Iran-We-will-help-cut-out-the-cancer-of-Israel.html>

⁴⁸² Alpher, Y., “from the center: Yossi Alpher”, interviewed at Auckland Writers festival, 2016. <http://www.writersfestival.co.nz/look-and-listen/videos/Page5/from-the-centre-yossi-alpher-2016/>

⁴⁸³ Perry, M. “Israel’s Secret Staging Ground”, *Foreign Policy*, March 28, 2012. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/03/28/israels-secret-staging-ground/>

⁴⁸⁴ Yaari, E., “Perry-tales in ‘Foreign Policy’”, *The times of Israel*, April 1, 2012. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/perry-tales-in-foreign-policy/>

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibidem*

⁴⁸⁶ Reynolds, J., “Why Azerbaijan is closer to Israel than Iran”, *BBC News*, August 12, 2012. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19063885>

⁴⁸⁷Shanker T., Cooper, H., Bronner, E., “US sees Iran attacks as likely if Israel strikes”, *New York times*, February 29, 2012.

⁴⁸⁸Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., “*Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace*”, chap.16.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, kindle edition, 2361.

(...) an economic effort (...) and a military effort”⁴⁹⁰. The statement was in line with Panetta’s declaration at Marines at 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit: “if Israel decides to go after Iran(...), we could be engaged sooner than any of us want”⁴⁹¹. However, in a meeting between Panetta and Sen. Chuck Schumer⁴⁹², Israel started to ask for practical acts with assurances about what US was prepared to do about Iran, leading Obama to different actions⁴⁹³.

2.4.2. INTELLIGENCE TIES IN THE IRAN NUCLEAR AFFAIR.

At level 1, the relations between Mossad and the Intelligence Community have been a source of influence vis-à-vis US foreign policy. The IC has an important role in US public policy since it participates at the policymaking process through indirect and direct channel⁴⁹⁴. On one hand, it is represented in Congress and in Senate through the Select Committee on Intelligence, to which it has advising and reporting functions; meaning that policymakers deal with IC by looking for support of their will and interests in Parliament⁴⁹⁵. On the other, it acts directly on the President, who depends on intelligence analysis as far as security and foreign policy decisions⁴⁹⁶. Moreover, the IC enjoys other two levels at which his control and power can be enforced: media and public⁴⁹⁷. The Israeli counterpart is the Mossad, the external state information services created by David Gurion after the birth of the State of Israel. As the IC, it is divided in different departments, and from 1951 it responds directly to the Prime Minister⁴⁹⁸. The Mossad’s role in Israeli policy is to develop intelligence relations with foreign intelligence services and to collect information based on the needs of the State⁴⁹⁹. Even if the Mossad is a civil body, the Israeli intelligence has had a role in shaping military option against Iran, believing that Iran could “*build one nuclear weapon within weeks*”⁵⁰⁰. The two intelligence agencies have had important relations through cover and uncover operations⁵⁰¹. In particular the relations between CIA⁵⁰² and Mossad⁵⁰³ strengthened the US-Israeli alliance. As far as concern the IC role in the US policy making, these relations between the IC and Mossad have been an Israeli channel of influence vis-à-vis US decision making against Iran. Already in 2007, through secret cables, Meir Dagan, head of Mossad send to the US Undersecretary of State five’s pillar strategy against Iran, including a military option⁵⁰⁴. Subsequently, during

⁴⁹⁰ Obama, B., “Text of Obama’s AIPAC speech”, *Politico*, April 3, 2012

⁴⁹¹ Press Operations Transcript, “Secretary Panetta All Hands Call USS Peleliu”, *US Department of Defense*, March 30, 2012 <http://archive.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5004>

⁴⁹² Senator Schumer is a Jewish American politician

⁴⁹³ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., “*Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace*”,

⁴⁹⁴ Holt, P.M., “*Secret Intelligence and Public policy: a dilemma of democracy*” (Congressional Quarterly Inc, 1994)

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 13.

⁴⁹⁶ *ibidem*

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹⁸ “About us”, Mossad Israeli Secret Intelligence Service. <https://www.mossad.gov.il/eng/about/Pages/default.aspx>

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰⁰ Black, I., “Israel primed to attack a nuclear Iran”, *The guardian*, November 28, 2010.

⁵⁰¹ Panetta, L. E., Newton, J., “*Worthy fights: A memoir of leadership in war and peace*”, chap.11

Bainerman J., “*Inside the Covert Operations of the CIA and Israel’s Mossad*” (paperback, 1994)

⁵⁰² the IC is a complex structure compartmented.

⁵⁰³ Smith, G., “*Big Israel: How Israel’s Lobby Moves America*”.

⁵⁰⁴ Wikileaks, “The “five pillars” of Israel’s strategy towards Iran”, *The Saker*, December 24, 2010. <https://thesaker.is/the-five-pillars-of-israels-strategy-towards-iran/>

the Obama administration, IC and Mossad worked together in covert operations against the Iranian regime through networks' and virus attacks and sabotaging equipment⁵⁰⁵.

Since when Obama started to fear an Israeli military option from which took some distance, the Mossad started to act along with Israeli government. On one hand, the agency became less clear without informing the US counterpart about its operations. For instance, together with IDF, Israeli intelligence tested Israel air capabilities in a bombing operation against Iran⁵⁰⁶. On the other hand, it has pressured US intelligence through public senior officials' statements. In a US conference, former head of Israel's military intelligence, Amos Yadlin warned about a "*danger that an escalation could get out of control*"⁵⁰⁷. As a matter of fact, the possibility of a strike was serious, as Ronen Bergman⁵⁰⁸ wrote: "*After speaking with many Israeli chiefs of the military and the intelligence, I have come to believe that Israel will strike Iran in 2012*"⁵⁰⁹. The statement has been considered by the IC, as reported by the Direction of National Intelligence Clapper in a hearing at Intelligence Committee⁵¹⁰, where indeed, the IC confirmed that since the sanctions did not prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, "*there are no options off the table*"⁵¹¹. However, IC directors feared an Israeli strike, looking at 2012 as "*a critical year for preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon*"⁵¹² and hoping for efficiency in sanctions that will prevent Israeli from a war⁵¹³.

Besides, the relations between CIA and Israel got complicated in Israel's ground, because of Mossad counterespionage and personal acts to CIA staff and station through blackmail⁵¹⁴. The concrete possibility of a collapse in the relations with Israel created a danger and more concerns in US administration. Firstly, because Israel was key center access for the US in the Middle East with historical relations. Hence, to lose Israel would mean to lose a key access to the region. Secondly, these long and intense relations gave to Israel access to higher US government's files and information⁵¹⁵, which Israel could use against the US.

2.4.3. THE PRO-ISRAEL LOBBY AND THE MILITARY OPTION.

The military option has been trumped also at domestic level by AIPAC, who seemed to leave pressure towards actions in favor of hard power. Whilst Iran continued its nuclear improvement, refusing IAEA

⁵⁰⁵ Vielhaber D, Bleek P.C. "Shadow Wars", *The Nonproliferation Review*, vol.19, no.3,(2012):481-491.

Bar-Zohar, M., Mishal, N., "*Mossad: The Great Operations of Israel's Secret Service*" (Hardcover, 2012)

⁵⁰⁶Perry, M. "Israel's Secret Staging Ground", *Foreign Policy*, March 28, 2012. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/03/28/israels-secret-staging-ground/>

⁵⁰⁷ Melman, Y., "2012: The Year That Could Bring a U.S. Strike of Iran", *Haaretz*, December 29, 2011. <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5223201>

⁵⁰⁸ Bergman is a journalist and analyst on the Israeli newspaper

⁵⁰⁹Bergman, R., "Will Israel Attack Iran?", *New York Times*, January 29, 2012.

⁵¹⁰Hearings Select Committee on Intelligence of US, "Current And Projected National Security Threats To The United States", *US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*, January 31, 2012, .48 <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-current-and-projected-national-security-threats-united-states-0#>

⁵¹¹*Ibidem*, 74.

⁵¹² *Ibidem*, 9

⁵¹³ *Ibidem*, 2

⁵¹⁴ The associated press, "Former U.S. Officials Say CIA Considers Israel to Be Mideast's Biggest Spy Threat", *Haaretz*, July 28, 2012. <https://www.haaretz.com/for-cia-israel-is-a-spy-therat-1.5272328>

⁵¹⁵*Ibidem*.

inspections, a Senators' group delivered a bipartisan letter to Obama pushing for Iran sanctions⁵¹⁶. All senders Senators were financed by AIPAC and all of them have been the main sponsors of bills' sanctions against Iran during Obama's presidency. Although it is difficult to say to what extent the letter itself had influenced the executive power; by considering the international surrounding, the majority/ minority situation in Congress and the near presidential elections, Obama increased sanctions through another executive order 13590. The "*Authorizing the Imposition of Certain Sanctions with Respect to the Provision of Goods, Services, Technology, or Support for Iran's Energy and Petrochemical Sectors*"⁵¹⁷, which enlarged sanctions. The order was reinforced by the legislative branch, which passed a military spending bill "*The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012*"⁵¹⁸, sponsored by McKeon and Buck⁵¹⁹. When the bill came to Senate, in November, Sen. Kirk and Sen. Menendez sponsored "*the amendment Kirk- Menendez*"⁵²⁰, supported by AIPAC since new sanctions to the financial sector of Iran "*significantly ratchet up pressure on Iran*"⁵²¹. After having been presented as "*fear and balanced*" by Sen. Menendez, who asked for bipartisan support⁵²², the amendment was approved at unanimity with a vote of 100-0 in Senate.

The vote was a vote of no confidence to Obama's administration, who wanted to stop Iran through diplomacy. Indeed, the unanimity put Obama in a corner between two forces. On one hand, the executive power had to face AIPAC majority in both Chambers, who wanted heavier sanctions; whereas some pro-Israel lawmakers (as Sen. Graham) asked that in case of sanctions' failure, US will prepare an air strike against Iran's facilities. On the other, the administration had to protect the weak US economy from the consequences of new sanctions on oil prices, since the economic chapter made him fall in the mid-term elections. In both cases, possible strike or new sanctions, Iran would respond forcefully⁵²³. However, Obama has not a real choice, since new sanctions have been presented as an alternative to military option against Iran, as Lieberman said in 2012: "*We want to say clearly and resolutely to Iran: You have only two choices—peacefully negotiate to end your nuclear weapons program or expect a military strike to end that program*".⁵²⁴ An option that Obama

⁵¹⁶ The letter had the same aim of the previous one, "*urging the United States to seek a strong resolution concerning Iran*". "Casey and Bipartisan Group of Senators Urge Strong Resolution on Iran at Tomorrow's IAEA Board of Governors Meeting", Bob Casey website, November 2011 <https://www.casey.senate.gov/newsroom/releases/casey-and-bipartisan-group-of-senators-urge-strong-resolution-on-iran-at-tomorrows-iaea-board-of-governors-meeting>

⁵¹⁷"Executive Order 13590 of November 20, 2011", Federal register, The daily Journal of the US government, Presidential documents. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2011/11/23/2011-30463/authorizing-the-imposition-of-certain-sanctions-with-respect-to-the-provision-of-goods-services>

⁵¹⁸ Here, the "National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year 2012", Public Law 112-81-Dec. 31, 2011. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-112publ81/pdf/PLAW-112publ81.pdf>

⁵¹⁹ Final Vote results for roll call 375 on "appropriations for fiscal year 2012 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction..." <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2011/roll375.xml>

⁵²⁰S.Amdt.1414 to S.1867, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012", 112th Congress (2011-2012) <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/112th-congress/senate-amendment/1414>

⁵²¹"AIPAC Applauds Unanimous Senate Passage of Tough, New Iran Sanctions Legislation", AIPAC Statements, accessed by August 2019. <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2012/11/AIPAC%20APPLAUDS%20UNANIMOUS%20SENATE%20PASSAGE%20OF%20TOUGH%20NEW%20IRAN%20SANCTIONS%20LEGISLATION>

⁵²²Emergence Cmte For Israel, "Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) rips Obama administration for opposing Iran sanction", Youtube, December 1, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G46Fnc_gVx4

⁵²³"Iran threatens to block Strait of Hormuz oil route", BBC News, accessed August 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-16344102>

⁵²⁴ Kahl, C.H., "The Iran containment fallacy", CNAS, February 22, 2012. <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/the-iran-containment-fallacy>

feared, but towards which Israel was pushing for and AIPAC did support⁵²⁵. Indeed, AIPAC's legislative agenda shifted from pure sanctions' bills against Iran to more military expenditures' requests, bills lobbied were mainly on military cooperation between Israel and US, Israel and US defense aid, military assistance, appropriation act and acts on foreign operations⁵²⁶ to which it spend 2,002,846,31\$ for lobbying activities⁵²⁷. Therefore, after that *The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012* passed the last vote of both chambers⁵²⁸ with closer Presidential elections, Obama signed it. Indeed, the US delivered \$662 billion for US defense and interests abroad, imposing unilateral sanctions on foreign banks that made process transactions with CBI. The law obliged these entities to make a choice between the US or Iran by blocking Iran oil exports to countries that had business with the US and by isolating Iran.

After that Iran expressed an interest of negotiation of P5+1, 12 AIPAC's senators sent a letter to Obama, expressing the necessity of continuing sanctions over Iran, since thanks to these sanctions the regime came to the request of multilateral diplomatic engagement⁵²⁹. In truth, the Senators were avoiding a likely diplomatic option that Obama tried to have, especially after the UN resolutions in favor of suspending sanctions on Iran as a confidence-building measure to have a nuclear Iran for peaceful purpose⁵³⁰. Indeed, they would oppose *"to any proposal that limits sanctions against Iranian regime in exchange to anything less than full, caps or limits sanctions suspension of all enrichment activities"*⁵³¹ as well as to *"any proposal that recognizes a right enrichment"*⁵³². In line with the letter, Sen. Casey, Graham and Lieberman introduced a resolution⁵³³, introduced *"after days of intense AIPAC lobbying, particularly of what some consider "vulnerable" Democrats"*⁵³⁴. The resolution introduced by 32 senators *"express the sense of the Senate regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability"*⁵³⁵, which seemed to have a clear military option. Indeed, it indicated as threshold the *"nuclear weapons capability"*, which give the same benefits of a nuclear power, but the problem was that the redline

⁵²⁵ Clifton, E., "AIPAC's Iran Strategy On Sanctions Mirrors Run-Up To Iraq War Tactics", *Think Progress*, August 10, 2011 <https://thinkprogress.org/aipacs-iran-strategy-on-sanctions-mirrors-run-up-to-iraq-war-tactics-f25733fc26e6/>

⁵²⁶ *The Foreign Relations Authorization Act; National Defense Authorization Act; Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Amendments*. For more information on lobbied bills look at "AIPAC bills-2012", Open Secret. <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientbills.php?id=D000046963&year=2012>

⁵²⁷ "AIPAC Cmte- Summary 2012/ report Images 2012", Open Secret, accessed August 2019. <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?id=D000046963&year=2012>

⁵²⁸ "Roll Call Vote 112th Congress - 1st Session on H.R. 1540", US Senate, December 15, 2011.

https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=112&session=1&vote=00230 ; "Final Vote Results For Roll Call 932", House of representatives, 14 December 2011. <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2011/roll932.xml>

⁵²⁹ Menendez and Senators' letter: <https://www.menendez.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2012%2002-17%20Letter%20to%20President%20Obama.pdf>

⁵³⁰ "Iran's new nuclear proposal could be a confidence-building measure – Ban", UN News, May 24, 2010. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/05/339512-irans-new-nuclear-proposal-could-be-confidence-building-measure-ban>

⁵³¹ Menendez and Senators' letter: <https://www.menendez.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2012%2002-17%20Letter%20to%20President%20Obama.pdf>

⁵³² *Ibidem*.

⁵³³ Bolton, A., "Democrats split on handling Iran threat", *The Hill*, February 12, 2012. <https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/210471-dems-split-on-handling-iran-threat>

⁵³⁴ Friedman, L. "Legislative Round-Up: February 13-17, 2012", *Americans for Peace now*, February 17, 2012. http://archive.peacenow.org/entries/legislative_round-up_february_13-17_2012

⁵³⁵ "S.Res.380 - A resolution to express the sense of the Senate regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability", 112th Congress (2011-2012), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/380>

had been already passed by Iran⁵³⁶. Hence, it seemed a- posteriori redline to take military action in opposition to any possible nuclear deal. Moreover, with some amendments and critical points⁵³⁷, the resolution maintain the main aim that pressured Obama, by opposing to any policy based on containment option “*in response to the Iranian nuclear threat*”⁵³⁸. The Senate resolution was accompanied by a House’s resolution with the same aim, “*Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability*”⁵³⁹ introduced by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

The military option was credible not only on international level but also on domestic one, becoming important as much as was important to avoid a nuclear Iran⁵⁴⁰. Indeed, the two resolutions have been introduced in Congress strategically before the AIPAC Policy Conference, where they would have been discussed at the beginning of March. During the Special Thursday, 13,000 participants received a file with talking points and pamphlet entitled “*Iranian Nuclear Weapons Capability: UNACCEPTABLE*”⁵⁴¹. Although AIPAC does not mention Israel in its reports, interventions or public statement on Iran, it “*is the spearhead of the pro-Israel community's efforts to move the American government's red lines closer to Israel's red lines*”⁵⁴². President Obama spoke at the Policy Conference asking AIPAC a more peaceful agenda⁵⁴³; but the answer was clear, when a group of senators, after having met Netanyahu, proposed the resolutions asking to Obama clear redline against Iran⁵⁴⁴. After the conference, the indirect and direct AIPAC pressures were effective on congressmen, since the resolutions reached: 77 co-sponsors in Senate⁵⁴⁵ and 332 co-sponsors in the House⁵⁴⁶.

Even though resolutions have bounding powers, but their soft power consists in “should do” more than “will do”, they are fundamental in expressing the legislative’s will and pressures on Presidential foreign pro-Israel policy approach. Indeed, before AIPAC’s members, Obama did not cut off any possibility from the table: “*We will also use all elements of American power to pressure Iran. We cannot unconditionally rule out an approach that could prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon*”⁵⁴⁷, including a military option. However, his words were more rhetorical than reality, since Obama was not in favor of a new redline nor a military option and peace-talks between Iran and P5+1 continued from April until June. But more peace talks

⁵³⁶McArthur, S., “AIPAC's Annual Meeting Beats the Drums Of War With Iran”, *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (May 2012): 27-29 <https://www.wrmea.org/012-may/aipac-s-annual-meeting-beats-the-drums-of-war-with-iran.html>

⁵³⁷“Key Issues With Casey/Lieberman/Graham Resolution On Iran”, *NIAC- National Iranian American Council*, February 16, 2012. http://www.niacouncil.org/site/DocServer/Key_Issues_with_Iran_Capability_Containment_Resolution.pdf?docID=1241

⁵³⁸“S.Res.380 -112th Congress”, Text, Congress.gov, accessed August 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/380/text>

⁵³⁹“H.Res.568 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability”, 112th Congress (2011-2012). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-resolution/568>

⁵⁴⁰ Bolton, A., “Democrats split on handling Iran threat”, *The Hill*, February 12, 2012.

⁵⁴¹Lobe, J., “Bomb-Iran Week Turns Syrious”, *Institute for Policy Studies*, March 30, 2012. <https://ips-dc.org/bomb-iran-week-turns-syrious/>

⁵⁴² Landler, M., “ Israel's Backers Pressure Obama On Iran Position”, *New York Times* , March 4, 2012.

⁵⁴³Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President at AIPAC Policy Conference”, *The White House*, March 04, 2012. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/03/04/remarks-president-aipac-policy-conference-0>

⁵⁴⁴Landler, M., “ Israel's Backers Pressure Obama On Iran Position”, *New York Times* , March 4, 2012.

⁵⁴⁵“S.Res.380 -112th Congress”, cosponsors, Congress.gov. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-resolution/380/cosponsors>

⁵⁴⁶“ H.Res.568 112th Congress”, cosponsors, Congress. Gov. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-resolution/568/cosponsors>

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

were arranged and a directly proportional lawmakers ‘action was made, by introducing several bills on US military and defense assistance to Israel⁵⁴⁸. Indeed, in June, AIPAC delivered an “Issue Memo” titled “*While the World Talks, Iran Enriches; More Pressure Needed*”⁵⁴⁹, in which it argued how Tehran continued to avoid P5+1 requests of suspending its enrichment program and how “*Iran has taken advantage of the talks to advance its nuclear program and cleanse a suspected nuclear site*”⁵⁵⁰. Hence, in line with Senate and House resolutions that AIPAC supported, it affirmed that “*crippling economic sanctions must be accelerated to prevent Tehran from achieving nuclear weapons capability*”⁵⁵¹. In line with AIPAC sponsored bills, it dismissed any possibility of Iran containment, since the “*US must make clear that it will prevent Iran from developing or acquiring nuclear weapons...that Iran will not be allowed to acquire the capability to quickly produce a nuclear weapon at a time of its choosing (...)*including military action if needed to prevent Iran from going nuclear”⁵⁵².

Truly, AIPAC was helped by the events and Iran that continued its nuclear activities. Indeed, the Senate in a bipartisan resolution rejected a policy of containment on Preventing Iran nuclear capability and welcomed a new cycle of sanctions against Iran, supported by AIPAC’s statement⁵⁵³. Plus, on November, the Sens. Graham, Lieberman And Casey’s amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), “*Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2013*”, enlarging sanctions passed in Senate with a bipartisan majority⁵⁵⁴. After amendments and legislative passages, the bill has been approved by both chambers in December, with a vote of 81-14 in Senate⁵⁵⁵ and 315-107 in the House⁵⁵⁶. It has been the 3rd January 2013 when Obama signed the bill, after another bipartisan AIPAC supported letter of 74 Senators to Obama that urged “*implementation of all existing U.S. sanctions and adoption of tough new measures to further its (Iran) diplomatic isolation*”⁵⁵⁷.

⁵⁴⁸ “S.2165 - United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012”, 112th Congress (2011-2012) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-bill/2165>

⁵⁴⁹MEMO “While the World Talks, Iran Enriches; More Pressure Needed”, AIPAC, June 1 2012. <https://www.aipac.org/~media/Publications/Policy%20and%20Politics/AIPAC%20Analyses/Issue%20Memos/2012/06/AIPAC%20Memo%20While%20the%20World%20Talks%20Iran%20Enriches.pdf>

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibidem*

⁵⁵¹ *ibidem*

⁵⁵² *Ibidem.*

⁵⁵³“Senate Sends Bipartisan Message on Preventing Iranian Nuclear Weapons Capability”, AIPAC statements, september 23, 2012. <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2012/09/Senate%20Sends%20Bipartisan%20Message%20on%20Preventing%20Iranian%20Nuclear%20Weapons%20Capability>

⁵⁵⁴“S.Amdt.3232 to S.3254- National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013), 112th Congress (2011-2012). <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/112th-congress/senate-amendment/3232?s=a&r=74>

⁵⁵⁵“Roll Call Vote 112th Congress - 2nd Session on H.R. 4310 , National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013. http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=112&session=2&vote=00229

⁵⁵⁶ House votes roll call 645 on National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2012/roll645.xml>

⁵⁵⁷“AIPAC PRAISES STRONG BIPARTISAN SENATE LETTER URGING FURTHER PRESSURE ON IRAN” , AIPAC statement, December 21, 2012. <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2012/12/AIPAC%20PRAISES%20STRONG%20BIPARTISAN%20SENATE%20LETTER%20URGING%20FURTHER%20PRESSURE%20ON%20IRAN>

On the other, AIPAC acts throughout several activities by organizing initiatives: conferences, campaigns, candidate meetings, forums, press release⁵⁵⁸, which contributed to persuading public opinion towards a more hawkish approach against Iran. According to a 2012's PEWRC's survey, six-in-ten Americans supported the option of preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons, including through a military action and only 30% wanted to avoid military conflict⁵⁵⁹. Specifically, 51% of Americans would remain neutral in case of Israeli actions, 39% were in favor and only 5% were against an Israeli attack. On the same line, in 2013, another survey showed that 64% of people argued that to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon was more important than avoiding a war⁵⁶⁰. Truly, it is difficult to affirm with absolute certainty how much AIPAC did shape these positions however, it acted on public opinion, who seemed in favor of a military strike if necessary to avoid a nuclear Iran. In this sense, AIPAC's action addressed to public opinion was a pressuring factor on Obama towards a hawkish in foreign policy's approach in Iran nuclear solution. The action was more effective in that moment since Obama was domestically weaker because of the contingent situation: the healthcare reforms and economic situation⁵⁶¹ and the Arab countries' mistrust⁵⁶². These problems before elections did not help Obama in pursuing the research of a nuclear deal with Iran, who was continuing its enrichment, since he was afraid of losing Israeli electorate in US, considering the 2008 elections, where Obama got half of the American Jewish votes⁵⁶³. On the contrary, it was leverage for Netanyahu's actions at level 1.

2.4.4. A SUCCESSFUL INFLUENTIAL MILITARY STRATEGY?

The military option should be considered successful in the short time. Indeed, the Mossad's behaviors together with executive pressures and domestic actions gave to Israel what it was looking for: the increasing US fear on which made pressures to discourage a deal with Iran or a decrease in sanctions. Indeed, as an answer to these pressures the US, UN and EU imposed new sanctions on Iran, embittering policies⁵⁶⁴. Moreover, President Obama took different actions: he put heavier and extended sanctions on Iran⁵⁶⁵; he asked

⁵⁵⁸ Rosenberg, M.J., "This Is How AIPAC Really Works", *The Nation*, February 14, 2019. <https://www.thenation.com/article/aipac-omar-israel-congress-anti-semitism/>

⁵⁵⁹ "Support for Obama's Afghan Troop Pullout: Public Takes Strong Stance Against Iran's Nuclear Program", *The PEW Research center*, February 15, 2012 <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/legacy-pdf/02-15-12-Foreign-Policy-release.pdf>

⁵⁶⁰ 80% of which were Republicans and 62% democrats;

"Public Remains Supportive of Israel, Wary of Iran", *PEW Research Center*, March 19, 2013. <https://www.people-press.org/2013/03/19/public-remains-supportive-of-israel-wary-of-iran/>

⁵⁶¹ Jones, J.M., "Obama Still Fares Better on Foreign Than on Domestic Issues", *GALLUP*, April 1, 2011. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/146930/obama-fares-better-foreign-domestic-issues.aspx>

⁵⁶² "Obama More Popular Abroad Than At Home, Global Image of U.S. Continues to Benefit", *PEW Research center*, June 17, 2010. <https://www.pewglobal.org/2010/06/17/obama-more-popular-abroad-than-at-home/>

⁵⁶³ Lubell, M., Spetalnick, M., "US, Israel still at odds over Iran nuclear issue", *Reuters*, September 10, 2012. <https://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFBRE88911J20120910?sp=true>

Rubin J., "Obama goes to AIPAC", *The Washington Post*, February 05, 2012.

⁵⁶⁴ Office of the press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: Sanctions Related to Iran", The White House, July 31, 2012. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/07/31/fact-sheet-sanctions-related-iran>

Borger, J., "EU agrees Iran oil embargo", *The guardian*, January 4, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/04/eu-iran-oil-embargo-ban>; Laub, Z., "International Sanctions on Iran", *Council on Foreign relation*, July 15, 2015; "Timeline: Sanctions on Iran", *Aljazeera*, accessed by August 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/10/20121016132757857588.html>

⁵⁶⁵ "S.2101 - Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Human Rights Act of 2012", 112th Congress 2nd session. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-bill/2101/text>

the Pentagon to come up with military options in case of a strike against Iran's nuclear program⁵⁶⁶. Besides, the Pentagon send air inspection on Iran, asking Congress reprogramming 82\$ million to make 30,000-pound bunker- buster bomb more capable⁵⁶⁷. Finally, at the end of 2012, the US department of Defense requested \$647 million to Israel Air Force with 10,000 bombs and 6,900 JDAM⁵⁶⁸. The data is relevant considering that the administration was planning to cut \$487 billion in military expenditure in 2013, with \$88.4 billion to support overseas operations in relation to \$115 billion in 2012.⁵⁶⁹

However, the military strategy did not resist in the long run. In fact, the strike did not happen until 2017, under Trump administration. Whereas, in the end, it pushed Obama, who avoided a military option, towards a peaceful solution with Iran as soon as possible. Moreover, the military option did not fully succeed because of Israeli internal divisions between government and defense services. Indeed, military officials⁵⁷⁰ and intelligence chiefs spoke in public against the possibility of a military strike against Iran that was "*far from posing an existential threat to Israel*"⁵⁷¹. A position shared also by the chief of the Mossad, Tamir Pardo addressing 100 Israeli ambassadors: "*Does Iran pose a threat to Israel? Absolutely. But if one said a nuclear bomb in Iranian hands was an existential threat, that would mean that we would have to close up shop and go home. That's not the situation. The term existential threat is used too freely*"⁵⁷². Consequently, there have been several dismissals from the government, which hurt Netanyahu's option and advantaged Obama's peaceful solution⁵⁷³, whereas Netanyahu started to mistrust his own establishment. For instance, he asked Y. Cohen, new Shin Bet director, to tap the phone of Mossad and Israel Defense Forces through the Shin Bet capabilities to monitor senior defense officials (IDF chief, Gantz; former head of the Mossad Pardo)⁵⁷⁴. Plus, these divisions have been one of the main causes that led Obama to a new path, when Rouhani became President looking for a peaceful solution over the Iran nuclear program.

⁵⁶⁶ Pentagon planned for a range of options, for instance high-end attacks that would aim to devastate Iran's command and control functions.

Keiswetter, A.L., Barrett R., "Prospects for US-Iran Relations on the Nuclear Issue in the Year Ahead", *Middle East Institute*, August 1, 2012, , <https://www.mei.edu/publications/prospects-us-iran-relations-nuclear-issue-year-ahead>

⁵⁶⁷Common Dreams Staff, "Pentagon Seeks Mightier 'Bunker Buster' Bomb vs. Iran", *Common dreams*, January 29, 2012 <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2012/01/29/pentagon-seeks-mightier-bunker-buster-bomb-vs-iran>.

⁵⁶⁸ "Israel requests sale of JDAM tail kits from US", *Air force news*, 12 December 2012. <https://www.airforce-technology.com/news/newsisrael-requests-sale-of-jdam-tail-kits-from-us/>

Kelley, M.B., "Israel Is Set To Receive 5,000 US Bunker Buster Bombs After Delaying Its Attack On Iran", *Business insider*, December 13, 2012 <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-us-sale-of-5000-bunker-buster-bombs-to-israel-israel-bunker-busters-in-exchange-for-not-striking-iran-2012-12?IR=T>

⁵⁶⁹ Alexander D.; Wolf, J., "Pentagon cuts reshape military, trim costs", *Reuters*, January 26, 2012. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-defense-budget/pentagon-cuts-reshape-military-trim-costs-idUSTRE80P1SP20120126>

⁵⁷⁰ Beinart, P., "U.S. Jews Should Heed Top Israeli Soldiers Who Oppose Bombing Iran", *Daily Beast*, July 7, 2012; update in 2017. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/us-jews-should-heed-top-israeli-soldiers-who-oppose-bombing-iran>

⁵⁷¹ Riedel, B., "The Israeli Anti-Attack-Iran Brigade Speaks Out—Why the Former Mossad Chiefs Are Right", *Daily Beast*, July 11, 2011; update in 2017. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-israeli-anti-attack-iran-brigade-speaks-out-why-the-former-mossad-chiefs-are-right?ref=scroll>

⁵⁷² Ravid, B., " Mossad Chief: Nuclear Iran Not Necessarily Existential Threat to Israel", *Haaretz*, December 29, 2011 <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5223063>

⁵⁷³ Senior military chiefs from IDF and Mossad started to work in counter-tendency with Israel government, criticized it and they agreed with the diplomatic option proposed by Obama

⁵⁷⁴ Pfeffer, A., Levinson, C., "PM Taps Yoram Cohen as New Shin Bet Director", *Haaretz*, May 29, 2011; Gross., J.A., "Netanyahu asked Shin Bet to tap phones of IDF, Mossad heads — report", *the Times of Israel*, June 1, 2018. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-asked-shin-bet-to-tap-phones-of-idf-mossad-heads-report/>; "Netanyahu Asked Shin Bet Head to Listen to Phones of then-IDF, Mossad Chiefs", *Haaretz*, May 31, 2018.

In conclusion, one remark has to be made since it has been stressed that the military option was an Israeli bluff by several newspapers⁵⁷⁵. Truly, whether Netanyahu would be bluffing or not, it resulted effective because he increased US fears and uncertainty, which led to a hawkish US foreign policy against Iran⁵⁷⁶, regardless of Obama's peaceful intentions. However, it has been demonstrated that the military strike was not a bluff, but real gamble on which Netanyahu was ready to prove the US loyalty, by limiting the Obama flexibility in favor of Iran. In 2018, Pardo, already former Mossad chief, has testified that in 2011 the Prime Minister gave the order to prepare the attack against Iran within 15 days⁵⁷⁷.

2.5. CONCLUSION.

In Chapter I have shown the actions made by Israel at two levels, the international and national one, towards the same directions. Netanyahu and AIPAC conducted independent actions, meaning that their strategy has not been always the same. But, the difference in strategy allows them to have a more appeal on the administration. Netanyahu used International forums to persuade the US administration and public opinion about the Iran danger. Whereas, AIPAC acted on executive and legislative. As far as concern the former, it tried to shape Obama's appointments and acting directly on Obama; whereas by financing lobbying activities, it introduced sanctions' bills against Iran. Furthermore, they worked together towards a military option. The relations between the security and intelligence apparatus, between the executives together with AIPAC have been fundamental to push on US fear towards a new engagement in the Middle East. The new Obama doctrine focused on new geostrategic interest and he did not want a new engagement where the US have not close old disputes yet. Plus, he was looking for a diplomatic solution over Iran nuclear program, instead of sanctions and hard power. Therefore, in the short time, the strategy of instilling fear through a likely military option, which could lead to a regional military escalation, has been used to pressure US decisions in foreign policy. Indeed, Israel achieved its goal of discouraging a deal with Iran or any possibility of ceasing sanctions. On the contrary, in spite of the US national interests, Obama's administration has been focused on the region, with Congress and Obama that imposed new sanctions over Iran, embittering its policies and their relations.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ Ahren, R., "Most Israeli Jews reject Iran strike, say war chatter a bluff to get US to act, poll says", *The times of Israel*, August 17, 2012. http://www.timesofisrael.com/poll-most-israelis-reject-iran-strike-say-war-chatter-a-bluff-to-get-us-to-act/?fb_comment_id=10151150242995399_24883764

Friedman, G., "War and Bluff: Iran, Israel and the United States", *Geopolitical weekly*, September 11, 2012. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/war-and-bluff-iran-israel-and-united-states>

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibidem*

⁵⁷⁷ "Netanyahu prepared strike on Iran in 2011, says ex-Mossad chief", *Mile East Eye*, May 31, 2018 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/netanyahu-prepared-strike-iran-2011-says-ex-mossad-chief>

World News, "Ex-Israeli spy chief: Netanyahu planned Iran strike in 2011", *Hurryet Daily News*, June 1, 2018. <http://www.hurryetdailynews.com/ex-israeli-spy-chief-netanyahu-planned-iran-strike-in-2011-132676>

⁵⁷⁸ Office of the press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: Sanctions Related to Iran", *The White House*, July 31, 2012. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/07/31/fact-sheet-sanctions-related-iran>

Borger, J., "EU agrees Iran oil embargo", *The guardian*, January 4, 2012; Laub, Z., "International Sanctions on Iran", *Council on Foreign relation*, July 15, 2015. "Timeline: Sanctions on Iran", *Aljazeera*, 17 October 2012.

CHAPTER III:

NEW FRIENDS -OLD ENEMIES: NEW STRATEGIES AND A NEW DEAL.

3.1.INTRODUCTION

The third chapter focuses on Obama's second term during which he established peaceful relations with Iran through international negotiations with the signature of the JCPOA, that created the main friction between Israel, the pro-Israel organization with Obama. Hence, Israel starting to look at new ways of acting vis-à-vis the US foreign policy in order to influence negotiations. The chapter is divided into two main part. One is dedicated to the Israeli strategies vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iran nuclear deal during Obama's second mandate before the interim deal; the second part looks at the Obama's second mandate after the interim deal.

3.2. BEFORE THE INTERIM DEAL.

In 2012, when Obama won elections for the second time, the geopolitical situation was more complex than ever. He continued trying to pursue a diplomatic path with Iran even through secret talks⁵⁷⁹, and Teheran decided to retake direct talks with the US after the heavier sanctions' bill sponsored by AIPAC that implemented additional sanctions on Iran energy and commerce sectors⁵⁸⁰. However, the talks failed, and sanctions continued to be implemented by international community leading Iran in serious economic crisis⁵⁸¹. Meanwhile, at domestic level, Netanyahu faced elections on 22nd January that he won, however weakened since he lost voters and consensus among people⁵⁸². At the international level, even after Rouhani's elections and new talks between Iran and P5+1, Netanyahu did not change his position over the nuclear program, leading Israel to international isolation and a weaker Netanyahu position.

3.2.1. INFORMATIONAL FLOW: THE SYRIAN AFFAIR.

At level 1, whereas international sanctions were implemented⁵⁸³, Israel continued to push towards a military option. The military option has been urged before AIPAC community at its policy conference, where Netanyahu argued that since diplomacy and sanctions were not working "*Sanctions must be coupled with*

⁵⁷⁹ Parsi, T. "*Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*", Chap. 9- 10;

"Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran", *Arms Control Association*, July 2019. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/Timeline-of-Nuclear-Diplomacy-With-Iran>

⁵⁸⁰ "H.R.4310- the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013".

⁵⁸¹ Seeberg, P., "The EU and the international sanctions against Iran: European and Iranian foreign and security policy interests, and a changing Middle East", *Palgrave communication*, Vol.2 , No. 2, 16080 (November 2016) <https://www.nature.com/articles/palcomms201680.pdf?origin=ppub>

⁵⁸² Rubin, A.; Navot, D; Ghanem, A., "The 2013 Israeli General Election: Travails of the Former King." *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 68, no. 2 (2014): 248-267.

⁵⁸³ Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy with Iran", *Arms Control Association*, July 2019.

clear and credible military threat if sanctions fail"⁵⁸⁴. Although for US administration the options were all on the table as they stressed at AIPAC conference⁵⁸⁵, de facto Obama was looking for a peaceful solution.

Therefore, Israel tried with a new strategy vis-à-vis US foreign policy in the Iran nuclear affair to push Obama towards an intervention in Syria, the warmer ground in 2013: the informational flow. In a world of complex interdependence, security and military force play an important role in foreign policy, but also information flowing in political space is fundamental⁵⁸⁶. The information revolution allows faster long-distance communications at cheaper costs, by increasing quantitatively channels of contacts between societies and in world politics⁵⁸⁷. Free information, commercial information and strategic information flows through newspapers, televisions, social media and virtual communities affecting public opinion, whereas governments tried to manipulate these instruments⁵⁸⁸. Indeed, these instruments created opportunities for governments, who can persuade other States to adopt specific similar policies via free information "*whether it possess hard power and strategic information became less important*"⁵⁸⁹. Therefore, soft power and free information can change perceptions of self-interest, which it is better to say "national-interest", when we speak about States.

After the 2012 Obama's redline discourse according to which the use of chemical weapons by Syria would lead to an US intervention⁵⁹⁰, Gen. Utai Brun⁵⁹¹ accused Syria of having used these kinds of weapon⁵⁹². Although experts and research considered the event likely, Gen. Brun did not demonstrate the episode and the information's credibility has been questioned by Obama administration, who called for more inspections before deciding about an US intervention⁵⁹³. The intervention was a way for Israel to have US ally on regional soil against Iran, who has always been an active supporter of Assad, since the Iran-Syria alliance gave to Iran a strategic weight in the region⁵⁹⁴. On the other hand, it constituted a deterrence over Israel, who felt the alliance as highly dangerous for its security. However, the Israeli information according to which Syria passed the Obama's redline was a way to test if the US would maintain the promises of military intervention and if it would react in case of evidence that Assad was using chemical weapons⁵⁹⁵. In continuation with the previous military option, the strategy seemed a new way to drop US troops on Syrian soil, where Iranian influence and

⁵⁸⁴Prime Minister Netanyahu's address before AIPAC 2013", The times of Israel, March 4, 2013 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/prime-minister-netanyahus-address-before-aipac-2013/>

⁵⁸⁵Vice President Joe Biden's address before AIPAC 2013" The Times of Israel, March 4, 2013 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/vice-president-joe-bidens-address-before-aipac-2013/>

⁵⁸⁶Keohane R.O., Nye, J.S.Jr, "Power and interdependence in the information age", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.77, No.5, (Sep/Oct 1998): 81-94

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibidem*

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibidem*

⁵⁹⁰ Seale, P., "How Israel manipulates US policy", *GULF News*, May 2, 2013. <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/how-israel-manipulates-us-policy-1.1178530>

⁵⁹¹ Israeli officer and head of research at army intelligence,

⁵⁹² Botelho, G., Labott, E., "Israel says Syria used chemical weapons; Russia warns of 'Iraqi scenario'", *CNN*, April 24, 2013 <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/23/world/meast/syria-civil-war/index.html>

⁵⁹³ *Ibidem* .

⁵⁹⁴ after the Arab Spring, Iran saw a decline in its influence in the Arab world.

Nader, A., "Iran's 2013 Presidential Election: Its Meaning and Implications", *RAND Corporation*, 2013. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE109.html>

⁵⁹⁵ Sanger, D.E.; Rudoren, J., "Israel Says It Has Proof That Syrian Government Used Chemical Weapons", *The New York Times*, 24 April 2013.

support to Hezbollah was Israel main concern⁵⁹⁶. This was confirmed by the fact that Israel was aware of its little capacity of affecting the outcome on Syria ground⁵⁹⁷, and it would not risk its position and its US relations to save rebels against the Syrian regime⁵⁹⁸. Indeed, relevant is Y. Steinitz's position⁵⁹⁹, according to whom Syria and Iran were different issues and Iran "is problem No. 1 of our generation"⁶⁰⁰ comparable to the Nazi regime.

Besides, it is important the timing in which Israel started to deliver the information. Indeed, Iran was going through a difficult period for its domestic politics. On one hand, new elections were getting closer, in the shadow of the 2009 protests and violence and with internal political and clerics' opposition to Ahmadinejad⁶⁰¹. On the other, Iran had a devastated economy, a high inflation and unemployment because of international sanctions due to its nuclear program and Ahmadinejad's foreign policy⁶⁰². The information has been delivered not casually in April, when Iran was in this internal weakness, a perfect moment for Israel to take a military intervention with the US, since more difficult an Iranian countermove. Meaning that if the US would follow Israel, the success' probabilities of a strike were higher.

Although the efforts, Israeli hard power was not enough to change the US's interests nor its perception, since Obama based the evaluation on strategic rather than free information. Indeed, the US wanted more evidence to act on the ground and Obama specified his statement on the redline⁶⁰³. However, once Syria used chemical weapons in August 2013 without doubts, by overcoming the 2012 red-line, Obama did not intervene⁶⁰⁴. He called for Congressional authorization to military strike and AIPAC stated in favor of it⁶⁰⁵, but once he did not take action, it was clear that the US under Obama would never take military action.

3.2.2. THE NECESSARY UNOFFICIAL CONSENSUS

Following the same path of 2009, AIPAC acted on executive's appointment also in 2012, to have a pro-Israel establishment vis-à-vis the US foreign policy that would allow enforcing action against Iran in a hawkish way. Indeed, when Obama had to appoint his ministers and Secretaries⁶⁰⁶, AIPAC's action has been taken against the Secretary of defense's nomination of Sen. Chuck Hagel⁶⁰⁷. The chief of the Pentagon has a fundamental role in security policy and foreign policy's decisions, which is why for Israel was important that

⁵⁹⁶ Hanauer, L., "Israel's Interests and Options in Syria", *RAND Corporation*, 2016. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE185.html>.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹⁸ Ginsburg, M., "Why did the IDF's top analyst drop his Syria WMD bombshell?", *The Times of Israel*, April 25, 2013. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/why-did-the-idfs-top-analyst-drop-his-syrian-wmd-bombshell/>

⁵⁹⁹ He was the minister of strategic and intelligence affairs and international relations.

⁶⁰⁰ Bronner, E., "Israel Says It's Not Seeking U.S. Intervention in Syria, Despite Chemical Arms", *the New York Times*(East Coast) 29 Apr 2013: A.4

⁶⁰¹ Erdbrink, T., "As Election in Iran Nears, Ahmadinejad's Critics Are Piling On", *The New York Times*, April 29, 2013

⁶⁰² *Ibidem*; Nader, A., "Iran's 2013 Presidential Election: Its Meaning and Implications", *RAND Corporation*, 2013.

⁶⁰³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibidem*

⁶⁰⁵ Allen, J., "AIPAC to Congress: Authorize action", *POLITICO*, September 3, 2013 <https://www.politico.com/story/2013/09/aipac-syria-congress-096220>

⁶⁰⁶ "Barack Obama: domestic Affair", *UVA; Miller Center*.

⁶⁰⁷ Lake, E., "Sources: Obama to Pick Chuck Hagel for Secretary of Defense", *Daily Beast*, January 4, 2013. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/sources-obama-to-pick-chuck-hagel-for-secretary-of-defense>

the position is covered by a pro-Israel personality⁶⁰⁸. According to AIPAC, Hagel's appointment would be dangerous for Israeli interests and it would be more difficult to lobby the Pentagon⁶⁰⁹, because he would be a moderate chief distant from a pro-Israel action. Indeed, since Bush's presidency Hagel opposed to Iran sanctions and to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist group⁶¹⁰, instead he preferred a diplomatic engagement similar to Obama's positions⁶¹¹. Furthermore, he has always been against the possibility of a pre-emptive war against Iran, which he considered "*not a viable, feasible, responsible option*"⁶¹², by distancing totally from Israeli perspective. Even more, he considered that "*the pro-Israel lobby intimidates people up here*"⁶¹³. Indeed, he did not sign AIPAC's letters that circulated during his Senator's mandate, which cost him charges of "antisemitism" and "anti-Israel".

Although officially AIPAC has not a role in the Presidential appointments⁶¹⁴, it tried to influence the decisions through pro-Israel PACs, i.e. NORPAC⁶¹⁵, lawmakers such as Sen. John Cornyn, staff members and activists, like Elliot Abrams⁶¹⁶, and pro-Israel organizations' campaign in Washington, i.e. the IP, the Israel Emergency Committee for Israel, who accused him to be too extremist as secretary of defense⁶¹⁷. The key pressuring source has been the role of pro-Israel lawmakers, since when Hagel was still a possibility as chief of Pentagon, before Obama's arrival at the White House in 2013⁶¹⁸. Indeed, hawkish pro-Israel congressmen opposed to the nomination since 2012 until 2013, when the White House staff arranged a meeting between Hagel and Schumer, a leading Jewish-American Senator AIPAC activists, who opposed to Hagel's nomination⁶¹⁹. After a face-to-face meeting, Schumer declared his support to the Hagel's nominee, by opening to other Senators that followed him. Among others: Democrat Sen. Boxer, important AIPAC supporter and member of the Foreign Relations Committee⁶²⁰; Republican Sen. Wicker, senior member of the Armed Services Committee⁶²¹.

⁶⁰⁸ Truly, during the first mandate until 2011, the secretary of defense Robert Gates was nearest to Israeli and AIPAC beliefs.

⁶⁰⁹ Chapter II.

⁶¹⁰ Lake, E., "Sources: Obama to Pick Chuck Hagel for Secretary of Defense",

⁶¹¹ Gharib, A., "Hagel, Obama and Iran", *Daily Beast*, December 19, 2012 <https://www.thedailybeast.com/hagel-obama-and-iran>

⁶¹² "Hagel: Military Strike on Iran is 'Not a Viable, Feasible, Responsible Option'", *ThinkProgress*, April 13, 2006 <https://thinkprogress.org/hagel-military-strike-on-iran-is-not-a-viable-feasible-responsible-option-d5d4f8b9edd3/>

⁶¹³ Stephens, B., "Chuck Hagel's Jewish Problem", *WSJ Opinion*, December 17, 2012. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324907204578185223495090066>

⁶¹⁴ AIPAC spokesman Marshall Wittman said: "*Our position remains the same as it always has been...AIPAC does not take positions on presidential nominations.*"

Lake, E., "Pro-Israel Lobby, AIPAC, Sitting Out Hagel Fight", *Daily Beast*, January 7, 2013 <https://www.thedailybeast.com/pro-israel-lobby-aipac-sitting-out-hagel-fight>

⁶¹⁵ NORPAC issued an action alert to its activists: "Action Alert: Hagel Nomination for Secretary of Defense" <http://norpac.net/blog/action-alert-2-hagel-nomination-for-secretary-of-defense>

⁶¹⁶ Elliot Abrams was married to Rachel Abrams an activist at the Emergency Committee for Israel, active organizations in advocacy activities with the aim of improving relations between Israel- US.

⁶¹⁷ Lake, E., "Pro-Israel Lobby, AIPAC, Sitting Out Hagel Fight", *Daily Beast*, January 7, 2013,

⁶¹⁸ Gharib, A., "Hagel, Obama and Iran", *Daily Beast*, December 19, 2012

⁶¹⁹ Cantor, M., "After Meeting, Chuck Schumer Backs Hagel", *Newser*, January 15, 2013. <https://www.newser.com/story/161021/after-meeting-chuck-schumer-backs-hagel.html> ; Kane, P., "Schumer to back Hagel as defense secretary", *Washington Post*, January 15, 2013. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/schumer-to-back-hagel/2013/01/15/ffd46fc8-5f23-11e2-9940-6fc488f3fecd_story.html

⁶²⁰ *Ibidem*

⁶²¹ Press release, "Wicker Says Hagel's Frequent Position Changes on Iran Sanctions are Troubling", US senator Wicker website. <https://www.wicker.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2013/1/wicker-says-hagel-s-frequent-position-changes-on-iran-sanctions-are-troubling>

Therefore, even if AIPAC's network was not able to stop Hagel's appointment, it did influence the process and final Hagel's position on Iran. Indeed, only after the meeting between Senators and Hagel, in particular the one with Schumer, they accepted the nomination, by taking from him several promises on how to deal with Iranian issue⁶²². Hagel rejected the containment of Iran in line with Israel and AIPAC, by promising that all options were likely to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, including the military and he guaranteed a military cooperation⁶²³. The change in Hagel position towards a more pro-Israel US foreign policy allowed AIPAC senators to approve his appointment as Secretary of defense⁶²⁴.

3.2.3. HOME SWEET HOME.

The international negotiations between P5+1 and Iran restarted in February, accompanied by Iranian enthusiasm and Israel concerns⁶²⁵. As already stressed, Israel considered negotiation a threat for its security, since it allowed Iran to keep enriched uranium, something unacceptable. Indeed, as soon as P5+1 resumed negotiation in Kazakhstan over Iran's nuclear program with a proposal based on 2012 package⁶²⁶, AIPAC legislative action pushed towards a hawkish US foreign policy against Iran, by avoiding any possibility of dialogue. Indeed, few weeks after the Obama's inaugural discourse whereas P5+1 was preparing for talks with Iran, on the 12th of February, AIPAC send a Memo "*New Iran Sanctions Must be Enforced*"⁶²⁷ to Congressional office. The pro- MEMO Israel clarified its legislative agenda indicating its future lobbying efforts, since the main thrust of "*impact of sanctions has been blunted by insufficient enforcement and Iran's exploitation of loopholes to bypass restrictions*"⁶²⁸, which is why here must be an "*enforcement of economic sanctions...to prevent Tehran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability*"⁶²⁹. Coherently, AIPAC legislative agenda focused mainly on Iran's nuclear program that loomed largest than other issues⁶³⁰. Indeed, the Palestinian issue was set aside as well as other legislative priorities, if not functional to make Israel a "*major*

⁶²² Kane, P., "Schumer to back Hagel as defense secretary", *Washington Post*, January 15, 2013.

⁶²³ US delivered to Israel F-35 joint strike fighters and the Iron dome among other weapons.

Zengerle, P., "After reassurances on Israel, Iran, Hagel wins key senators' votes", *Reuters*, January 16, 2013.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-defense-hagel/after-reassurances-on-israel-iran-hagel-wins-key-senators-votes-idUSBRE90E0PH20130116>

⁶²⁴ *ibidem*.

⁶²⁵ Parsi T., "The Ball is in Iran's Court", *The diplomat*, March 1, 2013. <https://thediplomat.com/2013/03/the-ball-is-in-irans-court/?all=true>

⁶²⁶ "Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy With Iran", Arms Control Association, accessed August 2019

⁶²⁷ "MEMO New Sanctions Must Be Enforced" AIPAC, February 2013, <https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/issue-memos/2013/aipac-memo-new-sanctions-must-be-enforced.pdf>

⁶²⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁶²⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶³⁰ Doing, M. "At AIPAC conference, Iran endgame looms large", *The times of Israel*, March 3, 2013. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/at-aipac-conference-iran-endgame-looms-large/>

strategic ally of the US” or to strengthen the military cooperation⁶³¹. However, the aim was to pressure US foreign policy towards a pro-Israel position in Iran affair, by acting through congressman and senator.

As far as concern Iran, in an op-ed in the NYT, AIPAC leaders Kessel and Rosenberg supported a new resolution strengthening the Congress’ historical role in foreign policy. Indeed, Congress can “*enhance the administration’s efforts by forcing Iran to recognize the stark implications of intransigence. The president should welcome such congressional initiatives, which would strengthen...the hand of his administration in forthcoming negotiations. We urge Congress to outline for Iran the acceptable terms of a final accord. This must include, at a minimum, the dismantling of its nuclear program, Iran has neither a uranium nor a plutonium pathway to a nuclear weapon.*”⁶³². Then, one day after, a bipartisan group of 26 Senators guided by Sen. Kirk send a letter to the European Council President. They called to close a loophole in US/EU sanctions stopping Iran from using the “Target2” system for global transactions⁶³³ since it hurt US sanctions’ effectiveness⁶³⁴. The days to follow, several legislations were introduced: the *H.R.850* in the House was introduced by the Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee, the Rep. Ed Royce⁶³⁵. The bill, sponsored by AIPAC and NORPAC, issued an action alert to congressmen⁶³⁶ to enlarge sanctions over Iran, by giving to the president the powers to bar companies from doing business with the US if they traded with Tehran. Hence, Obama could impose penalties to foreign financial institutions, foreign persons or firms to prevent the transfer of US’ origin goods, services, and technology to Iran⁶³⁷. Whereas, in Senate, the two AIPAC favorites Senators, who have always worked in line with AIPAC by promoting pro-Israel legislations⁶³⁸, Sen. Graham and Sen. Menendez introduced the resolution “*S.Res. 65 supporting the full implementation of US and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation.*”⁶³⁹ The resolution has not forced of law, but it gave a sense of congress’ will, by expressing the Senate’s expectations on Obama to support Israel also in case of a military option. Actually, the resolution was a real bipartisan commitment to Israel: “*if Israel is compelled to take military action in legitimate self-defense against Iran's nuclear weapons program the U.S. government should stand with Israel with diplomatic, military, and economic support in accordance with US law and the constitutional responsibility of Congress to authorize the use of military force, diplomatic, military, and economic support...*”⁶⁴⁰

⁶³¹Kampeas, R., “AIPAC agenda omits Obama, Netanyahu and the Palestinians”, *The Times of Israel* 27 February 2013. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/aipac-agenda-omits-obama-netanyahu-and-the-palestinians/>

⁶³² Kassen, M., Rosenberg, L., “Don’t let up on Iran”, *New York Times Opinion*, February 22, 2014

⁶³³ The Target2 system is a way of converting foreign-held euros into local currencies through the European Central Bank’s currency conversion.

⁶³⁴Foster, P., “US Congress in urgent call to ECB to tighten sanctions on Iran”, *The Telegraph*, February 26, 2013 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9894143/US-Congress-in-urgent-call-to-ECB-to-tighten-sanctions-on-Iran.html>

⁶³⁵“H.R.850 - Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013”, 113th Congress (2013-2014) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/850/actions>

⁶³⁶“NORPAC: Urge House Members to support increased sanctions on Iranian Regime”, NORPAC action alert, accessed September 2019. <https://zoa.org/2013/03/10194232-norpac-urge-house-members-to-support-increased-sanctions-on-iranian-regime/>

⁶³⁷H.R.850 - Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013”, 113th Congress, August 1, 2013. <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr850/BILLS-113hr850rfs.pdf>

⁶³⁸ In previous chapter we saw how they introduced several legislations against Iran.

⁶³⁹S.Res.65 -113th Congress” actions’ overview: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-resolution/65/actions>

⁶⁴⁰“S. RES. 65- 113th congress”, the bill: <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/sres65/BILLS-113sres65ats.pdf> ;

The timing of bills' introduction was decided strategically by AIPAC in order to reach the maximum consensus in Capitol Hill. Indeed, it was introduced before the AIPAC Policy conference where thousands of lawmakers that would vote the resolution would be present. We have stressed the importance of the "special Thursday" in influencing congressmen's vote in favor or against legislation through other lawmakers' speeches or important personalities. Both legislations were successful, but with different results. The amended Senate's resolution reached a quasi- total support with 99 Senators in favor one no-voting, from 21 cosponsors⁶⁴¹. The success was "*backdoor to War with Iran*"⁶⁴² for AIPAC and Netanyahu, by giving to Israel the permission to attack Iran, when threatened by Iran. Therefore, on one hand, Congress was guaranteeing to support Netanyahu, despite Obama's opposition to Israeli military strike. On the other, it was trying to limit the Obama administration's options in Iranian. This was evident when the foreign Committee amended resolutions' last paragraph as proposed Sen. Menendez The new paragraph specified the condition on which Israeli military action would be justified as self- defense, i.e. Iran's nuclear program.⁶⁴³ Congress' position was confirmed by another bipartisan resolution introduced few days after by Paul Gosar, H. Res.98⁶⁴⁴ with only one clause according to which "*the House fully supports Israel's lawful exercise of self-defense, including actions to halt Iranian aggression such as strike against Iran's illegal nuclear program*"⁶⁴⁵. The other chamber, under AIPAC pressures and action, passed the *H.R.850* with 400 yeas to 20⁶⁴⁶, by expressing the legislative branch's position over Iran. Although the resolution dies in Congress because the Senate missed the vote after the 2012 mid elections⁶⁴⁷, House's will firmly remain against diplomatic solution with Iran. Indeed, it did not pass Lee's bill, sponsored by progressists PACs and organizations⁶⁴⁸, in favor of bilateral and multilateral negotiations with Tehran "*to easier tensions and normalizing relations*"⁶⁴⁹. Another AIPAC sponsored bill has been introduced by Sen. Ed Royce, who received money from the pro-Israel lobby⁶⁵⁰ and made Iran one of the main big issues of his agenda, opposing to negotiations with Tehran on its nuclear program. Together with pro-Israel Senators Kirk and Menendez, he introduced a bipartisan legislation *S.892*

S.Res. 65 (113th): text and close comparison, government track:
<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/sres65/text/ats#compare=rs>

⁶⁴¹“Roll Call Vote 113th Congress - 1st Session on S. Res. 65 Amended “, US Senates
https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=113&session=1&vote=00133

⁶⁴² “S.RES.65: The Backdoor to War with Iran”, NIAC, March 12, 2013. Accessed august 2019.

<https://www.niacouncil.org/s-res-65-the-backdoor-to-war-with-iran/>

⁶⁴³ S.Res. 65 (113th): text and close comparison, government track:
<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/sres65/text/ats#compare=rs>

⁶⁴⁴ “H.Res. 98 (113th): Expressing support for Israel and its right to self-defense against the illegal nuclear program by the Islamic Republic of Iran”, Government track. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hres98>

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴⁶Final roll call vote in the House 427 on the H.R. 850: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2013/roll427.xml>

⁶⁴⁷ It arrived in Senate after 2012 elections that they won. Hence, having the majority, they did not pass the bill. Whereas the House had a republican majority, Democrats held the senate. For 2012 electoral results:
https://ballotpedia.org/United_States_Congress_elections,_2012

⁶⁴⁸ “H.R. 783, Summary”, Open Secret, accessed September 2019. <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/billsum.php?id=hr783-113>

⁶⁴⁹“H.R.783 - Prevent Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Weapons and Stop War Through Diplomacy Act”. For more information about the bill look at the text of the bill on government track website: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr783/text> ; All Actions H.R.783 — 113th Congress (2013-2014): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/783/all-actions>

⁶⁵⁰ “Rep. Ed Royce - California District 39- top contributor”, Open Secret, accessed by September 2019.
<https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/summary?cid=N00008264>

(113th)⁶⁵¹, discussed in Senate Committee on Banking, House and Urban Affairs⁶⁵². The bill amended the *H.R. 1905 (112th)*⁶⁵³, by giving to the President the power of new sanctions for precise transactions in foreign currencies⁶⁵⁴. The bill was supported by conservative pro-Israel organizations, since Sen. Kirk asked to NORPAC “to help garner further support for the bill”⁶⁵⁵. Hence, NORPAC issued an “Action Alert” in a coordinated action with AIPAC, who urged its senators a vote the bill. Furthermore, AIPAC not only acted by sponsoring directly and officially bills, but often major recipient of pro-Israel donations introduced bills in line with its policy agenda⁶⁵⁶.

As far as concern strategic partnership, AIPAC sponsored important bills. For instance, Ros-Lehtinen introduced “*H.R.938*” that passed the bill with 410 to 1 vote⁶⁵⁷. Meanwhile, in Senate, Sen. Boxer issued a similar bill “*S.462*”⁶⁵⁸, which died in Congress, but it was included in a 2014 legislation⁶⁵⁹, signed by Obama and supported by AIPAC⁶⁶⁰. Both bills increased and reaffirmed the cooperation between Israel and US in military and energy sector, cyber-security and self-defense, affirming that US “*should continue to support Israel's right of self-defense*”⁶⁶¹. The legislations were an answer not only to Iran’s peace talks, but they were an answer also to the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee’s declarations to JTA, according to whom cuts to US budget’s assistance to Israel were likely⁶⁶². The pressures made at the international and national level, led Obama to sign in June an executive order 13645 “*Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012*”

⁶⁵¹“S. 892 (113th): Iran Sanctions Loophole Elimination Act of 2013- Overview”, Government track. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s892>

⁶⁵² “Hearing Before The Committee On Banking, Housing, And Urban Affairs UNITED STATES SENATE”, Annual report to congress, May 13, 2013.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-113shrg81795/pdf/CHRG-113shrg81795.pdf>

⁶⁵³“H.R. 1905 (112th): Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012: overview” , government track. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr1905>

⁶⁵⁴S. 892 (113th): Iran Sanctions Loophole Elimination Act of 2013: overview”, government track <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s892/text>

⁶⁵⁵NORPAC email, “Call our friends in the Senate and thank them or ask them to cosponsor S. 892”, *Peace now*, accessed by august 2019. <http://archive.peacenow.org/norpac%20action%20alert.pdf>

⁶⁵⁶ For instance, S. 965 (113th): Iran Sanctions Implementation Act of 2013 (for more information look at government track website: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s965>)

H.R. 893 (113th): Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Accountability Act of 2013 by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen; H. Res.98- “Expressing support for Israel and its right to self-defense against the illegal nuclear program by the Islamic Republic of Iran.” the resolution was not enacted at the end. Whereas, Sen. John Cornyn introduced S. 1001 to impose [more] sanctions with respect to the government of Iran.

⁶⁵⁷ Summary: H.R.938 — 113th Congress (2013-2014), Congress: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/938>

⁶⁵⁸S. 462 (113th): United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2013.

⁶⁵⁹S. 2673 (113th): United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014, overview, government track <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s2673>

Actions Overview S.2673 — 113th Congress (2013-2014), Congress.gov: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2673/actions>

⁶⁶⁰“ Strengthen U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation”, AIPAC legislation. Accessed August 2019. <https://www.aipac.org/learn/legislative-agenda/agenda-display?agendaId=%7BD9F4B5E3-4883-4800-97FB-7D5655789AAA%7D>

⁶⁶¹Text: H.R.938 — 113th Congress (2013-2014), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/938/text>

⁶⁶²Kampeas, R., “Sequester cuts to Israel expected to be \$155 million”, *The Jewish telegraphic agency*, March 5, 2013.

and Additional Sanctions with Respect to Iran”⁶⁶³. The order became effective in July, when it enlarged 2012’s IFCIA and imposed new sanctions over Iran aimed of isolating Iranian economy from global trade⁶⁶⁴.

3.3. AN UNFORGETTABLE AD INTERIM DEAL.

From the second half of 2013, US-Israel and Iran relations changed to Hassan Rouhani’s elections as the new President of Iran. As stressed in Chapter 1, the Rouhani establishment’s position towards the Iran nuclear program in favor of a dialogue with international community has the main element that led to a new round of negotiations between P5+1 and Iran over Iran nuclear program. Rouhani was not inflexible as Ahmadinejad over the nuclear program nor vis-à-vis Israel⁶⁶⁵. He was trying to change Iran foreign policy in a moderate path, by looking for an economic relief together with the right of a peaceful nuclear program. Truly, the Supreme Leader had a role in this decision, but previous years demonstrated that President’s position vis-à-vis Israel and the Nuclear affair was fundamental⁶⁶⁶. However, after Syria strategy failure, the new balance of powers led Israel to a new action on US administration to influence negotiations and the final nuclear deal. In the end, it did not completely succeed since on November 24th the JCPOA has been signed without the respecting the pro-Israel requests⁶⁶⁷.

3.3.1. NETANYAHU CONTINUED THE MILITARY PATH.

At the end of September, P5+1 and Iran’s foreign minister met UNGA, whereas US and Iran started bilateral exchanges with direct communication between Obama and Rouhani⁶⁶⁸. Immediately in international forums and media interviews, Netanyahu opposed to Rouhani’s moderate statements⁶⁶⁹ through an already known harsh rhetoric. Israel stands for a deal in which Iran had to stop its nuclear enrichment at all levels with a complete secession of uranium enrichment, but without sanctions’ relief⁶⁷⁰. Therefore, once the interim deal has been implemented without respecting Israeli requests, Israeli reactions came to the fore. The ministers

⁶⁶³“Executive Order 13645 of June 3, 2013”, Federal Register/Vol. 78, No. 108/Wednesday, June 5, 2013/Presidential Documents.

⁶⁶⁴ Krauland, E.J., Rathbone, M., Hayes, R.J., “Effective July 1, 2013: Executive Order 13645, Implementing the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012 and Authorizing New Iran Sanctions”, *Steptoe*, July 1, 2013.

<https://www.step toe.com/en/news-publications/effective-july-1-2013-executive-order-13645-implementing-the-iran-freedom-and-counter-proliferation-act-of-2012-and-authorizing-new-iran-sanctions.html>

⁶⁶⁵ Shalev, C., “Rohani’s Charm Offensive Poses Difficult Challenge for Netanyahu”, *Haaretz*, September 20, 2013 <https://www.haaretz.com/bibi-bemused-by-rohani-charm-offensive-1.5337441>

⁶⁶⁶ Nader, A., “Iran’s 2013 Presidential Election: Its Meaning and Implications”, *RAND Corporation*, 2013.

⁶⁶⁷ Geneva Agreement “Joint Plan of Action”, Treasury of US government, November 24, 2013. <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/jpoa.pdf>

⁶⁶⁸ Borger, J., “Breakthrough hailed as US and Iran sit down for nuclear deal discussion”, *The guardian*, September 27, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/27/us-iran-nuclear-deal-discussion>

⁶⁶⁹ “Ahmadinejad was a wolf in wolf’s clothing. Rouhani is a wolf in sheep’s clothing, a wolf who thinks he can pull the eyes — the wool over the eyes of the international community.” Said Netanyahu.

TOI Staff, “Full text of Netanyahu’s 2013 speech to the UN General Assembly”, *The time of Israel*, October 1 2013, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-netanyahus-2013-speech-to-the-un-general-assembly/>

⁶⁷⁰ Netanyahu, B., “INTERVIEW WITH ISRAEL PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU”, *Euromideastnews*, 21 oct. 2013 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZD_n6pR5kw;

Foster, P., “Israel to push for better Iran nuclear deal”, *The telegraph*, November 17, 2013. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/10455957/Israel-to-push-for-better-Iran-nuclear-deal.html>

condemned the agreement and foreign minister Lieberman affirmed that “*all options are on the table*”⁶⁷¹. Indeed, Netanyahu and the minister of defense, Ya'alon, ordered to prepare a strike on Iran's facilities⁶⁷². The prime minister stood on hawkish military position, and at AIPAC policy conference he warned a strike⁶⁷³, trying to pressure the administration and fearing Obama of a possible failure of international negotiations with Iran. On the contrary, the action led to distance Israel from key West allies, who approved the deal with Tehran, since EU countries have been the most affected by sanctions⁶⁷⁴. Despite continuous meetings with Obama over Iran⁶⁷⁵, the international community discouraged a hard option or the mandatory requests of Israel, by reducing the legitimacy of the first option and let Israel isolated⁶⁷⁶.

Another lack of consensus was within Israeli establishment and on the domestic front. On one hand, the deep division between Netanyahu and his security apparatus did not give credibility to the option, since Israeli military and security chief did criticize Netanyahu's “*flagship policies*” that push for a strike against Iran⁶⁷⁷. Even more in this period in which Israel was fighting on the ground with Hamas in the “*Operation Protective Edge*”⁶⁷⁸. Indeed, in line with AIPAC action on the legislative branch, Israel public discourse shifted from a focus on Iran nuclear threat to the fight against terrorism⁶⁷⁹. On the other, Netanyahu was weakened on domestic level because it started his mandate with consensus a deficit⁶⁸⁰, losing votes within its own Party⁶⁸¹.

3.3.2. NEW INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS

In an interdependence world, bilateral and multilateral relations are fundamental, especially for small States, such as Israel, with an important but limited influence in shaping world policies⁶⁸². Therefore, international isolation as the one that Israel was receiving from West countries would be risky for Israeli power. Accordingly, Netanyahu has begun to diversify Israeli international alliances looking at other strategic allies, who perceived the nuclear deal as a loss. The strategy was intended to prove to the US that Israel had

⁶⁷¹Sherwood, H., “Israeli ministers rush to condemn Iran nuclear deal”, *The guardian*, November 24, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/24/israeli-ministers-condemn-iran-nuclear-deal>

⁶⁷²Ravid, B., “Netanyahu Orders IDF to Prepare for Possible Strike on Iran During 2014 Despite talks between Iran and West, senior”, *Haaretz*, March 19, 2014, <https://www.haaretz.com/idf-preparing-for-possible-iran-strike-1.5336169>

⁶⁷³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷⁴ Parsi, T “*Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*”

⁶⁷⁵Clawson, Patrick. “Netanyahu and Obama to Review Progress on Iran.” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, February 2014, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/netanyahu-and-obama-to-review-progress-on-iran.

⁶⁷⁶Sherwood, H., “Israel condemns Iran nuclear deal as 'historic mistake'”, *The Guardian*, November 24, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/24/israel-condemns-iran-nuclear-deal-binyamin-netanyahu>

⁶⁷⁷ Tibon, A., “Netanyahu vs. the Generals”, *POLITICO MAGAZINE*, July 3, 2016

⁶⁷⁸ “Operation ‘Protective Edge: A Detailed Summary of Events’”, *International institute for counter-terrorism*, December 7, 2014.

⁶⁷⁹“Transcript of Benjamin Netanyahu's Address to the 2014 UN General Assembly”, *Haaretz*, September 29, 2014. <https://www.haaretz.com/transcript-netanyahu-s-speech-to-unga-1.5308958>

⁶⁸⁰Rubin, A.; Navot, D; Ghanem, A., “The 2013 Israeli General Election: Travails of the Former King.” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 68, no. 2 (2014): 248-267.

⁶⁸¹ Weitz, G., “Former PM Barak: Netanyahu Leading Israel to Disaster”, *Haaretz*, 2015. <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-netanyahu-leading-israel-to-disaster-1.5357760>

⁶⁸²Inbar, E., “Israel is not isolated”, The Begin-Sadat Center For Strategic Studies Bar-Ilan University, *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* No. 99, March 2013. <https://besacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/MSPS99Eng.pdf>

other options, following Middle Eastern governments practices⁶⁸³. On the other hand, Netanyahu tried to push a US realignment by overcoming the historical enemies of Israel and ally of US, who has never putted aside but shifting Israel foreign policy to a more Eastern-centric one.

3.3.2.1. ISRAEL AND RUSSIA AT LEVEL ONE.

After Russian recognition of Israel, their relations have had ups and downs⁶⁸⁴. From the cold war, Russia stands on the Iranian side, by becoming an important Iranian partner in the global gas market and in Iran nuclear program⁶⁸⁵. However, Russia-Iran ties did not prevent Russia to vote in favor of UN sanctions against Iran nuclear program⁶⁸⁶. Indeed, Putin had an important role of international mediator between the West and Iran on Iran nuclear program. On one hand, he pushed on Western countries for an Iranian sanctions' relief, on the other, he acted on Iran by improving cooperation with the IAEA⁶⁸⁷. Furthermore, the progressive US disengagement from the Middle East⁶⁸⁸ gave to Russia the opportunity to increase its importance and power in the region⁶⁸⁹, according to its foreign policy aimed to boost its internal and external interests⁶⁹⁰.

Because of Russia's role, Israel saw an opportunity to exert pressures on Putin as far as concern the Iran nuclear deal, since he could not rely anymore on Obama. Israel saw in Moscow an opportunity to provoke a US reaction. Despite the US attempts of "reset" its relations with Russia, Israel was conscious of Putin's electoral campaign based on Anti Americanism as the main theme⁶⁹¹. Plus, there were still matter on which Russia and the US did not agree, i.e. Syria, Ukraine and Crimea's sovereignty. On his part, Russia had reasons to invests in Israel's relations, i.e. social-cultural links and Russian communities in Israel⁶⁹².

Accordingly, Russia and Israel engaged each other in bilateral relations⁶⁹³. In fact, the Deputy Israeli Foreign Minister Ze'ev Elkin said: "*Our job is to try to sway the Russians, as we have been doing with all the players. Russia is not going to adopt Israeli positions wholesale. But any movement, even small, in the Russian*

⁶⁸³ They use political and economic deals with Russia as a means of signaling to the United States that they have other options; Sladden, J, Wasser, B., Connable, B.,Grand-Clement, S., "Russian Strategy in the Middle East", *RAND Corporation*, PE-236-RC, 2017. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE236.html>

⁶⁸⁴ Ahronson, M., "Relations between Israel and the USSR/Russia", *The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security*, 2018. <https://jiss.org.il/en/aharonson-relations-israel-ussr-russia/>

⁶⁸⁵ Sladden, J, Wasser, B., Connable, B.,Grand-Clement, S., "Russian Strategy in the Middle East".

⁶⁸⁶ Security Council 5612th meeting, "Security Council Imposes Sanctions On Iran For Failure To Halt Uranium Enrichment, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1737", 2006. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2006/sc8928.doc.htm>

⁶⁸⁷ Parker W.J., "Russia and the Iranian Nuclear Program: Replay or Breakthrough?", *INSS, Strategic perspective* NO.9 March 2012. <https://inss.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-9.pdf>

⁶⁸⁸ Weber, Y., "Russian Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Multiple Drivers, Uncertain Outcomes", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, November 30, 2017. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/11/russian-foreign-policy-middle-east-multiple-drivers-uncertain-outcomes/>

⁶⁸⁹ Sladden, J, Wasser, B., Connable, B.,Grand-Clement, S., "Russian Strategy in the Middle East".

⁶⁹⁰ Ahronson, M., "Relations between Israel and the USSR/Russia".

⁶⁹¹ Stent, A., "U.S.–Russia Relations in the Second Obama Administration", *Global Politics and Strategy* Volume 54, Issue 6, 2012.

⁶⁹² Coalson,R., "Putin Pledges To Protect All Ethnic Russians Anywhere. So, Where Are They?", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, April 10 2014. <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ethnic-russification-baltics-kazakhstan-soviet/25328281.html>

⁶⁹³ "Vladimir Putin and the holy land", *The economist*, March 16, 2013 <https://www.economist.com/europe/2013/03/16/vladimir-putin-and-the-holy-land>

position can affect the negotiations”⁶⁹⁴. And, from 2012-2013 one main priority of the Soviet-born Israeli foreign minister A. Lieberman has been the implementation of the partnership with Russia. Firstly, Israel requested to Russia stopping military and nuclear technologies provisions to Iran⁶⁹⁵. Secondly, Netanyahu asked reassurances that the provisions sold to Iran would not be in the Hezbollah’s hand⁶⁹⁶. Finally, Israeli were clear with Russian diplomats and leader that Israel was ready to take any kind of actions against Iran.⁶⁹⁷

The relationship has been strengthened throughout time as demonstrated the fact that, in 2014, Putin did not condemn Israeli operations in Gaza⁶⁹⁸, in contrast with Obama⁶⁹⁹. In response to Russian allies, Israel, not present at the UNGA, did not enjoy the Western sanctions against Russia for the recognition of Crimea’s sovereignty⁷⁰⁰: a choice highly related to Iran and the Iran deal. Indeed, the Israeli Ambassador in Ukraine, Eli Belotserkovsky, discouraged the sanctions against Russia, by making a parallel with Iranian sanctions: “*diplomatic approach has not been exhausted with Russia, but that it has been exhausted with Iran... sanctions are effective if all other approaches are exhausted.*”⁷⁰¹ Moreover, the opposition to Russia’s sanctions gave to Israel economic gains, which increased through its neutral position vis-à-vis Russian intervention in Ukraine and Syria. Since sanctions were affecting Russia’s trade with the EU and US, Netanyahu took advantages by boosting its trades with Putin ⁷⁰².

The improvements of these relations have been important in the broader Israeli- Iranian relations, i.e. in Syria ground⁷⁰³. Indeed, to avoid a risk of a flare-up with Israel, during Russian operations, there has been an operative coordination between Russia and Israel⁷⁰⁴. The event shows two things. Firstly, for Israel, the coordination was a success of its strategy and “*a major strategic development in the Middle East*”⁷⁰⁵. Second, it shows the limits of Russia-Iran relations and it seemed a Russian’ step back from the alliance, though their

⁶⁹⁴ Anishchuk, A., “Israeli leader lobbies in Russia against Iran deal”, *Reuters*, November 20, 2013. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-israel-russia/israeli-leader-lobbies-in-russia-against-iran-deal-idUSBRE9AJ17K20131120>

⁶⁹⁵ Ahronson, M., “Relations between Israel and the USSR/Russia”.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁹⁷ Press, “Conclusions of the 11th Israel-Russia Mixed Economic Committee”, *Israel Embassy of Israel in Turkmenistan*, December 10, 2013. <https://embassies.gov.il/ashgabad/AboutIsrael/PressRoom/2013/Pages/Conclusions-of-the-11th-Israel-Russia-Mixed-Economic-Committee-9-Dec-2013.aspx>

⁶⁹⁸ COLLIVE reporter, “President Putin: I Support Israel”, *COLLIVE*, July 9, 2014. https://www.collive.com/show_news.rtx?id=31099&alias=president-putin-i-support-israel

⁶⁹⁹ Shalev, C., “Obama Gets Tough With Netanyahu, for Gaza And/or Kerry”, *Haaretz*, July 27, 2014. <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-obama-gets-tough-with-bibi-for-gaza-1.5257058>

⁷⁰⁰ “68th UN General Assembly, 80th Meeting, “General Assembly Adopts Resolution Calling upon States Not to Recognize Changes in Status of Crimea Region”, UNGA, March 27, 2014 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ga11493.doc.htm>.

⁷⁰¹ “Israel Opposes sanctions against Russia”, *Euromaidan Press*, January 19, 2016. <http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/01/19/88069/>

⁷⁰² JTA, “Israel’s trade with Russia leaps by 25%”, *The Time of Israel*, September 30, 2017. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israels-trade-with-russia-leaps-by-25/>

⁷⁰³ where Russia and Iran were on the same Assad side.

⁷⁰⁴ Smyth, G., “The tricky triangle of Iran, Russia and Israel”, *The Guardian*, April 25, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/iran-blog/2016/apr/25/iran-russia-israel-tehranbureau>

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

strategic shared regional interests⁷⁰⁶. Indeed, part of the Iranian government had doubts on Russian provisions of weapons and defense technologies because of its commitments to Israel⁷⁰⁷.

In conclusion, starting to lobby Russia at the international level has been successfully instrumental for Israel in handling the Iranian issue as far as weakening Iran- Russia relations. Although Israel was aware of the roots of this relationship, it had some gains from its isolated position, by gaining a new ally in the region.

3.3.2.2.THE REVERSE OF PERIPHERY DOCTRINE: SAUDI ARABIA

Following the same strategy, another path that Israel undertook vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iranian nuclear deal was a new relationship with Saudi Arabia, by reversing the periphery doctrine. The periphery doctrine is a foreign policy approach that predominated Israel foreign policy from Ben- Gurion until the Iranian revolution⁷⁰⁸. Although the periphery doctrine has been internalized in the Israeli way of thinking and partially taken up again after 2010⁷⁰⁹, it has been reversed with the shift in the US- Iranian relations. Indeed, the logic surrounding the strategy is the same but in reverse: if before Iran and Israel had common threats in Arab Countries; now Israel and Arab Countries share a common foe, Iran. Accordingly, under this logic, “*the enemies of my enemies are my friends*”⁷¹⁰, Israel started cooperation with Arab countries of the Gulf: Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman⁷¹¹. Truly, GCC countries supported international negotiations over the nuclear program, but they feared an agreement that would hurt their interests with recognition of Iran’s hegemony in the region⁷¹². Nevertheless, they feared a US-Israel military strike against Iran’s nuclear infrastructure, because of its consequences⁷¹³. Hence, they continued the relations with the US without cutting those with Iran, but they also started new amicable ties with Israel however they have opposite interests⁷¹⁴.

Through these new allies, Israel would have a new toll of pressure on US executive power, since a GCC-Israeli alliance against Iran would be a concern for the US. In the analysis, I focus on Saudis- Israeli relations, since the most consistent alliance developed in the framework of the Iran nuclear deal, whereas those with UAE and Oman are very recent⁷¹⁵. Finally, the new friendship will be taken into account on both domestic and international levels.

⁷⁰⁶Kozhanov, N., “The Limits of Russian-Iranian Cooperation”, *ChathamHouse, The royal Institute of International Affairs*, November 27, 2015. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/limits-russian-iranian-cooperation>

⁷⁰⁷ Geranmayeh, E., Liik, K., “The New Power Couple: Russia And Iran In The Middle East”, *European Council of foreign affairs*, September 2016,

⁷⁰⁸ The Israeli grand strategy has been always aimed to secure the State by countering the Arab neighbors’ hostility through relations with non-Arab states regional power. Parsi, T., “*The Treacherous Alliance*”, 70; Alpher, Y., “*Periphery: Israel’s Search for Middle East Allies*” (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015).

⁷⁰⁹ when a new wave of Arab revolutions started: the political Islam in Egypt, Turkey, Gaza, southern Lebanon and Syria, coupled with the Islamic regime in Iran rise concerns in Israel.

Alpher, Y., “*Periphery: Israel’s Search for Middle East Allies*”.

⁷¹⁰ Containing Iran was the first priority for both Israel and Gulf Countries: Guzansky, Y., “Tacit Allies: Israel and the Arab Gulf States”, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vo. 5, No. 1 (2011- online 2015): 9-17,

⁷¹¹ Sachs, N., “Iran’s Revolution, 40 Years On: Israel’s Reverse Periphery Doctrine”, *Brookings Institute*, January 21 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/01/24/irans-revolution-40-years-on-israels-reverse-periphery-doctrine/>

⁷¹² Guzansky, Y., “Tacit Allies: Israel and the Arab Gulf States”.

⁷¹³ *Ibidem*

⁷¹⁴ *Ibidem*

⁷¹⁵ “Israel International Relations: Israel - UAE Relations”, *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-uae-relations>

3.3.2.2.1. ISRAELI AND SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONSHIP AT LEVEL 1.

Despite the absence of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, the announcement of negotiation between Rouhani and Obama led Tel-Aviv and Riyadh to start meetings, bringing a new era of cooperation⁷¹⁶. As Israel, Riyadh sees Iran as a perilous enemy and the JCPOA would give the possibility for expanding its hegemony in the region, something that Saudis avoided⁷¹⁷. They saw Iran filling the vacuum in the region without Obama taking enough actions to address these perceived threats from Tehran⁷¹⁸. De facto, they believed that Obama was trying a rapprochement with Iran by weakening its position in the region, without considering their interests. Indeed, both States have been excluded by the international negotiating process, putting them aside as passive actors involved in all consequences of the deal but any decision⁷¹⁹. The common feelings pushed them for cooperation against Iran, without relying on the US. Although the Iran nuclear deal has not been the only issue of weakening the alliance between Saudis and Americans⁷²⁰, it was the main and the first one⁷²¹. One top priority of Saudi foreign policy was to reverse Iran's geopolitical gains, seen as a step forward its regional influence⁷²², by getting closer to Israel and stepping away from the US⁷²³.

Israel used the weakness in Saudis-US relations as an instrument to pressure Americans. Indeed, more improvements Israel made in its relations with Saudis, greater were US fears as far as the Riyadh uncertain position in the spectrum of the rivalry with Iran and its position in the Iran deal. Since Israel was conscious about the Saudis' strategic importance for the US, Netanyahu argued that Israel should have taken advantage of this commonality of interests⁷²⁴. The official contacts started in 2013 with President Peres, who spoke via satellite to 29 foreign ministers from Arab countries at the Abu Dhabi conferences⁷²⁵. But, only in 2014, the two States started meeting and, at the end of the year, they reached an economic and political agreement that reinforced their cooperation, which came out in June 2015 at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington⁷²⁶. Plus, Israel offered to Saudis a regional ally on which rely, without the US aids. Indeed, as in

⁷¹⁶Meysan, T., "in Parallel With The Usa-Iran Negotiation: The secret projects of Israël and Saudi Arabia", *Voltaire network*, June 27, 2015, <https://www.voltairenet.org/article187975.html>

⁷¹⁷Graham.A.D., "Israel and Saudi Arabia: Togetherish at Last?", *The Atlantic*, June 2, 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/06/israeli-saudi-relations/395015/>

⁷¹⁸Giorgio Cafiero, Private message. .

⁷¹⁹Black, I., "Why Israel is quietly cosying up to Gulf monarchies", *The Guardian*, March 19, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/mar/19/why-israel-quietly-cosying-up-to-gulf-monarchies-saudi-arabia-uae>

⁷²⁰For instance, their economic relations as far as concern oil imports from Saudi Arabia to America decreased for the US domestic production by weakening their ties. See the IAEA report on "U.S. energy consumption by energy source, 2018": https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.php?page=renewable_home

⁷²¹Feltman J., Gross, S., Indyk M., KiriSci, K., Maloney, S., Riedel, B., Sachs, N., Sloat, A., Stent, A., Cofman Witten, T., "The new geopolitics of the middle east: America's role in a changing region", *Foreign Policy at Bookings*, January 2019, 10.

⁷²²F.Gregory Gause III, "The Future of U.S.-Saudi Relations. The Kingdom and the Power", *The foreign affairs*, July- August 2016. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ united-states/2016-06-13/future-us-saudi-relations>

⁷²³Gardner, F., "How strained are US-Saudi relations?", *BBC news*, 20 April 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36083990>

⁷²⁴Heller, A., "Israeli perceptions of Saudi Arabia may be about to change", *Business Insider*, June 4, 2015. <https://www.businessinsider.com/israeli-preceptions-of-saudi-arabia-may-be-about-to-chnage-2015-6?IR=T>

⁷²⁵Black, I., "Why Israel is quietly cosying up to Gulf monarchies", *The Guardian*, March 19, 2019.

⁷²⁶Lake, E., "Israelis and Saudis Reveal Secret Talks to Thwart Iran", *Bloomerang*, June 4, 2015.; <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2015-06-04/israelis-and-saudis-reveal-secret-talks-to-thwart-iran> Meysan, T., "in Parallel With The Usa-Iran Negotiation: The secret projects of Israël and Saudi Arabia", *Voltaire network*, June 27, 2015, <https://www.voltairenet.org/article187975.html>

previous times⁷²⁷, in spring 2015, Israel offered military provision with Iron Rocket for Saudi Arabia's fights in Yemen⁷²⁸. Although Saudis rejected the help⁷²⁹, the consensus for peaceful relations was increasing in Saudi Arabia, where people were concerned more about Iran's threat than for Jewish State⁷³⁰. Moreover, Israel elaborated a joint plan with Saudi Arabia to block the Iranian nuclear program through an intervention in the Syria conflicts by hurting Iranian facilities⁷³¹. Eventually, they created broader military cooperation with a joint militia in the Red Sea through a memorandum of understanding⁷³². On the other part, US fears were exacerbated by the deep distrust that Saudis had in Obama, considering him able to "jettison old friends in order to cozy up to enemies"⁷³³. US concerns found fertile soil in Saudis Israelis economic relations since Saudi Arabia committed to grant Israel the MFN status⁷³⁴. In fact, a 2018's Tony Blair Institute paper estimated that indirect exports' volume in 2016 from Israel to GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia, was around \$1 billion, making the Gulf the 3rd largest Israeli export market⁷³⁵.

3.3.2.2.2. AIPAC HELPS OLD ENEMIES.

The strategy has been followed on level 2. In conjunction with Netanyahu's strategy, AIPAC initiated to work in favor of this friendship within US institutional framework. In line with Israel, the lobby has always been in hawkish opposition to US-Saudi alliance, in particular as far as US military aid to Saudis⁷³⁶, its position shifted vis-à-vis the US foreign policy in relations with Saudis and Iranian threats. Indeed, it stopped its opposition against Saudis- US cooperation and US military assistance to Saudi Arabia. In 2013, when the Saudi Israeli relations were not official yet, Saudis received 10\$million from the US in missiles, warplanes and troop transports to counter a future Iran threat⁷³⁷. The interesting part is that AIPAC backed the deal with no opposition to the assistance in Congress, as well as it did not in 2010, when the US announced 60\$ billion

⁷²⁷ in 1960s Israel helped Yemeni backed by Saudis facing Nasser

⁷²⁸TOI Staff, Saudi Arabia "rejects Israeli offer to supply Iron Dome", *The Time of Israel*, 23 May 2015. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-arabia-rejected-israeli-offer-of-iron-dome/>

⁷²⁹ Ibidem.

⁷³⁰the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya's pool showed that 53% of people chose Iran as main adversary, 22% ISIS and 18% Israel

Heller, A. "Israeli perceptions of Saudi Arabia may be about to change", *Business insider*, June 4, 2015. <https://www.businessinsider.com/israeli-preceptions-of-saudi-arabia-may-be-about-to-chnage-2015-6?IR=T#ixzz3cCZH3MQ6>

⁷³¹ De Groot Vos, M., "L'alleanza tra Israele e Arabia Saudita contro l'Iran (rapporto esclusivo)", *Right Reporter*, August 31, 2015. <https://www.rightsreporter.org/alleanza-israele-arabia-saudita-contro-iran-rapporto-esclusivo/>

⁷³²Editor board, "Formation of joint militia between Saudi Arabia and Israel in Red sea", *MuslimPress*, April 4, 2016. <http://www.muslimpress.com/Section-world-news-16/84113-formation-of-joint-militia-between-saudi-arabia-and-israel-in-red-sea>

⁷³³ F.Gregory Gause III, "The Future of U.S.-Saudi Relations. The Kingdom and the Power",

⁷³⁴ "Memo BDS: An Overview and Approach", AIPAC; April 17, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/issue-memos/2015/aipac-memo-bds-an-overview-and-approach.pdf>

⁷³⁵ Podeh, E., "Saudi Arabia and Israel: From Secret to Public Engagement, 1948-2018", *Middle East Journal* Vol. 72 (October 1, 2018): 563-586

⁷³⁶ in 1981, it stand in hawkish opposition to the AWACS deal, trying to prevent US from signing military agreement with Saudis For more information about the AWACS deal: Gutfeld, A., "The 1981 AWACS Deal: AIPAC and Israel Challenge Reagan", *BESA, Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 157*, NOVEMBER 2018.

<https://besacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/157-MONOGRAPH-The-1981-AWACS-Deal-Gutfeld-WEB.pdf>

Dine, A.T., "AIPAC's Waterloo? Why Iran Is Worse than AWACS", *FOREIGN AFFAIRS*, September 8, 2015. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2015-09-08/aipacs-waterloo>

⁷³⁷ Shanker, T., "Arms Deal With Israel and 2 Arab Nations Is Near", *New York Times*, 19 April 2013.

deal with Saudi Arabia, the biggest arms sale⁷³⁸. Although in 2010 Obama convinced Israel, AIPAC did not oppose the deal. On the contrary, it issued a MEMO “*Congress Should Examine Impact of Saudi Arms Sale*”, where speaking about Israel security problems that the deal could pose, it spoke on what Congress “should do” rather “must-do”⁷³⁹. However officially concern about an armed Arab State, it did not mobilize its activists, neither it blocked the deal in Congress, nor it pressured the administration to do not sell arms⁷⁴⁰. Eventually, Israel and AIPAC saw in the deal a US’ assurance that the weapons could not be used against Israel: From 2009 to 2013, the US gave to Saudi Arabia around \$52 billion in military equipment and not AIPAC neither Netanyahu opposed to the assistance. The choice of not acting on domestic and international levels should be considered a sign of cooperation in the relations among the two Countries against Iran main foe. Finally, considering an imaginary balance, where one arm weights Israel (AIPAC and Netanyahu) and Saudi Arabia in hawkish position against the JCPOA and Iran; the other has US, Iran and UN’s weight in favor of the JCPOA. The Israeli- Saudis relations represented the balance needle for Obama, who feared the new alliance against Iran, especially in a moment in which US- Saudis relations got “complicated”⁷⁴¹.

3.3.3. AIPAC AND OBAMA: A CLEAR DIVISION UNDER VETO THREAT.

Whereas international talks with Iran continued⁷⁴², in line Netanyahu, 10 Senators guided by Sen. Menendez sent a letter to Obama, expressing that any deal must have an “*immediate suspension of all enrichment activity (and) the implementation of the next round of sanctions currently under consideration by the Congress*”⁷⁴³. The pro-Israel lobby was not totally against the interim deal, but as Netanyahu, they wanted a deal with a zero enrichment for Iran, who claimed a right of peaceful nuclear enrichment. On its hand, the White House was worried that sanctions could hurt negotiations, and it met Senators in asking to stop sanctions⁷⁴⁴. The meeting was defined by Sen. Kirk as “anti-Israel”, leading him to a new action for heavier sanctions⁷⁴⁵. Indeed, by attacking Obama, the Senator introduced an amendment to the NDAA, military

⁷³⁸F-15 fighters upgrades, 100 attack helicopters, missiles, bombs and radar systems: Black, I., “Barack Obama to authorise record \$60bn Saudi arms sale”, *The Guardian*, september 13 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/13/us-saudi-arabia-arms-deal>

⁷³⁹“ Memo, congress should examine impact of saudi arms sale”, AIPAC, November 12, 2010. https://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/issue-memos/2010/11/aipac_memo_congress_should_examine_impact_of_saudi_arms_sale.pdf

⁷⁴⁰ Guttman, N. “Israel Quietly Accedes to Huge Saudi Arms Deal, The Largest Ever”, *New York times*, November 2010: 1,9.

⁷⁴¹Gardner, F., “How strained are US-Saudi relations?”, *BBC news*, April 26, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36083990>

⁷⁴² Timeline of Nuclear Diplomacy With Iran”, Arms Control Association, accessed August 2019

⁷⁴³“ Bipartisan Senate Leaders to President Obama: “The True Test of Iranian Sincerity is a Willingness to Match Rhetoric with Actions”, Bob Menendez website: <https://www.menendez.senate.gov/news-and-events/press/bipartisan-senate-leaders-to-president-obama-the-true-test-of-iranian-sincerity-is-a-willingness-to-match-rhetoric-with-actions>

⁷⁴⁴A first meeting has been arranged by Kerry with the Senate Banking Committee, the main pro-Israel committee. Burgess, E., Bresnahan, K., “Senate GOP rejects W.H. Iran plea”, *POLITICO*, November 13, 2013. <https://www.politico.com/story/2013/11/senate-republicans-white-house-iran-099818#ixzz211NIB6KG>; Hudson, J., “John Kerry’s Iran Briefing Succeeds ... in Solidifying GOP Against Him”, *Foreign Policy*, November 13, 2013.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibidem; “ After Kerry Briefing, Senators Slam White House Over “Chamberlain”-Style Iran Deal & “Anti-Israel” Statements”, *The Tower*, accessed by August 2019.

defense spending bill⁷⁴⁶. More pressures have been exercised on the Secretary of State Kerry by a bipartisan group of Senators, who sent to him a letter expressing their support for the talks, but warning “*the Administration against accepting a deal that would roll back economic sanctions without rolling back progress towards nuclear weapons capability*”.⁷⁴⁷ Indeed, in line with Israel position, they affirmed that “*any interim agreement with the Iranians should bring us closer to our ultimate goal which is Iran without a nuclear weapons capability*”⁷⁴⁸. By using different words and register, the pressuring strategy worked since before international Geneva’s assembly, Obama arranged a new meeting with a bipartisan group of Senators, where he asked to cease any attempts of increasing sanctions over Iran⁷⁴⁹Fox, L., “. De facto, Obama was lobbying the pro-Israel Senators with a request of more time to “*see if Iran will live up to the obligations*”⁷⁵⁰. The division between Obama and pro-Israel conservative lawmakers in the Iran nuclear deal approach was drawn, and it became even more clear once the deal has been signed. Indeed, from October, pro-Israel bills concerning Iran deal negotiations or sanctions were sponsored only by Republicans, by changing AIPAC bipartisanship⁷⁵¹.

3.3.3.1. OLD STRATEGY, GOLD STRATEGY? A NEW ROLE FOR THE CONGRESS.

Once the deal was signed, AIPAC had a softer reaction compared to Netanyahu. Indeed, it issued a MEMO “*US Must Prevent a Nuclear-Capable Iran*”⁷⁵², which with a less hawkish language considered the agreement full of defaults and urged Congress to “*press the administration to negotiate a verifiable agreement that will prevent Iran from ever building nuclear weapons. Congress must pass legislation that will increase the pressure on Iran and ensure any future deal denies Tehran a nuclear weapons capability.*”⁷⁵³ The AIPAC actions were based on sanctions path, since it was aware that would be difficult to sink the deal in the international and domestic surrounding. Indeed, PEWR’s polls showed that the majority of Jewish approved how Obama held the nation’s policy toward Israel and how he was dealing with Iran⁷⁵⁴. Truly, AIPAC is composed mainly by Evangelical Protestants, whom only 26% approved his approach⁷⁵⁵. However, few days before the interim deal, polls showed that the majority of Americans “*would favor an international agreement*

⁷⁴⁶Lake, E., “GOP Defies Obama on Iran Sanctions”, *Daily beast*, November 19, 2013. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/gop-defies-obama-on-iran-sanctions>

⁷⁴⁷ “Casey Urges Administration Not to Accept Iran Deal that Cuts Back Sanctions But Allows Iranian Nuclear Program to Continue”, Bob Casey website, accessed by August 2019.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁴⁹Fox, L., “Dianne Feinstein on Stronger Iran Sanctions: 'If You Want a War, That Is the Thing To Do’”, *USNews*, November 19, 2013. <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/11/19/dianne-feinstein-on-stronger-iran-sanctions-if-you-want-a-war-that-is-the-thing-to-do>

⁷⁵⁰Allen, J., “Obama asks for Iran sanctions delay”, *POLITICO*, November 19, 2013,<https://www.politico.com/story/2013/11/barack-obama-iran-sanctions-100064#ixzz2l7TBZCjh>

⁷⁵¹ H.R. 3292, the “U.S.-Iran Nuclear Negotiations” was introduced by Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), with 29 co-sponsors, all Republicans. The S.Res. 269 expressing the “sense of the Senate”, has been introduced by Mark Rubio, with 12 Republican co-sponsors.

⁷⁵²“MEMO U.S. Must Prevent a Nuclear-Capable Iran”, AIPAC, November 15, 2013.

⁷⁵³ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁵⁴ “Chapter 6: Social and Political Views”, *PEW research center*, October 1, 2013. <https://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/chapter-6-social-and-political-views/>

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibidem*

that would impose major restrictions on Iran's nuclear program but not end it completely”, and 39% opposed to the deal⁷⁵⁶.

Hence, instead of a public confrontation with Obama⁷⁵⁷, AIPAC opted for a less hawkish and more nuanced approach against Iran. It proposed sanctions that would be taken progressively if Iran would have violated the interim agreement or “if Iran cheats during the next six months or if Iran’s nuclear infrastructure is not being dismantled at the end of the six-month period”⁷⁵⁸. Hence, AIPAC started a slow action through its lawmakers to influence not the imminent agreement but the final one, which “must deny Iran both uranium and plutonium paths to develop nuclear weapons”⁷⁵⁹, by imposing more sanctions.

Coherently, AIPAC sponsored few bills against Iran in the six months after the interim deal. In fact, AIPAC lawmakers introduced a resolution and a bill. The resolution was “H.Res. 431: Calling US Senate to increase sanctions against Iran” introduced by Scalise⁷⁶⁰; whereas the bill was the “S. 1881” introduced by Senators Menendez and Kirk⁷⁶¹. The bill previewed sanctions over Iran in case “Iran’s violations of any interim or final agreement regarding its nuclear program”⁷⁶². In order to reach the majority for the bills, AIPAC started a campaign that pushed mainly on Democrats to influence Obama’s line⁷⁶³. In particular, AIPAC pressured the last missing vote on Sen. Reid, who introduced several pro-Israel AIPAC sponsored bills in previous time and with links with AIPAC, as reported by the New Yorker⁷⁶⁴. Plus, pro-Israel lobby acted along with neoconservative organizations, i.e. FPI that helped writing an open letter to Congressional leaders, signed by officials and diplomats who had ties with pro-Israel hawkish organizations⁷⁶⁵. The letter did not ask explicitly to congressmen to vote in favor of the bill but covertly affirmed that “Congressional leadership can help prevent Iran from using future negotiations as cover to further the growth of its nuclear weapons-making capability”⁷⁶⁶.

The action alarmed Obama administration because the number of Senator that signed the letter, since a majority of 60 would have meant the passage of new sanctions and the end of the negotiation. Hence, the White House started to react. The NSC spokespersons accused the sponsors of the bill of closing “the door on diplomacy” pushing the US towards a military option and Iran to continue its enrichment⁷⁶⁷. Furthermore,

⁷⁵⁶CNN poll’s document: <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2013/images/11/21/rel13a.pdf>

⁷⁵⁷ Something that it tried before, but it lose with the administration as in 1992 during Bush administration creating a rift with it Guttman, N. “Jewish Groups Back Away From All-Out Fight Over Iran Nuclear Deal” *Forward*, November 27, 2013 <https://forward.com/news/israel/188417/jewish-groups-back-away-from-all-out-fight-over-ir/?p=all>

⁷⁵⁸ Kampeas ,R.” Interim deal on Iran splits Congress on new sanctions”, *Jewish telegraphic agency*, November 25,2013 <http://www.jta.org/2013/11/25/united-states/in-congress-unhappiness-with-the-iran-deal-but-a-willingness-to-give-it-a-chance>

⁷⁵⁹ “MEMO U.S. Must Prevent a Nuclear-Capable Iran”, AIPAC, November 15, 2013.

⁷⁶⁰ H.Res 431 (113th): Calling on the United States Senate to increase sanctions against Iran

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-resolution/431/all-actions?overview=closed>

⁷⁶¹ S. 1881 (113th): Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013, introduced by Menendez <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s188>

⁷⁶² *Ibidem*

⁷⁶³ Lobe J. “Top Israel Lobby Group Loses Battle on Iran, But War Not Over”, *IPS, Global Politics*, January 23,2014

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/01/top-israel-lobby-group-loses-major-battle-iran-war/>

⁷⁶⁴ Bruck C. “Friends of Israel”, *The new Yorker*, August 25,2014 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/01/friends-israel>

⁷⁶⁵ Lobe J. “Neocons Who Brought You The Iraq War Endorse AIPAC’s Iran Bill”, *Lobe Log*, January 9, 2014 <https://lobelog.com/neocons-who-brought-you-the-iraq-war-endorse-aipacs-iran-bill/>.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibidem*

⁷⁶⁷ Grim, R., “White House Dares Democratic Senators Pushing Iran Sanctions To Admit They Want War

during his State of the Union discourse, Obama threatened a veto: “*if this Congress sends me new sanctions bill now that threatens to derail these talks*”⁷⁶⁸. The president was putting diplomacy before sanctions⁷⁶⁹, without setting aside AIPAC proposals, since he declared himself ready for more sanctions⁷⁷⁰. However, this time Obama’s diplomacy won the match, with democrats backward from their initial position⁷⁷¹. Indeed, the bill did not reach the majority with 59 bipartisan votes.

Following its traditional path, AIPAC tried to influence lawmakers’ vote through its Policy conference, where future initiatives are introduced. Notwithstanding the presence of congressman from both parties, Netanyahu⁷⁷², pro-Israel speeches had not effects on Congress’ voters as they used to be. However, Rep. Hoyer and Cantor started to circulate an AIPAC approved letter among other congressmen present at the conference to gain signatures⁷⁷³. These signatures were a top priority for AIPAC since it would be a manifest support for its Iran policy in congress, that was losing⁷⁷⁴. The letter has been sent to Obama on March 19th with 394 signers and in line with Netanyahu position⁷⁷⁵. Indeed, in favor of diplomacy and agreement, they required a full dismantling of Iran nuclear capability: “*dismantlement of Iran’s nuclear weapons-related infrastructure, including enrichment, heavy water and reprocessing-related facilities*”.⁷⁷⁶ Plus, they stressed the role of sanctions. Although some ambiguities in the letter’s language, which could have been made to gain broader support, it has a clear request to the President: “*to consult closely with us so that we can determine the parameters of such relief in the event that an agreement is reached, or, if no agreement is reached or Iran violates the interim agreement, so that we can act swiftly to consider additional sanctions...*”⁷⁷⁷, in other terms a zero enrichment’s option. Despite the letter had the same content of Menendez bill, it had no-binding powers and with a softer language, it was a way for AIPAC to gain support on its position over the Iran nuclear final deal. Indeed, it easily overcame 59 senators’ majority. In spite of the consensus to bipartisan letter⁷⁷⁸, it did not have the effects on Obama that it hoped for since the zero-enrichment ‘s option was unrealistic for Tehran and the P5+1.

Headshot”, *The HuffPost*, September 1, 2014. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-house-iran-war_n_4572003

⁷⁶⁸“State of the Union address 2014 – full text of President Obama’s remarks”, *The Guardian*, January 29, 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/28/state-of-the-union-address-2014-full-text>

⁷⁶⁹ Parsi, T. , “*Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*”, 252 .

⁷⁷⁰ State of the Union address 2014 – full text of President Obama’s remarks”, *The Guardian*, January 29, 2014

⁷⁷¹ At the beginning the bill had 67 co-sponsors.

⁷⁷²PM Netanyahu’s Speech at the 2014 AIPAC Conference”, Embassy of Israel at the US, April 3, 2014 <https://embassies.gov.il/washington/NewsAndEvents/Pages/PM-Netanyahu---Full-Remarks-at-the-2014-AIPAC-Conference.aspx>

⁷⁷³ Lobe J. “Here’s the AIPAC-Approved House Version of Iran Letter to Obama”, *Lobe Log*, March 3, 2014 <http://lobelog.com/heres-the-aipac-approved-house-version-of-letter-to-obama/>

⁷⁷⁴“Support Congressional Role on Iran Policy”, legislation AIPAC: <https://www.aipac.org/learn/legislative-agenda/agenda-display?agendaid=%7B6F7B2B4E-4607-411E-B1FB-0CDC9D8EE7CD%7D>

⁷⁷⁵“ Engel Supports Hoyer/Cantor Letter to President on Iran”, U. S House of Representatives, Committee of foreign affairs, March 19,2014 <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/2014/3/engel-supports-hoyercantor-letter-president-iran>

⁷⁷⁶ *ibidem*

⁷⁷⁷ *ibidem*

⁷⁷⁸ 395 with Kirk, Menendez, and Schumer that became three co-sponsors. Moreover, during the conference, also Graham, Ayotte and Coons signed.

Accordingly, disappointed by the Western Powers' negotiations⁷⁷⁹, AIPAC restarted a heavy action in congress. However, in 2014, its main actions focused on Appropriation and Authorization acts, US-Israel military Partnership and cooperation, and resolution on terrorist groups⁷⁸⁰. The reason for this shift was in the struggles against Hamas and other militias that Israel was facing in Gaza⁷⁸¹, for which it needed US assistance⁷⁸².

After 2014 mid-term elections in November and the stop of the fights with Gaza, AIPAC retook its main action on legislative branch vis-à-vis US foreign policy to shape the final agreement. Indeed, in Israel before taking office in the Senate, Sen. Graham, who received money from AIPAC, said to Netanyahu that Congress would follow his lead, by reintroducing the bipartisan Menendez-Kirk's bill⁷⁸³. The action was quite effective on Obama, who felt his foreign policy threatened to affirm that *"if I'm not persuading Congress, I promise you, I'm going to be taking my case to the American people on this"*⁷⁸⁴. De facto, the legislative branch assumed more relevance after elections now that the conservative view of Republicans got the majority in the two chambers with midterm elections⁷⁸⁵. These results in the light of political polarization between Democrats (more liberal) and Republicans (more conservative) not only led to a partisan foreign policy on Iran⁷⁸⁶, but it gave a greater possibility that these partisan policies against Iran would be achieved easier considering the majority. Indeed, AIPAC increased its actions by delivering 3,385,700\$ in 2015⁷⁸⁷, around 11% more than in 2014.

Once arrived in office, AIPAC and lawmakers started their actions. However, this time the main pro-Israel strategy vis-à-vis Obama's foreign policy in Iran deal focused on limiting Presidential sanctioning powers to interpose Congress between International community-US and Iran. The strategy of a re-evaluation of congressional power was due to the White House's position. Indeed, Obama was worried about Congressional future action on whatever final agreement would prescribe, and *"The Treasury Department, in a detailed study it declined to make public, has concluded Mr. Obama has the authority to suspend the vast*

⁷⁷⁹ Throughout these months Iran was not continuing with enrichment, it stopped its production, but it did not dismantled its nuclear centers. This was confirmed in June by the IAEA reports.

⁷⁸⁰ "H.R.3979 - Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015" 113th Congress (2013-2014) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/3979>

⁷⁸¹ The reason of these resolution was that during summer 2014, Israel was combatting with Hamas and other militants in Gaza, and it needed US assistance.

For more about the conflict:

Robison, G., E., "Gaza 2014: Hamas' Strategic Calculus", *Parameters*, vol 44, No. 4, (Winter 2014-15)

White, J., "The Combat Performance of Hamas in the Gaza War of 2014", *Washington Institute*, vol. 9, issue 9 (September 2014):9-13

⁷⁸² Zanotti, J., "Israel: Background and U.S. Relations in Brief", *Congressional Research Service*, September 16, 2016

⁷⁸³ JTA, "U.S. Senator Tells Netanyahu Congress Will Follow His Lead on Iran Sanctions", *Haaretz*, December 29, 2014 <https://www.haaretz.com/u-s-senate-to-vote-on-iran-sanctions-1.5353509>

⁷⁸⁴ Ap and Toy staff, "Obama urges Congress to resist new Iran sanctions", *The time of Israel*, December 20, 2013 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/obama-urges-congress-to-resist-new-iran-sanctions/>

⁷⁸⁵ Indeed, the 2014 biggest defeat for Obama were the elections, since he lost both chambers. In House of Commons the GOP won with 247 seats against 188 to Democrats, skipping its majority from 33 to 46 seats. In Senate, the Republicans gained 54 seats in total, 8 more than before. The results are visible on New York Time scheme: House, <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2014/results/house>; Senate, <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2014/results/senate>

⁷⁸⁶ "Political Polarization in the American Public", *Pew Research Center*, June 12, 2014 <https://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

⁷⁸⁷ Report of expenditures, 2015 "American Israel Public Affairs Cmte", *Open Secrets* https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/client_reports.php?id=D000046963&year=2015

majority of those sanctions without seeking a vote by Congress, officials say”⁷⁸⁸ as reported by NYT. In other words, the President would use all his means to a Congress vote on any comprehensive nuclear deal, such as to skip the vote because the deal would not be a formal treaty between US and Iran subject to the congress’ majorities to pass⁷⁸⁹.

Accordingly, in January, Senators Kirk and Menendez along with 16 cosponsors introduced the “S.269”⁷⁹⁰. The bill amended previous sanctions, by affirming that the final deal with Iran will reverse the development of Iran’s nuclear program. For this reason, the comprehensive deal “*will be most sustainable over the long term if the President consults and coordinates closely with Congress to implement a strategy that ends any nuclear threat from Iran*”⁷⁹¹. In truth, the legislation was tried to give to the Congress a voice on the negotiating process and the final deal. On one hand, the congress had to “*oversight of Iran nuclear negotiations*”⁷⁹²; on the other, it had to review the final deal, that had to be signed before the 6 July or new sanctions would be gradually imposed, since Israel would not accept another delay in negotiations⁷⁹³. The bill was lobbied by AIPAC, according to which it increased “*prospects for successful negotiations*”⁷⁹⁴ threatening economic sanctions, which is why it urged “*full Senate to adopt this critical legislation since Iran poses a serious threat to the US and our allies*”⁷⁹⁵. The vote on the bill was delayed according to Obama’s requests until March⁷⁹⁶, but the delay was due to the Netanyahu’s speech before US Congress since it would have strengthened Israel position⁷⁹⁷.

Nevertheless, AIPAC legislative pressures continued with the bill “S. 615” introduced in February by Senators Menendez and Cocker⁷⁹⁸. After Cocker’s discussion with Sen Kaine to amend it in exchange for his support⁷⁹⁹, the bill was introduced before the AIPAC conference. Once again, the timing was used strategically to reach more votes in favor to the bill. Despite the Obama threatened the veto on the bill, it passed the Senate of foreign relations committee by unanimous vote, but it was via other measures, precisely as “H.R. 1191”⁸⁰⁰. The bill was introduced by the Repr. Barletta as *Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders*

⁷⁸⁸ SANGER, D.E., “Obama Sees an Iran Deal Skirting Congress, For Now”, *The New York Times*, October 20, 2014

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibidem*

⁷⁹⁰ Menendez B.” Kirk and Menendez Lead 16 Senators to Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Stop Iran’s Nuclear Threat”, Bob Menendez for new Jersey, January 27, 2015 <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/s269> <https://www.menendez.senate.gov/news-and-events/press/kirk-and-menendez-lead-16-senators-to-introduce-bipartisan-legislation-to-stop-irans-nuclear-threat>

⁷⁹¹ S.269 (114th Congress): Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2015.

⁷⁹² “The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2015”, Bill summary, AIPAC, January 2015. <https://peacenow.org/WP/wp-content/uploads/15.01.14-AIPAC-Bill-Summary-The-Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Iran-Act-of-2015..pdf>

⁷⁹³ The first deadline for the final deal was July 2014, another delay has been in November 2014.

⁷⁹⁴ “Senate Panel Overwhelmingly Adopts Bipartisan Legislation to Bolster Iran Diplomacy”, statement, AIPAC, January 29, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/01/Senate%20Panel%20Overwhelmingly%20Adopts%20Bipartisan%20Legislation%20to%20Bolster%20Iran%20Diplomacy>

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁹⁶ The date was the international deadline for negotiations to agree on the framework of the final deal

⁷⁹⁷ Beauchamp Z. “ Netanyahu’s planned speech to Congress is already backfiring “ *Vox*, February 5, 2015 <https://www.vox.com/2015/2/5/7978375/netanyahu-speech-congress>

⁷⁹⁸ S.615 (114th Congress): Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015:

⁷⁹⁹ Parsi, T. “ *Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*”; 293.

⁸⁰⁰ S.615 114th Congress): Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015

Act, but the senate replaced the text with the one of “S. 615” bill⁸⁰¹. The final bill required to the President to submit to the Congress the final deal “*not later after that 5 calendar days after reaching the deal*”⁸⁰², whereas Congress had 60 days to fully understand the agreement through all its tools and to make a joint resolution on the deal. Besides, it required a President’s certification that the final deal would ensure that “*Iran’s nuclear activities permitted thereunder will not be inimical to or constitute a risk to the common...security*”⁸⁰³.

To strength AIPAC’s actions pushing for bill approval and to give powers to Congress, two main letters have been important. Under the Cotton’s initiative⁸⁰⁴, 47 GOP senators sent a letter to Iran’s leaders about nuclear deal, by affirming that any deal reached with Obama must pass Congress vote to last after Obama’s mandate. The action was challenging Obama, who did not appreciate the initiative. The second letter has been sent by Representatives Royce and Engel⁸⁰⁵ to Obama⁸⁰⁶. The content pushed to prevent Iran nuclear capabilities development as well as to a major Congressional power in implementing the final bill and in sanctions relief⁸⁰⁷, by strengthening AIPAC’s objectives as well as the bill. Once they wrote the letter, they asked AIPAC’s “*help to get members to sign on to that so that we can leverage answers to these questions [on Iran’s nuclear program]*.”⁸⁰⁸ In the end, the letter had 367 signatures of House members that, together with the previous 98 senators’ vote in favor of the bill, constituted an important majority that dropped all possibility of Obama’s veto power (1/3 plus one of the votes). Accordingly, the House passed the bill with 400-25 votes, and the president had no a choice, if not sign the bill in law, by prescribing an important role for the Congress in foreign policy as far as concern the Iran nuclear deal⁸⁰⁹.

The AIPAC’s pressures were clear since it delivered a press release for every bill’s step⁸¹⁰, pushing the House “*to take speedy action on congressional review legislation and send it to the president for signature*

⁸⁰¹H.R.1191 (114th Congress):Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015

⁸⁰²“S.615 (114th Congress): Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015: SEC. 135. Congressional Review And Oversight Of Agreements With Iran.

⁸⁰³ *Ibidem*

⁸⁰⁴ Cotton has been highly financed by the Emergency Committee for Israel, who spend \$960,000 for his candidacy Brownfeld, A.C, “ Neocons and the Israel Lobby Are Promoting War With Iran, as They Once Did With Iraq” *WRMEA*,(June-July, 2015), pp. 41-42

<https://www.wrmea.org/015-june-july/neocons-and-the-israel-lobby-are-promoting-war-with-iran-as-they-once-did-with-iraq.html>

⁸⁰⁵ Royce was House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman and Engel Ranking Democrat.

⁸⁰⁶367 House Members: Iran Must Have “No Pathway” to a Bomb”, AIPAC, March 23,2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/03/367%20House%20Members%20Iran%20Must%20Have%20No%20Pathway%20to%20a%20Bomb>

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibidem*

⁸⁰⁸Welsh T. “House Lawmakers Seek Iran Deal Influence at AIPAC “ , *U.S News*, March 2, 2015 <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/03/02/ed-royce-eliot-engel>

⁸⁰⁹ In particular, it previewed that Congress had 30 days to review the deal if presented before 30 June, or 60 days if presented after the 10 July. Truly, it previewed also a specific role for the Secretary and the President in negotiations over the Iran’s nuclear program “H.R.1191 - Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015”- 114th Congress (2015-2016) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1191>

⁸¹⁰“AIPAC applauds unanimous approval of Iran review legislation”, AIPAC statement , April 14,2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/04/AIPAC%20APPLAUDS%20UNANIMO%20US%20APPROVAL%20OF%20IRAN%20REVIEW%20LEGISLATION>

into law”⁸¹¹. Despite the success, AIPAC continued pressuring Congress “to address the concerns that have been raised by the framework and the standards by which an agreement must be judged”. Indeed, AIPAC pointed out in a press release the parameters and general framework within which the final agreement signed, meaning that a good deal has to be “achieved by the application of increased economic and political pressure on Tehran (for a deal) that transparently does not allow Iran a path to a nuclear weapons capability”⁸¹². Hence, the agreement had to be in line with the INARA⁸¹³.

AIPAC seemed to have always strong bipartisanship that guaranteed its success, since the lobbied bill that challenged Obama was proposed by bipartisan senators⁸¹⁴. However, it must be highlighted that the final bill had not the same toughest provisions as at the beginning. The final bill was a compromise between conservatives and key democratic senators in order to give to Congress the possibility to oversight the Obama. Indeed, part of Republicans and Netanyahu objected the bill, because of not enough restrictive⁸¹⁵.

3.3.3.2. THE NETWORK: TRUE FRIENDS SHOW UP WHEN YOU NEED: ARE THEY NECESSARY?

We have already stressed the importance of information in an interdependent world, and how it can be used by States or organizations to shape others’ interests⁸¹⁶. Indeed, also AIPAC increased the use of this instrument, since the increased polarization of foreign policy between Republicans and Democrats⁸¹⁷ hurts its bipartisan nature with consequences in midterms federal election⁸¹⁸. Consequently, AIPAC relied on, empowered or created anti-Iran organizations or campaigns that promoted a hawkish position towards the Iran nuclear deal by using media. It shifted its main strategy from pressuring executive power to persuade people through informative and communication tools that it has, in line with Netanyahu’s words of “using our

⁸¹¹“Senate Adopts Iran Review Bill with Overwhelming Bipartisan Support”, AIPAC Statment, May 7, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/05/Senate%20Adopts%20Iran%20Review%20Bill%20with%20Overwhelming%20Bipartisan%20Support>

⁸¹²“AIPAC statement on framework agreement”, AIPAC, April 2, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/04/AIPAC%20STATEMENT%20ON%20FRAMEWORK%20AGREEMENT>

⁸¹³“Overwhelming House Majority Adopts Iran Review Legislation”, AIPAC, May 14, 2015. <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/05/Overwhelming%20House%20Majority%20Adopts%20Iran%20Review%20Legislation>

⁸¹⁴Rogin J., “Senators Challenge Obama With New Iran Bill”, *Bloomberg opinion*, February 27, 2015 <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2015-02-27/senators-challenge-obama-with-new-iran-bill>

⁸¹⁵Zengerle P, “U.S. House passes Iran nuclear review legislation”, *Reuters*, May 14, 2015 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-usa-idUSKBN0NZ29M20150514>

⁸¹⁶Keohane R.O., Nye, J.S.Jr, “Power and interdependence in the information age”.

⁸¹⁷Political Polarization in the American Public”, Pew research center, June 12, 2015 <https://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>

⁸¹⁸ it spent around \$3.1 million (and \$82,589 in 2013). The amount has been delivered from pro-Israel organization in an unusual way compared to previous year: 44% of the money to Republicans and 56% to Democrats much less than what Democrats were used to receive (60%).

Mindock, C., “AIPAC Posts Biggest Lobbying Year in 2014 as Netanyahu Goes to Congress” *Open Secret*, March 2, 2015 <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2015/03/aipac-posts-biggest-lobbying-year-in-2014-as-netanyahu-goes-to-congress/>

contacts and expressing our views, directly, in the international media, in my contacts with the American administration and other heads of government”⁸¹⁹.

AIPAC was strictly connected to WINEP, a research institute that has been demonstrated to be an AIPAC spin-off⁸²⁰. The Institute assumed a relevant weight during 2014, when AIPAC leverage on congress decreased and the probability of a diplomatic solution over Iran nuclear program was one of its core issues. Quantitatively, in 2014, WINEP published 532 publication: 87 were on Iran, among which 61 on nuclear negotiations or interim deal⁸²¹. Throughout the year, with negotiations ongoing, WINEP published op-eds, articles, several “policy focus” on Iran and interim deal were delivered by its major experts and relevant personalities, all in line with AIPAC and Israel. These articles were not delivered only on the WINEP website or through their conferences, but also through the major US magazine or newspaper, such as Foreign Policy⁸²², Washington post⁸²³, the Wall Street Journal⁸²⁴, POLITICO and USA today, by reaching a large piece of public of every age⁸²⁵ covering issues through a predominant pro-Israel position⁸²⁶. For instance, Ross in an op-ed POLITICO criticized Obama by affirming that he “*is not demanding zero enrichment and the complete dismantlement of Iran's enrichment facilities, as some on Capitol Hill are calling for...*”⁸²⁷. In particular, among WINEP personalities, the AIPAC activist Ross has been relevant. Middle East Senior adviser during Obama first mandate⁸²⁸, he helped Obama approaching Israel and AIPAC⁸²⁹. Always in favor of heavier sanctions and a military option against Iran, in 2008, Ross found the UANI, also called the *American Coalition Against Iran*, a no-profit bipartisan hawkish group with the aim of pressuring people to stop doing business with Iran, through aggressive advocacy campaigns against Iran in order to marginalize and isolate the State⁸³⁰.

⁸¹⁹“PM Netanyahu's speech at the AIPAC Policy Conference” ,Israel Ministry of foreign affairs, March 2, 2015 <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2014/Pages/PM-Netanyahus-remarks-today-in-the-Knesset-24-November-2104.aspx>

⁸²⁰ Smith, G, “*Big Israel: How Israel's Lobby Moves America*”

⁸²¹ Compared to the 2013, in which among 496 publications, 140 were on Iran and among these 140, 57 were on Iran nuclear program and the Iran deal

⁸²²Ross, D., “How to Muddle Through with Iran”, *The Washington Institute*, October 19, 2014 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/how-to-muddle-through-with-iran>; Singh, M., “A Regional Approach to Iran”, *The Washington Institute*, March 3, 2014 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/a-regional-approach-to-iran>

⁸²³Singh, M., “America Should Not Soften Its Nuclear Demands of Iran”, *The Washington Institute*, May 14, 2014 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/america-should-not-soften-its-nuclear-demands-of-iran>

⁸²⁴Singh, M., “How the U.S., Not Iran, Is Making Concessions”, *Wall Street Journal and The Washington Institute*, November 3, 2014 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/how-the-u.s.-not-iran-is-making-concessions>

⁸²⁵ The USA today was the nation's top newspaper in circulation until 09/2014 with 4,139,380 of copies delivered in several format and 1.08 millions of printed copies per week plus 1.6 mm "branded editions" circulation, whereas around 1.4 mm of people read it for free on app mobile. WSJ was the second nation's newspaper with 2,276,207 activities and 1.36 million in print circulation.

Roger, Y. “USA TODAY, WSJ, NYT are top three papers in circulation”, *USA TODAY*, Oct 28, 2014 <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2014/10/28/aam-circulation-data-september/18057983/>

In 2015, the FP registered 1 mm of users, 2.5 mm visitors per month and more than 300K subscription in newsletter with average age of 38 y.o.”Media kit 2015”, Foreign policy group, June 2016;

POLITICO published free-33 circulation newspaper in Washington the days in which Congress is in session, whereas when it is not, it publishes online on its website, which registered in 2013, 4 mm of visitors per month. <https://www.niemanlab.org/encyclo/politico/>

⁸²⁶ Raed M. I. Qaddoura “Israel's propaganda strategies: case study of the protective edge operation in Gaza 2014”.

⁸²⁷Ross, D., “How to Solve Obama's Iran Dilemma”, *POLITICO/The Washington Institute*, January 26, 2014 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/how-to-solve-obamas-iran-dilemma>

⁸²⁸ There have been criticisms because of his pro-Israel hawkish being an important part of US administration

⁸²⁹ Ross wrote half of the 2008 Obama speech for the Conference in a total pro-Israel vision of the world, since he knew how to catch AIPAC votes. Indeed, he has been important during the 2008 elections race and during the first Obama mandate in shaping a more hawkish policy towards Iran.

⁸³⁰ Annex 2.

Ross supported the Menendez-Kirk's bill, affirming that there was an *"interesting gap between the White House and Congress"*⁸³¹. Likely, this was an attempt to persuade readers that the White House was alone in its diplomatic approach, whereas AIPAC congressman did not have the support of the chambers. The same position has been shared by Statloff, Singh and others, but for reasons of space, a precise analysis of WINEP action is done in Annex 2.

Besides, AIPAC operated in a situation of institutional pluralism since *"within multiple institutional spheres"*⁸³². Although pluralism tends to create competition, fragmentation and organization instability, it can also create opportunities for organizations through the complementarity of actions⁸³³. Indeed, AIPAC was not the only pro-Israel conservative organization that pushed towards hard US foreign policies against Iran, but a variety of new and old organizations shared AIPAC position vis-à-vis US policy in the nuclear deal⁸³⁴. Hence, by operating in a complementary action among them and with key personalities belonging to more than one pro-Israel conservative organization, the AIPAC tried to act on institutions and to pursue public opinion. These organizations have its history, patterns and ways of action⁸³⁵, but during 2014, they have been important for Israel and AIPAC, who could not rely only on itself. The pro-Israel organizations in line with AIPAC that I have taken into account are 8:

FBI, BPC, FDD, TPI, the already cited UANI, CPD and IPC. These organizations shared the same experts and personalities. For instance, R. Kagan was on FPI board and senior fellow at Brookings Institute; whereas Kristol founder of PRF and of the Weekly Standard was a member of ECI's board. Makovsky, president and CEO of JINSA, participated at AIPAC conference and was FPI director. Again, Josh Block, former spokesman of AIPAC, was CEO and TIP president. Founders of UANI were already experts and directors of WINEP, and lawmakers were part of its board. However, the limited space does not allow to demonstrate here all links among these organization and their closed network with overlapping board directors, but the precise explanation can be found in the Annex 2.

3.4. CONCLUSION.

The chapter showed how Israel has changed some pattern of actions once the Interim deal has been approved. Indeed, until November 2013, on both levels, domestic and international, he continued to prospect military option and ask more sanctions. At Level 1, Israel found a new way to ask US military intervention through Syrian expedient, by using the informational flow. However, its hard power and strategic information was not enough vis-à-vis the US administration, it did not succeed in its goal of dragging the US on the Middle Eastern soil. At level 2, AIPAC continued its main strategy on the executive, trying to influence the

⁸³¹ *Ibidem*.

⁸³² Kraatz, M.S, Block, E.S., "Organizational implications of institutional pluralism", *College of Business University of Illinois*, 2008. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228619022_Organizational_implications_of_institutional_pluralism

⁸³³ *Ibidem*.

⁸³⁴ older pro-Israel conservative are TAEI or the JINSA, whereas new are Israel safe, Keep America safe, stop Iran now, Project for the New American Century

⁸³⁵ For instance, members pf FPI helped the opposition of Hagel nomination in 2013.

establishment's appointments in line with Israeli interests; on congressmen by pushing towards a hawkish approach. Indeed, the pro-Israel lobby continued to ask for more sanctions and to consider as likely a military option against Iran, by discouraging any diplomatic solution.

However, the changes in Iran's domestic policies with the new Rouhani's government, the international community started peaceful negotiations and Obama could reach its main goal of a deal over Iran's nuclear program. Therefore, Israel needed a change in strategy vis-à-vis US foreign policy, since it became internationally isolated from Western powers. This isolation has been followed by an AIPAC decreased influence of Congress, since its action on executive and congressmen were failing. Indeed, they looked to a new pattern of influence the US decisions. Specifically, they rely on new friends. At level 1, Netanyahu started friendly relations with Russia and Saudi Arabia; in the latter case, AIPAC helped this new relationship without opposing those bills that delivered military aids to Saudis. Furthermore, at level 2, AIPAC created or relied on hawkish pro-Israel organizations against Iran and the Iran deal. Although the new anti-Iran alliance were not effective in influencing Obama's final decision in favor of Iran, it was effective in keeping a distance between the US and Iran⁸³⁶. Besides, the action at level 2 had influenced Obama's way of doing policies. If the closed hawkish pro-Israel network failed in pushing Obama against Iran, it influenced Obama's way of doing policies. The President shifted from policies inclined to congressional approval in international affairs, such as Syria intervention (though not necessary), to an approach that avoids Congressional power in foreign policy by threatening a veto or circumventing it through formal expedient.

⁸³⁶ Beinart P., "If AIPAC Lost the Iranian Nuclear Fight, It Won Too", *Haaretz*, September 16, 2015
<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-if-aipac-lost-the-iranian-nuclear-fight-it-won-too-1.5399140>

CHAPTER VI:

THE END OF THE AGREEMENT, THE RECOVERY OF A FRIENDSHIP.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The last chapter focuses on Israeli strategy vis-à-vis US policy from 2015 until 2018. I divided the chapter into two main parts. The first focuses on the end of Obama's mandate and the second on Trump first two years. The end of Obama's mandate envisages how Netanyahu spoke directly on the Congress, but the main action has been made by AIPAC inside and outside Capitol Hill. It founded a new group to finance Tv ads, whereas it delivered money for lobbying activities to impose new sanctions over Iran for non-nuclear activities. In the last part, I show how with the new President, new patterns of actions would be discovered through a personal network. Nevertheless, some traditional patterns are still in function.

4.2. THE OBAMA'S FAREWELL

4.2.1. NETANYAHU'S SPEECH IN CAPITOL HILL

Although, as stressed, Netanyahu was looking to new alliances and establishing new friends, it does not mean that he let aside US. Even if in 2015 his influence vis-à-vis US foreign policy at the international level decreased, since closer ties between Iran and US increased clashes between Netanyahu and Obama, also in public debates⁸³⁷, Netanyahu tried to keep the historical alliance. However, as argued by Dagan *"Netanyahu's position will not change the West's position on the Iranian issue, (he) bring our relationship with the Americans to an extreme point"*⁸³⁸. The extreme point was the 3rd of March, when Netanyahu accepted the lawmakers' invitation to speak directly in front of US Congress⁸³⁹, overcoming the AIPAC's leading from behind. Indeed, the speech was received as interference in US policies, since Obama's did not invite the prime minister, but the White House declined to meet him. The discourse's content *"to speak up about a potential deal with Iran that could threaten the survival of Israel"*⁸⁴⁰ was delivered by Netanyahu, the day before at AIPAC conference. Indeed, the Congress discourse was aimed to convince Capitol Hill of imposing new sanctions by approving the S.269 bill, consequently, to torpedo the Iranian nuclear negotiations, putting Obama in difficulties on the national and international level. According to his rhetoric of describing in negative terms Israeli enemies⁸⁴¹, he called to *"stand together to stop Iran's March of terror"* to impede the

⁸³⁷World news, Netanyahu 'chickenshit' & 'coward': US officials go tough on Israeli PM", *RT*, October 29, 2014 <https://www.rt.com/news/200427-netanyahu-chickenshit-us-interview/>

⁸³⁸Beauchamp Z., "The Netanyahu speech controversy, explained", *Vox*, March 3, 2015

⁸³⁹ The intervention was arranged between Republicans House Speaker John Boehner, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Israel's Ambassador to the US, Ron Dermer.

⁸⁴⁰PM Netanyahu's speech at the AIPAC Policy Conference" *Israel Ministry of foreign affairs*, March 2, 2015 <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2015/Pages/PM-Netanyahu%27s-speech-at-the-AIPAC-Policy-Conference-2-March-2015.aspx>

⁸⁴¹ Raed M. I. Qaddoura "Israel's propaganda strategies: case study of the protective edge operation in Gaza 2014",

“the marriage of militant Islam with nuclear weapons”, something that could happen if the negotiated deal would be the final acceptance by the parties⁸⁴². Contrary to the intentions, on one hand, the discourse marked a dysfunctional relationship between Obama and Netanyahu and caused a hash collision between Obama and Republicans not only on Iran deal but also on Israel, whose support was shifting into a partisan policy. For this reason, though officially AIPAC approved Netanyahu discourse⁸⁴³, unofficially its members distanced from the Prime minister’s position, by blaming him to “made the Iranian issue a partisan one”⁸⁴⁴. Indeed, in this way, AIPAC lost many democrats, who threatened to boycott the prime minister speech or were absent at the session⁸⁴⁵.

However, the Netanyahu did not engage in international level over Iran nuclear deal as before, since focused on next Israeli election on 17th of March, which is why part of Congressmen saw his discourse instrumental for Israeli elections⁸⁴⁶. Indeed, Israelis did not favor Netanyahu since they blamed him for the government’s collapse with the Likud- Beiteinu split over social benefits and a new Liberman’s party group⁸⁴⁷. Strategically, Netanyahu used Iran deal as a way to gain domestic consensus, since Israelis were against the JCPOA. It was confirmed when after the announce of Netanyahu’s speech, polls in favor of Netanyahu gone up⁸⁴⁸. Although Netanyahu won the elections, he started his fourth mandate without a majority in Knesset, for which he needed a parties’ coalition. Therefore, he was much engaged on national affair of keeping power to focus on Iran deal throughout the year⁸⁴⁹.

4.2.2. A NEW ACTION FROM INSIDE

Once the Iran nuclear deal has been concluded and signed, on July 14th, AIPAC started its action in the US, by delivering a press release that stressed the importance of Congress role “in approving or disapproving the proposed agreement”⁸⁵⁰, that missed pro-Israeli requirements for a good deal. If at the beginning it has a softer reaction, then it accused Obama’s diplomacy that “facilitate rather than prevent Iran from obtaining a

⁸⁴²Brendan J., “TRANSCRIPT: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu’s Speech To Congress”, *TPM*, March 3, 2015 <https://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/netanyahu-address-congress-transcript-read>

⁸⁴³ “AIPAC Statement on Prime Minister Netanyahu’s Address to Congress”, AIPAC, March 3 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/03/AIPAC%20Statement%20on%20Prime%20Minister%20Netanyahus%20Address>

⁸⁴⁴Staff Toi, “AIPAC official: PM’s Congress speech hurt Iran deal opposition”, *The time of Israel*, September 3, 2015 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/aipac-official-pms-congress-speech-hurt-iran-deal-opposition/>

⁸⁴⁵⁸⁴⁵McGreal, C. “ How Netanyahu’s speech to Congress has jeopardized US-Israel relations”, *The Guardian*, February 24,2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/24/obama-binyamin-netanyahu-congress-speech-boehner-leaks>

⁸⁴⁶ Ibidem

⁸⁴⁷Lis J. , “Lieberman Ends Partnership With Netanyahu, Dismantles Likud-Beiteinu”, *Haaretz*, July 7, 2014 <https://www.haaretz.com/lieberman-dismantles-likud-beiteinu-1.5254698> ; Verter Y., “Analysis Israeli Elections 2015: It’s Everyone vs. Netanyahu “, *Haaretz*, December 3, 2014 <https://www.haaretz.com/israeli-elections-it-s-everyone-vs-netanyahu-1.5339726>

⁸⁴⁸Beauchamp Z., “Netanyahu’s planned speech to Congress is already backfiring” , *Vox*, February 5, 2015

⁸⁴⁹ He found a coalition with Bayit Yehud constituted the hard-line pro-settler group that would cause a shift towards an more right and conservative policies

“Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu agrees coalition deal”, *BBC*, May 7, 2015. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32618192>

⁸⁵⁰“ AIPAC Statement on Proposed Iran Nuclear Agreement”, AIPAC, July 14, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/07/AIPAC%20Statement%20on%20Announcement%20of%20Proposed%20Iran%20Nuclear%20Agreement>

nuclear weapon and would further entrench and empower the leading state sponsor of terror".⁸⁵¹ Indeed, it asked to the Congress the rejection of the agreement, by urging to keep economic pressure on Iran and negotiate a new deal respecting their requests, listed in five main points⁸⁵². Once in congress, Republicans started hawkish attacks against Obama administration⁸⁵³, who relied on Democrats to approve the deal, whereas AIPAC on Republicans to reject it. The congress decision arrived after the 60 days, meaning that August was the warmest month of lobbying activities inside and outside institutional places *"to urge Congress to oppose the deal and insist on a better agreement"*⁸⁵⁴.

4.2.2.1. OUTSIDE CAPITOL HILL: CITIZENS FOR A NUCLEAR FREE IRAN.

In 2015, outside of Capitol Hill AIPAC started an important initiative against Iran nuclear deal with the creation of *"Citizens for a nuclear free Iran"* that was addressed to the public. The organization was a 501(c)(4) no-profit organizations, a tax-exempt lobbying group,⁸⁵⁵ with the aim *"to informing the public about the dangers of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon"*⁸⁵⁶. The platform through which the initiative has been spread was *"winning connection"*⁸⁵⁷, a telecommunication company that impacts public policy, passes legislation and wins elections, by receiving money from congressmen, mainly democrats⁸⁵⁸. The new organization was created together with a group of Democrats Senators involved in House Foreign Affairs Committee, who opposed to Obama: Senators Evan Bayh, Mark Begich, Landrieu and Joe Lieberman. The new organization raised around 30\$ million around 40 States, allocated in pro-Likud organizations for its campaign against the Iran deal⁸⁵⁹. Whereas, it planned to spend around \$20 million in more than 30 States in campaigns and advertising against the Iran deal⁸⁶⁰. In particular, it delivered TV ads, published also on several mainstream websites⁸⁶¹; it provided trips of AIPAC members to Washington to convince lawmakers, especially Democrats, to vote against the deal⁸⁶². Indeed, at the end of July, it organized a sit-in with hundreds

⁸⁵¹AIPAC Statement on Proposed Iran Nuclear Agreement", AIPAC, July 15, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/07/AIPAC%20Statement%20on%20Proposed%20Iran%20Nuclear%20Agreement>

⁸⁵² inspections and verification anytime and anywhere, fully explanations of all its previous nuclear work by Iran, sanctions relief must commence only after Iran complies with its commitments, no expiration date of the deal, Iran must dismantle completely its nuclear infrastructure and relinquish its uranium.

Annex 7.

⁸⁵³Siddiqui S., "John Kerry pushes back as Republicans attack Iran deal at Senate hearing ", *The Guardian*, July 23,2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/23/john-kerry-republicans-senate-iran-nuclear-deal>

⁸⁵⁴Kampeas R., "AIPAC to fight White House head to head in battle over Iran deal" *JTA*, July 16, 2015 https://www.jta.org/2015/07/16/united-states/aipac-to-fight-white-house-head-to-head-in-battle-over-iran-deal?_ga=2.42223590.2109524647.1568643303-461430787.1568643299

⁸⁵⁵ "Social Welfare Organizations", *IRS* <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/other-non-profits/social-welfare-organizations>

⁸⁵⁶"Citizens for a Nuclear Free Iran", *Winning connections* <https://www.winningconnections.com/case-study/citizens-nuclear-free-iran/>

⁸⁵⁷"Winning connection website": <https://www.winningconnections.com>

⁸⁵⁸"Democratic Party' expenditures to Winning Connections", *Open Secrets* <https://www.opensecrets.org/parties/expendedetail.php?cmte=DPC&txt=Winning+Connections&cycle=2018>

⁸⁵⁹ Kampeas R., " AIPAC fly-in launches major push against Iran nuclear deal", *Jewish Telegraphic agency*, July 23, 2015

⁸⁶⁰ Davis, Hirschfeld J., " Pro-Israel Group Creates Plan to Lobby Against Iran Deal" *New York Times* ,July 18 2015

⁸⁶¹ " Citizens for a Nuclear Iran", Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCecPoMsqhzuPjU9fd8RaA6g>

⁸⁶²Spetalnick M., Zengerle P, Ali I., "Republicans, pro-Israel groups step up campaign against Iran deal", *Reuters*, July 23, 2015 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-congress-idUSKCN0PW2HS20150723>

of pro-Israel activists that crossed the country to press lawmakers in Washington asking to refuse of the deal⁸⁶³. Besides, all freshman members of the Congress flew to Israel in an all-expenses-paid trip, for a week of briefings and lobbying to ensure their vote against the deal⁸⁶⁴. Even more, calls and e-mails were sent by activists to their congressional representatives through its website, where on the homepage was written “*Urge congress to reject the Iran nuclear deal with Iran: contact Congress today*”⁸⁶⁵.

AIPAC was acting indirectly on Congressmen, by pushing on public opinion, which majority of US National population did not believe that the deal would prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon or that the deal would make America safer⁸⁶⁶. Since 80% of people that did not believe that Iran should be given up to \$100 billion in economic sanctions relief without Congressional approval, 74% were democrats, Obama tried to contrast the AIPAC’s action⁸⁶⁷. On one hand, in a conference, he tried to convince democrats to approve the deal, where he targeted those against JCPOA as “*responsible for us getting into the Iraq war*”⁸⁶⁸. On the other, he reassured Israel about JCPOA consequences “*by pledging increased support for Israel and our Gulf allies and by vowing that it will strictly enforce the deal*”⁸⁶⁹.

4.2.2.2. ACTION WITHIN THE HILL BUT OUTSIDE A THE TRADITIONAL PORTFOLIO.

In 2015, with the Obama’s popularity dropping and an increasing consensus in Netanyahu⁸⁷⁰, AIPAC main actions on Capitol Hill focused on democrats, who were preparing for new elections without Obama leadership. Indeed, doves started to change position vis-à-vis Obama foreign policy in Iran deal. This was the case of Sen. Schumer, an Obama supporter, who declared through a statement that he “*will vote to disapprove the agreement...because Iran under this agreement... will be able to achieve its dual goals of eliminating sanctions while retaining its nuclear and non-nuclear power. Better to keep U.S. sanctions in place, strengthen them, enforce secondary sanctions....*”⁸⁷¹. Although not sure that AIPAC had influenced the Senator’s shift,

⁸⁶³Kampeas R., “ AIPAC fly-in launches major push against Iran nuclear deal”, *JTA*, July 23, 2015 <https://www.jta.org/2015/07/23/politics/aipac-fly-in-launches-major-push-against-iran-nuclear-deal>

⁸⁶⁴Borger J.,” The looming August battle for the Iran nuclear deal “,*The Guardian*, July 31,2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2015/jul/31/the-looming-august-battle-for-the-iran-nuclear-deal>

Hager L.M, “Ethics and Apartheid: How Israel Junkets Undermine U.S. Democracy”, *Foreign Policy Journal*, February 2,2016 <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2016/02/02/ethics-and-apartheid-how-israel-junkets-undermine-u-s-democracy/>

⁸⁶⁵ ANNEX 8.

⁸⁶⁶Caddell P. H. and Schoen D.E., “ Schumer May Save the Democratic Party”, *Politico Magazine*, August 23, 2015 <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/08/chuck-schumer-iran-deal-121605>

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibidem*

⁸⁶⁸Kornbluh J., “ Obama Implores Supporters to Lobby Congress in Favor of Iran Nuclear Deal”, *Haaretz*, July 3, 2015 <https://www.haaretz.com/obama-calls-on-backers-to-get-behind-iran-deal-1.5381572>

⁸⁶⁹ “Promises Cannot Fix a Bad Deal”, AIPAC Memo, 31 august,2015 <https://www.aipac.org/hp/Promises>

⁸⁷⁰ Caddell P. H. and Schoen D.E., “ Schumer May Save the Democratic Party”.

⁸⁷¹ Schumer C. E., “My Position on the Iran Deal”, Schumer united state senator for new York, June 8, 2015 <https://www.schumer.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/my-position-on-the-iran-deal>

the day after it published a press release in agreement with his statement⁸⁷², which had several elements referring to AIPAC's five points that the deal must prescribe⁸⁷³.

The action did not succeed since the resolution against the bill did not pass in Senate because of 2 votes missing, by giving the main victory to Obama⁸⁷⁴. Accordingly, AIPAC urged the Senators who have blocked its resolution to reconsider their position, since JCPOA enriches Iranian nuclear program and *"This vote should provide a note of caution...about jumping back into Iran. This is a dangerous moment for America and our allies. We must step up pressure against Iran...and take firm action to support our regional allies, especially Israel"*⁸⁷⁵. In spite of AIPAC's words and pressures, the senators' position did not change in the two subsequent votes⁸⁷⁶. In fact, Republicans had 4 votes less, i.e. 56 to 42, which did not allow them to pass the resolution against the deal. Two days after, McConnell arranged a last attempt to block the deal by introducing an amendment that recognized Israel's right to exist before the US lifted sanctions, but it did not reach the majority with 53 to 45 votes⁸⁷⁷. De facto, Obama one the struggle, whereas AIPAC lost its bipartisan nature, since its goals in Iran deal were shared only by Republicans, who accused Obama of having betrayed Israel⁸⁷⁸. Indeed, *"Obama is likely to go down in history as a president whose single biggest foreign policy and domestic achievements were won with no Republican votes"*⁸⁷⁹, wrote Steinhauer.

However, AIPAC acted at the same time also on the House of representatives. Indeed, Republicans introduced three successful acts. The first, *"H.Res.411"*⁸⁸⁰, was introduced by Pompeo, it claimed that Obama did not submit the information required in the INARA to the Congress. As expected from the polarization of the issue and the majorities/ minorities' distribution in the Chambers, the vote followed the partisan lines and the resolution had 245 Republicans voted in favor to 186 democrats against⁸⁸¹. The second was a bill *"H.R.3460"* introduced by Peter Roskam⁸⁸². Following the legislative steps, the bill passed the House following the polarization of US foreign policy on Iran: all Republicans' votes plus two democrats, 247 votes

⁸⁷²"AIPAC statement on senator Schumer's opposition to Iran agreement", AIPAC, August 7, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/08/AIPAC%20STATEMENT%20ON%20SENATOR%20SCHUMERS%20OPPOSITION%20TO%20IRAN%20AGREEMENT>

⁸⁷³Annex 7

⁸⁷⁴"The Final Tally: How Congress Voted on Iran", *The Iran primer*, September 17, 2015 <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2015/sep/11/congress-votes-deal>
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2015/sep/10/iran-nuclear-deal-us-senate-vote-disapproval-live-updates>

⁸⁷⁵Bipartisan Senate Majority Rejects Iran Nuclear Deal, AIPAC, September 10, 2016 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/09/Bipartisan%20Senate%20Majority%20Rejects%20Iran%20Nuclear%20Deal>

⁸⁷⁶ Republican Majority Leader Sen. McConnell forced a second vote, on September 15th, in order to disapprove the deal, the vote had a similar outcome.

⁸⁷⁷ "The Final Tally: How Congress Voted on Iran", *The Iran primer*, September 17, 2015

⁸⁷⁸Zengerle J. "Sheldon Adelson Is Ready to Buy the Presidency", *New York magazine*, September 9, 2015 <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2015/09/sheldon-adelson-is-ready-to-buy-the-presidency.html?utm=top>

⁸⁷⁹ Steinhauer, J., "Democrats Hand Victory to Obama on Pact With Iran", *New York Times*, September 11, 2015

⁸⁸⁰ "H.Res.41 Finding that the President has not complied with section 2 of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015", text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-resolution/411/text>

⁸⁸¹ the House has not the same Senate's threshold to reach majority, meaning that it would be easier for GOP to pass the bill.

⁸⁸²H.R.3460 (114 th Congress): To suspend until January 21, 2017, the authority of the President to waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions pursuant to an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3460>

were in favor, 186 democrats against⁸⁸³. The final bill introduced by Bohener was the “*H.R.3461 To approve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed at Vienna on July 14, 2015, relating to the nuclear program of Iran*”, which failed the passage with 269 against (25 Democrats) and 162 in favor of the deal⁸⁸⁴. If AIPAC actions did not succeed in the Senate, it did in the House. Although it affirmed to have a *bipartisan majority* in opposition to the deal⁸⁸⁵, the majority needed in the House to pass a bill is simplest one, 218 votes⁸⁸⁶. Therefore, GOP reached already the necessary majority to refuse the JCPOA without the 25 democrats’ votes, since it has 244 republicans vote. However, it was a rhetorical expedient to influence the public opinion⁸⁸⁷, since the consensus in public opinion decreased.

Although AIPAC’s failure that a no congressional resolution on the JCPOA, the pro-Israel lobby did not stop its struggle. Indeed, it led another lawmakers’ action to persuade those Democrats senators who voted in favor of the JCPOA. On October 1st Sen. Cardin officially introduced the “*Iran Policy Oversight Act of 2015*”⁸⁸⁸. “*Officially*” since AIPAC and lawmakers worked to the bill already at the beginning of September, as reported by Jim Lobe⁸⁸⁹. Although AIPAC affirmed its extraneity to the bill since its draft⁸⁹⁰; the drafted legislation seemed to be the AIPAC plans’ B, since the new bill shared the same goals with AIPAC’s previous statements and its five points (i.e. congressional monitoring of the agreement, new strategies with Israel and Arab allies to counter Iran)⁸⁹¹. The bill was presented as a way to strengthen JCPOA and to solve issues that the deal did not “*by providing vital oversight and vigorous enforcement to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran*”⁸⁹². Nevertheless, it supported pro-Israel requests through “*poison-pill*” that run against the bill’s implementation, such as the inclusion of a military option to prevent Iranian nuclear weapon strengthened the possibility of a unilateral strike with additional security assistance to Israel⁸⁹³. Since the bill did not pass⁸⁹⁴, AIPAC changed the reasons why the US had to impose sanctions on Iran.

⁸⁸³The vote roll call documents: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2015/roll494.xml>

⁸⁸⁴Final vote roll call 493, document: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2015/roll493.xml>

⁸⁸⁵“Congressional Bipartisan Majorities Reject Iran Nuclear Deal”, AIPAC, September 11, 2015 <https://www.aipac.org/resources/aipac-publications/publication?pubpath=PolicyPolitics/Press/AIPAC%20Statements/2015/09/Congressional%20Bipartisan%20Majorities%20Reject%20Iran%20Nuclear%20Deal>

⁸⁸⁶“the legislative process”, US House of representatives

<https://www.house.gov/the-house-explained/the-legislative-process>

⁸⁸⁷ As demonstrated by Westwood, bipartisan rhetoric influence opinion more than evidence of the opposition support : Westwood, S., J.”The Partisanship of Bipartisanship: How Representatives Use Bipartisan Assertions to Cultivate Support” (Ph.D. Stanford University. 2014)

⁸⁸⁸S.2119 - Iran Policy Oversight Act of 2015 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2119>

⁸⁸⁹Lobe J., “AIPAC’s Plan B?”, *Lobe Log*, September 3, 2015 <https://lobelog.com/aipacs-plan-b/>

⁸⁹⁰JTA, “Republicans, AIPAC weigh support for bill ‘fixing’ Iran deal”, *The times of Israel*, October 3, 2015. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/republicans-aipac-weigh-support-for-bill-fixing-iran-deal/>

⁸⁹¹ Lobe J., “AIPAC’s Plan B”.

⁸⁹² “Senators Introduce Iran Policy Oversight Act of 2015 “ *Foreign Relations*, October 1, 2015 <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/senators-introduce-iran-policy-oversight-act-of-2015>

⁸⁹³*Ibidem*; Prince R., “The Iran Policy Oversight Act of 2015”, *Foreign Policy in focus*, October 5 2015 <https://fpif.org/the-iran-policy-oversight-act-of-2015/> “

⁸⁹⁴S. 2119 : Iran Policy Oversight Act of 2015: government track: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/s2119/details>

Therefore, AIPAC started to lobby sanctions ‘bills “*outside of nuclear portfolio*”⁸⁹⁵, meaning over Iran non-nuclear activities, on the base of its aids to terrorism and its violation of human rights, since the JCPOA prohibited nuclear-related sanctions⁸⁹⁶. Indeed, it spent \$3,602,343 in lobbying activities⁸⁹⁷ for 30 bills mainly upon military US-Israel cooperation and assistance, terrorist and energy sector than hurt indirectly Iran⁸⁹⁸. For instance, in the Senate Foreign Committee, Senators Cocker and Cardin drafted a new bipartisan sanctioning bill against Iran for its aggressive non-nuclear activities, i.e. ballistic missile test, which caused human right violations, calling the ISA⁸⁹⁹. Lawmakers from both parties pressured the administration for progress in preventing Iran from bad behavior through sanctions and the congress to oversight Iran’s compliance. Indeed, letters were sent to Obama, one from Republicans and the other from Democrats with the same content⁹⁰⁰: urging sanctions for a punitive action against Iran and those involved in the test⁹⁰¹.

On the same line, in the House, Democrats and Republicans introduced two resolutions: “*H.R.4333*”⁹⁰² and “*H.R.4342*”⁹⁰³, which urged the U.S. Treasury to impose sanctions on Iran for its ballistic missile activities. Before the 16th of January⁹⁰⁴, “*H.R.3662*”⁹⁰⁵ has been introduced by Russell, indirectly undermining the JCPOA, since it sanctioned those institutions that financed the IRGC impeding any sanctions ‘relief’⁹⁰⁶. De facto, the bill could jeopardize the JCPOA, leading the White House threatened a veto on House bill⁹⁰⁷, since Iran was clear that “*any new sanctions on any level with any excuse (...of support for terrorism or human rights) pursued by...opposing countries in the negotiations will be considered a breach of the Bar-Jaam and the government is obligated to take the necessary steps*”⁹⁰⁸.

⁸⁹⁵Demirjan, K., “With Iran nuclear deal in place, key senators look to slap new sanctions on country”, Ben Cardin- u.s senator for Maryland, February 2, 2016 <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/articles/with-iran-nuclear-deal-in-place-key-senators-look-to-slap-new-sanctions-on-country>

⁸⁹⁶ Beinart, P. ,“If AIPAC Lost the Iranian Nuclear Fight, It Won Too” ,*Haaretz*, September 16, 2015 <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-if-aipac-lost-the-iranian-nuclear-fight-it-won-too-1.5399140>

⁸⁹⁷“Bills lobbied in 2016, AIPAC Cmte”, Open secret https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/client_reports.php?id=D000046963&year=2016

⁸⁹⁸“expenditures-report lobbying activities 2016”, AIPAC, Open Secret <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientbills.php?id=D000046963&year=2016>

⁸⁹⁹ Demirjan K., “With Iran nuclear deal in place, key senators look to slap new sanctions on country”, Cardin website. <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/articles/with-iran-nuclear-deal-in-place-key-senators-look-to-slap-new-sanctions-on-country>

⁹⁰⁰ Here the several letters send throughout the time to Obama by Democrats and Republicans: “Congress Urges Action on Iran Missile Tests”, *The Iran primer*, January 15, 2016 <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2015/dec/17/congress-alleged-iran-missile-test>
⁹⁰¹Democrats’ letter: https://lowey.house.gov/sites/lowey.house.gov/files/documents/Lowey_IranMissileViolationsLetter_1.6.15.pdf; “Inhofe Calls for President to Hold Iran Accountable for Transgressions”, James M. Inhofe, January 15, 2016, <https://www.inhofe.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/inhofe-calls-for-president-to-take-action-against-iranian-transgressions>

⁹⁰² H.R.4333 : Zero Tolerance for Terror Act <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/4333?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22zero+tolerance+for+terror+act%22%5D%7D&resultIndex=1>

⁹⁰³ H.R.4342:Iran Ballistic Missile Prevention and Sanctions Act of 2016 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/4342?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Iran%22%5D%7D&resultIndex=10>

⁹⁰⁴ The Day of JCPOA’s implementation

⁹⁰⁵ H.R.3662 : Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act, text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3662>

⁹⁰⁶ Ibidem.

⁹⁰⁷ Demirjan K., “With Iran nuclear deal in place, key senators look to slap new sanctions on country”, Ben Cardin- u.s senator for Maryland, Febraury 2, 2016

⁹⁰⁸Leader’s letter to President Rouhani regarding the JCPOA”, *Khamenei.ir*, October 21,2015 <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/2336/Leader-s-letter-to-President-Rouhani-regarding-the-JCPOA>

Nevertheless, AIPAC and GOP continued their actions through bills' introduction, statement, letter that undermined the JCPOA. For instance, DeSantis, who received 82,000\$ from the pro-Israel lobby⁹⁰⁹, introduced the “*H.R.4448*”, which amended the CISADA to secure local governments to adopt measures to restrict business. The action increased in April, when Obama announced he was considering easing US financial restriction to help the Iranian economy⁹¹⁰. Indeed, Republicans introduced five bills preventing the administration from the choice. The bills were not lobbied by AIPAC, but their sponsors have links with⁹¹¹. A remarkable action signed AIPAC' has been taken by Senators Menendez and Kirk, AIPAC activists in first-line against Iran. After the failure of their amendment that enlarged the expiration date of ISA from 2016 to 2026⁹¹²; they retake actions in 2016 with Sen. Cocker introducing the “*S.3267*”⁹¹³. The bipartisan bill was aimed to extend ISA until 2016⁹¹⁴, exercising pressure on Iran to improve human rights' condition and stop with ballistic missiles program⁹¹⁵. The bill did not pass the vote, but in November, just before the elections, when Royce introduced an AIPAC bill “*H.R.6297*”⁹¹⁶ to extend ISA until 2026 and it passed both chambers and with 99-0 in Senate and 419-1 in the House⁹¹⁷. The bill became law on 15th of December, when Obama was not President and Democrats lost the elections on November 8th. Whereas AIPAC congratulated for the achievement that maintained the “*basic architecture of U.S. sanctions on Iran's nuclear program and other dangerous activities*”⁹¹⁸, Khamenei threatened retaliation and the nuclear program restart⁹¹⁹.

4.2.2.3. LAST GREETINGS TO OBAMA: NO DEAL BUT MILITARY AIDS.

Until November, the action in parliament was inefficient, since all AIPAC bills did not pass, whereas the JCPOA's implementation continued⁹²⁰. Hence, the pro-Israel action focused on improving cooperation between Israel and the US. Lawmakers sent letters to Obama that urged him to conclude a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Israel, which expired in 2018, to arrange aid to Israel for 10 years. The House's

⁹⁰⁹“ pro-Israel money to congress”, Open Secret <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?ind=q05&recipdetail=H&sortorder=N&mem=N&cycle=2016>

⁹¹⁰Associated Press “US may allow dollars to be used in Iran business deals”, *Fox News*, March 31, 2016. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/us-may-allow-dollars-to-be-used-in-iran-business-deals>

⁹¹¹ Marco Rubio, Peter Roskam or Suillian

⁹¹² Document of Kirk- Menendez amendment: <http://www.niacouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/scorecard///Kirk-Menendez-1710.pdf>

⁹¹³S.3267, Countering Iranian Threats Act of 2016 114th Congress (2015-2016): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/3267>

⁹¹⁴“ Menendez, Corker to Lead Bipartisan Legislation to Hold Iran Accountable”, Bob Menendez website, accessed by July 2019. <https://www.menendez.senate.gov/news-and-events/press/menendez-corker-to-lead-bipartisan-legislation-to-hold-iran-accountable->

⁹¹⁵ Text: S.3267 — 114th Congress (2015-2016): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/3267/text#toc-ida11609c0e4aa4755b3ba09050b0b2e59>

⁹¹⁶ “H.R.6297 - Iran Sanctions Extension Act”, Congress.gov, accessed August 2019. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/6297>

⁹¹⁷ “ Roll Call Vote 114th Congress - 2nd Session”, United State Senate, accessed by August 2019. http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=114&session=2&vote=00155; “FINAL VOTE RESULTS FOR ROLL CALL 577”, United State House of Representatives, accessed by August 2019 <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2016/roll577.xml>

⁹¹⁸ ANNEX 5.

⁹¹⁹Zengerle, P., “Extension of Iran Sanctions Act passes U.S. Congress”, *Reuters*, December 1, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-usa-sanctions-idUSKBN13Q5JW>

⁹²⁰Charbonneau, L., “Exclusive: Iran missile tests were 'in defiance of U.N. resolution - U.S., allies”, *Reuters*, March 28, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-missiles-idUSKCN0WV2HE>

letter signed by 51 representatives under a bipartisan initiative of Representatives Graham and Jolly⁹²¹, asked Obama to increase Israeli military assistance from \$3.1 billion to \$5 billion a year⁹²². The Senate's bipartisan letter has been sent with 81 signatures under Sen. Coons and L. Graham's leadership, who urged a "*new long-term agreement to help provide Israel the resources it requires to defend itself and preserve its qualitative military edge*"⁹²³. The letter did not ask for money assistance but for a military one (i.e. FY17). The pressure was made also level by Netanyahu through different meeting with Obama to whom he asked for more assistance since the JCPOA led to the Iranian economic relief (150 billion) but increased Israel's security concerns⁹²⁴. The negotiations throughout 10 months between the two heads of State among the US aid exacerbated the already difficult relations, but at the end, they have been successful. Indeed, before leaving the office, in September, Obama concluded a new MOU with Israel, according to which the US would give \$38 billion in military assistance covering the next 10 year of cooperation⁹²⁵. The largest aid that US had always delivered as a guarantee for "*Israel's security in what remains a dangerous neighborhood*"⁹²⁶ as affirmed by Obama, who wanted to demonstrate his commitment to Israel before ending the mandate⁹²⁷. Something that he partially succeeded, since the new MOU "*demonstrates America's strong and unwavering commitment to Israel.... This MOU will send a strong message of deterrence to America's and Israel's regional adversaries that these two allies stand together amid increased instability and growing chaos in the Middle East*"⁹²⁸ wrote AIPAC in its Press release on MOU.

4.3. A NEW BEGINNING.

The year 2016 had been a new year for Israel vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iran nuclear deal, with Obama leaving the office and a new hawkish president arriving at the White House. However, the Israeli strategy has been put in place before elections, through presidential campaigns.

4.3.1. STOP THE DEAL AND RETAKE OLD FRIENDS.

⁹²¹ They visited Netanyahu some days before the proposal

Perry, M., "David Jolly and Gwen Graham pen letter to President Obama calling for more \$ to Israel", *FLAPOL*, April, 20, 2016. <https://floridapolitics.com/archives/207495-david-jolly-gwen-graham-pen-letter-president-obama-calling-increase-financial-aid-israel>

⁹²² *Ibidem*.

⁹²³ "Senators Coons, Graham lead bipartisan letter to urge Administration to quickly renew, strengthen security MOU with Israel", *Chris Coons press release*, accessed by August 2019. <https://www.coons.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senators-coons-graham-lead-bipartisan-letter-to-urge-administration-to-quickly-renew-strengthen-security-mou-with-israel>

⁹²⁴ Jordan, B., "US Security Aid to Israel May Increase to \$5 Billion a Year", *Military.com*, April 2016. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/11/09/us-security-aid-to-israel-may-increase-to-5-billion-a-year.html>

Perry, M., "David Jolly and Gwen Graham pen letter to President Obama calling for more \$ to Israel".

⁹²⁵ Office of Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel", *White House*, September 14, 2016. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/14/fact-sheet-memorandum-understanding-reached-israel>

⁹²⁶ Spetalnick, M., "Large majority of U.S. Senate pushes Obama to boost Israel aid", *Reuters*, September 14, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-israel-statement/u-s-israel-sign-38-billion-military-aid-package-idUSKCN11K2CI>

⁹²⁷ Zengerle, P., "Large majority of U.S. Senate pushes Obama to boost Israel aid", *Reuters*, April 25, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-israel-defense-exclusive-idUSKCN0XM14E>

⁹²⁸ ANNEX 6

In the beginning, in contrast with Israel's position in favor of Trump⁹²⁹, Netanyahu shared AIPAC's balanced position between US candidates. Hence, he decided to meet both, Trump and Clinton⁹³⁰, where it came up that Netanyahu shared a common position with Trump, especially on JCPOA. Indeed, Democrat candidate was in favor of maintaining the core of the deal and do not abandon completely the Obama legacy, though on more hawkish position. Whereas, Trump wanted to dismantle the deal as the Israeli prime minister⁹³¹.

Once at the White House, the fact that Trump shared the same hawkish views against Iran of Netanyahu has been relevant, as well as the fact that both stand for isolationism and nationalism, leading them to rely on bilateralism rather than multilateralism. Indeed, Trump's foreign choices towards Iran seemed to be part of a broader pro-Israel US foreign policy, where Israel is the administration's focal point at the international level⁹³². This understanding of foreign policy approach between Netanyahu and Trump gave to the former leverage in the decision of ceasing the JCPOA. Indeed, in 2018, at the UNGA Netanyahu took the floor and he presented Mossad's documents about Iranian secret atomic bomb and bunkers⁹³³. Israel showed the documents to US President⁹³⁴, who used it to justify its Iran nuclear deal withdrawal⁹³⁵. Indeed, the US strongly supported Israel, as Netanyahu highlighted⁹³⁶ and according to whom US-Israeli actions were always in accordance⁹³⁷. The presentation on Iran nuclear program made by Netanyahu had an international resonance, by accusing the Republic to be a lair and arguing about the possession of atomic weapons in "*Shorabad District in southern Tehran*"⁹³⁸. The fact that the information refers to the pre-2015 nuclear deal situation and that Netanyahu did not prove that Iran violated the JCPOA was not enough for Trump to do not keep the electoral promises⁹³⁹. Therefore, with Trump, Netanyahu retake direct contacts and leverage on White House, that he had during Obama's mandate.

⁹²⁹ Carlstrom, G., "Why Israel Loves Donald Trump... and why that's awkward for Israel", *POLITICO MAGAZINE*, March 20, 2016 <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/03/donald-trump-israel-2016-netanyahu-213748>

⁹³⁰ Ravid, B., "Trump Tells Netanyahu: If Elected, U.S. Would Recognize Undivided Jerusalem as Israel's Capital", *Haaretz*, September 25, 2016. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/trump-to-pm-i-d-recognize-undivided-jerusalem-as-israeli-capital-1.5442362>

⁹³¹ Bradner, E., "Trump, Clinton each meet Israeli PM Netanyahu", *CNN*, September 26, 2016. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/09/25/politics/netanyahu-trump-clinton-meetings/index.html>

⁹³² Annex 3.

⁹³³ Irish, J., Mohammed, A., "Netanyahu, in U.N. speech, claims secret Iranian nuclear site", *Reuters*, September 27, 2018.

⁹³⁴ Levison, C., "Netanyahu's Reveal of Iranian Nuclear Archive Damaged Israel, Senior Intelligence Officials Say", *Haaretz*, April 8, 2019. <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/iran/.premium-netanyahu-s-reveal-of-iranian-nuclear-archive-damaged-israel-senior-intelligence-officials-say-1.7089581>; Hains, T., "Secretary Pompeo Announces New Iran Policy: 'Strongest Sanctions In History'", *Real Clear Politics*, May 22, 2018.

https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2018/05/22/secretary_pompeo_announces_new_iran_policy_toughest_sanctions_ever.html

⁹³⁵ "FULL: Trump's Iran Deal Withdrawal Speech", *i24News English*, accessed by May 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8YAsRFJ678>

⁹³⁶ Netanyahu, B., "Full text of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's UN speech", *The Times of Israel*, September 2017. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-prime-minister-benjamin-netanyahus-un-speech/>

⁹³⁷ For instance, among all UNGA resolutions on Israel, US and Israel have voted always in agreement "no" in all resolutions unless two resolutions, where US abstained. Whereas in 2018, they voted on the same way for all resolutions, by showing a congruence in policies.

⁹³⁸ *Haaretz*, "FULL TEXT: Netanyahu Claims Iran Nuclear Deal Based on Lies", *Haaretz*, April 30, 2018 <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/full-text-netanyahu-s-reveals-iran-s-atomic-archive-in-speech-1.6045556>

⁹³⁹ Holland, S., "Trump campaign criticizes Iran nuclear deal anew after Reuters report", *Reuters*, September 1, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump-iran-idUSKCN1175YH>

4.3.2. A NEW PATH: STILL A TWO-LEVEL GAME?

As already stressed, AIPAC did not participate directly to the electoral campaign, but through affiliated PACs and super PACs, such as *Crossroads GPS*, *The RJC* or through private donations⁹⁴⁰. However, it introduced candidates to pro-Israel voters by arranging meetings with voters, billionaire donors that support pro-Israel policy in exchange for a support for Israel⁹⁴¹. Indeed, US candidates knew the importance of being seen favorably by the pro-Israel lobby, since being friends with AIPAC holds different advantages not only for Jewish American hard-liner⁹⁴², but also for Americans candidates. A favorable AIPAC means to be considered a strong candidate and a higher probability of winning the election, since he shares the same value of the organization, common in Americans citizens, i.e. “*US exceptionalism*” and hegemony in the Middle East⁹⁴³. Plus, AIPAC contributed not only with money but also with several activities that helped to grasp votes through its wide network- the Policy conference.

During the campaign, AIPAC tried to retake its bipartisanship vis-à-vis US foreign policy by funding candidates from both parties⁹⁴⁴. Indeed, the theme of the 2016’s Special Thursday was “*Come together*”⁹⁴⁵, where candidates and lawmakers from both sides were present⁹⁴⁶. Unless Jew Sanders who gave his speech in Utah⁹⁴⁷, all candidates did participate at the 2016’s AIPAC conference, showing their commitment to Israel and talking about the Iran nuclear deal⁹⁴⁸. However, AIPAC did not appreciate Trump’s speech against Obama, who was considered “*the worst thing to ever happen to Israel*”⁹⁴⁹. Though on same Trump’s position on JCPOA, that wanted to be dismantled it since “*catastrophic for America, for Israel and for the whole of the Middle East*”⁹⁵⁰, AIPAC feared that Trump’s accusations to Obama would threaten its rebalancing strategy of bipartisanship in foreign policymaking. Indeed, the new pro-Israel lobby president apologized for those people that applauded Trump, distancing from him⁹⁵¹.

⁹⁴⁰ “Dark Money Basics”, Open Secret, accessed by September 2019 <https://www.opensecrets.org/dark-money/basics>

⁹⁴¹ Stu Rothenberg and Tamara Keith, “Why most 2016 candidates are speaking at AIPAC”, interview by Gwen Ifill, *PBS NEWS HOURS*, March 22, 2016 <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-most-2016-candidates-are-speaking-at-aipac> .

⁹⁴² Newhouse, J., “The Influence of Lobbies on U.S. Foreign Policy”, 73- 92

⁹⁴³ “What role does AIPAC play in US elections?”, *Aljazeera*, accessed by September 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestoryus2012/2012/03/20123774029910326.html>

⁹⁴⁴ Reports about pro-Israel lobby expenditures can be found here “pro-Israel”, Open Secret, accessed by August 2019. <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries./indus.php?cycle=2016&ind=Q05>

⁹⁴⁵ The difference speeches during the conference and the main subject can be found in its youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGrpphaV_cl1fNpKjhviLYpSudzIWIJ3_x

⁹⁴⁶ In 2016 there was a high presence of democratic activists, representatives and candidates, such as Vice President Biden contrary to 2015’s AIPAC conference, where 65% of presents were Republicans

LAKE, E., “AIPAC Opens Door to Democrats Who Supported Iran Deal”, *Bloomerang*, October 21, 2015. <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2015-10-21/aipac-is-forgiving-democrats-who-backed-iran-nuclear-deal>

Hager, L.M., “The Best Congress AIPAC Can Buy” *Foreign Policy Journal*, March 22, 2016. <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2016/03/22/the-best-congress-aipac-can-buy/>

⁹⁴⁷ In his speech, Sander criticized Netanyahu and AIPAC for having lobbying against the JCPOA

Lachman, S., “Bernie Sanders Delivered A Killer AIPAC Speech ... In Utah”, *Huffpost*, March 21, 2016. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bernie-sanders-aipac-israel_n_56f072eae4b09bf44a9e34a1

⁹⁴⁸ Bixby, S., Jamierson, A., “Trump, Clinton and more candidates take the stage at AIPAC - as it happened”, *The Guardian*, March 22, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2016/mar/21/us-election-2016-live-trump-clinton-sanders-cruz-kasich>

⁹⁴⁹ Begley, S., “Read Donald Trump's Speech to AIPAC”, *TIME Politics*, March 21, 2016.

⁹⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁹⁵¹ O’Toole, M., “AIPAC Condemns Donald Trump Speech: ‘We Take Great Offense’”, *Foreign policy*, March, 22, 2016 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/22/aipac-condemns-donald-trump-speech-we-take-great-offense/> Shimoni Stoil, R.,” AIPAC

Accordingly, from 2016's electoral campaign, personal direct links with the Jewish community and with Jewish rich personalities, who stand in hawkish conservative positions did count more and were more influential than ties with AIPAC. Indeed Trump, already billionaire entrepreneur, has ties with the "*the richest Jew in the world*"⁹⁵², Sheldon Adelson, a casino owner in hawkish conservative position and a Netanyahu's close friend. He has been one of the main donors to Trump (around \$100 million)⁹⁵³ and after having broken with AIPAC in 2008⁹⁵⁴, he found a new organization in 2016, the Israeli American Coalition for Action⁹⁵⁵. Hence, the contacts with Sheldon enlarged Trump's network without relying on AIPAC.

More importantly, he had closer ties with Judaism and Israeli society through his son-in-law Kushner⁹⁵⁶, Orthodox Jew owner with contacts with Israel and Trump's campaign adviser⁹⁵⁷. Truly, Kushner was an AIPAC donor, but he did not rely on the organization to establish contacts between Trump and Netanyahu⁹⁵⁸. When Trump arrived at the White House, he was appointed as senior advisor of the President, a charge that is not voted in Congress⁹⁵⁹. Trump's son-in-law has an important personal network of friendship in media, i.e. with the mogul Murdoch, News Corp owner⁹⁶⁰, and also with Perelman, a billionaire with whom Trump was not yet in touch⁹⁶¹. Plus, NYT discovered that Kushner's family has ties with a major financial Israeli institution, the Menora Mivtachim, who delivered \$30 million to Kushner company⁹⁶². The issue assumed relevancy, since closer ties between Israel and the US straddling between private business and politics could undermine the US ability of independency in the region, by giving to Israel important leverage through which act⁹⁶³.

head excoriates Trump, delegates for insulting Obama", *The Times of Israel*, March 22, 2016
<https://www.timesofisrael.com/aipac-head-excoriates-trump-delegates-for-insulting-obama/>

⁹⁵² "Sheldon Adelson", Forbes, accessed by September 2019. <https://www.forbes.com/profile/sheldon-adelson/>

⁹⁵³ Janetsky, M., "Trump's top donors: Where are they now?", *Open Secret News*, January 18, 2018.
<https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2018/01/trump-donors-1-year-later/>

Stone P., "Sheldon Adelson backs Trump trip to Israel after \$100m pledge, sources say", *The Guardian*, May 20, 2016.
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/may/20/donald-trump-sheldon-adelson-israel-trip-campaign-donation>

⁹⁵⁴ Brownfeld, A. C. "Adelson-Funded IAC and Other Groups May Soon Rival AIPAC for Influence, Power", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, March/April 2018, 50-51

⁹⁵⁵ Tibon, A., "This Powerful Adelson-funded Israel Lobby Could Soon Rival AIPAC's Influence in Washington", *Haaretz*, October, 31, 2017.
<https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-the-adelson-funded-group-that-could-rival-aipacs-influence-in-d-c-1.5461209>

⁹⁵⁶ Begley, S., "Read Donald Trump's Speech to AIPAC", *TIME Politics*, March 21, 2016

⁹⁵⁷ Flitter, E., "Jewish Son-in-law Kushner Guided Trump's Triumphant AIPAC Speech", *Haaretz*, April, 5, 2016.
<https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/jewish-son-in-law-kushner-guided-trump-s-triumphant-aipac-speech-1.5427089>

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁵⁹ Yuhas, A., "Trump names son-in-law Jared Kushner as senior adviser, testing anti-nepotism law", *The Guardian*, January, 10, 2017.
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/09/jared-kushner-senior-adviser-donald-trump>

⁹⁶⁰ The News Corp is the largest global diversified media and information services, which comprises book publishing, digital services, pay tv distribution. Among others, they own: the wall street journal, The times, the advertiser, the Sunday times, TSL, Daily Telegraph. For more on News Corp its website: <https://newscorp.com/about/>

⁹⁶¹ Flitter, E., "Behind Donald Trump, a son-in-law who is also an adviser", *Reuters*, April, 4, 2016
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump-idUSKCN0X1230>

⁹⁶² Thomsen, J., "Kushner family business got \$30M investment from Israeli firm prior to Trump's state visit:report", *The Hill*, July, 01, 2018.
<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/367848-kushner-family-business-got-30m-investment-from-israeli-firm-prior-to>

Silow-Carroll, A., "The underwhelming fact that Jared Kushner has ties with Israeli businesses", *The Jewish Telegraph agency*, January, 8, 2018
<https://www.jta.org/2018/01/08/opinion/the-underwhelming-fact-that-jared-kushner-has-ties-with-israeli-businesses>

⁹⁶³ *Ibidem*

Therefore, instead of using AIPAC's network, Trump and Kushner's private networks were the main link between Washington and Tel Aviv. Truly, Israeli goals did not change, but it shifted the channel of action vis-à-vis US foreign policy, which seemed to be more pro-Netanyahu than pro-Israel, hurting AIPAC bipartisanship.

The main domestic actions have been exercised through the appointment of the establishment in a pro-Israel direction⁹⁶⁴. Firstly, the Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has been substituted with a tweet by Mike Pompeo⁹⁶⁵, one of the main Obama's critic in a more pro-Israel position against the JCPOA⁹⁶⁶. The new CIA Director was named in the person of Gina Haspel, who has a hawkish and rigid interrogation approach towards radical Islamist in line with the extremist right-wing vision⁹⁶⁷. Even if Rex Tillerson was a hawk against Iran considering the deal a bad deal⁹⁶⁸, he was more moderate as far as the option of leaving the deal. According to Tillerson, consequences of a withdraw would be worse than the option of staying in and improve it or, at least, build a second deal⁹⁶⁹. As a matter of fact, Tillers was not fidelis to Trump as Pompeo⁹⁷⁰, and he was not pro-Israel as Mike Pompeo, who already in 2015 declared his opposition to the JCPOA⁹⁷¹. Indeed, Pompeo has always had strong relations with Netanyahu, from who appreciate the "*efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons*"⁹⁷², a relation demonstrated through his first official trip after his appointment to Israel, where they reaffirmed their common intention against Iran⁹⁷³. Consequently, in December, at the UN Security Council meeting on the Middle East that Pompeo chaired, the US secretary of State asked to the international community: "*to get serious about this real risk from proliferation from the Iranian regime. We clearly see that the JCPOA didn't succeed in stopping this malign activity*"⁹⁷⁴. Eventually, the shift in office has been important for the Israeli goal of stopping the Iran Nuclear Deal since US President and Secretary of

⁹⁶⁴ "Trump Administration: Trump and Israel", *The Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed by May 2019. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/trump-administration-trump-and-israel>

⁹⁶⁵ Trump, D., Personal twitter, March 13, 2013. <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/973540316656623616>

⁹⁶⁶ "US: Rex Tillerson vows to hold Iran to the nuclear deal", *Aljazeera*, December 5, 2017. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/tillerson-contradicts-trump-iran-nuclear-deal-171205133434540.html>; "Trump Fires Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; CIA Chief Pompeo to Replace Him", *Haaretz*, March 13, 2018 <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/trump-fires-secretary-of-state-rex-tillerson-cia-chief-to-replace-him-1.5904788>

⁹⁶⁷ Short Marc, "White House Director On Iran Nuclear Deal, Gina Haspel Nomination", *npr*, May 8, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2018/05/08/609343192/white-house-director-on-iran-nuclear-deal-gina-haspel-nomination>

⁹⁶⁸ Tillerson, R., "Rex Tillerson full State of the Union interview", *CNN*, October 15, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZOhW2dVp0c>

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*;

Borger, J., "Defense secretary James Mattis resigns and points to differences with Trump", *The Guardian*, December 21, 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/dec/20/jim-mattis-defense-secretary-retires-trump>

⁹⁷⁰ Friedman, U. "Mike Pompeo, Counterpuncher", *The Atlantic*, March 27, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/03/mike-pompeo-foreign-policy/555593/>

"Mike Pompeo on Iran"; The Iran, US Institute of Peace, November 30, 2017. <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2017/nov/30/mike-pompeo-iran>

⁹⁷¹ Tibon, A., "New U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Has a Hawkish History on Iran and Israel", *Haaretz*, March, 13, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-new-u-s-secretary-of-state-mike-pompeo-has-a-hawkish-history-on-iran-1.5904882>

⁹⁷² *Ibidem*.

⁹⁷³ "Secretary Pompeo Travel to Brussels, Riyadh, Tel Aviv, and Amman", US Embassy in Israel, accessed by May 2019 <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/04/281231.htm>

⁹⁷⁴ FINNEGAN, C., "Alone at UN, Pompeo blasts Iran nuclear deal, but searches for common ground on missile threat", *abcNEWS*, December 12, 2018. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/pompeo-blasts-iran-nuclear-deal-searches-common-ground/story?id=59772811>

State were completely in synchrony on approaching issue⁹⁷⁵. Indeed, just two weeks after Pompeo's appointment, US withdrew from the JCPOA at the end of April.

Another pro-Israel change has been Trump's National Security Adviser. Indeed, H.R. McMaster accepted to resign by being substituted with John Bolton, more hawk with Iran⁹⁷⁶. Although McMaster was not hostile to Israel⁹⁷⁷, he looked for an agreement with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to prevent the president from ceasing the deal⁹⁷⁸. On the contrary, the hawk Bolton was completely in line with Netanyahu and very loyal to Trump: he agreed with a military option and more enforcement of economic sanctions⁹⁷⁹. Since Netanyahu and Bolton completely understood each other, aligned in the goals and in the method of achieving objectives against Iran, they started a common action to convince European Countries for a greater pressure on Iran.

A few months later, at the end of 2018, Trump's Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis resigned⁹⁸⁰ and Shanahan took his place. Once again, Jim Mattis had hawkish position vis-à-vis the Iran nuclear deal, but not enough for the President. Plus, relations between Israel and Mattis have been always warm, he rejected a 500\$ million arms deal between Israel and Croatia before he left the office⁹⁸¹. However, the dismissal was due to a different view of US foreign policies implemented by Trump, in particular upon the JCPOA⁹⁸². Mattis agreed with Tillerson about the fact that a withdrawal would provoke a new crisis and, eventually a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, when the US has engaged already in the Korean nuclear situation⁹⁸³.

Hence, these changes have been the main source through which Netanyahu acted at the international level vis-à-vis the US foreign policy towards a hawkish approach to Iran nuclear deal. Indeed, whereas in US administration, fears increased for these changes mainly after Tillerson's departure⁹⁸⁴, the main action against

⁹⁷⁵ McKenzie, S., "Pompeo uses meeting with Saudis as an opportunity to slam the Iran nuclear deal", *CNN*, April 29, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/29/politics/pompeo-iran-nuclear-deal-intl/index.html>,

Wintour, P., "Fears grow for future of Iran nuclear deal in wake of Tillerson's removal", *The Guardian*, March 13, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/mar/13/rex-tillerson-iran-nuclear-deal-us-eu>

⁹⁷⁶ McMaster, H.R., "READ: H.R. McMaster's departure email to the NSC", *CNN*, March 22, 2018. <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/22/politics/mcmaster-departure-email-nsc/index.html>

⁹⁷⁷ Tibon, A., Harel, A., "Israeli Defense Officials Strongly Reject Criticism of McMaster as 'anti-Israel'", *Haaretz*, August 5, 2017. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israeli-defense-officials-strongly-reject-criticism-of-mcmaster-1.5440266>

⁹⁷⁸ Woodruff, B., Ackerman, S., "McMaster Rushes to Save the Iran Deal That Trump Promised to Kill", *The daily beast*, 2018. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/mcmaster-rushes-to-save-the-iran-nuke-deal>

⁹⁷⁹ Takeyh, R., "John Bolton Is Threatening Iran. Good", *Politico Magazine*, January 15, 2019. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/01/15/john-bolton-is-threatening-iran-good-224015> ;

Stewart, P., Lynch, S.N., Chiacu, D., "White House asked for options to strike Iran", *Reuters*, January 13, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-iran-strikes/white-house-asked-for-options-to-strike-iran-wsj-idUSKCN1P70IX>

⁹⁸⁰ TOI Staff, "Departing Mattis said to cancel Israel trip, as Israel feels 'betrayed' on Syria", *The times of Israel*, *The times of Israel*, December 21, 2018. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/mattis-said-to-cancel-trip-to-israel-following-resignation/>

⁹⁸¹ Ravid, B., "Scoop: Mattis rejected Netanyahu's request on arms deal with Croatia", *Axios*, December 27, 2018. <https://www.axios.com/james-mattis-benjamin-netanyahu-israel-croatia-arms-deal-e1a257ec-7ed8-4a95-8cbc-eaac935af52b.html>

⁹⁸² AFP, "Jim Mattis: The 'Mad Dog' who for two years concealed his true thoughts on Trump", *The Times of Israel*, December, 21, 2018. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jim-mattis-the-mad-dog-with-a-big-library/> Breuninger, K., "Read James Mattis' resignation letter to Trump: 'We must be resolute and unambiguous' toward Russia and China", *CNBC*, December 20, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/12/20/read-james-mattis-letter-to-trump-resigning-as-defense-secretary.html>

⁹⁸³ Borger, J., "Trump and Netanyahu ready united assault against Iran nuclear deal", *The guardian*, September 18, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/18/trump-netanyahu-iran-nuclear-deal-united-nations-general-assembly>

⁹⁸⁴ Wintour, P., "Fears grow for future of Iran nuclear deal in wake of Tillerson's removal", *The guardian*, March 13, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/mar/13/rex-tillerson-iran-nuclear-deal-us-eu>

Richman, J., "Secretary of Defense Mattis to exit Pentagon with significant evolution on US-Israel ties", *Jewish News Syndicate*, December 20, 2018. <https://www.jns.org/defense-secretary-mattis-to-exit-pentagon-with-evolution-on-us-israel-ties/>

the JCPOA was made by Trump and Netanyahu vis-à-vis the international community in Iran deal in order to take a more hawkish action. As confirmed by Bolton: *“It's why we've worked with our friends in Europe to convince them of the need to take stronger steps against the Iranian nuclear-weapons and ballistic-missile program”*⁹⁸⁵.

Looking at the who influenced these appointments, a sure answer is difficult at the time of writing, because of fewer resources available. Nevertheless, the pro-Israel changes should be considered, at least partially, a consequence of Trump's contacts with Israeli surrounding and his business' affairs. For instance, Pompeo received money for his career by industrialist Koch brothers, because of which he earned the nickname *“Congressman from Koch”*⁹⁸⁶. The Koch brothers' industries are an important multinational corporation⁹⁸⁷, who push towards a rightwing political agenda in different ways⁹⁸⁸. Despite the distance on several issues between Koch brothers and Trump, the Koch allies within the administration are seen as way of influencing the administration and take advantages for business⁹⁸⁹. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Netanyahu or AIPAC have had a role in this nomination, even if useful to pursue their agenda; however, he decreased AIPAC bipartisanship what was trying to regain⁹⁹⁰. As a matter of fact, the pro-Israel establishment was not choose for personal beliefs, since *“Israel and pro-Israel policy was not particular important to Trump”* as professor Parsi affirmed: *“Trump is a transactional guy: if he can get money from them, if he can get support, he will do it, but he is not coming to the White House with any particularly strong using favor or against Israel, or in favor or against Saudi Arabia. He is reacting to.”*⁹⁹¹ Indeed, Trump did not act following a line or ideology, but he freed himself from his advisor's fears, increasing his autonomy from his establishment, but weaker his relative bargaining position internationally and strengthening the Netanyahu's relations.

4.3.3. WHAT ABOUT AIPAC?

How Trump took pro-Israel decisions, because of intents' commonality, put AIPAC in difficulties towards an even more partisan policy since it was increasing in contrast with democrats⁹⁹². Although AIPAC has difficulties in its activities, it has maintained its leverage on Capitol Hill, but with a change of focus on its lobbying activities, because of the Trump spontaneous pro-Israel decisions in the Iran deal, the main focus has been on Iran ballistic missile, Israel-Palestine affair and military cooperation. Indeed, in 2017, it spent

⁹⁸⁵“Bolton, Netanyahu Call For 'Greater Pressure' On Iran”, *Radio Free Europe*, accessed by August 2019 <https://www.rferl.org/a/bolton-netanyahu-israel-iran-nuclear-ballistic-missiles-syria-russia/29442806.html>

⁹⁸⁶ Timmons, H., “Secretary of State nominee Mike Pompeo owes his political career to the Koch brothers”, *QUARTZ*, March 13, 2018 <https://qz.com/1227882/secretary-of-state-nominee-mike-pompeo-owes-his-political-career-to-the-koch-brothers/>

⁹⁸⁷Koch brothers are the 2nd largest private company in US with \$110 billion in revenue in 2018.

Livni, E., “This is the Koch Brothers empire”, *QUARTZ*, August ,23, 2019.<https://qz.com/1694047/what-the-koch-brothers-own/>

⁹⁸⁸ Helmore, E., “Five key ways the Koch brothers pushed their rightwing agenda”, *The Guardian*, August, 23, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/23/koch-brothers-agenda-key-donations-promotions>

⁹⁸⁹Vogel, K.P; Dawsey, J., “Trump makes nice with Koch brothers”, *POLITICO*, July, 04, 2017 <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/donald-trump-david-bill-koch-brothers-237059>

⁹⁹⁰Rosen, A., “no one is afraid of AIPAC”, *Tablet*, January, 3, 2017 <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/220665/no-one-is-afraid-of-aipac>

⁹⁹¹ Trita Parsi, Personal interview, March 2019.

⁹⁹²Rosen, A., “no one is afraid of AIPAC”, *Tablet*, January, 3, 2017

\$3,402,651 to lobbying activities through their lawmakers⁹⁹³, who introduced 35 bills, one on Iran ballistic missiles⁹⁹⁴, but they mostly focused on US-Israel cooperation, BDS movements, Hezbollah and Israel-Palestine dispute⁹⁹⁵. The same path has been followed in 2018 when AIPAC has spent \$3,518,028 Capitol Hill on 45 bills⁹⁹⁶, among which only 2 concerned Iran, H.R. 5132 and H.R.4744, whereas all the others concerned anti-terrorist measures and cooperation, military assistance and activities against Palestine and Hezbollah⁹⁹⁷.

4.3.4. COMMON PATTERN BUT DIFFERENT MEANING.

Until now we have considered the major strategies used by Israel during the two years of Trump administration that differ from those used during the Obama administration. However, it can be noticed some common patterns used by Israel vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iran deal.

Firstly, Israel has continued linking the Iranian questions with other international issues to maintain the Iran nuclear deal at the top of the US agenda. Indeed, it linked Iran deal with the North Korea nuclear affair and its denuclearization. This has been clear when A.Yadlin⁹⁹⁸ in an interview of Hareetz made parallelism between North-South Korea and Iran-Israel underlining that Iran denuclearization is important as well as is North Korea denuclearization. He put the two question at the same level: “*we will sign a deal and we postpone. They (Iran) are willing to wait and lift all the sanction, build conventional power that will take Israel hostage in a way that North Korea is taking South Korea as a hostage.*”⁹⁹⁹ North Korea has been instrumental also for another reason, an agreement with North Korea and its “*denuclearization will remove North Korea as the Number 1 U.S. national security issue*”; in this way “*Iran can be number one priority*” by putting at the top of the US agenda Iran.¹⁰⁰⁰

Secondly, the rhetoric strategy of framing Iran in negative terms continued¹⁰⁰¹. Since both Countries, US and Israel considered “*the worst deal even seen*”¹⁰⁰², both used the strategy of framing in negative terms Iran and the JCPOA in front of States’ signatories and the international community¹⁰⁰³. The intent has been the one to discourage States that signed the deal to implement the Deal and to isolate Iran from the international community at UNGA: “*Iran’s leaders sow chaos, death, and destruction. That is why so many countries in*

⁹⁹³ AIPAC expenditures in lobbying activities, 2017, Open secret. https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/client_reports.php?id=D000046963&year=2017

⁹⁹⁴ “H.R.1698 - Iran Ballistic Missiles and International Sanctions Enforcement Act”, Congress government bills, accessed by May 2019 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1698>

⁹⁹⁵ “AIPAC lobbied bills 2017, Open Secret <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientbills.php?id=D000046963&year=2017>

⁹⁹⁶ AIPAC expenditures to lobbies activities in 2018, Open Secret: <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?id=D000046963&year=2018>

⁹⁹⁷ AIPAC lobbied bills in 2018, Open Secret. <https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientbills.php?id=D000046963&year=2018>

⁹⁹⁸ Y. Adlin has been a former commander of Israel’s military intelligence.

⁹⁹⁹ Pfeffer, A., “Trump’s Iran Decision: Anshel Pfeffer Talks With Former Israeli Intelligence Chief Amos Yadlin”, *Haaretz*, May, 8, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/iran/anshel-pfeffer-talks-with-former-israeli-intel-chief-amos-yadlin-1.6071245>

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁰¹ Raed M. I. Qaddoura “Israel’s propaganda strategies: case study of the protective edge operation in Gaza 2014”, *International Journal of Development Research* 7, No.12, 17938-17950, December, 2017.

¹⁰⁰² “Full video: Trump UN Speech 2017”, Politico channel on youtube, accessed by May 2019 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/tillerson-contradicts-trump-iran-nuclear-deal-171205133434540.html>

¹⁰⁰³ Borger, J., “Trump and Netanyahu ready united assault against Iran nuclear deal”, *The guardian*, September, 18, 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/18/trump-netanyahu-iran-nuclear-deal-united-nations-general-assembly>

the Middle East strongly supported my decision to withdraw from the horrible 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal and re-impose nuclear sanctions.... We ask all nations to isolate Iran's regime as long as its aggression continues"¹⁰⁰⁴. The same was proposed by Netanyahu at the UN *"to Europe's leaders and to others: instead of cuddling Iran's dictators, join the U.S. and Israel and most of the Arab world in supporting new sanctions against a regime that endangers all of us..."*¹⁰⁰⁵.

Finally, another path on which Israel continued is the relationship with Saudi Arabia. The new amity with commonalities of intents has been important for Israel and its equilibrium in the struggle against Iran and Iran nuclear deal, which broaden their cooperation in cyber technologies, a field in which Israel and US have a relation cemented for years¹⁰⁰⁶. Accordingly, now that the three Countries US, Israel and Saudi Arabia found themselves on the same anti-JCPOA an anti-Iran position could think about the creation on a new axis¹⁰⁰⁷. Indeed, Riyadh is playing a major role in the process that aims to make Israel part of the anti-Iranian alliance, the so-called "Arab-NATO."¹⁰⁰⁸

4.4. CONCLUSION.

In the chapter, I focused on the last period of Obama's mandate and on the first of Trump. Considering the end of Obama's administration, it has been clear that Netanyahu lost all his leverage on Obama when he overcame his power by speaking in front of US congress without any invitation from the President. Furthermore, Netanyahu was engaged in domestic affairs, i.e. elections and no- majority in Parliament. Therefore, the main action has been made on level 2 by AIPAC and its new advocacy organization *"Citizens for a nuclear free Iran"* through TV ads and campaigns. Truly, the AIPAC's actions continued also in Capitol Hill, but the strategy changed in bills' contents. Indeed, not only it focused on Congress' power as far as concern the JCPOA's approval, but it tried to promote bills that sanction Iran for its non-nuclear activities and that indirectly would hurt the Iran deal. Despite the less effectiveness in congress and on the executive branch, AIPAC and Netanyahu never stop pressuring Obama towards closer military cooperation. Indeed, through a stronger and heavier US military assistance, Israel would be more protected from its regional enemies on the ground.

However, it is difficult to measure how much the Obama's will of ending his mandates in peaceful relations with Israel showing his commitment, and how much did AIPAC and Netanyahu pressures. Truly, the pressures exercised by Democrats and Republicans on the executive has been important. Nevertheless, it should be considered that Obama was ending his last mandate, and these pressures had less effectiveness on

¹⁰⁰⁴ "Trump slams Iran at UN (full speech)", *CNN politics*, (25 september 2018) accessed by May 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2018/09/25/cnngo-donald-trump-full-united-nations-speech-september-25-2018.cnn>

¹⁰⁰⁵ "PM Netanyahu's Remarks at the UN General Assembly – 2018", Israel PM channel Youtube, accessed by May 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7ZPPaeMmmA>

¹⁰⁰⁶ Max Schindler, "Israeli Companies Talking to Saudi Arabia about \$500B. 'Smart City'", *Jerusalem Post*, October 25, 2017, www.jpost.com/Business-and-Innovation/Israeli-companies-likelytalking-to-Saudi-Arabia-about-500-bil-smart-city-508429

Max Schindler, "Business Ties to Arab World Skyrocketing, Says Venture Capitalist Margalit", *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2018.

¹⁰⁰⁷ McKenzie, S., "Pompeo uses meeting with Saudis as an opportunity to slam the Iran nuclear deal", *CNN*, April 29, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/29/politics/pompeo-iran-nuclear-deal-intl/index.html>

¹⁰⁰⁸ Giorgio Cafiero, WhatsApp message to the author, 6th May 2019.

Obama as politicians, since he could not participate for a third run. Plus, Obama did not negotiate Iran deal according to Israeli requests, but he stood on his position at the expenses of Israel's friendship, breaking the relationship. Finally, the AIPAC pressures for new sanctions non-nuclear activities failed at least in one of the two chambers until Obama was in office, without any Obama's intervention in favor of these bills. Therefore, what did count in the decision of a new MOU to strengthen Israel's regional power seemed to be more Obama's will rather than Israeli actions.

The final part of the chapter has been dedicated to Trump's administration, during which the main action has been made by Netanyahu at level 1. Indeed, the two chief negotiators not only share the same political views, but they also share contacts and personal network, i.e. Sheldon Adelson and Kushner. With Trump, Israel has worked easier vis-à-vis US foreign policy: he already announced during his campaign his will of reprimating sanctions and dismantle the JCPOA, as advocated by Israel. Plus, administrative changes in a pro-Israel perspective facilitated the connection between Netanyahu and the executive, on which he had close contacts. Whereas Israel prime minister regains power on US administration, AIPAC continued to lose its bipartisanship, since it started to be identified more with Republicans. Truly, it tried to take distance from Trump, since his electoral campaign. However, once in power, Trump started to promote a series of pro-Israel decisions, which for a long time have been advocated by the lobby, i.e. the end of the JCPOA, Jerusalem capital among others. Therefore, AIPAC's focus of lobbying activities has changed towards Israel-Palestine relations and terrorist organizations.

CONCLUSION.

In the study, I have tried to understand how Israel has acted vis-à-vis US foreign policy in the Iran nuclear deal, by using Putnam's two-level game theory in a context of complex interdependence. Throughout a case study method, I have analyzed the two Obama's mandate and the first two years of Trump's mandate to test my three hypotheses:

1. A greater lobby influence in institutional and non- institutional actors in the Iran nuclear issue conditions the US national.
2. A broader AIPAC network in US institutional and non- institutional environment does not imply a more influential action in pushing for a pro-Israeli foreign policy.
3. Stronger is the Israeli prime minister's action at level 1, stronger and more influential is the pro-Israel lobby position in carrying on common policies against Iran nuclear deal and vice-versa.

The hypothesis one is partially demonstrated by the analysis.

I have shown throughout the chapter that Obama's leading from behind wanted a disengagement in the Middle East and a peaceful solution over the nuclear deal. Truly, he achieved his goal with Iran by reaching the JCPOA mainly because of two reasons. Firstly, a change in Iran government with Rouhani as President, in line with Obama's diplomacy and solution; secondly, an international community who stand with Obama. Indeed, Obama did not conclude the deal alone but with the P5+1. Nevertheless, Obama has been not immune from Israeli actions, mostly during his first mandate and half of the second. As shown in Chapter 1, mainly AIPAC's pressure on Congress and executive, and then the threat of military action carried out by both levels, has influenced Obama to pass new heavier sanctions against Iran avoiding a peaceful solution. Furthermore, in this period did count electoral campaign, since Obama wanted a new mandate and AIPAC's favor in the electoral campaign would be fundamental for him. However, instead of disengagement as Panetta announced and a military expenditure cut, the wider AIPAC's lobbied activities on congressmen, senators and executive on which acted by sending letters but as well as through its conference pushed the administration to supply military furniture to Israel, increasing their expenses in the region. Besides, in 2016, after JCPOA implementations, when relations between Israel and the US were at minimum, Obama decided in favor of a new MOU, the largest in history. Regardless, we cannot be sure on how much Israeli pressures did matter in that decision; but we should evaluate that, in the end, the pro-Israel decision has been taken against Iran's power in the region and with Khamenei in disagreement. Finally, the hypothesis needs to be corrected taking into account Trump. Indeed, in the last chapter, it has been reported how the direct contacts between Israeli leadership and Trump as well as Trump's business ties have been more relevant vis-à-vis US foreign policy in Iran deal than AIPAC's actions.

The second hypothesis is confirmed.

Particularly in chapter 3, I have demonstrated how AIPAC has broadened its network by relying on non-institutional actors, i.e. other pro-Israel organizations that shared the same hawkish views concerning Iran and the JCPOA. Indeed, once it was aware of less effectiveness in Congress, in 2014, the pro-Israel lobby strengthened its action on congressmen but also through think tanks and advocacy groups. It relied mainly on WINEP, its spin-off, but also on FBI, BPC, FDD, ECI, TPI, UANI, CPD and IPC. However, the major deficit of AIPAC's network was that it was a closed network with overlapping directors' boards. For instance, founders of one organization, such as UANI, were already experts or directors or others, such as WINEP. Or, hawkish pro-Israel lawmakers already in line with AIPAC were part of the board of these organizations. These ties have constituted a closed circle that along with the ongoing polarization between the two Parties, Democrats more liberals and GOP more Hawkish, it has prevented AIPAC from enlarging its network to gain new support, that was what it needed to push for a pro-Israel foreign policy against Iran.

The third hypothesis is not completely confirmed since it is confirmed when the direction goes from domestic to international level.

To better say, it is confirmed as far as in the formulation "*stronger is the pro-Israel lobby action, stronger is the Israeli prime minister action at level 1 in carrying on common policies against Iran nuclear deal*", whereas is not true the opposite. Indeed, when in a strong position AIPAC has supported Netanyahu's strategy vis-à-vis the US policy, as in the case of military strike (chapter 1 and 2), it has been successful in influencing Obama and it has enforced Netanyahu's actions. The same happened in maintaining the Iran threat of the top of US priorities by framing it as "*urgent threat*" as stressed also by Ido Oren¹⁰⁰⁹. On the contrary, when AIPAC has a weak and weak has been its actions, then also Netanyahu's position in carrying policies against Iran has been weak, as demonstrated in the case of Syria redline in Chapter 3. AIPAC is indeed "the pro-Israel lobby", as it affirmed, but it is an American pro-Israel lobby, born and raised in US. The organization knows the US system as well as its society and the best approach to achieve its goals through a broader role. Then, it is quite natural that AIPAC's action reinforced Netanyahu's once. Whereas, the opposite is not confirmed. As stressed in the Chapter IV, during Trump administration until 2018, Netanyahu has taken a strong position vis-à-vis US policies in the Iran deal, with friendly relations with the new President. Indeed, AIPAC has had a defiled role in the matter since Trump, due to Israel- Trump personal links. Even more, since the new President arrived, AIPAC seemed to have lost the main source of influence, its bipartisanship, whereas Netanyahu acquired stronger leverage on his new friend.

In conclusion, even though it does not concern properly my hypotheses, I consider this last point one of the main important conclusions for the literature. Indeed, it has been stressed in the literature that AIPAC acted to promote the Israeli interests also at the expenses of the US' national interests. However, the Iran deal has shown how the main concern for AIPAC has been its bipartisanship, especially from 2015/2016, when the deal has been signed and implemented.

¹⁰⁰⁹Ido Oren, "Why has the United States not bombed Iran? The domestic politics of America's response to Iran's nuclear program", 659-684.

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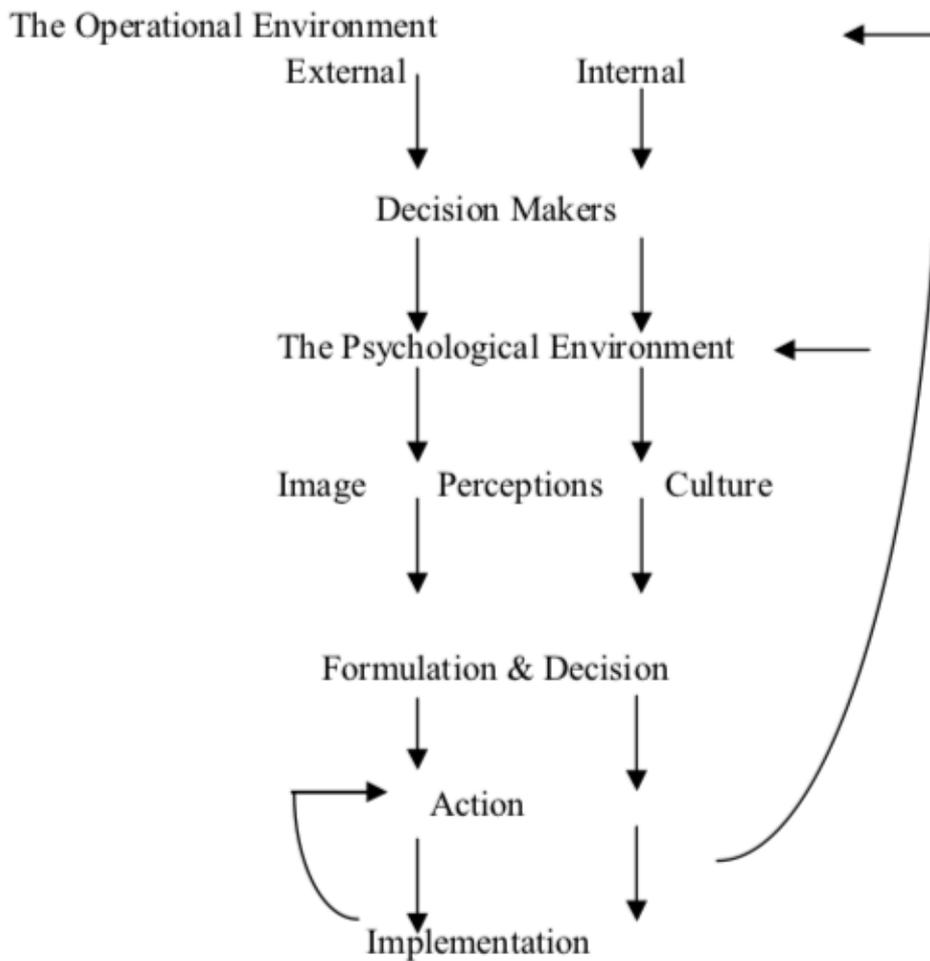
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ANNEX

ANNEX 1.

FOREIGN POLICY OPERATIONAL SCHEME BY SMITH.



Source: Source: Smith, S. (2008).(Ed.), *Foreign Policy Theories . Actors. Cases*, New York, Oxford University Press,121.

ANNEX 2.

The annex considers all the organizations on which AIPAC had relied, highlighting the fact that it had a closed group.

- WINEP: Washington institute Near East Policy

WINEP is an AIPAC spin-off as already stressed in Chapter 3. Indeed, they are in line in promoting US-Israel relations and against the Iran deal. We have already saw, the important role of Dennis Ross insofar he pushed against an Iran deal, and in particular against a final deal without respecting some points¹⁰¹⁰. Dennis Ross's position has been shared by the executive director, Statloff, who expressed his doubts on the interim agreement, which could trigger a "*deeper crisis with Israel...heighten the potential for a unilateral Israeli military attack on Iran's nuclear sites, with U.S.-Israel ties suffering massive collateral damage.*"¹⁰¹¹ Indeed, if diplomacy would fail, "*force will be inevitable because Iran cannot become a nuclear weapons state*", agreed Ross¹⁰¹². On this line were also other two important personalities D.Pollock, who served in State's departments and is lecture at Harvard university, and Ambassador J.Jeffrey¹⁰¹³.

In May, WINEP managing director Michael Singh published an article in the Washington Post, by arguing that the final agreement should curtail Iran missile activity¹⁰¹⁴. By supporting a zero-enrichment option for Iran by displaying the consequence of a minimum enrichment option¹⁰¹⁵, he hardly criticized Obama's administration for having sign the interim agreement that "*concedes that Iran will be permitted to enrich in perpetuity*"¹⁰¹⁶ shifting from zero-enrichment position. Sight stressed the important impact that sanctions had on Iran economy, and contrary to what the P5+1 decided previously, now, they "*should allow the pressure of sanctions to work to full effect*"¹⁰¹⁷, otherwise an Iranian enrichment "*would threaten vital U.S. interests*"¹⁰¹⁸. For this reason, coherently with Netanyahu's words¹⁰¹⁹, "*no deal is better than a bad deal*" wrote Michael Singh in his testimony about problematic implications of JCOP on US defense, which he submitted to the

¹⁰¹⁰ Chapter 3.

¹⁰¹¹ Statloff, R., "Will Israel and the U.S. Break Up over Iran?", *WINEP*, January/February 2014

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/will-israel-and-the-u.s.-break-up-over-iran>

¹⁰¹²Ross, D., "How to Solve Obama's Iran Dilemma", *POLITICO*, January 26, 2014

¹⁰¹³ Jeffrey, J.F., Pollock, D., "Preventing an Iranian Breakout after a Nuclear Deal", *WINEP*, March 12, 2014

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/preventing-an-iranian-breakout-after-a-nuclear-deal>

¹⁰¹⁴ Singh, M., "Michael Singh: America should not soften its nuclear demands of Iran," *The Washington Post*, May 14, 2014.

¹⁰¹⁵Singh, M., "The Case for Zero Enrichment in Iran", Arms control Association, 2014.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Ibidem*

¹⁰¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰¹⁹ PM Netanyahu's remarks in the Knesset on Iran", Israel Ministry of foreign affair, 24 November 2014

<https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2014/Pages/PM-Netanyahus-remarks-today-in-the-Knesset-24-November-2104.aspx>

House Armed Service Committee in his testimony about problematic implications of JCOP on US defense¹⁰²⁰. Hence, not only the experts addressed to the people, but they submitted testimony to both Chambers. Indeed, also Dennis Ross submitted his testimony to another Committee, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, about “*Regional Implications of a Nuclear Deal with Iran*” focusing on Israel and Saudis¹⁰²¹, who were highly suspicious and concerned on Obama’s position vis-à-vis a nuclear deal. Indeed, “*if we want to reassure our friends about such a deal*” and keep them US had to “*signal to the Iranians they will pay a price for behaviors outside the nuclear area that we find unacceptable*”¹⁰²².

- The Foreign Policy Initiative: FPI

The FPI was a no-profit and no-partisan organization created from 2009 to 2017¹⁰²³, during Obama era, by a group of neo-conservatives led by Christopher J. Griffin. It had the aim of promoting “*US engagement- diplomatic, economic, and military- in the world and rejection of policies that would lead us down the path to isolationism;... robust support for America’s democratic allies and opposition to rogue regimes that threaten American interests;... a strong military with the defense budget needed to ensure that America is ready to confront the threats of the 21st century*”¹⁰²⁴. Although some critics and negative definition¹⁰²⁵, the FPI is a think tank financed by Paul Singer, a billionaire investor that has been defined by the conservative newspaper “The times of Israel” as “*pro-Israel Philanthropist*”¹⁰²⁶. Deeply involved in the right-wing network, he was one of the top donators to conservative pro-Israel Romney¹⁰²⁷, by criticizing “*Obama administration’s inadequate support for Israel*”¹⁰²⁸. And, he founded and financed several pro-Israel groups such as Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and Foundation for Defense of Democracies (with Adelson)¹⁰²⁹. On the same conservative line were the executive director and the FPI’s board of director. The former, Christopher Griffin, a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI)¹⁰³⁰, was the legislative director of Sen. Lieberman, who sponsored by and tied to AIPAC.¹⁰³¹ The board was composed by Robert Kagan, a senior fellow of Brookings Institute¹⁰³², in opposition to Obama administration for his

¹⁰²⁰ Singh, M. “P5+1 Nuclear Negotiations with Iran and Their Implications for United States Defense”, *WINEP*, Testimony submitted to the House Armed Services Committee June 19, 2014

¹⁰²¹ Ross, Dennis, “Regional Implications of a Nuclear Deal with Iran”, *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Testimony submitted to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations June 12, 2014

¹⁰²² *Ibidem*

¹⁰²³ “Foreign Policy Initiative Cease Of Operations”, FPI, February 2018. <https://foreignpolicyi.org/foreign-policy-initiative-cease-of-operations/>

¹⁰²⁴ “Foreign Policy Initiative: Mission”, Guidestar. <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/26-4392915>

¹⁰²⁵ Some experts defined the FPI as loose coalition of individuals that seeks to influence American foreign policy in ways that will benefit Israel.

¹⁰²⁶ TOI Staff and AP “Trump dossier triggered by website funded by Jewish GOP mega-donor”, *Times of Israel*, 29 October 2017.

¹⁰²⁷ “Paul singer biography, People pill <https://peoplepill.com/people/paul-singer-3/>

¹⁰²⁸ Lichtblau, E., “Financier’s Largess Shows G.O.P.’s Wall St. Support”, *The New York Time*, August 27, 2010

¹⁰²⁹ Landon, T., “With Cash in Hand, Hedge Fund Chiefs Join Political Fray” *The New York Times*, January 25, 2007

¹⁰³⁰ “Christopher Griffin”, AEI, <http://www.aei.org/tag/christopher-griffin/>

¹⁰³¹ AIPAC publication showed ties between AIPAC, Lieberman and Griffin in a dispute between executive and legislative Authorization

<https://www.aipac.org/~media/Publications/Policy%20and%20Politics/AIPAC%20Analyses/Issue%20Memos/2011/08/Amicus.pdf>

¹⁰³² “Robert Kagan biography”, Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/experts/robert-kagan/>

non-confrontational line with Iran¹⁰³³. Besides, the brooking institute is a center right institute, where personalities with intimate links with AIPAC works as Pollack, WINEP member¹⁰³⁴. William Kristol, who has been co-founder of the PRF¹⁰³⁵ and the Weekly Standard, an influential journal of politics in Washington¹⁰³⁶. Dan Senior, who has been AIPAC intern at the beginning of its career¹⁰³⁷, spokesman for Iraq during Bush administration¹⁰³⁸, then, he became Romney's senior advice. Eric Edelman, former US diplomat as well as Iran and military expert, has served at the White House and Departments of State and Defense and he is co-chair for Iran Task Force at the JINSA¹⁰³⁹, pushing for a hard line vis-à-vis Iran nuclear program. Hence, the organization was important since its members had key positions in the several US administrations, meaning that even their autonomous action was relevant as far as negotiations on Iran. For instance, Kristol has been always in favor of an US military action against Iran, which he compared to Nazi regime, despite Rouhani elections. According to him, in the case in which Obama would not attack Iran, Israel shall unilaterally strike the neighbor¹⁰⁴⁰. On the same line, he supported republicans in elections, since they *"could mitigate the damage Obama can do in his final two years... Republicans have to constrain the president, rebuild American defenses, do their best to stop a bad deal with Iran."*¹⁰⁴¹

However, FPI is fundamental also because it acted as a group through several ways. Indeed, it produced policy briefings, articles, op-eds in major newspaper and issue memos. In particular, in 2014, with the other two pro- Israel organizations, the Bipartisan Policy Center and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies made a public forum titled *"High Standards and High Stakes: Defining Terms of an Acceptable Iran Nuclear Deal"* with the presence of AIPAC sponsored Senators, such as Sen. Kirk, Sen. Coats, Rep. Engel, Rep. Ros-Lehtinen and Sherman¹⁰⁴². After the meeting, the policy director of FPI, Zarate wrote an op-ed in *"USA Today"* by claiming for sanctions since *"Iran retains substantial illicit nuclear infrastructure and could potentially produce explosive nuclear material for a weapon in "two months"*¹⁰⁴³. Then, following AIPAC he said that *"The White House should start by working with Congress. Sanctions legislation introduced by Sens. Robert*

¹⁰³³Kagan, R., "Obama, Siding With the Regime", Washington Post, June 17, 2009.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2009/06/17/obama-siding-with-regime-pub-23285>

¹⁰³⁴ Shank, G., "Anatomy of a Done Deal: The Fight over the Iran Nuclear Accord", *Social Justice ; San Francisco* Vol. 42, Fasc. 1, (2016): 1-18,145.

¹⁰³⁵ Project for the Republican Future

¹⁰³⁶"Columnist biography, William Kristol", *The new York times*, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/opinion/kristol-bio.html?_r=0; "Biography: William Kristol", US department of State.

¹⁰³⁷ Quoted in E.J. Kessler, "Campaign Confidential," *Forward*, July 25, 2003,

¹⁰³⁸Dan senior biography, NNDB. <https://www.nndb.com/people/410/000126032/>

¹⁰³⁹ Amb. Eric Edelman, JINSA <https://jinsa.org/person/ambassador-eric-edelman/>

¹⁰⁴⁰ Kristol, W., "From Bad to Worse", *Washington examiner*, September 30, 2013 <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/from-bad-to-worse-756463>

¹⁰⁴¹Kristol, W., "the morning after", *The Washington examiner*, November 2014. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/the-morning-after-817064>

¹⁰⁴²"Daily Kickoff: BREAKING: BBC Reports New Cease-Fire Reached | Pew: "Jews Are Most Popular Religious Group In U.S." | Kerry To Speak @SIXTH&I Tonight", *Jewish Insider*, July 2014.

<https://jewishinsider.com/2014/07/daily-kickoff-breaking-bbc-reports-new-cease-fire-reached-pew-jews-are-most-popular-religious-group-in-u-s-kerry-to-speak-sixthi-tonight/>

¹⁰⁴³ Zarate, R., "Expand non-military pressure on Iran: Opposing View", *USA today*, Jul 20, 2014 <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2014/07/20/iran-nuclear-negotiations-sanctions-editorials-debates/12884821/>

Menendez, and Mark Kirk, last December... offers a fruitful approach."¹⁰⁴⁴ The pressures continued also after the midterm elections, when FPI directors Hoff and Poling framed midterm elections as “*foreign policy election*”, claiming a role for the congress as far as concern Iran in line with AIPAC action: “*Congress should describe what it believes to be an acceptable final nuclear agreement with Iran and insist upon approval of any final agreement with Tehran. Congress should also approve sanctions-in-waiting should Tehran violate its commitments under the current interim deal.... The Republican Senate should move to swiftly approve these sanctions-in-waiting (Nuclear weapons free Iran act) if negotiations are extended.*”¹⁰⁴⁵

- Bipartisan Policy center.

AIPAC has always had strictly links with BPC, which is a think tank based in Washington that “*that actively fosters bipartisanship...to promote health, security, and opportunity for all Americans*”¹⁰⁴⁶. Indeed, in the BCP team, there are important lawmakers that received support from AIPAC and that promoted AIPAC bills against Iran¹⁰⁴⁷. This is the case of the BPC co- founders Senators Bob Dole, Baker, Mitchell and Daschle; whereas other personalities are or have been members of other important pro-Israel organizations. For instance, Michael Makovsky, president and CEO of JINSA, was the foreign policy director for the center¹⁰⁴⁸ by participating at AIPAC conference; whereas his brother, David, is a fellow at the WINEP and Director of project Arab-Israel relations ¹⁰⁴⁹.

The BPC focuses on solutions for domestic and foreign policy, but a particular importance had Iran nuclear program and the P5+1- Iran agreement over it. Indeed, in spite of its bipartisanship, it developed a reputation of hawkish right-wing security position vis-à-vis Iran. For instance, it co-hosted with FPI and the FDD the event in which they discussed about the negotiations between western powers and Iran. Before the event, it released a report, where it affirmed the cooperativeness of Iran with P5+1 Powers but the uncooperative posture of Iran with IAEA, claiming that it “*continues to test boundaries of the current diplomatic process*”¹⁰⁵⁰. Furthermore, the BPC created “*Iran’s Task Force*”¹⁰⁵¹, in which Dennis Ross was one of the main members¹⁰⁵². In 2014, the center published a guideline to negotiations in order to have a good deal highlighting the major issues that the final deal with Iran should address. The project “*Evaluating a Nuclear Deal with Iran*”, to which participated also the Sen. Robb¹⁰⁵³, analyzed the interim deal and the Iran nuclear program, by arguing that “*whatever the content of any potential comprehensive deal, no matter how*

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibidem

¹⁰⁴⁵Hoff, R., Polinf, C., “A Foreign Policy Election”, Washington examiner, November 2014. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/a-foreign-policy-election>

¹⁰⁴⁶“About”, Bipartisan policy <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/about/>

¹⁰⁴⁷“our team”, bipartisan policy <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/team/>

¹⁰⁴⁸“Michael Makovsky, PhD”, JINSA <https://jinsa.org/person/dr-michael-makovsky/>

¹⁰⁴⁹ David Makovsky, fellows, WINEP. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/makovsky-david>

¹⁰⁵⁰ Blaise Misztal, “Update on Iran’s Nuclear Program, BPC, November, 2014

¹⁰⁵¹ Today it is not possible anymore to access to this page, since the BCP closed the specific website <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/press-release/bipartisan-policy-centers-iran-task-force-co-chair-senator-charles-robb/>

¹⁰⁵² Shank, G., “Anatomy of a Done Deal: The Fight over the Iran Nuclear Accord”, *Social Justice ; San Francisco* Vol. 42, Fasc. 1, (2016): 1-18,145.

¹⁰⁵³ At that time also co-chair of the Bipartisan Policy Center’s Foreign Policy Project.

restrictive it might be, Iran will maintain the knowledge and technical abilities it has...Diplomacy alone cannot truly prevent a nuclear Iran, but it can constrain its intentions”¹⁰⁵⁴. Therefore, they prescribed solution to have a good deal that would prevent any Iran’s attempts of breakout, such as to do not cease with sanctions faster, but a “*phased approach*” and IAEA “*extensive and wide-ranging inspections*”¹⁰⁵⁵

- Foundation for defense of democracies: FDD

The FDD, founded in 2001, is a “*non-profit and nonpartisan 501(c)(3) research institute focusing on foreign policy and national security.*”¹⁰⁵⁶ Even if it affirms that “*it does not accept donations from other governments*”¹⁰⁵⁷, it does not imply that it does not promote a pro-Israeli agenda. The organization was not a new, but it has been the transformation of a group, the EMET, which had strong ties with Israeli government and society¹⁰⁵⁸. By strengthening its neoconservative basis and enlarging its network of contacts, it shifted its main focus from Palestine to Iran. Indeed, it started the “*Iran energy project*” who ceased in 2015 under the director Mark Dubowitz¹⁰⁵⁹. The aim of the project was a hawkish action against Iran, following the logic of increasing sanctions instead of a diplomatic approach, coherently with the director’s position as he wrote in WSJ¹⁰⁶⁰. FDD has had a relevant role in legislative branch, since throughout the 2014, Dubowitz has been called two time to testimony in front of congressional committees. Usually, House and senate committees call to hearings relevant experts from relevant institute of research in order to better understand how to act, which means that their opinion would be listen by lawmakers as professional opinion and not personal one.

In other words, Dubowitz, considered a relevant expert in that domain, had preferential access to the place of power, by affirming the FDD pro-Israel point of view about Iran nuclear program’s negotiation. Indeed, in his first congressional testimony to Senate Foreign Relations Committee, after the interim deal, he supported the Menendez- Kirk’s sanctions bill¹⁰⁶¹. He stressed the importance of sanctions, by attacking Obama since: “*blocking any new congressional measures, Obama is making...a dangerous bet... when miscalculation could mean the most dangerous state sponsor of terrorism in the world getting its hands on the world’s most lethal weapon*”.¹⁰⁶² Moreover, throughout an analysis of several scenarios, all options remained on the table, including the military one, since sanctions relief would improve Iran’s position on negotiations,

¹⁰⁵⁴ Senator Charles S. Robb and General Charles F. Wald, “Evaluating a Nuclear Deal with Iran”, *Bipartisan policy center* (July 2014),29.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Ibidem*

¹⁰⁵⁶“About FDD”, FDD. <https://www.fdd.org/about-fdd/>

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁵⁸ MCCARTHY, D., “Most Favored Democracy”, *The American Conservative*, November 17, 2003 <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/most-favored-democracy/>

¹⁰⁵⁹ Which after the 2015 deal it change in “Iran program” with the aim to address the threat that Iran represents to Americans and its allies through research and policy options delivered in media

“Iran Program: about”, FDD: <https://www.fdd.org/projects/iran-program/>

¹⁰⁶⁰ Dubowitz, M., Gerecht, M.R., “The Case for Stronger Sanctions on Iran”, *WSJ Opinion*, November 2013. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-case-for-stronger-sanctions-on-iran-1384126905?tesla=y>

¹⁰⁶¹Dubowitz, M., “Negotiations on Iran’s Nuclear Program”, Congressional Testimony: Hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *FDD*, February 4, 2014,2-18. https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Dubowitz_Testimony.pdf

¹⁰⁶² *Ibidem*, 3

increasing “*the likelihood of a deal that does not adequately address Iran’s illicit military- nuclear program... requiring the U.S. president or Israeli Prime Minister to use military force to forestall that possibility*”.¹⁰⁶³ For this reasons, Congress had to pass the Menendez- Kirk’s sanctions bill before the collapse of talks to prevent Iran economic benefits.

At the end of the year, the FDD direct was called for another testimony about the Iran deal to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa¹⁰⁶⁴. In the hearing, he pushed upon an Iranian neglecting behavior, since it missed an IAEA deadline to complete actions in compliance with the agreement¹⁰⁶⁵. And he attacked Obama since he was trying to circumvent the congress and having shift from “*commitments to verifiably dismantle “substantial” portions or “a lot” of Iran’s nuclear program*”¹⁰⁶⁶. Indeed, he strongly defended the sanctions architecture and recommended possible solutions to the case, among which sanctions should remain even when a final agreement would be signed because an US essential leverage on Iran. If Dubowitz pushed on Congress, FDD experts and direct pressured public opinion. For instance, at the end of the year, the director May published an article on Washington Time “*betting on Iran*”, in which he hardly attacked Obama and his chief negotiator Sherman¹⁰⁶⁷.

- The Israel Project: TIP.

The Israel project is an advocacy organization founded in 2002 with two main offices, one in Jerusalem and one in Washington. It is “*dedicated to informing the media and public conversation about Israel and the Middle East. The only organization dedicated to changing people’s minds about Israel through cutting-edge strategic communications*”¹⁰⁶⁸ and through educational tools. Indeed, it tried to reach people by providing facts to press and policymakers, publishing talking points and researches, sending action alerts, social media communications as well as youtube’s video, and issuing petitions¹⁰⁶⁹. Since 2013 it has its own magazine, “*the tower*” and “*the tower Magazine*” on which members publish daily news¹⁰⁷⁰. Although it affirmed that “*TIP does not lobby and is not connected to any government*”¹⁰⁷¹, the board of directors has included Congressman and staff from both parties with important links with AIPAC. For instance, Representatives Wilson and Engel, the Sens. Kirk and Menendez, Sen. Lieberman have served on TIP’s Board of Advisors¹⁰⁷². Plus, Josh Block, former spokesman of AIPAC, was the CEO and TIP president from 2012 until 2019¹⁰⁷³. The links with AIPAC

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibidem*. 18

¹⁰⁶⁴Dubowitz, M., “Examining What a Nuclear Iran Deal Means for Global Security”, Congressional Testimony: Hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa”, *FDD*, November 20, 2014 <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA13/20141120/102758/HHRG-113-FA13-Wstate-DubowitzM-20141120.pdf>

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Ibidem* 4

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Ibidem* 21

¹⁰⁶⁷Clifford D. May, “Betting on Iran”, *The Washington Times*, November 19, 2014

<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2014/11/19/betting-on-iran/>

¹⁰⁶⁸“The Israel project, mission”, TIP. <https://www.theisraelproject.org/mission> accessed by August 2019

¹⁰⁶⁹“The Israel project: projects”, TIP <https://www.theisraelproject.org/projects> accessed by August 2019

“IRAN”, TIP. <https://www.theisraelproject.org/iran> accessed by August 2019

¹⁰⁷⁰“The tower”: <http://www.thetower.org> accessed by August 2019

¹⁰⁷¹“The Israel project, mission”, TIP <https://www.theisraelproject.org/mission>

¹⁰⁷² “The Israel Project “ the right web, May 15, 2015.https://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/the_israel_project/

¹⁰⁷³“Our Staff”, TIP <https://www.theisraelproject.org/staff>

were not new, in 2009 the TIP recognized AIPAC ‘s importance “for educating some Jews about Israel”¹⁰⁷⁴, and in 2012 the TIP gave visibility to AIPAC’ initiatives against Iran on its website¹⁰⁷⁵.

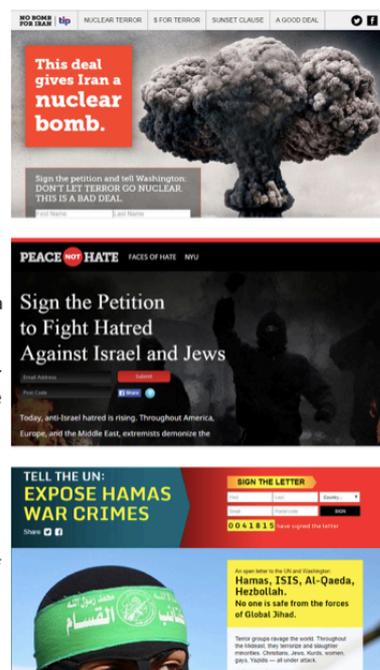
The TIP was fundamental in reaching public, by influencing media coverage through campaign against the nuclear Iran. In 2014, they issue a paper by delivering the AIPAC approved letter of Rep. Hoyer and Cantor “*Outline Core Principles of a Final Agreement with Iran*”¹⁰⁷⁶. Moreover, in the same year, they launched a new web-site campaign, “*No Bomb for Iran*”¹⁰⁷⁷, with imagines and statements about Iran and its nuclear program by impressing and fearing people¹⁰⁷⁸.

On issues that are vital to TIP’s mission, we engage in full-scale campaigns to get the word out to as many people as possible using both conventional and new-age public relations.

- We build websites that serve as an information hub on a particular issue.
- We place advertisements on billboards, in newspapers, on social media and the web.
- We engage in full-scale social media campaigns.

These efforts create an echo chamber that amplifies the truth – and we have proven to get results.

Our No Bomb For Iran was at the center of a public relations effort to ensure the American public knew the true dangers of the nuclear deal with Iran. More Americans were in favor of the deal when it was first announced than against it. We went to work, with a web campaign, an advertising campaign and traditional public relations. Thousands of people signed our petition at NoBombForIran.com and we used this growing support base to create a distribution network of social media assets we produced.



By the end of the congressional review period, the American public had flipped... 2 1

Source: Tip <https://www.theisraelproject.org/campaigns>

- United Against Nuclear Iran : UANI

The UANI is a no-profit and no-partisan advocacy group founded in 2008 by the Ambassadors Wallace, R. Holbrooke and Dennis Ross¹⁰⁷⁹ with the aim of ensuring “*economic and diplomatic isolation of the Iranian regime in order to compel Iran to abandon its illegal nuclear weapons program, support for terrorism and human rights violations*”¹⁰⁸⁰. The group was found also by Senator Lieberman, prominent Senator that during Obama’s mandate sponsored the main bills against Iran nuclear deal, and by Degan, Mossad Chief . Moreover, the group proposed public policies against Iran throughout their senators and representatives in the House, such us Sen. Kirk. Also, it pushed and applauded the enlargement of sanctions

Richman, J., “Josh Block resigns as CEO of The Israel Project”, JNS, July 2019. <https://www.jns.org/israel-project-ceo-josh-block-leaving-after-seven-years/>

¹⁰⁷⁴“The Israel Project’s 2009 GLOBAL LANGUAGE DICTIONARY”, TIP, 14 <https://www.transcend.org/tms/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/sf-israel-projects-2009-global-language-dictionary.pdf>

¹⁰⁷⁵AIPAC’S TAGS in TIP’s activities : <https://www.theisraelproject.org/tags/aipac> accessed August 2019

¹⁰⁷⁶“83 Senators Outline Core Principles of a Final Agreement with Iran in Letter to President Obama”, Paper TIP, accessed August 2019. <https://www.theisraelproject.org/83-senators-outline-core-principles-of-a-final-agreement-with-iran-in-letter-to-president-obama>

¹⁰⁷⁷“campaigns”, TIP, <https://www.theisraelproject.org/campaigns>

¹⁰⁷⁸ LOBE, J., “Spoiler Alert: Iran Hawks Take Wing Against Nuclear Deal” *LobeLog*, July 2014. <http://lobelog.com/spoiler-alert-iran-hawks-take-wing-against-nuclear-deal/>

¹⁰⁷⁹ Already part of WINEP and advisor of Obama, whereas Wallace has launched an initiative in 2014 “Counter Extremist Project (CEP)”: “About Counter extremism project”, <https://www.counterextremism.com/about> .

¹⁰⁸⁰“About, mission” UANI: <https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/about/mission>

against Iran. Indeed, Lieberman became as chair, whereas Sen. Kirk is part of the advisory board, as well as James Woolsey, former CIA director and harsh critics of Mearsheimer and Walt's book¹⁰⁸¹. Besides, Meir Degan, Israeli direct of Mossad, was among Original Co-Founders and Former Advisory Board Members¹⁰⁸²; and the research Jordan Steckler has been enrolled as Senior Research Analyst at the AIPAC until 2017¹⁰⁸³. After the Interim agreement, it issued a statement affirming that they were disappointed, since *"by rolling back sanctions now, the international community is significantly lessening the pressure on Iran's economy and the best measure of that pressure is the value of the Iranian dial"*¹⁰⁸⁴. From the same AIPAC position, the UANI has been an important tool that reinforced the AIPAC action in 2014. Indeed, it released a campaign against Rouhani after his discourse at the UNGA¹⁰⁸⁵. In truth, the UANI has been important for actions on agencies and firms, since it issued reports and press release through its Accounting Campaign or Iran Business register, by discouraging big firms to make deal with Iran¹⁰⁸⁶. The information delivered through these campaigns costed to UANI a scrutiny under the Justice Department¹⁰⁸⁷; but, regardless the content of the investigation, what it should be underline is the importance and the weight of its campaign on the White House.

- Committee on the Present Danger.

The CPD is a neoconservative non-partisan and no-profit pressure group with the aim of stiffening *"American resolve to confront the challenge presented by terrorism and the ideologies that drive it"*¹⁰⁸⁸. Indeed, born in 1950, it has been relaunched in 1976 and 2004 according to the danger that US was facing¹⁰⁸⁹. It can be defined foreign policy interest groups¹⁰⁹⁰, since it supports legislations and activities relevant for its mission through education and advocacy¹⁰⁹¹. Indeed, it tried to influence government's foreign policy with the objective *"to have a broad base of public"*¹⁰⁹². CPD and AIPAC had already several contacts before Obama mandates through key persons who had a role or were activists in both organizations, such as Sen. Lieberman and Sen. Kyl¹⁰⁹³, who several times spoken at the AIPAC conference shared CPD's activities and positions. The CPD has been important not only for its members, but mostly for its informative tools through which it

¹⁰⁸¹ "About Leadership", UANI, <https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/about/leadership>

¹⁰⁸² *Ibidem*

¹⁰⁸³ Jordan Steckler, Research Analyst", UANI. <https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/people/jordan-steckler>

¹⁰⁸⁴Wallance, M.D. "UANI Issues Statement Regarding P5+1 Deal with Iran", press release, UANI.

<https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/press-releases/uani-issues-statement-regarding-p51-deal-iran>

¹⁰⁸⁵ "UN general Assembly", UANI <https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/2014-campaign-and-news>

¹⁰⁸⁶ "Iran Business Registry" UANI <https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/ibr#>

"accounting campaign" UANI <https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/accounting>

¹⁰⁸⁷ APUZZO, M., "Moves to Shield Anti-Iran Group's Files", The New York Times, 28 July 2014 .

¹⁰⁸⁸ "our mission", CPD, web archive, accessed by August 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20071009234735/http://www.committeeonthepresentdanger.org/AboutUs/tabid/363/Default.aspx>

¹⁰⁸⁹ Now it focuses nowadays on China's threat: <https://presentdangerchina.org>

¹⁰⁹⁰ Thomas, A., *"Ethnic identity groups and US foreign policy"* (Praeger Publishers , 2002)

¹⁰⁹¹ "CPD Today", CPD, web archive, accessed by August 2009. <https://web.archive.org/web/20071021154144/http://www.committeeonthepresentdanger.org/AboutUs/CPDToday/tabid/383/Default.aspx>

¹⁰⁹² *Ibidem*

¹⁰⁹³ "our members", CPD, Web. Archive, accessed by August. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080124113829/http://www.committeeonthepresentdanger.org/OurMembers/tabid/364/Default.aspx>

acted, by addressing directly to people: newspaper, speeches, interviews, commissioned studies, position papers, public opinion polls and Congressional testimony and briefings¹⁰⁹⁴. Although CPD did not made negotiations on Iran nuclear deal and Obama diplomacy approach the top priority of its agenda; at the end of 2014, the CPD expressed its position on the Iran nuclear negotiations through its members. Indeed, Sol Sanders wrote an article *“The Persian threat”* by focusing on terrorism fight, the situation in the Gulf, on Obama’s approach to the region and on negotiations on Iran nuclear power¹⁰⁹⁵. He affirmed that *“Tehran’s mullahs are reaching for great power status. There is growing evidence Iran may shortly be a “threshold” nuclear state, that is one able to produce nuclear weapons and their delivery systems in short order. Never mind its oft repeated threat to wipe out Israel, a bomb will give Tehran dominance in the region...”*¹⁰⁹⁶. Then, he hardly criticized the Obama diplomatic efforts to reach a deal, by arguing was Obama accepting the Iranian hegemony in the area and *“for any but the most idealistic observer, it is hard to rationalize the past history of this fanatical Muslim regime’s secret nuclear efforts and any hope that it would abide by such an agreement, or, indeed, that UN or other surveillance would be more effective than in the past”*¹⁰⁹⁷.

- Iran Policy committee/ The Iran Policy Committee Publishing: IPC¹⁰⁹⁸.

The IPC has been founded in 2005 by Professor Tanter, but in 2012 it became “IPC publishing”¹⁰⁹⁹. Although the IPC does not display all its members, it gives us the information about its main personality, its founder, who has several links with AIPAC. Indeed, among several roles Tanter is an adjunct scholar at the pro-Israel WIPEN, AIPAC spin-off, and member of CDP¹¹⁰⁰. The original IPC agenda for US-Iran relations and it aim consisted in two options: *“open diplomatic and military options, while providing a central role for the Iranian opposition to facilitate regime change”*¹¹⁰¹. When the IPC changed in IPC Publishing, its focus has shift on *“empowering the Iranian people to change their own regime without external military intervention”*¹¹⁰². Therefore, Iran nuclear deal was not the first priority of the organization, but since Tanter gives the IPC political line, and since he shared with AIPAC the same critical vision of Obama’s negotiations with Iran, he started to declare his position in public statement and interviews. Indeed, after he expressed his support for Menendez’s bill in January¹¹⁰³, in an October interview, he affirmed that *“President Obama and*

¹⁰⁹⁴“CPD Today”, CPD, web archive, accessed by August 2009. <https://web.archive.org/web/20071021154144/http://www.committeethepresentdanger.org/AboutUs/CPDToday/tabid/383/Default.aspx>

¹⁰⁹⁵Sanders, S.W., “The Persion Thread”, ACDemocracy, November 2014. <https://acdemocracy.org/the-persian-thread/>

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibidem*

¹⁰⁹⁷ *ibidem*

¹⁰⁹⁸Iran policy committee: <https://americancommitteeonhumanrightspublishing.wordpress.com>

¹⁰⁹⁹ There is a change of website, the first version published until 2012 and we can find some trace thanks to the web archives; whereas, the second started in 2012 and it is still publishing.

¹¹⁰⁰ “About” IPC, <https://americancommitteeonhumanrightspublishing.wordpress.com/about/>

¹¹⁰¹ “Mission Statement,” Iran policy, accessed by August 2019 <http://www.iranpolicy.org/mission.php>

¹¹⁰²“ About” IPC, <https://americancommitteeonhumanrightspublishing.wordpress.com/about/>

Iran Policy Committee, IPC, web archive, august 2019.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20050831165746/http://iranpolicycommittee.com/>

¹¹⁰³ Tanter, R., “A Postmortem for Failure of Nuclear Talks With Iran”, Foreign Policy, January 3 2014.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/31/a-postmortem-for-failure-of-nuclear-talks-with-iran/>

Secretary John Kerry cannot unilaterally take away the American sanctions, which are the bulk of the sanctions against Iran... and no matter what the P5+1, the major powers, say, the US holds the 95% of the cards”¹¹⁰⁴. Then, he argued the only possible solution to keep “a nuclear-armed Iran from coming into” is a “regime change from within”.¹¹⁰⁵

¹¹⁰⁴ Tanter, R., interviewed by Anana Naidoo, The Heat, CCTV, <https://america.cgtn.com/2014/10/02/the-heat-explores-how-us-iran-can-find-common-ground>

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibidem. m

ANNEX 3

TRUMP'S PRO-ISRAEL ACTIONS.

- February 2, 2016: first meetings between Netanyahu and Trump
- February 13, 2017: new sanctions over people and entities with activities with Iran.
- February 15, 2017: Trump invited Netanyahu at the White House to discuss about Iran
- May 21, 2017: Trump visited Israel
- October 2017: US and Israel withdrawn from the UNESCO¹¹⁰⁶.
- December 6, 2017: Trump announced that US has recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital with the announcement of the change of embassy and consulate on May 14, 2018.
- January 16, 2018: Trump decide to cut \$60 million to UNRWA
- March 5, 2018: Trump and Netanyahu met.
- May 8, 2018: Us announced the withdrawal from the JCPOA and new sanctions over Iran.
- May 14, 2018: US embassy was opened in Jerusalem¹¹⁰⁷.
- June 2018: US withdrawn from UN Human Rights Council
- August 2018: Trump signed the Taylor Force Act, cutting US foreign aid to PA.
- September 2018, Trump cut more aid to UNRWA¹¹⁰⁸.
- October 2018: Ambassador Nikki Haley said "*when organizations undermine our national interests and our allies, we will not be complicit*"¹¹⁰⁹. US administration would no longer tolerate a UN condemnation of Israel
- March 25, 2019: Trump announced the recognition of Israel sovereignty over the Golan Heights.¹¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰⁶ Aljazeera, "US and Israel withdraw from UNESCO", Aljazeera and news agency, October 13, 2017. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/withdraws-unesco-171012133838151.html>

¹¹⁰⁷ Bolton, K.R., "US Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's Capital: A Travesty of History", Foreign Policy Journal, May 24, 2018 <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2018/05/24/us-recognition-of-jerusalem-as-israels-capital-a-travesty-of-history/> ;

¹¹⁰⁸ Brunnstrom, D., Sawafta, A., Lubell, M., Farrell, S., "Trump cuts \$25 million in aid for Palestinians in East Jerusalem hospitals", reuters, September 8, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-palestinians-hospitals/trump-axes-25-million-in-aid-for-palestinians-in-east-jerusalem-hospitals-idUSKCN1LO000>

Tibon, A., "Trump Administration Cuts \$10 Million From Israeli-Palestinian Co-existence Groups", Haaretz, September 15, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-trump-administration-cuts-10-million-from-israeli-palestinian-co-existence-groups-1.6471400>

¹¹⁰⁹ "Contemporary Practice Of The United States Relating To International Law: Interna-Tional Organizations: United States Withdraws From The Un Human Rights Council, Shortly After Re-Ceiving Criticism About Its Border Policy", American Journal of International law, 112 A.J.I.L. 745, October 2018.

¹¹¹⁰ "Trump Administration: Trump and Israel", The Jewish Library <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/trump-administration-trump-and-israel>

ANNEX 5.

BILL AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS CONSIDERED:

House of representatives' bill:

- H.R. 5833 (111th): Iran Transparency and Accountability Act of 2010”, government track, accessed by July 2019.
- H.R. 6043 (111th): Gulf Security and Iran Sanctions Enforcement Act”, government track, accessed July 2019,
- H.R.2194 (111th): Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010”,
- H.R.1905 (112th): Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012
- H.Res.568 (112th) Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability”,
- H.R.3979 (113th)- Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015”
- H.R.783 (113th) Prevent Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Weapons and Stop War Through Diplomacy Act,
- H.R.850(113th) - Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013”,
- H.R.938 (113th)- United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014
- H.Res 431 (113th): Calling on the United States Senate to increase sanctions against Iran
- H.Res. 98 (113th): Expressing support for Israel and its right to self-defence against the illegal nuclear program by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Government track.
- H.R.1191(114th) - Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015”
- H.R.3460 (114 th): To suspend until January 21, 2017, the authority of the President to waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions pursuant to an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran, congress.gov.
- H.R.3662 (114TH): Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act,
- H.R.4333 (114th) : Zero Tolerance for Terror Act
- H.R.4342 (114th):Iran Ballistic Missile Prevention and Sanctions Act of 2016 .
- H.R.6297 (114th) - Iran Sanctions Extension Act
- H.Res.41 (114th) Finding that the President has not complied with section 2 of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015”
- H.Res.411 (114th) Finding that the President has not complied with section 2 of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015

- H.R.1698 (115th) - Iran Ballistic Missiles and International Sanctions Enforcement Act”, Congress government bills, accessed by May 2019

Senate’s bills:

- S. 1065 (111th) :Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2009”,
- S. 1048 (112th) : To expand sanctions imposed with respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran, North Korea, and Syria, and for other purposes”
- S.908 (111th) - Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act
- S.2101 (112th): Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Human Rights Act of 2012”,
- S.1048 (112th).Iran, North Korea, and Syria Sanctions Consolidation Act of 2011”
- S.2165(112th) - United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012”,
- S.Amdt.1414 to S.1867 (112th) :National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012
- S.Amdt.3232 to S.3254 (112th) National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013
- S.Res.380 (112th): A resolution to express the sense of the Senate regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability
- S.Res. 65 (113th): Strongly supporting the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation.
- S. 1881 (113th): Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013,
- S. 2673 (113th): United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014
- S. 462 (113th): United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2013,
- S. 892 (113th): Iran Sanctions Loophole Elimination Act of 2013: overview,
- S.2119 (114th)- Iran Policy Oversight Act of 2015
- S.269 (114th) :Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2015.
- S.3267 (114th): Countering Iranian Threats Act of 2016
- S.5102 (115th): Iran sanctions.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS:

- Executive Order 13574 Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, as Amended”, Federal Register, Vol. 76, No. 101, May 25, 2011.
- Executive Order 13590 of November 20, 2011”, Federal register, The daily Journal of the US government, Presidential documents.
- Executive Order 13645 of June 3, 2013”, Federal Register/Vol. 78, No. 108/Wednesday, June 5, 2013/Presidential Documents.

ANNEX 6.

TRITA PARSI INTERVIEW.

1. By considering both Obama and Trump administrations, we can see two different approaches to foreign policy since the begging. By considering these different attitudes, according to you, has Israel changed its action from 2012 to 2017 in order to trump the US decisions?

Yes, I think that there is different in Israeli that they can now work with the administration, because the administration isn't very much willing to differ to Netanyahu wants handle different issues. Whereas, the Obama administration was pursuing Americans' interests in such way that they wanted to have good relations with Israel, but they do not want an agreement with Israel on a set of key issues, included the Israel-Palestinian issue, including Iran. And, this is resulted in tensions. But, Trump administration does not seem to have independent view on these issue, instead is very willing to listen to and being guided by both Saudi Arabia and Netanyahu government and Shaldon Aldeson for this things.

2. During the presidential elections, Trump was balanced towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while Hillary Clinton was extremely pro-Israel. What happened to Trump once he became president. Why did he move from a relatively distant position too even more pro-Israel than Hillary Clinton?

I think he was pro-Israel, but he was just his campaign was mostly focus... First of all, I did not have the money of Shaldon Adelson send on others in the beginning. They were not actually in favor of him. Shaldon Adelson was sending money supporting Marco Rubio. Whereas, what happens is that once he became President, some of them have turned to him and they have major demands in whether for him to get their support. And, once he could have their support, he was willing to sign it too. But, early on, when they were not supporting him, he was not important to him. I think that what he shows, ultimately, is that...I do not think that Israel and Israel policy is particularly important to Trump. Trump is a transactional guy: if he can get money from them, if he can get support, he will do it, but he is not coming to the White House with any particularly strong using favor or against Israel, or in favor or against Saudi Arabia. He is reacting to.

3. In the case of Trump, how much have counted the Trump's family ties with Israel in his foreign policy decisions?

I don't think we have any clear answer of the exact excepts. And, I personally, I am not sure even if it's business ties that is a driving factor for him on Israel. I think that families connections, son in law Kushner, who is very committed to Israel; his daughter who has converge to Judaism having important factors. I think that the more important factor and that even is the fact that Shaldon Adelson is one of the biggest financier of Donald Trump campaign. For him, this is issue number 1, 2, 3,4 and 5. He made not secret of whatsoever.

4. In your book, you point out different strategies through which Israel acts (executive pressure, congress pressure through the lobby, "framing effect"), and then you focus a bit on AIPAC and the Israel lobby. But which is the most effective strategy that we can define as "the main base of success" of Israel's action within US?

There is not one main strategy, there are many different strategies and organizations. Some organizations fulfil certain function, certain others. AIPAC is certainly one of the most important one, but the only the important one.

5. In your opinion, is J Street a real possibility for new peaceful relations between Israel- US and Iran?
I think that the existence of J Street has caused that many members of AIPAC, who feels that AIPAC was becoming too hawkish, too right-wing, moved over J Street. And, at the same time, the existence of other organizations have caused some people, who wanted AIPAC to be more hawkish to move to the right. So, the landscape for AIPAC has become more complex that it was before.

The problem is Jewish political situation. The Jewish political situation right now is not such that I think that a reduce power of AIPAC or a different President in Iran would automatically lead to better relations. There is a possibility to reduce tensions, but the Jewish political factor that is pushing Iran and Israel into rivalry are very real and cannot been push away. But, that rivalry can be handle in many different ways, it does not have be handle in this very aggressive and antagonistic way that is currently has been handle

NEGOTIATIONS with IRAN

5 REQUIREMENTS FOR A GOOD DEAL

As negotiators close in on a nuclear agreement with Iran, Congress must press American diplomats to insist on a good deal that eliminates every Iranian pathway to a nuclear weapon. To accomplish this goal, each of the following five minimum criteria must be met:



1. INSPECTIONS AND VERIFICATION

Inspectors must be permitted unimpeded access to suspect sites.

A good deal must support “anytime, anywhere” inspections – including all military facilities – to verify Iranian compliance. Iran’s decades-long history of cheating on international obligations suggests it will secretly attempt to continue its nuclear weapons program. Iran cannot be permitted any safe havens where it could pursue this ambition.



2. POSSIBLE MILITARY DIMENSIONS

Iran must fully explain its prior weaponization efforts.

A good deal must require Iran to come clean on all of its prior nuclear work, such as developing triggers for a nuclear weapon, as required by six United Nations Security Council resolutions. The entire scope of Iran’s nuclear activities must be known to establish a baseline against which to measure future actions. Iran must also be made to comply with prior commitments; allowing Iran to shirk them will only tempt it to defy commitments made under a new deal.



3. SANCTIONS

Sanctions relief must commence only after Iran complies with its commitments.

A good deal must lift sanctions gradually as Iran meets its obligations under the agreement. Further, any deal should specify clear and immediate consequences for Iranian violations. The international community must retain significant leverage while Iran demonstrates compliance; it must not provide immediate sanctions relief or unfreeze a significant portion of Tehran’s assets so Iran can “take the money and run.”



4. DURATION

Iran’s nuclear weapons quest must be blocked for decades.

A good deal must prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear threshold state. The announced framework would lift nuclear restrictions in 10 to 15 years and grant Iran virtually instant breakout time after 12 or 13 years. A deal must restrict Iran’s nuclear capabilities until it demonstrates conclusively, over time, that it no longer seeks a nuclear weapons capability.



5. DISMANTLEMENT

Iran must dismantle its nuclear infrastructure so it has no path to a nuclear weapon.

A good deal must require Iran to dismantle its nuclear infrastructure and relinquish its uranium stockpile such that it has neither a uranium nor plutonium pathway to nuclear weapons.

May 2015

www.aipac.org/Iran

ANNEX 8.

SCREENSHOT FROM THE WEBARCHIVE.

