

A Disclosure of Obama's Beliefs

*Exploring American ideology in Barack Obama's foreign
policy towards military Israel and nuclear Iran*



Universiteit Leiden

Master thesis Esther Jansen (S1718452)

Leiden University

July 2017

First Reader: Dr. Andrew Gawthorpe

Second Reader: Dr. Lukas Milevski

Abstract

Barack Obama secured two remarkable deals during his presidency: the nuclear deal with Iran and the military deal with Israel. Which beliefs inspired Obama to establish these deals?

In this thesis Obama's foreign policy towards nuclear Iran and military Israel is explored to determine whether any of the three ideologies – liberty promotion, orientalism and containment – have potentially inspired Obama's decision to establish the deals. In both cases Obama's actions indicate strong influence of the ideology of liberty promotion. The ideology of orientalism seems absent in both cases, and the containment ideology can be found in the Iran case only. The findings indicate that Obama's approach has been inspired by particular ideologies when he dealt with nuclear Iran and military Israel.

Index

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	The power of ideology	4
1.2	An old ideology in a new jacket	6
2	THE INFLUENCE OF IDEOLOGY IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY	6
2.1	The worldwide promotion of liberty	6
2.2	Hierarchy of race and orientalism.....	9
2.3	Perils of revolution and containment.....	10
3	AMERICA’S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST UNDER OBAMA.....	12
3.1	Case one: the military agreement with Israel.....	13
3.1.1	<i>Safeguarding Israel at any cost</i>	13
3.1.2	<i>Managing Israel</i>	16
3.1.3	<i>Israel’s unpredictable nature</i>	16
3.1.4	<i>The power of the pro-Israel lobby</i>	17
3.1.5	<i>Conclusion</i>	18
3.2	Case two: Iran’s nuclear deterrent	19
3.2.1	<i>Introduction</i>	19
3.2.2	<i>The nuclear issue</i>	20
3.2.3	<i>Reconciliation with Iran</i>	21
3.2.4	<i>Conclusion</i>	24
4	CONCLUSION: DID IDEOLOGY INFLUENCE OBAMA’S FOREIGN POLICY?	26
5	REFERENCES	27

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The power of ideology

"America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election. But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; [a] government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. [...] Those are not just American ideas, they are human rights, and that is why we will support them everywhere."

These words, spoken by Barack Obama during his visit to Cairo in 2009 (The Guardian, 2009), reflect his assumption that everyone shares the same core values. This belief manifested itself in American foreign policy in the 19th century when the American elite witnessed how the American society flourished after the Civil War in 1865. The United States was to be an example to the world - they believed - and their liberal values and ambitions would undoubtedly be sought and shared by other peoples too (Pfaff, 1989, p.13). The Americans made the promotion and expansion of liberalism central to their foreign policy ever since (Bouchet, 2013). Did this ideology inspire Barack Obama too in his foreign policy decisions? And if so, to what extent did he act upon it?

According to Michael Hunt (1987), ideology shapes foreign policy to a great extent. He describes the influence of ideology in American foreign policy in his book 'Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy' (1987) and argues that three core ideological principles shaped American foreign policy: 'The quest for national greatness and liberty', 'Hierarchy of race', and 'Perils of revolution' (p.17). Studying the influence of ideology in foreign policy is important for two reasons. Hunt argues that "Ideologies are important because they constitute the framework in which policymakers deal with specific issues and in which the attentive public understands those issues."(p.16). Furthermore, he argues that the ideas that constitute a foreign policy

ideology depend on different leaders and timeframes (p.16-17). However, the ideologies that Hunt describes relate to American foreign policy of the 19th and early-mid 20th century.

In order to correctly analyse Barack Obama's foreign policy, this study brings forwards three other ideologies that are associated with post-Cold War foreign policy: promotion of liberal values, orientalism, and containment. These three ideologies will be used as the starting point in this thesis to analyse the influence of ideology in Barack Obama's foreign policy decisions.

Obama left office roughly five months ago after a turbulent eight years as America's 44th president. During his presidency he made many remarkable decisions, but two stand out because of their paradoxical nature: the \$38 billion military deal with Israel and the nuclear deal with Iran. Both deals sparked controversy. Israel's deal is the largest military aid deal in U.S. history, while Obama repeatedly emphasized his desire to reduce America's military involvement in the Middle East. Moreover, Israel enjoys ongoing American military support despite acting against U.S. interests on a number of issues. On the other hand there is Iran with whom Barack Obama secured a nuclear deal after nearly four decades of hostility while strongly opposing its nuclear ambitions and revolutionary regime. Israel and Iran are considered enemies of each other, but nevertheless secured an important deal with a common world power: the United States. What inspired Barack Obama when he negotiated these deals? Was he influenced by a particular ideology? By analysing the two cases of Israel and Iran, this study aims to answer the following research question: **did the ideological principles influence Barack Obama's foreign policy towards military Israel and nuclear Iran?**

This thesis proceeds as follows. Firstly, Hunt's three core ideologies will be outlined to show the foundation on which American foreign policy was built. Afterwards these ideologies are connected to three other theories that correlate with them and are associated with post-Cold War foreign policy. This will allow for a better analysis of Obama's foreign policy. Secondly, America's role in the Middle East will be discussed briefly with the focus on Israel and Iran. Coupled with the core elements of Barack Obama's doctrine, it provides for a deeper understanding of the issues he encountered in the region during his presidency. Thirdly, the updated ideological principles are explored in Barack Obama's foreign policy towards military Israel to see if they are present and, if so, to what extent they have influenced his strategy. Fourthly, Obama's decisions regarding the nuclear deal with Iran are analysed to determine

whether the ideological principles influenced his decision-making. And finally, the results will be discussed and the research question will be answered.

1.2 An old ideology in a new jacket

To fully understand the ideology behind Obama's foreign policy towards Israel and Iran it is important to start at the beginning. Michael Hunt thoroughly described the origin and expression of three ideologies, that are thought to have shaped American foreign policy. The first one is 'The quest for national greatness and liberty'. In short, this ideology stresses the importance of spreading liberal values to protect America's national safety. Defeating foreign hostile powers and actively participate in world affairs is considered vital to this. Second, the 'Hierarchy of race'-ideology states that some cultures or races are more developed than others and therefore enjoy a more powerful position in the world. The third and last ideology proposed by Hunt is the 'Perils of revolution'. This idea entails that revolutions and other uprisings are dangerous to America's national safety because of their contagious and unpredictable nature. To better explain Obama's strategy in Israel and Iran, this study suggests three other theories that share features with Hunt's original ideologies. These 'updated' ideologies are thought to better suit the current timeframe because they have been associated with post-Cold War foreign policy (see a.o. Nayak & Malone, 2009; Bouchet, 2013; and Dueck, 2015) and are therefore considered more useful when exploring the cases in this thesis. Hunt's first ideology, 'The quest for national greatness and liberty', will be updated to 'The promotion of liberal values'. The second ideology, 'Hierarchy of race', is updated to the theory of 'Orientalism'. The last ideology, 'Perils of revolution', will be updated to the ideology of 'Containment'. Both original and updated ideologies will be described below before analyzing them in the cases.

2 THE INFLUENCE OF IDEOLOGY IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

2.1 The worldwide promotion of liberty

In the 19th and 20th century, the United States became more internationally involved and established itself as a world power. After the end of the bloody Civil War in 1865, the U.S. blossomed due to the Industrial Revolution, making it a 'breadbasket to the world' (McDougall, 1997, p.102). The renewed strong federal government and modernized economy brought the Americans new energy, confidence and pride, resulting in the strengthened desire to expand overseas. President Abraham Lincoln, who successfully led the United States through the Civil War, voiced before the end of the war in 1862 that America would be "the worlds last best hope." (McDougall, 1997, p.3). He was, like many others of his generation, driven by the growing assumption that America could serve as a model to other states and be an exemplary society. The American political elite started to reflect upon how the United States should position itself in the new international world order that gradually unfolded. They agreed that their international behaviour should reflect their cultural values (Hunt, 1987, p.17). A new mission was established, defined by historian Albert J. Beveridge in 1919 as: "To present to mankind the example of happiness and well-being which comes from progressive, self-disciplined liberty." (Hunt, 1987, p.135). The mission formed the basis on which three core ideological ideas developed that influenced American foreign policy from the beginning of the 20th century. The first one is the quest for national greatness and liberty.

'The active quest for national greatness, coupled with liberty promotion' (Hunt, 1987, p.17) is an ideology based on the assumption that "national security would carry the nation towards greatness in the world" (Hunt, p.41). National security was thought to be achieved by active participation in the world's affairs to timely signal possible danger and defeat hostile foreign powers. Moreover, the world's economy had to be opened to encourage the flow of trade, capital and resources, and liberal values such as democracy, economic freedom and rule of law had to be actively promoted. All these efforts would further enhance the national character, strengthen unity and American pride, and stimulate the economy. "Greatness abroad," argues Hunt (1987, p.42), "would glorify liberty at home.". The 'quest' is visible in American foreign policy of the twentieth century. In 1917 Woodrow Wilson placed the global promotion and spread of democracy central to American war aims (Cox, 2000 p.152). His famous phrase "make the world safe for democracy" (Smith, 1994, p.xvii) reflected

his belief about the importance of this value to the American nation. Much later, on 28 May 1965, president Johnson declared: "We want for the peoples of this hemisphere [U.S. and Latin America] only what they want for themselves: liberty, justice, dignity, a better life for all." (Pfaff, 1989, p.10). The leaders of the United States assumed that their society served as an example to the world and that they had the responsibility to "fix" other civilizations that lacked liberal values. Protecting the nation's safety continued to be the ultimate goal of this mission, and the belief that the Americans are best protected by the expansion of democracy became a tradition in American foreign policy (Smith, 1994, p.9). In 1996 Clinton's National Security Strategy declared: "The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world [. . .] the safer our nation is likely to be and the more our people are likely to prosper." (Desch, 2007, p.22). The twentieth century ultimately expressed America's desire to make the nation great and enrich the world with American values.

What is the status of the quest for national greatness and liberty promotion in the 21st century? Many scholars argue that the promotion of liberty, especially democracy, continues to be an important aspect of American foreign policy today (see a.o. Coyne & Hall Blanco, 2016; Bouchet, 2013; Desch, 2007; Lieber, 2005, p.49). The rhetoric of the last two presidents has reflected this tradition. In 2005 president George Bush spoke the words: "I believe the United States is the beacon for freedom in the world. And I believe we have a responsibility to promote freedom that is as solemn as the responsibility is to protecting the American people, because the two go hand-in-hand." (Desch, 2007, p.22). A few years later in 2010, the National Security Strategy of his successor Barack Obama stated that the purpose of American engagement abroad is "to advance democracy and human rights; and ultimately position ourselves to better address key global challenges by growing the ranks of prosperous, capable, and democratic states that can be our partners in the decades ahead." (Bouchet, 2013, p.44). Liberty promotion, for the sake of American security, seems to be present in American foreign policy today. The ideology proposed by Hunt is thus relevant for exploring current foreign policy and therefore does not to be updated to another, more contemporary ideology. Yet the name will be rephrased to 'The promotion of liberal values' to accurately reflect America's current interest, which is promoting liberal values for America's national safety.

2.2 Hierarchy of race and orientalism

The second core idea that influenced American foreign policy, according to Hunt (1987, p.46), is the idea that race is hierarchical. The origins of this folk wisdom, which ranks people on the basis of their physical appearance, goes back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century when these racial views caused severe exploitation of black African people. In America the race relations gradually shifted after the Civil War ended in 1865 but the dominant, "white" view on the issue of black inferiority remained according to Hunt (1987, p.51). The conception of race was so powerful that it passed to the generations thereafter (p.91) and carried over into American foreign policy. It shaped the way the Americans dealt with other peoples they encountered, including the Latino's, Asian's and Europeans. Hunt argues that in a rapidly changing world, the solid view on racial hierarchy offered a useful, easy handle to the world for American policymakers so that they did not have to puzzle out unknown cultures (p.52). Some races were simply more civilized or barbaric than others. Gradually, Americans build up an imaginary wall to protect themselves against unknown, possibly dangerous cultures and their peoples (Hunt, 1987, p.90).

Would Barack Obama, who has a Kenyan background and grew up in Indonesia, be influenced by an ideology containing elements based on racist grounds? To better assess this, the theory of Orientalism will be used instead of Hunt's race ideology to analyse Obama's foreign policy. It is an ideology that has been used by scholars to examine American identity politics in the light of its restless attempt to promote and spread its hegemony (Nayak & Malone, 2009). Orientalism was first described by Edward Said in 1979 as a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (p.3). The Orient, also referred to as the Other, is considered mysterious, unpredictable and dangerous. For Westerners the Other included among other the Muslim, Jewish, and Asian natives (Nayak & Malone, 2009). Said also argues that Orientalism is about shaping one's identity. Beliefs about the Other form the basis of how the West sees itself (Said, 1979, p.12). In this element lies the difference with Hunt's hierarchy of race ideology. Orientalism explains that the West needs the comparison with the Other to validate claims about itself. Within the Orientalist movement exists an American version of Orientalism according to Nayak and Malone (2009). They argue that the

Americans assume a clear distinction between oneself and the Other which underlies the American political thought and subsequently influences its relations with especially non-Western countries. Nayak and Malone argue that George W. Bush justified his war on terror with claims about different characteristics of the Other such as habits and beliefs. His speech from 21 September 2001 reflects this:

"Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber - a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms - our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. [...] Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. [...] This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom." (The Guardian, 2001).

Bush emphasized the core features of American society, such as freedom and a democratically elected government, claiming that these are 'hated' by 'them'. This assumed difference between America (the Self) and the terrorists (the Other) shaped a clear image of the American society and legitimized 'the world's fight'. Lacking knowledge or understanding of an unknown group decided the course of Bush's well-known foreign policy on terrorism. Orientalism is an influential ideology and is therefore considered relevant to explain Barack Obama's foreign policy. If he acted from an Orientalist point of view, for instance when dealing with the Iranians, will be examined in the cases.

2.3 Perils of revolution and containment

Finally, the third core idea is the so called 'Perils of revolution' (Hunt, 1987, p.92). Two philosophers, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, strongly influenced the American way of thinking after the American Revolution between 1765 and 1783. They argued that the fate of a revolution depended on the characteristics of the nation that carried out the revolution. "In broadest terms," wrote Hunt (1987, p.96), "the quality of a people – their fortitude, integrity,

literacy, devotion to justice, and intelligence – determined whether they would pass safely through what Jefferson called the "hazards of a transition from one form of government to another". The American Revolution was the ultimate result of a well-executed uprising, but were other nations capable of doing this too? What if they, instead, awakened a reign of terror in their country? Both Adams and Jefferson concluded that revolutions were too dangerous because of the contagious nature and potential far reaching implications (Hunt, 1987, p.97). The Americans thus had to remain cautious of possible revolutionary outbreaks outside their border. Sudden social and political revolutions overseas were regarded as a threat. "If you don't pay attention to the periphery, the periphery changes. And the first thing you know the periphery is the centre." said Dean Rusk in 1961 when he was the U.S. Secretary of State (Hunt, 1987, p.152). Americans gradually shaped their foreign policy around efforts to control the world outside American borders.

To accurately analyse Barack Obama's foreign policy in Iran and Israel, this study suggests using the doctrine of containment as an ideology instead of Hunt's 'Perils of revolution'. According to Pollack (2010) the containment strategy is used by the U.S. today to deal with China, Afghanistan and Iran when normal diplomatic relations are deemed impossible. Therefore, it is considered a relevant ideology to explore whether it inspired Barack Obama's foreign policy. The ideology of containment has its roots in geopolitical thinking and the balance of power (Gavin, 2015). It was introduced by George Kennan in 1948, who argued that the goal of containment should be to stop Soviet expansion because it endangered the American national security (Gaddis, 2005, p.33). Containment gradually became a well-known foreign policy strategy when the United States tried to curb the spread of Soviet influence during the Cold War. When the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, the doctrine of containment was not abandoned. It became the main objective of U.S. foreign policy to control 'rogue' states (Litwak, 2000, p.xiii). "As the sole superpower, the United States has a special responsibility for developing a strategy to neutralize, contain, and through selective pressure, perhaps eventually transform these backlash states into constructive members of the international community.", wrote Anthony Lake, the national security advisor of President Clinton, in 1994 referring to among other North Korea and Libya (Litwak, 2000, p.2). In the 21st century American foreign policy was largely shaped by Bush's war on terror. His National Security Strategy of 2002 read: "Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a

terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents.' (Desch, 2007, p.23). Containment rather than transformation became the policy towards global terrorism (Desch, 2007), though elimination was the ultimate goal. If Barack Obama was inspired by the ideology of containment in his foreign policy towards military Israel and nuclear Iran will be explored in the cases.

3 AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST UNDER OBAMA

Now that Hunt's three ideologies are explained and connected to contemporary theories, it is important to address America's involvement in the Middle East before moving to the case studies. The 9/11 attacks have undoubtedly caused a true turnover in American strategic thinking (Lieber, 2005, p.25). The threat of terrorism and nuclear weapons suddenly became reality, causing increased anxiety among George Bush and his administration who feared that American primacy was seriously endangered. American involvement in the Middle East radically increased. The war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the nuclear ambitions of Iran are just some of the challenges that the U.S. encountered. Barack Obama was determined to break away from Bush's policies by rebalancing American commitments to the Middle East (Lynch, 2015). He wanted American withdrawal from Iraq, a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and reconciliation with Iran. He emphasized the importance of American military retrenchment, accommodation and gestures of goodwill (Dueck, 2015, p.2). Bush spoke about 'good' and 'evil' in the world, whereas Obama talked about bridging the differences (Rynhold, 2008). Diplomatic engagement, instead of preventative use of force, was an important element in his foreign policy. His diplomatic efforts were challenged enormously on a number of issues, for instance when he attempted to broker the dispute between Israel and Palestine. He viewed this as "a constant sore that affects U.S. foreign policy" (Rynhold, 2008, p.2), yet he was unable to broker a peace agreement between the two parties. He did however manage to secure a huge military deal with one of them: Israel. This decision will be studied in the next section to see which beliefs moved Obama to give the green light for the biggest military aid agreement in American history.

3.1 Case one: the military agreement with Israel

Barack Obama secured the largest military deal yet with Israel on 14 September 2016. The agreement, worth \$38 billion dollar, contributes to Israel's security for the next decade. Military material, technology and knowledge will contribute to the protection of Israeli borders and its citizens, and help Israel to better deal with instability and unrest in the region (CNN, 2016). After signing the deal, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared: “The relationship between Israel and the United States is solid and powerful. It does not mean that we don’t have disputes now and then. But these are disputes you have between family, it does not affect whatsoever the great friendship between Israel and the United States, a friendship that this aid deal represents, that will strengthen Israel’s military force in the next decade.” (Reuters, 2016). Talks about the military deal with Israel lasted for months, at a time when tensions between Benjamin Netanyahu and president Barack Obama were at its highest because of three core issues. The first issue was the establishment of the American nuclear deal with Iran, which Israel strongly opposes. Second, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not even close to being resolved and that remains a thorn in Obama’s eye. Lastly, Israel repeatedly ignored Obama’s demands to retreat from the occupied Palestinian territories and continues to build settlements. The relationship with Israel was indeed precarious under Barack Obama and it seems rather odd that he secured the massive military deal despite so many bumps in the road. What is in it for the United States? What beliefs influenced Obama, who has been critical of Israel, to arrange such an important deal with an ally that opposes American interests?

3.1.1 Safeguarding Israel at any cost

Various American presidents have clashed with Israel before and crises in the relationship are hardly new. In the last 50 years presidents like Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush have had multiple conflicts with Israel, among other about the settlements (Gordon, 2016). Obama was struggling with that issue too. Although he was critical of Israel, his rhetoric

has been a mix of criticism and pro-Israeli statements (Rynhold, 2008). "Precisely because of our friendship it is important that we tell the truth: the status quo is unsustainable, and Israel too must act boldly to advance a lasting peace." said Obama in 2011 (Kramer, 2016, p.56) about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When securing the military deal in 2016, Obama made a strong political argument: he showed the world that the United States will continue to support Israel regardless of the fuss in their relationship. "It's an important message to the region that nobody should misread the differences between the U.S. and Israel when it comes to Iran or policy differences when it comes to the Palestinians. At the core, the U.S. remains very committed to Israel's long-term security." said David Makovsky, director of the Project on the Middle East Peace Process at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (CNN, 2016). Why is Israel's security important to the United States?

The answer to this question can be found in the Cold War period. Towards the end of the 1960s the U.S. witnessed how friendly governments in the Middle East were overthrown by the Soviet regime and gradually became hostile (Organski, 1990). The Soviet Union was actively bringing arms into the region to buttress its Arab allies. Israel was already a U.S. ally and felt the Soviet threat come closer. In 1973 Syria and Egypt, both backed by the Soviet Union, launched attacks on Israel to retrieve the former Egyptian Sinai Peninsula that was abducted by Israel in 1967 during the Six-Day War. Through a joint surprise attack, the Arab coalition started the Yom Kippur War on October 6 1973 (Stephen, 2008). Israel, a democratic state, stood as the defender of Western values amidst its Soviet-armed Arab neighbours. If Israel would be defeated, the U.S. reasoned, the Middle East would become entirely Soviet-dominated (Organski, 1990). This expansion had to be blocked for the safety of America and its allies. So Israel was eventually heavily armed by the U.S. to resist the Soviet-backed coalition (Stephen, 2008). After weeks of fighting and thousands of casualties, a cease fire was brokered by the United Nations on October 25 1973. Shortly thereafter the United States stood up as a mediator to broker peace between Egypt and Israel, which led to the Camp David Accords in 1978. Egypt separated itself from the Soviet Union and became the biggest recipient of American foreign aid after Israel (Stephen, 2008). The influence of the Soviets in the region reduced rapidly until the Union collapsed in 1991. Israel witnessed how its powerful friend, the United States, got even more dedicated to its security than before.

After the Yom Kippur War Israel's military potential was continuously monitored and updated. This 'Gold Standard' or Qualitative Military Edge refers to the level of U.S. support to Israel that is necessary to maintain Israel's military superiority in the Middle East (Holt, 2014). It remains a U.S. national interest until this day for an important reason. As mentioned before American interests are thought to be best protected by the expansion of liberalism, because this makes the international order more advantageous to the United States (Hunt, 1987; Desch, 2007; Bouchet, 2013). At the heart of this thought lies the idea that democracy abroad contributes to American security and prosperity. According to Bouchet (2013), Barack Obama made democracy promotion one of his strategic goals. Protecting Israel, a democracy in a turbulent and largely undemocratic region, equals protecting oneself. Israel's military forces deters possible enemies in the Middle East (Davidson & Flourney, 2012) and supports the advancement of democracy in the region which in turn is beneficial to American security. Barack Obama seems to have prioritized this thought when securing the deal because Israel did not give Obama many other reasons to commit. The ongoing Israel-Palestinian dispute fuels Hamas and Hezbollah terrorism and complicates the maintenance of a pro-American balance of power in the region (Rynhold, 2008). It also endangers Israel reputation of being democratic because of its illiberal behaviour towards the Palestinians (Gordon, 2016). All of these elements together jeopardize America's safety in the long run and work against its security interests. The deal is contrary to Obama's initial plans with the Middle East, which were reducing America's massive military investment and demanding allies to take more responsibility for their own security (Lynch, 2015). At the end of his presidency he swung to the opposite side by securing the massive military deal, crushing his two original policies that could have rightsized Israel's behaviour. Bishara (2016) argues that the more Israel is militarised by the United States, the less Israel is willing to make compromises. He also points out that providing military assistance for preserving Israel's security is "lame at best", because Israel has been using the money to maintain its illegal settlements on Palestinian territory. If Barack Obama was aware of this, why would he award a huge amount of military aid again to Israel?

3.1.2 *Managing Israel*

A possible answer to this question is that providing military aid gives the U.S. more leverage on the Israeli government. The military deal would be a part of a strategy to implement ways to a new peace process plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for example through a UNSC resolution. Claims for this have however been denied by Obama's national security advisor Susan Rice (The New York Times, 2016). Barack Obama did emphasize the importance of resolving the conflict after securing the military deal. "As I have emphasized previously," he said, "the only way for Israel to endure and thrive as a Jewish and democratic state is through the realization of an independent and viable Palestine. Ultimately, both this MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] and efforts to advance the two-state solution are motivated by the same core U.S. objective of ensuring that Israelis can live alongside their neighbours in peace and security." (Haaretz, 2016). A few months later, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2334 demanding an immediate cease of all Jewish settlement activities (United Nations, 2016). The United States broke a longstanding tradition of vetoing Israel-related resolutions by abstaining from voting on this one. It may have been the first signal to Israel that the U.S. was ready to deal with its illiberal behaviour. But American leverage through the deal has not worked out so far. Israel did underline its commitment to the peace process when signing the military agreement (Bishara, 2016) but today, nearly one year later, Israel started work on new settlements in the West Bank (BBC, 2017). Perhaps Obama did not have enough time to employ the deal in the way he intended to, because his presidency ended roughly four months after securing the deal.

3.1.3 *Israel's unpredictable nature*

Allin & Simon (2010) argue that Israel will naturally make its own decisions, thereby ignoring American interests if they do not appeal to them. Obama's pressure on Netanyahu to stop building settlements has been counterproductive so far and even complicated negotiations further with the Palestinians (Indyk, Lieberthal & O'Hanlon, 2012).

Moreover, Obama has lost credibility from the Israeli public because his rhetoric has been at times inconsistent with his foreign policy. Bouchet (2013) argues that every time the President

spoke of respecting choices of other countries, this statement was coupled with the standard proclamation that “the U.S. believes in universal liberal rights and values that are, effectively, non-negotiable” (p.39). Thus if a country chooses to follow another path, like Israel, it is only accepted by the U.S. if it leads to a clear liberal democratic destination. The administration liberal interests have not been taken too serious by Israel thus far. Drezner (2011, p.66) argues that “the administration's embrace of democratic ideals has not gone down as well in Saudi Arabia or Israel; those countries prefer the devils they know, and the United States again seems like a revisionist power in the region.” Obama is, however, not to blame entirely. Another powerful actor at home limited his critical approach towards Israel and possibly influenced his decision to secure the military deal. This actor is the pro-Israel American lobby group.

3.1.4 The power of the pro-Israel lobby

Besides national security interests and liberal tendencies, the Obama administration had other reasons to continue its support to Israel despite its opposing actions. Obama has been popular among the American Jews, who overwhelmingly voted for Obama over his opponent McCain in 2008 (Allin & Simon, 2010). When Obama entered office, he experienced the enormous influence that the American Jews have in U.S. politics. The pro-Israel lobby, carried out by Jewish organisations, have influenced U.S. foreign policy for decades (Organski, 1990, p.3). Groups like the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) have protested many U.S. actions deemed unfavourable to Israel (Holt, 2014) and are thought to have unmatched power today (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2012, p.95). AIPAC is still strongly pressuring for American support for Israel (Gordon, 2016) even though they know it has become harder to make Israel's case (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2012, p.102). But its backers have emphasized the value of supporting Israel many times: Israel is surrounded by enemies, it is a democratic state, and the Jewish people have suffered enough and deserve unlimited support (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2012, p.92). Regardless of his criticism about the settlements and the conflict, Obama could not and did not ignore them. He praised Israel's democracy (Rynhold, 2008) and secured the massive military deal that contributes to Israel's safety for the next ten years. He said that the deal underscored America as “Israel's greatest friend and partner.” (The New York Times,

2016). Moral beliefs about Israel thus played an important role in the decision to secure the military deal, and these were strengthened by the American Jewish lobby groups.

Some however argue that Obama was unpopular among the Israeli Jews because of his incidental critical attitude towards Israel. Indyk, Lieberthal and O'Hanlon (2012) state that Obama assumed he could win Israel over with stepped-up security backing, but that the real problem got lost out of sight: he hardly connected with the Israeli public during his presidency, for instance via speeches or visits. This damaged Obama's credibility as a supporter of Israel in the public discourse. In response Netanyahu gradually gained more support for his policies, making it harder for Obama to move the Israeli audience. Allin and Simon (2010) agree that Obama has not showed an outspoken connection to the Israeli audience. During his presidency he actively sought reconciliation with many peoples in Muslim countries, but not with the Israeli people. Gilboa (2009) argues that this is precisely the reason that most Israeli's and American Jews seriously doubted his policies towards Israel and the Middle East and that they felt like Obama was actively distancing the U.S. from Israel, thus altering the 'special relationship' between them. There is however no indication in literature that Obama's approach to Israel had anything to do with the Israeli public, or that he disliked the Israelis and did not feel connected to them. Nayak and Malone (2009), who argued that Westerners regards the Jews as 'the Other' within the Orientalist ideology, do not provide concrete examples of this assertion either. Barack Obama was critical of Israel's actions, but not explicitly of its inhabitants.

3.1.5 Conclusion

Obama's decision to secure the military deal seems to contradict with what he aimed for during his presidency: less military investments and more responsibility of allies for their own security. Was he influenced by the three ideologies – promotion of liberal values, orientalism and containment – when deciding to secure this deal?

The promotion of the liberal values seems to be present in his decision for the military deal. His intention was to protect Israel against possible future threats to preserve democracy in the region, which is vital to American security. Moreover, the deal was probably part of the bigger plan to maintain a pro-American balance of power in the Middle East although Israel's actions

complicated this at times. Obama did not seem to actively use the deal as leverage to pressure Israeli prime minister Netanyahu to stop building settlements. Regardless, the pro-Israel lobby at home would likely have given Obama a hard time if he had proceeded with that plan. Obama did not manage to steer Israel in the right direction with the deal, since the building of settlements continues until this day. Signs of the containment ideology are hardly present in Obama's policy towards Israel and thus considered irrelevant for explaining his decision to secure the deal. Lastly, there are no convincing arguments yet that Obama was inspired by orientalist beliefs towards Israel or the Israeli public. Despite his presumed disconnection with the Israeli audience there are no profound signs that Obama distanced himself from them and regarded the Israeli Jews as 'the Other'. In summary, Obama's actions indicate that he was inspired by the ideology of liberty promotion when securing the deal, but not explicitly by orientalism or containment.

3.2 Case two: Iran's nuclear deterrent

3.2.1 Introduction

Being called either "historical" (BBC, 2015) or a "historic mistake" (The New York Times, 2015), the nuclear deal got the official green light in the summer of 2015. It was established by Iran and the P5 + 1 group of world powers led by the United States. The agreement is supposed to prevent Iran from producing a nuclear weapon by restricting its nuclear activities for at least a decade, in turn for the lifting of international sanctions that crippled Iran's economy for years (BBC, 2016). Iran is now allowed to sell oil again on international markets and can thus participate in the global financial system. Regarding the nuclear activities, Iran's number of uranium enrichment centrifuges have been reduced along with its uranium stockpile. Research and development are restrained for the next seven years, and uranium enrichment is forbidden. If Iran does not adhere to the agreement, the sanctions will be imposed again for another decade (BBC, 2016). Particularly remarkable about this deal is that the United States and Iran talked directly with each other again after 35 years of mutual hostility and obstruction (Barzegar, 2014). Why did Barack Obama decide to seek reconciliation with Iran, a state that

has been called part of an “axis of evil” by his predecessor George W. Bush in 2002 (Wright, 2010, p.5)? Which deeper beliefs have potentially inspired Obama to do business with Iran on the nuclear issue?

3.2.2 *The nuclear issue*

To understand Obama’s approach it is important to explore the nuclear issue first. What is the fuss about Iran’s nuclear program, while other countries carry out nuclear activities too – or already possess nuclear weapons? The reason for this is that Iran violated the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty by hiding its uranium enrichment program for nearly two decades (BBC, 2015). Enriching uranium is a vital aspect for the production of a nuclear weapon. Despite the heavy sanctions that hit Iran thereafter, Iran has not opened up enough about its possible military dimensions according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The international community, including the United States is therefore worried about Iran’s nuclear potential and its intentions with the program. Iran’s nuclear issue is entangled in its politics, which have complicated its relationship with the United States. The situation got messy when the United States interfered in Iran’s domestic affairs back in the 1950s. The American CIA organized a military coup d’état together with the British in 1953 to depose the democratically elected Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh for his nationalist movements. They were afraid that Iran would fall into communism, just like its Soviet neighbor, and wanted to keep access to its immense oil resources. The newly installed shah Pahlavi kept a close relationship with the U.S. and opposed Soviet expansion. His focus was on westernizing Iran and he was being criticized heavily for this by the opposition. Iran started its nuclear activities in 1957, and ironically purchased a reactor and enriched uranium fuel from the United States in 1960 under an agreement on nuclear cooperation (Albright & Stricker, 2010, p.77). Its purpose was mainly energy production, but the shah kept the option open of establishing nuclear weapons open for safety reasons. In the years thereafter, the opposition grew stronger and unrest in the country increased. The popularity of the shah decreased as he was accused of corruption and funneling oil money to the elite instead of creating jobs for the people. Support and loyalty for the clergy grew rapidly because they seemed to be more concerned with the

future of the Iranian people. Eventually the dissatisfaction resulted in the Iranian revolution in 1979, led by the extremely conservative Ayatollah Khomeini who changed Iran's name to the 'Islamic Republic of Iran'. Ayatollah Khomeini believed that his country could preserve its interests only if it kept away from the West and in particular from the United States, which he called "the Great Satan" (Wright, 2010, p.5). This thought established the philosophy that "Iran would follow its own, independent political, security and economic trends in regional and global equations, which would inevitable be in contradiction with U.S.' hegemonic aims in the Middle East region." (Barzegar, 2014, p.2). Meddling of the international society, especially from the United States, was regarded as foreign arrogance and an attack on Iran's sovereignty (Chubin, 2010, p. 83).

The nuclear programme was shut down by Ayatollah Khomeini for a short period until he decided to restart it during the Iran-Iraq War to deter both Iraq and the U.S. (Albright & Stricker, 2010, p.78). Iran carried out its first nuclear tests in 1999 and 2002 and conducted secret enrichment facilities. When this came to light in 2002, the international community pressured Iran for opening up these facilities to inspection and condemned the tests. Despite several inspections thereafter, Iran continued to not fully disclose its nuclear programme. It became a political issue, since the programme was part of Iran's plan to become more self-reliant and gain international respect. Several U.S. administrations have imposed sanctions on Iran because of the nuclear tests and the secret enrichment facilities (Clawson, 2010, p. 115). Sanctions were deemed effective because they would disrupt Iran's nuclear programme, deter other countries to acquire nuclear weapons, potentially aid the democratic opposition in Iran and function as leverage for possible nuclear negotiations. Under Barack Obama, the negotiations finally bore fruit.

3.2.3 Reconciliation with Iran

Barack Obama opposed nuclear proliferation even before he entered office. In an article of Foreign Affairs in 2007, he wrote: "To renew American leadership in the world, we must confront the most urgent threat to the security of America and the world – the spread of nuclear weapons, material and technology and the risk that a nuclear device will fall into the hands of

terrorists.” (p.2) Regarding Iran, he argued that “It is far too dangerous to have nuclear weapons in the hands of a theocratic regime. We should show Iran what can be gained from fundamental change: economic engagement, security assurances and diplomatic relations.” (p.2). Direct talks with Iran were deemed necessary. When entering office he strived for a foreign policy characterized by accommodation and retrenchment (Dueck, 2015, p.60). Obama sought reconciliation between Iran and the United States as part of his plan to reach out to the Muslim world and prevent an arms race in the Middle East (Allin & Simon, 2010, p.24). Eliminating Iran’s nuclear program was however an unrealistic goal to Obama and measures for this have not been able to shut it down in the past decades. Obama did however impose harsh sanctions on Iran too just like his predecessors have done (Indyk, Lieberthal & O’Hanlon, 2012). This would change completely. Obama called for direct negotiations about Iran’s nuclear programme in 2009 in a remarkable way. “He [Barack Obama] sent letters to Iran’s Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and recorded a video message to the Iranian people in the apparent expectation this would help kick-start the process of mutual conciliation.” wrote Dueck, (2015, p.61). The response of Ayatollah Khamenei was sceptical, but not rejecting. Khamenei said: “You change and we will change as well,” (Parsi, 2012, p.66). It lasted until 2013 for the negotiations to bear fruit when, under the in 2013 elected Iranian president Hassan Rouhani, Iran-U.S. relations began to head in the right direction. Rouhani, a ‘moderate’ cleric for Iranian standards, stressed the importance of more flexible international relations. He pledged for the easement of the destructive sanctions and sought rapprochement towards the West. Finally Obama saw a serious opportunity for dialogue.

At first it seemed rather strange that Obama, who explicitly argued against nuclear weapons, secured an agreement which lifted the sanctions on a “rogue” state. But when exploring Obama’s decision in depth, it starts to make more sense. In his Noble Peace Prize speech in Norway, December 2009, Obama declared:

"Let me also say this: the promotion of human rights cannot be about exhortation alone. At times, it must be coupled with painstaking diplomacy. I know that engagement with repressive regimes lacks the satisfying purity of indignation. But I also know that sanctions without outreach—and condemnation without discussion—can carry forward a crippling status quo.

No repressive regime can move down a new path unless it has the choice of an open door." (Parsi, 2012, p.152).

In order to change the status quo, which posed a major threat to regional and global security of America and its allies, Obama needed to open up the door for change. This meant creating an agreement that met the core needs of both Iran and the U.S. (Lynch, 2015) so that the tensions between them and about the nuclear threat reduced. The mission of trying to change the nature of the Iranian regime, which has been accused of human rights violations and sponsoring of terrorism (Nau, 2010), had to be put aside to reach that goal. When he reached out to Iran in the video message a couple weeks later, he spoke about "the Islamic Republic of Iran" rather than just "Iran". By doing this, he showed the Iranian public and officials that the United States recognized the regime and does not, at least for now, seek regime change anymore (Parsi, 2012, p.64). Moreover, Obama said: "The U.S. wants Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations." By saying this, he indicated that the Americans are willing to give Iran a meaningful role in global affairs which is exactly where Iran has felt bypassed (Parsi, 2012, p.64). Whereas Obama's predecessors were fixated on spreading democracy, assuming that this would make the world safe for America, Obama focused on shared interests rather than shared values. Creating a nuclear deal solves a national security challenge without military force and potentially creates common interests (Lynch, 2015). Iran retrieved the chance to participate in a meaningful way in regional and international affairs when the sanctions were lifted, while the United States averted a serious nuclear threat. Cooperation emerged from shared interests, and these are present especially in a nuclear world (Nau, 2010, p.33-34). "Put simply, no deal means a greater chance of more war in the Middle East," Barack Obama said. "I will veto any legislation that prevents the successful implementation of this deal." (The New York Times, 2015). He thus chose to fix a global security issue rather than sticking to promoting democracy and human rights in the region (Nau, 2010).

American administrations have refused to understand the nature of the Iranian regime for years (Cohen, Edelman & Takeyh, 2016). Obama broke away from this. He did not reject Iran for its regime, but sought ways to overcome the differences and preserve the interests of both sides. The nuclear agreement has been called 'a historical accomplishment' by Kaplan (2014, p.46), who argued that Obama wanted to break free from the old Cold War mind set by

forming alliances with rivals in order to pave the way towards peaceful progression. This is however just one side of the story. Many scholars argue against Barack Obama's accommodating strategy towards Iran. Cohen, Edelman and Takeyh (2016) argue that the nuclear agreement will encourage Iran's regional rivals in the Middle East to go nuclear too, eventually provoking an arms race that Obama intended to avoid. This would severely endanger the regional safety of U.S. allies if they decide to strike Iran because it could unleash a nuclear war. Sanctions have to be put back in place again to segregate Iran from the international economy and punish Iran for its human rights abuses and sponsorship of terrorism. Moreover, Posen and Ross (1996) argue that Iran needs to be restricted at any cost because it has demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to risk and costs because of its political ambitions. But was the 'old' status quo, favoured by these scholars, a better alternative? Probably not, according to Allin and Simon (2010, p.23). They argue that the Obama administration desperately needed a fresh approach towards Iran to start a new beginning in the Middle East. The traditional American approach to Iran, which included the aggressive push for democracy (Drezner, 2011), is preposterous because it made Iran increasingly hostile towards the West. Mearsheimer and Walt (2016, p.79) argue that "countries usually seek the [nuclear] bomb because they fear being attacked," and that America's push for regime change could only heighten these concerns. Obama responded to the Iranian nuclear threat with multilateral pressure rather than regime change or military force, which brought more movement in the challenge than before. Furthermore, by showing respect for contending historical narratives with Iran (Allin & Simon, 2010), Obama opened the floor for dialogue and transformed the crisis of Iran's nuclear proliferation. He said: "when I see a situation like this one [the nuclear deal with Iran], where we can achieve an objective with a unified world behind us and we preserve our hedge against its not working out, I think it would be foolish – even tragic – for us to pass up on that opportunity." (Kaplan, 2014, p.63).

3.2.4 *Conclusion*

Based on the above this section will review if the three ideologies – promotion of liberal values, orientalism and containment – can be identified in his foreign policy towards Iran and the nuclear deal.

Barack Obama did not appear to follow the traditional path of promoting democracy in his policy towards Iran. Rather, he focused on the core needs of each sides and the shared interests instead of the shared values. He engaged Iran again in global affairs by lifting the crippling economic sanctions, and did not actively push for regime change like his predecessors did. In a way this can be interpreted as a form of liberty promotion because the deal relieved, at least temporarily, the nuclear threat and that is crucial to the safety of America and its allies. As mentioned before, the core purpose of liberty promotion is to make the world safer for the American nation and its allies. Obama achieved this by eliminating the nuclear threat from Iran through the deal. He was thus likely inspired by the ideology of promotion of liberal values when he decided to secure the nuclear deal with Iran.

Obama did not seem to try to change the Iranian regime. Rather, he respected the differences between the societies and looked at solutions beyond this to deal with the nuclear issue. The ideology of orientalism does therefore not seem relevant to his approach towards Iran. Indeed, the absence of an orientalist view has likely been the driving force behind his reconciliation with Iran because he did not let the different cultural values interfere in the nuclear negotiations. This resulted in a deal that meets the needs of both countries.

When securing the deal Barack Obama made it clear that when Iran violates the conditions, the sanctions will go back in place (BBC, 2016). This serves a deterrent purpose because sanctions hurt Iran's economy in a serious fashion. Sanctions are considered part of the containment strategy (Pollack, 2010) and Indyk, Lieberthal and O'Hanlon (2012) argue that Obama imposed these on Iran before to show what the consequences are when the 'rules' are broken. Several scholars have argued that Obama practiced the containment ideology during his presidency (see a.o. Dueck, 2015, p.2; Nau, 2010). His choice to secure the deal along with sanctions on stand-by mode can be interpreted as a product of the containment ideology.

In summary, the establishment of the nuclear deal displays a potential influence of the promotion of liberal values and containment ideologies, but it does not indicate an orientalist inspired view.

4 CONCLUSION: DID IDEOLOGY INFLUENCE OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY?

Quite much has been written about Barack Obama's foreign policy towards military Israel and nuclear Iran, but less about his beliefs behind it. This will likely change in the near future when scholars review his complete presidency and broadly analyse the rationale behind his policies.

This thesis is one of the first contributions to that discussion and aims to give insight in the beliefs that potentially influenced Obama's policy decisions that navigated the course of his presidency. The research question central to this thesis is: **did the ideological principles influence Barack Obama's foreign policy towards military Israel and nuclear Iran?**

When analysing the cases of military Israel and nuclear Iran it became clear that Obama's foreign policy towards them shared one similarity, namely the employment of the promotion of liberal values. Scholars have argued that this ideology has been deep rooted in American foreign policy in the 19th and 20th century, and in the 21st century under George W. Bush. The tradition seems to have spilled over into Obama's doctrine too. Another interesting result was the presumed absence of the orientalist ideology in Obama's foreign policy in both cases. There were no clear signs for the existence of this ideology in his approach. Finally, the ideology of containment is thought to be present in Obama's actions towards Iran but not towards Israel. Thus not all the ideological principles were relevant in the cases. Since the promotion of liberal values ideology has manifested itself in Obama's policy towards both nuclear Iran and military Israel, it is considered the most influential ideology of the three. It is likely that this ideology inspired his other foreign policy decisions too. So at least two of the ideological principles have influenced Barack Obama's foreign policy towards Israel and Iran.

These results are important for three reasons. First, they contribute to the broader discussion about Obama's beliefs beyond his foreign policy. Second, the results create discussion about which ideologies were important to Obama, and to what extent these results are replicable to other cases. More research is necessary to identify other potential ideologies that influenced Obama in the decisions he made, and place the effects of his policies in a broader daylight. More research is needed following Hunt's book 'Ideology and U.S. Foreign

Policy' (1987) to explore if contemporary ideology shapes foreign policy the way it did in the 19th and 20th century, or if other ideologies became more influential. Lastly, the results indicate that ideology can explain a leader's actions to a great extent and that its influence is powerful.

5 REFERENCES

Albright, D. & Stricker, A. (2010) Iran's Nuclear Program. In: Wright, R. (2010) *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*. *United States Institute of Peace Press*, p.77-81.

Allin, D.H. & Simon, S. (2010) Obama's Dilemma: Iran, Israel and the Rumours of War. *Survival*, 52,6, pp. 15-44.

Barzegar, K. (2014) Iran-US Relations in the Light of the Nuclear Negotiations. *The International Spectator*, 49, 3, p.1-7.

BBC (2015) Iran Nuclear Crisis: Six Key Points. 14 July 2015. Retrieved from:
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32114862>

BBC (2015) Will Iran nuclear deal make Middle East a less safe place? Kevin Connolly, 14 July 2015. Retrieved from:
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33519808>

BBC (2016) Iran profile: leaders. 29 February 2016. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14541904>

BBC (2016) Iran Nuclear Deal: Key details. 16 January 2016. Retrieved from:
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655>

BBC (2017) Iran country profile. 8 June 2017. Retrieved from : <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14541327>

BBC (2017) Israel starts work on first new West Bank settlement in 20 years. 20 June 2017.

Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-40339768>

Bishara, M. (2016) Five reasons why US-Israel military deal stinks. Al Jazeera, 15 September 2016. Retrieved from:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/09/reasons-israel-military-deal-stinks-160915114203185.html>

Bouchet, N. (2013) The Democracy Tradition in US Foreign Policy and the Obama Presidency. *International Affairs*, 89,1, pp. 31-51.

Chubin, S. (2010) The Politics of Iran's Nuclear Programme. In: Wright, R. (2010) The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy. *United States Institute of Peace Press*, p.82-85.

Clawson, P. (2010) U.S. Sanctions. In: Wright, R. (2010) The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy. *United States Institute of Peace Press*, p.115-118.

CNN (2016) Largest-ever US military aid package to go to Israel. Nicole Gaouette, September 14 2016. Retrieved from:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/09/13/politics/us-israel-military-aid-package-mou/index.html>

Cohen, E., Edelman, E. & Takeyh, R. (2016) Time to Get Tough On Tehran. Iran Policy After the Deal. *Foreign Affairs*, 95, pp. 64-75.

Coyne, C.J. & Hall Blanco, A.R. (2016) Empire State of Mind. Illiberal Foundations of Liberal Hegemony. *The Independent Review*, 21, 2, pp. 237-250.

Cox, M., Ikenberry, G. J., & Inoguchi, T. (2000). American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, strategies, and impacts. *Oxford University Press*.

Desch, M. (2007) America's Liberal Illiberalism: The Ideological Origins of Overreaction in U.S. Foreign Policy. *International Security*, 32, 3, pp. 7-43.

Drezner, D.W. (2011) Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy? Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times. *Foreign Affairs*, 90, 4, pp. 57-68.

Dueck, C. (2015) The Obama Doctrine: American Grand Strategy Today. *Oxford University Press*.

Gaddis, J.L. (2005) Strategies of Containment. *Oxford University Press*.

Gavin, F.J. (2015) Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Grand Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation. *International Security*, 40, 1, pp. 9-46.

Gilboa, E. (2009) Obama and Israel: A Preliminary Assessment. *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 3, 3, pp. 51-58.

Gordon, P. (2016) The Crisis in U.S.- Israeli Relations. Are Washington and Jerusalem Drifting Apart? *Foreign Affairs*, 95, 132, pp.132-138 .

Haaretz (2016) U.S., Israel Sign Historic 10-Year \$38 Billion Military Aid Deal. Barak Ravid, September 14 2016. Retrieved from:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.742074>

Holt, B. (2014) The Gold Standard: U.S.-Israel Military Relations. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 36, 2, pp. 37-41.

Hunt, M.H. (1987) Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy. *Yale University Press*.

Indyk, M.S., Lieberthal, K.G. & O'Hanlon, M.E. (2012) Scoring Obama's Foreign Policy. *Foreign Affairs*, 91, 3, pp. 29-43.

Kaplan, F. (2016) Obama's Way, the President in Practice. *Foreign Affairs*, 95, 48, p.46-63.

- Kramer, M. (2016). Israel and the Post-American Middle East. Why the Status Quo Is Sustainable. *Foreign Affairs*, 95, 4, pp.51-56.
- Lieber, R.J. (2005) *The American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lynch, M. (2015) Obama and the Middle East. Rightsizing the U.S. Role. *Foreign Affairs*, 18, 94, pp.18-27.
- McDougall, W.A. (1997) *Promised Land, Crusader State: the American Encounter with the World Since 1776*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Mearsheimer, J.J. & Walt, S.M. (2012) The Israel lobby. In: McCormick, J.M. (2012) *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy. Insights and Evidence*. Rowman & Littlefield, p.89-103.
- Mearsheimer, J.J. & Walt, S.M. (2016) The Case for Offshore Balancing. A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy. *Foreign Affairs*, 95, pp. 70-83.
- Nau, H.R. (2010) Obama's Foreign Policy. *Policy Review*, pp.27-48.
- Nayak, M. & Malone, C. (2009). American Orientalism and American exceptionalism: A critical rethinking of US hegemony. *International Studies Review*, 11, 2, p. 253-276.
- Obama, B. (2007) Renewing American Leadership. *Foreign Affairs*, p.1-7.
- Organski, A.F.K. (1990) *The \$36 Billion Dollar Bargain*. Columbia University Press.
- Parsi, T. (2012). *A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama's Diplomacy with Iran*. Yale University Press.
- Pfaff, W. (1989) *Barbarian Sentiments. How the American Century Ends*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Pollack, K.M. (2010) 'Containing Iran', in Wright, R. (2010) *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*. *United States Institute of Peace Press*, pp. 209–211.

Pollack, K.M. (2016). Fight or Flight: America's choice in the Middle East. *Foreign Affairs* 62, 95, pp. 62-75.

Posen, B.R. & Ross, A.L. (1996) Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy. *International Security*, 21, 3, pp. 5-53.

Reuters (2016) U.S., Israel Sign \$38 Billion Military Aid Package. Matt Spetalnick, September 14 2016. Retrieved from:
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-israel-statement-idUSKCN11K2CI>

Rynhold, J. (2008) President Obama and the Middle East Challenge. *BESA Center Perspectives Papers*, 50.

Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. *New York: Vintage*.

Smith, T. (1994) *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century*. *Princeton University Press*.

Stephen, E. (2008). Caught on the Hop: The Yom Kippur War. *History Today*, 58, 10, pp.44-50.

The Guardian (2001) Text of George Bush's Speech. 21 September 2001. Retrieved from:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>

The Guardian (2009) . Barack Obama woos Muslim world with call for new understanding. 4 June 2009. Retrieved from:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jun/04/obama-muslim-world-new-understanding>

The New York Times (2015) Deal reached on Iran nuclear program; Limits on fuel will lessen with time. Michael R. Gordon and David E. Sanger. 14 July 2015. Retrieved from:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/world/middleeast/iran-nuclear-deal-is-reached-after-long-negotiations.html>

The New York Times (2016) Obama Prods Netanyahu After Signing of U.S. Israel Aid Deal. Julie Hirschfeld Davis, September 14 2016. Signing of US Israel Aid Deal. Retrieved from:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/15/world/middleeast/united-states-israel-military-aid.html>

United Nations (2016) Security Council Meetings Coverage. Israel's Settlements Have No Legal Validity, Constitute Flagrant Violation of International Law, Security Council Reaffirms. December 23 2016. Retrieved from:

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12657.doc.htm>.

Wright, R. (2010) *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and U.S. Policy*. *United States Institute of Peace Press*.