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Religion's Influence on Foreign Policy

The case of U.S.-Israel
relationship

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INTRODUZIONE

Con il presente lavoro dal titolo “L’influenza della religione nella politica estera. Il caso della relazione tra Stati Uniti d’America e Stato d’Israele”, si intende esaminare il ruolo svolto dalla religione nelle relazioni internazionali, con particolare riguardo all’influenza esercitata da quest’ultima nel rapporto sussistente tra Stati Uniti d’America ed Israele.

A partire dalla fine della Guerra Fredda, si sono succeduti una serie di rilevanti avvenimenti - tra i quali, sommariamente: la rivoluzione iraniana del 1978 - 79, gli attacchi terroristici dell’11 settembre 2001, i più recenti eventi parigini, e le sempre più frequenti conferenze indette dai Ministeri degli Esteri di vari paesi – che testimoniano la crescente rilevanza assunta recentemente dalla religione nel panorama internazionale.

Negli ultimi anni i governi di vari Paesi, tra i quali Italia e Stati Uniti d’America, si sono adoperati per portare il tema in esame all’attenzione delle rispettive amministrazioni. Particolarmente rilevante fu l’iniziativa intrapresa nell’ottobre 2011, dall’allora Segretario di Stato del Governo degli Stati Uniti d’America, Hillary Clinton, denominata “Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group”; nell’ambito del citato programma venne costituito un gruppo di lavoro formato da personale diplomatico, ufficiali degli Affari Esteri, vertici militari e rappresentanti delle comunità religiose di tutto il mondo, con lo scopo di instaurare una relazione con quest’ultime e i relativi leader, al fine di considerare, nella determinazione delle linee guida della politica estera americana, le esigenze da loro manifestate.

La suddetta iniziativa esprime dunque, la consapevolezza, recentemente acquisita, in ordine alla necessità di rivalutare l’incidenza del fattore religioso nelle attuali dinamiche delle relazioni tra Stati.

D’altro canto molteplici sono le manifestazioni del coinvolgimento della sfera religiosa nell’ordine politico di vari Paesi: dall’influenza diretta di attori religiosi governativi e non, al ruolo svolto da quest’ultimi in alcuni processi di peacebuilding, sino alle recenti dimostrazioni di radicalismo religioso.

Il principale obiettivo di questa dissertazione è dunque quello di analizzare l’impatto del fattore religioso nella politica estera degli Stati; nello specifico si intende dimostrare come elementi religiosi comuni a più Paesi possano contribuire in maniera determinante a costituire solide relazioni internazionali tra gli stessi. Entro tale cornice l’alleanza tra Stati Uniti d’America e lo Stato d’Israele si pone come un singolare caso di studio, meritevole di particolare attenzione. La scelta dei due citati Paesi è stata infatti dettata principalmente dalla comune presenza, al loro interno, di una marcata contrapposizione tra sfera secolare e religiosa;

se da un lato gli USA, pur essendo ritenuta una delle più secolari nazioni al mondo, vanta il 52% della popolazione che considera la religione un aspetto molto rilevante della propria vita, dall'altro Israele, considerato l'ultimo Stato religioso al mondo, presenta un ordinamento notevolmente secolarizzato e caratterizzato da elementi di somiglianza alle laiche democrazie europee.

Al fine di trattare al meglio il tema suddetto, si è scelto di adottare un approccio deduttivo. Partendo dal dato fondamentale, contrapposto al parallelo processo di secolarizzazione, rappresentato dalla rinnovata influenza esercitata dalla religione nelle dinamiche degli affari internazionali, si è poi proceduto all'attenta valutazione del rapporto sussistente tra USA ed Israele, delineando le caratteristiche che l'hanno contraddistinto sino ai giorni nostri. Infine si sono osservati gli aspetti religiosi comuni costituenti il patrimonio giudaico-cristiano che funge da base della stretta amicizia tra i due Paesi, giungendo così a evidenziare il rilevante ruolo assunto dal fattore religioso all'interno dei processi decisionali della politica estera e, quindi, la più generale esigenza di riconsiderare quest'ultimo per comprendere pienamente le relazioni internazionali.

Prima di procedere ad una sintesi più completa del lavoro svolto appare opportuno chiarire un aspetto di fondo. Con la presente tesi non si intende né esprimere giudizio etico sull'alleanza sussistente tra i due Paesi in questione, né analizzare la conformità o meno della stessa al diritto internazionale, anche in relazione alle note vicende israelo - palestinesi.

Data la complessità delle tematiche di seguito affrontate, il lavoro è stato suddiviso in tre capitoli principali, a loro volta articolati in paragrafi e sotto - paragrafi.

Nel primo capitolo, dal taglio più teorico, si è analizzato il concetto di religione in rapporto alle relazioni internazionali; a tal riguardo è risultato in primo luogo necessario spiegare brevemente l'evoluzione del medesimo, subita a partire dal medioevo. Nell'affrontare questo argomento non si è utilizzato una nozione di religione ontologicamente peculiare; ciò dal momento che l'obiettivo della presente ricerca è di individuare le ripercussioni provocate dalla sfera religiosa in determinate condotte umane, e non già la definizione della citata nozione. Nonostante ciò, per analizzarne al meglio la rilevanza, è stato necessario spiegare l'evolversi del concetto negli anni.

Una breve digressione è stata dedicata al rapporto tra religione e nazionalismo e a come il fattore religioso abbia giustificato il sorgere di movimenti nazionalistici quali il Sionismo.

Si è poi prestata particolare attenzione alle modalità mediante le quali la religione può influenzare la politica estera, individuandone principalmente tre: l'influenza esercitata direttamente tramite istituzioni quali la Chiesa Cattolica Romana, ovvero tramite la propria

forza intrinseca in grado di condizionare l'identità di un gruppo o di singole persone, nonché per mezzo degli strumenti propri del patrimonio culturale di uno Stato.

L'ultima sezione del primo capitolo è dedicata alle teorie delle relazioni internazionali, e in particolare a come quest'ultime hanno affrontato la ricomparsa della religione nelle dinamiche della comunità internazionale. A tal riguardo sono state prese in considerazione specificatamente quattro filoni di pensiero: il realismo, il liberalismo, il costruttivismo e l'istituzionalismo. Tale scelta è giustificata dalla condivisione, da parte delle citate correnti di pensiero, di premesse comuni in ordine ai fattori idonei a orientare le relazioni tra Paesi. Si è inoltre notato come tutte le suddette teorie hanno riscontrato delle difficoltà nell'inserire il fattore religioso all'interno delle proprie logiche, dal momento che esse si sono sviluppate agli inizi del ventesimo secolo e sono state fortemente influenzate della secolarizzazione.

Il secondo capitolo considera la speciale relazione intercorrente tra Stati Uniti d'America e Stato d'Israele, offrendo al contempo una panoramica storica dell'amicizia tra i due Paesi.

Mentre nella prima parte si è approfondito il rapporto sussistente tra USA e Palestina anteriormente alla fondazione dello Stato di Israele, nella seconda sezione sono state delineate le caratteristiche che contraddistinguono la medesima relazione a partire dal 1948 sino ad oggi. Al riguardo si è rivelato di estremo interesse prendere in considerazione gli originari insediamenti ebrei nel Nuovo Mondo, nonché le prime connessioni instauratesi tra gli ebrei immigrati negli Stati Uniti e il popolo americano. In particolar modo si è sottolineato come anche gli ebrei abbiano contribuito alla lotta per l'indipendenza americana assieme ad altri coloni, indipendentemente dalla diversa religione, e come, differentemente dalla condizione europea dell'epoca, nel nuovo Paese di immigrazione gli ebrei abbiano potuto trovare una "patria" sicura, tanto da sentirsi a tutti gli effetti americani.

Successivamente è stato trattato lo sviluppo, come avvenuto negli Stati Uniti, del movimento nazionalista israeliano (il Sionismo), nonché il contributo americano al raggiungimento dell'obiettivo di tale movimento. A questo riguardo si è rivelato estremamente significativo, sia l'appoggio fornito dal Presidente statunitense Woodrow Wilson alla Dichiarazione Balfour, sia il successivo riconoscimento *de facto* dello Stato d'Israele da parte del Presidente Harry Truman. Tali eventi testimoniano come già all'epoca la popolazione americana si dimostrasse schierata a favore della costituzione di uno Stato ebraico indipendente in Palestina; ciò a dimostrazione di come i cittadini americani condividessero gli ideali e gli obiettivi della battaglia sionista. Nonostante ciò, fu solo a partire dalla Guerra Fredda che si manifestò un esplicito appoggio statunitense a favore dello Stato israeliano.

Come precedentemente anticipato, nella parte finale del secondo capitolo vengono illustrati i diversi aspetti che caratterizzano il rapporto tra i due citati Paesi nel periodo successivo al 1948, focalizzando l'attenzione specialmente sulla cooperazione strategica e i legami economici ed accademici intercorsi tra gli stessi.

La relazione tra USA e Israele è considerata da molti accademici come una "relazione speciale ed unica". Alcuni studiosi, tra i quali Walt e Mearsheimer, giustificano questa singolarità con la presenza di una potente lobby ebraica negli Stati Uniti; altri, tra i quali Bernard Reich, Abraham Ben-Zvi, Walter Mead Russell, attribuiscono invece la peculiarità della relazione ad aspetti ideologici radicati nelle Sacre Scritture.

Il terzo capitolo, infine, rappresenta il nucleo del lavoro in quanto ivi vengono presentati ed esaminati i principi e i valori religiosi nei quali le popolazioni di entrambi i suddetti Paesi si riconoscono, costituendo al contempo il comune patrimonio cultural religioso, giudaico-cristiano, che influenza la politica estera di entrambi gli Stati.

In seguito si sono individuati i primi legami ideologici tra puritani ed ebrei dimostrando come tutte le prime tradizioni puritane siano impregnate di giudaismo. Inoltre un intero paragrafo è stato dedicato all'influenza del modello di educazione ebraico nell'istruzione americana, portando come esempi l'esperienza di personaggi rilevanti nella sfera politica statunitense del XVIII secolo, tra i quali Thomas Jefferson, James Madison ed Alexander Hamilton.

Si è poi giunti ad esaminare l'influenza della Bibbia nelle legislazioni delle prime colonie americane e nella Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza degli Stati Uniti d'America, evidenziando nelle medesime la rilevanza della teologia del Patto, la quale trova a sua volta origine dal Vecchio Testamento. Particolarmente affascinante è stato studiare, la predisposizione della popolazione Americana non-ebraica nei confronti degli Israeliani, dimostrando come l'opinione dei gentili abbia un'importanza tale da influenzare la politica estera degli Stati Uniti.

La dissertazione procede poi ad analizzare le radici bibliche dei valori comuni tra gli Stati in questione: la democrazia, la lotta per l'indipendenza e la condizione di stati nati dall'immigrazione e di come questi aspetti abbiano influenzato la politica estera degli USA e di Israele. Al termine della dissertazione si è proposto lo studio di come la religione influenzi concretamente la formazione e i programmi di due partiti politici: i neoconservatori negli Stati Uniti e i neo-revisionisti in Israele.

In conclusione questa tesi si propone di affrontare il tema della religione nelle relazioni internazionali, dimostrando come essa possa svolgere un ruolo chiave nel comprendere al

meglio i rapporti tra Stati. Non si può negare che elementi religiosi comuni possano spiegare alcune dinamiche all'interno della comunità internazionale, come è avvenuto nel caso della relazione qui esaminata tra Stati Uniti d'America e Israele. Di conseguenza è opportuno che le teorie delle relazioni internazionali riconsiderino l'impatto della religione negli affari esteri.

Relativamente alle fonti usate per svolgere questo tipo di lavoro, sono state consultate opere ed articoli accademici sia americani che israeliani. Si è fatta particolare attenzione a recuperare opere di diversi punti di vista e teorie, al fine di conferire maggior obiettività possibile al lavoro, e di estendere le ricerche in un arco temporale ampio, non soffermandosi solamente su un determinato periodo. Il web è stato un'utile strumento di lavoro in quanto ha permesso di consultare direttamente le fonti ufficiali governative, di leggere parti di libri online, grazie in particolar modo a Google books, di leggere articoli su quotidiani o riviste specifiche di settore. Specificatamente, nella prima parte della dissertazione sono stati molto utili le opere accademiche del Professor Jeffrey Haynes, mentre per la seconda parte il Professor Bernard Reich è stato fonte di grande ispirazione.

Tutto sommato, come dimostrato dalla bibliografia finale, il lavoro comprende differenti aree di studio: la storia, la filosofia, le scienze sociali, la religione e le scienze delle relazioni internazionali. Questo lavoro offre un'interessante prospettiva sul ruolo della religione a livello domestico e internazionale in particolar modo negli Stati qui presi in considerazione.

ABSTRACT

Many events over these last three decades, like the Iranian revolution in 1978-1979, the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001 in America, numerous debates about the failure of the secularization theory and the rise of religious diplomacy seem have brought to light a new theme on international relations: religion.

Different are the manifestations of the involvement of religion in political issues and controversies: an increased engagement of state and non-state religious actors, the impact of religion on conflicts or on the contrary as a major component of peacebuilding processes, helping resolve political conflicts or again the recent manifestations of religious radicalization. In addition, religion can play a distinctive role in international dynamics and this factor aims to be the core thesis of this work. Specifically, this dissertation addresses the role of religion in the decision making of foreign policy of countries, focusing in particular on the way religious beliefs are able to influence political dynamics and actors at international level. Concretely, it has been examined the role of religious elements in the establishing and development of the relationship between the United States and the State of Israel.

In order to better develop the focal point of this dissertation, it has been adopted a deductive approach, starting from the general assumption, even more evident, that religion has regained power in international affairs, challenging the secularization theory that emerged following the peace of Augsburg in 1555 and the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The analysis has proceeded taking into consideration a real case study: the relationship between the United States and the State of Israel, with the main objective to examine the common religious aspects that distinguish this alliance. It has therefore been necessary to examine at first the history and the main characteristics of the current relationship between the two states, since its beginning, and then focus on the religion's impact on international affairs of both the U.S. and Israel.

The choice of the states to involve in the case study has been induced by many factors. Basically, studying the role of religion in the United States and the State of Israel, represents an interesting analysis, since both countries are modern states with quite high proportions of people who proclaim religious. According to many academics, the United States is one of the most secular states in the world, but surprisingly the 52% of Americans consider religion very important in their life¹.

¹ Data from Gallup polls of 2015: Religion. The question was "How important would you say religion is in your life - very important, fairly important, or not very important?". In 2012, the 56% of Americans

In Israel, a state that for some aspects is considered the last religious nation in the world and for others is similar to secular Western democracies, a recent Win/Gallup international reports that 34% of Israelite consider themselves religious². In addition to all these data, worth noting is the relationship between these two states, which is considered unique and special by many scholars thanks to its shared religious heritage. As a consequence, in both countries religion seems to play a key role in the formation and execution of their foreign policy.

Before proceeding a clarification is required. This thesis does not intend to make an ethical judgment on the existing alliance between the two states, or the compliance or not of the same to the international law, also in relation to the well-noted Israeli-Palestinians conflict. It rather aims to study the features of the friendship between the two countries, drawing particularly attention on their common religious heritage and the effects of this last one on the international relations.

Since examining in what ways religion can affect states' foreign policies, particularly in the U.S.-Israel relationship, is quite a complex issue, this dissertation has been divided into three main chapters, developed in turn in paragraphs and subparagraphs.

The first chapter aims to introduce the issue of religion on international relations, tracing the evolution of the concept of religion within society over the years. For the subject here examined, it is important to notice that prior to the eighteenth century and the development of the modern state, religion occupied a relevant place in the Western political order, as the religious power was under the control and authority of the Pope. Following the Thirty Years War, something changed and the political importance of religion significantly declined, giving rise to the secularization process. However, some events during the post - Cold War era seemed to evidence a returning of religion in the current political processes and interstate relations. As a result, academics of various disciplines and scholars of international relations should reconsider the role of religion in the international affairs.

After a brief reconstruction of the notion of religion from Middle Ages until nowadays, it has been discussed the interconnection between religion and nationalism and the role played by religious beliefs in the rise of nationalist movements. Finally, it has been highlighted the possible ways through which religion may affect the foreign policy of a state and how the contemporary international relations theories tackle the issue or how they should do it. In

answered religion was very important. Available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx>, last access on 4 June 2016.

² Data from Win/Gallup International conducted in 2015. Available at <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Gallup-Israel-one-of-least-religious-countries-398823>, last access on 4 June 2016.

choosing the school to analyse, it has been given more importance to four principal positivist schools, which are realism, liberalism, constructivism and institutionalism, because they share some principles about the nature of causality in the establishing of relationships between countries. It is important to specify that the whole approach of this dissertation to the notion of religion does not rely on a specific definition of the concept; it rather accepts that it exists and influences human behaviour. This method focuses its efforts on discovering the just mentioned influences, not on the definition of religion, even if to do this, it has been necessary to trace the evolution of the concept from Middle Ages until today.

The second chapter provides an historical overview of the relationship between the United States and the State of Israel, starting from the period preceding the formation of the two states. Indeed, the first part focuses on the first connections between Jewish people and America, focusing in particular on the first Jewish colonies and the American attitude toward them. An entire paragraph is dedicated also to Zionism and its development in the New World, as well as to the American support to the Zionist cause, as they are relevant factors to offer a complete examination of the relationship at issue.

The second part of the chapter defines the different strands that have built the special friendship of nowadays, giving particularly emphasis to historical events after the 1948 and the *de facto* American recognition of the State of Israel. To be more precise, it has been therefore analysed the strategic, economic and academic connections between the two states and revealed some common values that will be better explicated in the following chapter.

Finally, the third chapter constitutes the nucleus of this dissertation, presenting and examining the religious elements that build a common Judeo-Christian heritage between the United States and the State of Israel. Highlighting the influence of Bible on the U.S. education as well as on the American Declaration of Independence, it has been gradually arrived to study how religion affect American domestic and international politics. Rather than the direct influence of religious actors on politics, this section concentrates on the force of religious identity among the population and the influence of a state's cultural heritage in the decision making. Basically, it has been delineated and carefully scrutinized those principles and values that Americans and Israelis joint and which are deeply rooted in the Bible. In so doing, it has been revealed the common elements that constitute the common Judeo-Christian heritage between the two nations and that its manifestations on the bilateral relationship here examined.

At the end, it has been presented a concrete case of religion's impact on the ideologies and programs of two political parties, precisely on the American neoconservatives, and then the Israeli neo-revisionists.

To conclude, this research attempts to show that religion can play a decisive role in the better understanding of international affairs and alliances. Nowadays, international relations cannot be completely comprehended without taking into consideration religious factors, as in the case of the U.S-Israel alliance. Many scholars have considered the relationship between the two states as a special relationship principally due to strategic factors and the strong influence of pressure groups. In such a way, they ignore the importance of religious elements that can be rather considered the secret ingredient of such a long-standing relationship. Therefore, a reconsideration of the impacts of religion in the international affairs is required by scholars as well as by international relations theories, re-evaluating the role of religion in their explanations of the world system.

Concerning the method and the sources employed in this kind of research, it has been used both American and Israeli academics' books and articles on the subject. Particularly attention has been paid to find references that represent different viewpoints on the topic tackled in this work, in order to write a dissertation as more objective as possible. Moreover, the articles and works consulted extend over a wide time frame up to nowadays.

The web has been a very useful instrument of research in many diverse forms: from the consultation of official governmental sites to academic articles and international newspapers, to the possibility of reading books, entirely or partially, online (thanks to Google books), to the numerous online libraries where it can be legally downloaded scientific books. To be more specific, for the first part more theoretical, the numerous works of Jeffrey Haynes, who is Professor of Politics and Director of the Centre for the Study of Religion, Conflict and Cooperation, have been very helpful. Relating to the second part, a great source of inspiration has been the studies of Bernard Reich, Professor of Political science and International Affairs at the George Washington University.

On the whole, as also demonstrated by the bibliography, this work includes different fields: history, social science, religious, international relations and also philosophy. It offers a perspective on the role of religion firstly internal of the system of the both states and then the international dimension of the same subject.

“It is my deeply held belief that in the year 2009 - more than at any point in human history - the interests of nations and peoples are shared. The religious convictions that we hold in our hearts can forge new bonds among people, or they can tear us apart.”

President Barack Obama, Address to the United Nations, September 23, 2009

CHAPTER 1 – RELIGION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTENTS: 1. *An introduction to international relations and religion* – 1.1. *The evolution of the concept of religion* – 1.1.1. *Religion and nationalism* – 1.2. *The resurgence of religion* – 1.3. *Religion and foreign policy* – 1.4. *Religion in international relations theories*

1. *An introduction to international relations and religion*

There is a widespread general consensus that contemporary international politics are influenced once again by religious forces. Probably religious international politics had been all along, but in these last decades it becomes even more difficult to overlook.³ Relatively unexplored has been the role of religion in the foreign policy of states and its influence represents one of the great and least interpreted security challenges of the twenty-first century. As well as it is an intellectual challenge to scholars of international relations, religions and politics.

As sustained by some American international relations (hereafter IR) analysts, religion is older than the state and its aims encompass not just politics but all of life⁴. They are convinced that religion is so important in today's world and therefore it plays an inevitable role of relevance in international relations analysis.

Before proceeding a short digression on the meaning of religion is required. It is notorious that defining religion satisfactorily is difficult. On this regard, the two main approaches generally used by sociologists can be helpful. According to Acquaviva, religion can be considered either a system of beliefs and practices related to an ultimate being or beings, or to the supernatural; or that which is sacred in a society, including ultimate inviolate beliefs and practices⁵. In wider social science studies, religion is usefully tackled from the perspective of a body of ideas and outlooks, as a type of formal organization; or as social group. According to Jeffrey Haynes, an international authority in this field, religion can affect temporal world in two

³ Jack SNYDER, *Religion and International Relations Theory*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 1-2.

⁴ Timothy Samuel SHAH and Daniel PHILPOTT, *The fall and rise of religion in International Relations: History and theory*, in Jack SNYDER (edited by) *Religion and International Relations Theory*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 24-26.

⁵ Jeffrey HAYNES, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, UK, Pearson Education, 2013, 2nd ed., pp. 16-17.

manners: by what it says and /or by what it does⁶. The former correlates to religion's doctrine or theology, while the latter is linked to religion's relevance as a social phenomenon and mark identity⁷, as it will be demonstrated later in the case of American and Israeli society. As a consequence, also international relations are influenced by religion in two principal ways. Firstly, governments may make issues linked to religion a focal point of their foreign policies; secondly non-state actors, inspired by religious concerns may engage politically with governments, whether within countries or across state borders⁸. The case study examined in the following chapters permits to concentrate more on the last point mentioned.

Religion can be considered powerful because it includes extraordinary aspects which allow it to play relevant roles in different situations. For instance, religions go beyond state borders, that is to say that they are transnational actors. Alternatively, thanks to its wide-ranging interests, religion acts on different society's institutions, norms and values, in short it may influence how actors in the international arena behave. Finally, religions may powerfully encourage believers to behave in certain ways instead of others, in other words religion can be an incentive to act both for individuals and for groups. To better understand today's return of religion to international relations, it is essential to briefly analyse the evolution of its role and concept in the past centuries.

1.1. The evolution of the concept of religion

During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, when it began to develop the secular international system, Europe was mainly imbued with the Christian Protestant Reformation⁹. The major outcomes of this period were the divide of Christianity into many and different communities, groups and sects and the consequently emergence of military, political and civil clashes after the religious split. The following years were characterized by the Wars of Religion (1550-1650), which showed that when religion was brought into international public life, it caused intolerance, war, devastation, political upheaval, and even the collapse of international order.

A meaningful event in this period was the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which officially ratified the separation between Catholics and Protestants and introduced the principle of *cujus*

⁶ *Ibidem.*

⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 2-3.

⁹ It occurred in 16th century in Europe and it consisted in the separation from the Roman Catholic Church initiated by Martin Luther and then carried on by other Protestant Reformers.

region, ejus religio, that is every ruler can determine the religion of his realm. In so doing the political power was discerned from the clerical one and this paved the way to the society's secularization process¹⁰.

During the coming years, crucial for the international order as we know it today, was the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which put an end to the Thirty Years' War¹¹ and introduced the so called Westphalian international order. This historical event had many important consequences, among them the most important were the abolition of the big European Empires introducing the system of the modern states and the decline of the idea of Medieval Christianity. Furthermore, being inspired by the principle *cujus region, ejus religio* established in the peace of Augusta, the Congress of Westphalia devised the principle of non-interference, according to which every state has to respect the sovereignty of all other states. In other words, it determined the principle of absolute sovereignty. For what concern the impacts of these ages on the notion of religion, it will be shown below.

What occurred starting from 1648 was a transformation from religion as a community of believers to religion as a set of privately held doctrines or beliefs. How was it possible? During the Middle Ages the term *religio* regarded the monastic life or it was used to delineate a special "virtue" supported by practices embedded in the Christian tradition, as part of the ecclesiastical community, the Church¹². In other words, religion implied that virtues and practices of the Christian tradition were not divided from the culture and community in which they were rooted and which supported them.

¹⁰ The meaning of secular is ambiguous. Shah and Philpott propose nine concepts that can be helpful to map the possible range of meanings that the adjective has collected during these years. The first four concepts can be considered positive or neutral towards religion; while the other five are negative. For a detailed reading on the subject see SHAH and PHILPOTT, *The fall and rise of religion in International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 25.

¹¹ It took place between 1618 and 1648 over most of Europe. It consisted in a series of wars fought by several nations for various reasons, including religious, dynastic, territorial, and commercial rivalries. It represented the last war, but also the most destructive. Its ruinous campaigns and battles ended with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and the map of Europe had been irrevocably changed. Definition taken from the online Encyclopaedia Britannica. For more details see <http://www.britannica.com/event/Thirty-Years-War>, last access on 7 May 2016.

¹² Thomas M. SCOTT, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously: The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Society*, in Fabio PETITO and Pavlos HATZOPOULOS (edited by), *Religion and International relations. The return from exile*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 26.

This medieval definition of religion had a social connotation, in which religion was intended as a community of believers. This can also be defined “traditional religion” and it represents the meaning of Christianity for most people of the early modern Europe¹³.

The successive end of the Europe’s religious wars generated the eclipse of the concept of Christendom which had predominated ideologically the region’s medieval principles, structures and institutions. For centuries, Christendom had apparently encouraged the common good, yet it had brought about an unlimited contest for power among political and religious heavyweights¹⁴, causing the breakdown of relations that were typical of the wars of religion time. Consequently to the Peace of Westphalia and the appearance of modern states, the typical Christian moralities and practices came to be divided from the communities in which they were rooted. The modern concept of religion arose precisely in the late fifteenth century and it first emerged as a universal, internal impulse or sensation toward the divine common to all people. The different types of pieties and rituals were more frequently called “religions”, as representations of the one true *religio* common to all, apart from any ecclesiastic community¹⁵.

A significant turning point occurred in the early sixteenth or seventeenth century, when religion began to shift from being representative of various virtues, supported by practices of an ecclesiastical community embedded in the Christian tradition, to be a system of doctrines or beliefs, which could exist apart from the ecclesiastical community. Besides, Europe’s political leaders began to consider the previous system, rooted in an aspirational but in reality unachievable Christian unity under the protection of the pope, as obsolete and unworkable¹⁶. In their opinion the shared Christian values were no longer appropriate and efficient to legitimise ideals which could effectively guide the actions of leaders of European countries. The post-Westphalia disintegration of power in Europe, which was based on individual nation-state rather than the collective authority of the pope, was over time justified, while on the other hand religious authority and power declined. This process was demonstrated by a wide literature on religion and the outcomes of the Protestant Reformation. Worth noting is Skinner’s observation that “the idea of the Pope and Emperor as parallel and universal power disappears, and the independent jurisdictions of the *sacerdotium* are handed over to the secular authorities¹⁷”.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ HAYNES, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, op. cit., pp.75.

¹⁵ SCOTT, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, op. cit., pp. 26.

¹⁶ HAYNES, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, op. cit., pp. 76.

¹⁷ Quentin SKINNER, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, in “The Age of Reformation”, vol. 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp.353.

Alternatively, Cavanaugh recognized that the battle of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries overturned the supremacy of ecclesiastical over civil authorities through the creation of the modern state and at the same time paving the way for the probable exclusion of the church from the public sphere¹⁸. Finally, Falk explained the elimination of religion from the spheres of power and authority in order to “facilitate governmental efficiency as well as to provide the basis for a unified politics of the state in the face of religious pluralism, and a background of devastating sectarian warfare¹⁹.”

As result of historical events, the new set of system values focused principally on sovereign equality of states. What is more, the state used the invention of religion to legitimate the transfer of the ultimate loyalty of people from religious to the state as part of the consolidation of its power. Krasner commented this point as follows: “The idea of sovereignty was used to legitimate the right of the sovereign to collect taxes, and thereby strengthen the position of the state, and to deny such right to the church, and thereby weaken the position of the papacy²⁰.”

With the rise of modern states, the concept of religion shifted from a social understanding into a modern one, which conceived religion as a set of privately held doctrines or beliefs. After the Westphalia Congress, it followed the privatization of religion and the secularization of politics. For this reason, the domestic influence of religion was limited, the religious disagreements were minimized and the bloody and destructive role of religion in international relations ended.

Both the Peace of Augsburg and the Peace of Westphalia marked the policy of religious toleration and non-interference on religious grounds in the domestic affairs of other states; they contributed in different ways to the collapse of the Christianity-based concept and to the structure named “Christendom”. The 1648 agreement prepared the ground for a European-wide decentralised system of sovereign and legally equal nation-states, which developed later into a global system of international relations via colonialism. The dissemination of the concept of secular all over the world is well elucidated in one of Madan’s articles. In the author’s words “the idea of secularism-which he considers a gift of Christianity-has been built into Western

¹⁸ William T. CAVANAUGH, *A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State*, in “Modern Theology”, vol. 11, n. 4, 1995, pp. 399.

¹⁹ Richard FALK, *Religion and Politics: Verging on the Postmodern*, in “Alternatives”, vol. 13, 1988, pp. 318.

²⁰ Stephen D. KRASNER, *Westphalia and All That*, in Judith GOLDSTEIN and Robert KEOHANE (edited by), *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 238.

social theories' paradigms of modernization, and since these paradigms are believed to have universal applicability, the elements, which converged historically to constitute modern life in Europe in the sixteenth and the following three centuries, have to come to be presented as the requirements of modernization elsewhere²¹." From that time until the end of the Cold War (1988) international connections developed as a highly secular environment, with no public place for religion and where nationalism²² replaced the role of religion as the key organising ideology of nation-states. During the first half of the twentieth century, religion was frequently used in the service of anti-colonialism, a major facet of emerging national identity as a key component of burgeoning indigenous opposition to alien rule²³.

1.1.1. Religion and nationalism

Concerning the relationship between nationalism and religion, it has to be remarked that its nature can be described as both indefinite and controversial. Some authors, like Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm, do not believe that religion is necessary to explain and discuss the origin and practice of nationalism. In their writings²⁴, they give more importance to different secular elements such as history and economy. In contrast, other experts hold opposing points of view about the interconnection between religion and nationalism. They recognise that to analyse the rise of nationalism in both developed and developing countries, it is needed to take into account religion's direct and indirect influence.²⁵ In Thomas Scott's opinion especially, religion was necessary for the rise of the modern state as well as the development of modern international society²⁶.

²¹ Triloki Nath MADAN, *Secularism in Its place*, in "Journal of Asian Studies", vol. 46, n. 4, 1987, pp. 754.

²² It can be interpreted in two extending ways: as a doctrine or as a political movement. It underlines that a nation, which in turn is a group of people of considerable size settled in a particularly territory linked by feelings of community, thinks it has the right to become an independent and sovereign political community. This is because they share a common history and perceive to have the same destiny.

²³ Jeffrey HAYNES, *Religion, Politics and International Relations*, London, Routledge, 2011, 1st ed., pp. 6.

²⁴ Specifically, in Ernest GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1983; and in Eric HOBBSAWM, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

²⁵ Of this thesis are Barbara-Ann J. Reiffer, Anthony Smith, Thomas Scott. For more details on it, read Barbara-Ann J REIFFER, *Religion and nationalism: Understanding the consequences of a complex relationship*, in *Ethnicities*, vol. 3, n.2, 2003, pp. 215-242; Anthony SMITH, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

²⁶ SCOTT, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, op. cit., pp. 21-53.

Moreover, some academics employ the term “religious nationalism” when there is a demonstrable relationship between religion and nationalism²⁷. It indicates the response in a religious way to a political situation and it is identified in various frameworks, leading different outcomes. Religious nationalism constitutes an important ingredient of nowadays international life, characterising a nation in terms of shared religion, though not necessarily exclusively. Yet it can also be connected to other elements of identity, including culture, ethnicity and language. It can be identified different degrees of religious influence on nationalism. In the first category religion and nationalism are inseparable and it is the case of Iran and Saudi Arabia, where the power is legitimised by a public adherence to a religious faith; the state is ruled by officials who believe themselves to be divinely guided²⁸. Then in other nationalist movements such as the Palestinians, religion play only an assisting role as a cohesive element, in other words it is a supporting component that can help bring together a community in pursuit of a nation-state²⁹. Thirdly, religion can take the same place as secular doctrines in the building of a nation-state and this is the case of Israel. This specific case is a particular one due to the disputes about which group -Muslim Palestinians or Jewish Israelis- has the absolute right to control the territory and build a nation-state³⁰.

1.2. *The resurgence of religion*

Although the secularisation process implied the privatization of religion everywhere and the demotion of religion as secondary category to secular for a prolonged period of time, today there is a de facto consensus among IR scholars that religion has regained power both within countries and in international relations. The decline of optimism about the superior secular values of international relations revealed that perhaps religion does have something to give us in order to improve the relationships between states³¹. Particularly after the Cold War, religion began its public rehabilitation in the international arena. Religion values and norms started to reassert themselves, reacquiring the power to influence world affairs after centuries of absolute marginalisation.

²⁷ Mark JUERGENSMEYER, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*, Berkely, University of California Press, 1993, pp. 5-6.

²⁸ HAYNES, *An Introduction to International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

²⁹ REIFFER, *Religion and nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 225-226.

³⁰ HAYNES, *An Introduction to International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 80-82.

³¹ Jeffrey HAYNES, *Introduction*, in Jeffrey HAYNES (edited by), *Routledge Handbook of religion and politics*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 1-3.

Many scholars of International Relations have denominated all this as the “return” or the “resurgence of religion” in the international panorama. What is more, according to Pepito and Hatzopoulos, it has to be recognized that the return of religion in the international relations cannot be conceived as simply a “return”, but as the “return of the repressed” because it points out the resurgence of what it has been banished and sent into exile³². Others, like George Weigel called it “unsecularization of the world”, meaning to a global religious revitalization³³. This can be seen as a worldwide re-emergence of religious ideas and religion-influenced social movements, which are not limited to one faith or a few countries.

At this point, one demand should rise spontaneously: what have favoured the resurgence of religion after the end of the Cold War? Two main explanations can be found. The first one is that religious beliefs are seen as lifeline against the phenomenon of globalization that during these last decades has undermined traditional value systems and allocate opportunities in highly unequal ways³⁴. As consequence, many confused and disoriented people find solace and comfort in turning to religion; many are in search of a new or renewed sense of identity, something to give their lives greater meaning and purpose. Moreover, the return of religion has been favoured by a fertile milieu. There is a widespread popular belief that society’s traditional morals and values are being seriously undermined by the corrosive effects of modernisation, which has in turn the effect of reducing or even removing religion’s influence from the public realm³⁵. It is therefore reasonable that the influence of religion will not be seen “only” in relation to personal issues. In line with this, the return of religion has also political effects. Most countries have politicised religious groups, institutions and movements emerging in these recent years³⁶. All these have a desire to change domestic and in some cases, international arrangements, so as to reinstate religion as a central societal and political influence. Some political commentators believe that this “revival of religion” is none other than a politicised religion with much greater visibility today compared to the past³⁷. In their opinion, all the current visibility is due to the communications revolution that has characterized the entire

³² Fabio PETITO and Pavlos HATZOPOULOS, *The Return from Exile: an Introduction*, in Fabio PETITO and Pavlos HATZOPOULOS (edited by), *Religion and International relations. The return from exile*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 12.

³³ Samuel P. HUNTINGTON, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996, 1st ed., pp. 34.

³⁴ Pippa NORRIS and Ronald INGLEHART, *Sacred And Secular: Religion And Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 35-40.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ Jeffrey HAYNES, *Religion, Politics and International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

world. That is to say that religion is not a novel political actor in the international arena, rather it has to be seen as an obstinate persistent actor of whom we are nowadays more aware.

Up to this point we have talked about the reappearance of religion in the nowadays relations between nations, but we have not given a definition of the contemporary concept of religion yet. According to the Professor and Director of the Centre for the Study of Religion, Conflict and Cooperation, Jeffrey Haynes, religion concerns two analytically distinct, but related meanings: a religious definition and a secular one. The current concept of religion is the result of its evolutions over the years. Religion, in a spiritual sense, is related to three ways of models of social and individual behaviour that help believers organise their everyday lives. Conforming to it, religion is firstly related to the idea of transcendence, that is, it associates to supernatural realities. Secondly it pertains to sacredness, namely a system of languages and practice that organizes the world in terms of what is considered holy. And thirdly, it is concerned with ultimacy, that is to say that it relates people to the ultimate conditions of existence³⁸. For what concerns the material sense, religious beliefs can encourage individuals and groups to act in pursuit of social and political goals. Very few are those religious groups that do not have an interest in some social and political matters. Thereafter, religion can be a mobiliser of masses, a controller of mass action, an excuse for repression or and ideological basis for dissent³⁹. However, in many States, religion plays an important role as fundamental value orientations and this can have social and/or political implications.

In Thomas Scott point of view, it has to be remarked that the modern reading of religion has misinterpreted the understanding of what the Wars of Religion in early modern Europe were all about. If the Wars of Religion are explained as a backward and barbarian period of European history, when people killed each other because of their different religious beliefs, then the role of religion in other situations would probably be distorted⁴⁰. Religion in early modern Europe should be described as community of believers rather than a body of doctrines of beliefs, as liberal modernity would have it. As a result of this interpretation, the Wars of Religion have to be read as a defence and protective act of the sacred notion of community defined by religion, since each community struggle to delimit and shield the boundaries between the sacred and the profane as a whole⁴¹.

³⁸ Jeffrey HAYNES, *Religion, Politics and International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ SCOTT, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, op. cit., pp. 25.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

1.3. Religion and foreign policy

What are the effects of religion into foreign policies of states? Every state defends a set of “national interest” objects through their foreign policy. In order to do so, the state’s diplomatic policy should always be prepared to comply with the numerous changes of forms and dynamics of international politics. As reported by Frankel, foreign policy is to a great extent the reflection of the country’s internal climate, its needs, priorities, strong and weak points⁴². Therefore, country’s international relations are generally affected by many factors, for instance history, geography, socio-economic conditions and culture, which intervene to change the interactions of states and global actors. In short, national foreign policies reveal firstly the country’s power guidelines and secondly the interplays with the dominant international milieu.

It is generally admitted that any country’s domestic environment has a considerable role in conditioning its foreign policy⁴³. Religion is one of those conditioning agents and it has substantially many implications in the basic concept of international politics. The most direct way of influencing is by religious actors, who depending on their ability to establish good relationships with key figures of world politics, may get close to decision-makers. They can be also transnational actors, like non-governmental actors that represent a certain religious tradition and have important foreign relations. As declared by Daniel Philpott, “the pathway through which religious actors’ ideas and relationship with states develop will be diverse”⁴⁴. An example of non-state religious actor that has become particularly relevant in recent times is the Roman Catholic Church. Between the 1980 and 1990, it played a leading role in the democratisation process of many countries around the world, like Latin America, Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia.

Another significant way, through which religion can affect foreign policy, is the conditioning force of religious identity. If religion is thought as an aspect of identity and culture of a community or of a single person, it may be supposed that it contributes to the world vision that such person or collective have. In addition, the system of beliefs, norms and doctrines, on whom religions are based, may be a guide for the community or the single person. As a result, faith can induce people to act in such a way to determine ethic precepts or principles and so influencing decisions on the internal, but also foreign sphere. As the decision apparatus of

⁴² Joseph FRANKEL, *The Making of Foreign Policy*, London, Oxford University Press, 1963.

⁴³ HAYNES, *An Introduction to International*, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

⁴⁴ Daniel PHILPOTT, *Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion*, in “The American Political Science Review”, vol. 11, n. 3, 2007, p. 508.

governments and international institutions is composed of individuals, it is reasonable to sustain that the choices of a political leader can be affected, even minimally, by the own creed. This is the case of Woodrow Wilson's decision to sustain the Balfour Declaration, as it will be explained later.

At last but not least, the cultural heritage of a state, to whom religion belongs, is another fundamental aspect that may weight on the orientation of countries' foreign policy, suggesting towards which states acting friendly or inimical. An example of how the cultural heritage of a nation may have an impact on its foreign policy and conditioning the choice of allies and enemies is the case of the US-Israel alliance examined in this essay. In the following chapter, it will be analysed those aspects that create a common cultural heritage between the two states at issue.

For what concern the role of religion in state foreign policies, Haynes introduces the concept of "religious power", which denotes the ability to get policy makers to adopt policies because they believe they are religiously appropriate to do so⁴⁵. He suggests that, if religious actors "get the ear" of the key foreign policy makers due to their shared religious beliefs, the former may become able to influence foreign policy outcomes through the exercise of religious soft power⁴⁶. As a matter of fact, several religious actors in USA influence foreign policy through such a strategy.

Haynes focuses notably on the term "soft power", coined by the American scholar Joseph Nye⁴⁷, and he seeks to extend the use of it also in the context of religion and international relations. The new term has been defined in contrast to hard power, which draws its strengths from material capabilities like force and the threat of force or economic threats. On the contrary soft power reflects the power and force of ideas and values; it is related to the capacity to encourage other people to act in certain ways rather than others. It happens when ideas, arguments and campaigns attract a great number of people and so there are more possibilities to affect outcomes by encouraging decision makers to make one choice instead of another⁴⁸. However, it has to be remarked that soft power is not so used and between the most powerful states still dominate the conventional measures, which characterized hard power. Secular ideas

⁴⁵ Jeffrey HAYNES, *Routledge Handbook of religion and politics*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 293-294.

⁴⁶ Jeffrey HAYNES, *Religion and Foreign Policy Making in the USA, India and Iran*, in "Third World Quarterly", vol. 29, n. 1, 2008, pp. 143-144.

⁴⁷ Joseph S. NYE, *Soft Power: The Means to success in World Politics*, Washington, Public Affairs, 2004, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 6-8.

seem to predominate most states' foreign policies or seems to be more evident in the international scenario, while religious ideas require a deeper analysis to become evident.

The first attempt to elevate religion as a central category for understanding international relations was Samuel Huntington in 1993, when he wrote an article entitled "The clash of civilisations?" and become well-known all over the world. In this essay he controversially argued that the post-Cold War international relations would be characterized by what he defined a "clash of civilisations", referring to an emerging conflict between "Islam"-the Muslims countries- and the "West"-western European and north America states⁴⁹. However, his main argument was that religion, together with history, language and tradition were the first elements through which civilizations, the highest cultural grouping of people, differentiate from one another. "Blood, language, religion, way of life, were what the Greeks had in common and what distinguished them from the Persians and other non-Greeks⁵⁰." In his book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" published in 1996, Huntington stated that religion is a central, perhaps the central, force that motivates and mobilizes people in the modern world. As affirmed by the American academic, "Of all the objective elements which define civilizations, however, the most important usually is religion, as the Athenians emphasized. To a very large degree, the major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world's great religions; and people who share ethnicity and language but differ in religion may slaughter each other, as happened in Lebanon, the former Yugoslavia, and the Subcontinent⁵¹." Moreover, he added that religion is a central defining characteristic of civilizations, and, as Christopher Dawson said, "the great religions are the foundations on which the great civilizations rest⁵²."

In summary, Huntington proposed a world divided in principally two parts: those countries who share a Judeo-Christian common ground and those who do not. What is surprising, is that Huntington's scheme corresponds in some measure to a framework conceptualized in the fourteenth century by an Italian jurist, Bartolus de Sassoferato. This last one separated the world into five classes: the "populous Romanus"- practically all those who obey the Holy Mother Church- and four classes of "populous extranei", such as the Turks, the

⁴⁹ Samuel P. HUNTINGTON, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, in "Foreign Affairs", vol. 72, n. 3, 1993, pp. 22-49.

⁵⁰ Samuel P. HUNTINGTON, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the Word Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996, 1st ed., pp. 42.

⁵¹ *Ivi*, pp. 87.

⁵² *Ivi*, pp. 90.

Jews, the Greeks and the Saracens. Notwithstanding he positioned the Jews among the “populous extranei”, it is thought-provoking to notice how already in the past authors divided the world relying on religions⁵³.

1.4. *Religion in international relations theories*

The discipline of International Relations arose during the beginning of the Twentieth century with the purpose to study and develop possible behaviours and strategy of international actors. It is important to notice that they developed in an environment which was characterized by the modernisation and secularization process and so their theories reflect the concept of religion as an impediment to the scientific management of the domestic and international public realm.

According to the concept of secular, sovereign states are the key actors in international relations and they are characterized by two crucial aspects: state sovereignty and the principle of international non-intervention. Being products of the secular era, international relations theories has gradually embedded these concepts in the international thinking, creating the Westphalian system. For these reasons, it has been difficult for the discipline to recognize and subsume the return of religion into the public sphere. Most of international relations scholars hardly mentioned religion in his works and articles. This was due to the difficulty of integrating religious subject matter into their normal conceptual frameworks. Talking about the difficulty for the realist and liberalism approach, Katzenstein explains well the embarrassment which is common to all IR theories: “Because they are expressions of rationalist thought deeply antithetical to religion, the silence of realist and liberal theories of international relations on the role of religion in European and world politics is thus not surprising⁵⁴”.

However, in the last few years, many sociologists of religion and political scientists have expressed doubts about the suppositions of secularization theory, which appears to them incorrect since it does not any longer have realistic validity due to the meaningful revitalization of religion at global level. Furthermore, numerous events, among them the many terrorist attacks in Europe and in USA, cannot be seen as simply anti-modernist and fundamentalist

⁵³ Elizabeth Shakman HURD, *Secularism and International Relations Theory*, in Jack SNYDER (edited by), *Religion and International Relations Theory*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁴ Peter J. KATZENSTEIN, *Multiple Modernities And Secular Europeanization?*, in Peter J. KATZENSTEIN and Timothy BYRNES (edited by), *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 31.

reactions against the secularization failure in many relevant aspects⁵⁵. It is rather required to take into consideration and investigate also other concerns like religion and its actors.

How then should international relations scholars conceive the role of religion in their work? To answer to this question, I limit the analysis to the principal positivist schools of realism, liberalism, constructivism and institutionalism, as they share some premises about the nature of causality in founding relationships between countries.

Conforming to realism, which is based on the assumption that international order is dominated by anarchy and as a consequence every state has to defend its own territory and exercise sovereignty, religion may be decisive to identify which state is a good ally and which are to be considered enemies⁵⁶. They have noted that also values, which are expressed in culture, are an important source of influence. Countries with common cultural values are argued to be less probable to go to war against each other. In effect, it is more probable to consider an ally a state that has common identity and with whom there is an ideological affinity, so that it is easier to converge on same politics, stipulate international agreements or find support in case of war⁵⁷. On this account, states with common religious values are expected to have special connections and to be strongly allies.

From the point of view of constructivism, religion is typically viewed as one aspect of culture and therefore also its conceptualization is theorized in the concept of culture. At the basis of constructivists thought there is the belief that the very essence of a state is its identity, which in turn is derived from its culture. As stated by Warner and Walker, “the religion embedded in a country’s national identity, which shaped its institutions, would be expected to shape how that country defines its foreign policy interests. State actions in the international arena are derived from that identity⁵⁸”. Therefore, if a country’s decision-maker apparatus tends to take into consideration religion as part of its own identity, it would be also more favourable to take into account the religious element in defining its foreign policy.

Religion finds a place also in liberal IR theories. They hold that religion can influence international relations through the creed of a leader; his faith affects his opinions and behaviour and so he will act in compliance with the values of his religion in pursuing objectives and

⁵⁵ Jeffrey HAYNES, *Religion and foreign policy*, in Jeffrey HAYNES (edited by), *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, New York, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009, pp. 294.

⁵⁶ Caroline M. WARNER and Stephen G. WALKER, *Thinking about the Role of Religion in Foreign Policy: A Framework for Analysis*, in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, n. 7, 2011, pp. 118-120.

⁵⁷ Zeev MAOZ and Bruce RUSSETT, *Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946-1986*, *American Political Science Review*, vol. 87, n. 3, 1993, pp. 624-625.

⁵⁸ WARNER and WALKER, *Thinking about the Role of Religion*, op. cit., pp. 120.

achieving goals⁵⁹. In line with this, liberalists sustain that religious ideas can shape interests and authorities of political agents and of international institutions. These ideas may derive from the low, that is public opinion, and interact with foreign policy through political parties, pressure groups or religious organizations, such as the Jewish national movement: Zionism. In those countries where nowadays religious plays an important role in politics, it has been generally noted that there is great relevance of religious organizations in society and politics in comparison to other centuries.

At the end of the Second World War, numerous transnational actors took advantage of the modernisation of communication means, with the aim of becoming the bearer of relevant ideas, both secular and religious⁶⁰. Obviously the religiousness of a population, alternatively the presence of active religious groups or a public opinion well-informed on religious subjects, can contribute to give or not legitimacy to decision makers international actions.

To a less theoretical level, institutionalized religions, generally locally defined such as churches, political parties, organizations or religious associations, have concrete and efficient means to get access to the dynamics of international relations. For instance, religious movements and institutions may act in supporting political parties, but also political parties may offer the right channel for the development of religious movements, in order to improve society values making them closer to their programs. As a matter of fact, factions usually structure their objectives on the basis of ideologies and mobilize society to achieve the essential backing to win the elections and to continue common interests.

An American academic, Vendulka Kubálková arguments the inadequacy of contemporary international relations theory and calls for a new subfield of international relations: International Political Theology (IPT). In numerous articles she discussed that it is necessary to struggle the strictness of Western social science that has been characterized by an unwillingness and inability to deal with religions as a fundamental social factor at the same level with secular forces⁶¹. In Kubálková opinion, IPT wants to correct this systematic exclusion in the same way that International Political Economy (IPE) was intended at the time of its conception to reply to the indifference of economic factors in international politics. IPT

⁵⁹ *Ivi*, pp. 121-123.

⁶⁰ HAYNES, *An Introduction to International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

⁶¹ Vendulka KUBÁLKOVÁ, *Toward International Political Theology*, in Fabio PETITO and Pavlos HATZOPOULOS (edited by), *Religion and International relations. The return from exile*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 79-107.

suggests a more analytical study of dialogues and relations concerning world affairs that seek an answer, transcendental or secular, to the human need for meaning.

After a detailed study it can be stated that there is no credible, universally relevant, academic framework to describe how, why, when and under what circumstances does religion achieve centrality in foreign policy making and accomplishment. When scholars identify affinity and persistently connection to religious purposes in foreign countries of States, it is in most cases a consequence of national religious lobby groups who foster such policies⁶². Nevertheless, it seems that nowadays some governments are abandoning their embedded secular national interest affairs, including national security, protection of trade and territory, or trying to deter possible enemies from fighting against them, so as to clearly permeate religious concerns into their foreign policies.

A manifestation of the increased salience of religion in international relations is particularly evident in the United States. Indeed, since 1998, thanks to the emanation of the International Religious Freedom Act, the American diplomats have to be trained to promote religious freedom around the world. In addition, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and the Office of International Religious Freedom have to report to the U.S. Congress on the condition of religious freedom across the globe⁶³. In 2010, a paper of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs underlined the strong influence religion has on the making of US foreign policy⁶⁴. The most suitable reply to the increasing global relevance of religion proposed by the Council was an effectively engagement of religious communities in the promotion of policy objectives'. In the words of Douglas Johnston, one of the members of the Chicago Council task force, "the advantage of using faith-based actors not only acknowledges the importance of religion in the world but is one of the most effective means of advancing US foreign policy interests⁶⁵". He asserts that faith-based non-governmental organizations,

⁶² Shibley TELHAMI, *Between faith and ethics*, in J. Brayn HEHIR, Micheal WALZER, Louise RICHARDSON, Shibley TELHAMI, Charles KRAUTHAMMER and Jermes LINDSAY (edited by), *Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and US Foreign Policy in an Unjust World*, Washington, Brookings Institution Press, pp. 71.

⁶³ Lee MARSDEN, *Obama, Bush and a faith-based US foreign policy*, in "International Affairs", vol. 88, n. 5, 2012, pp. 956.

⁶⁴ R. Scott APPLEBY, Richard CIZIK and Thomas WRIGHT, *Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy. Report of the task force on religion and the making of U.S. foreign policy*, Chicago, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2010, pp. 17-19. Available at http://kroc.nd.edu/sites/default/files/engaging_religious_communities_abroad.pdf, last access on 20 May 2016.

⁶⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 28-29.

hereafter NGOs, are less likely than secular NGOs to obtain charges of governmental co-optation; their peculiarity is that they bring a sense of moral authority to discussions that would otherwise be dominated by political considerations⁶⁶. Pursuant to the guidelines of the new tendency of U.S. foreign policies, the U.S. State Department has continued to launch many initiatives on the issue of religion and foreign policy. One of them it has started in October 2011, promoted by the American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and it is called “Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group⁶⁷”. It consists in a working group, that gathers diplomats, Foreign Service officials, military leaders and representatives of faith communities with the aim of establishing relationships with religious leaders and communities around the globe and at the same time allow them to give their opinion in the guidelines’ formation of the American foreign policy. This project arises from the idea that in order to face new future challenges it should get involved new religious institutions and partners, so as to achieve more successfully objectives of the international affairs. In so doing, the U.S. State Department has launched a dialogue among faiths of all over the world. Today the future diplomats study the faith of the country to which they have been assigned and embassy do not talk only with governments and diplomats, but also with religious leaders⁶⁸.

Moreover, it has to be added that under both the latest two administrations, Bush and Obama, great efforts have been made to encourage an understanding in which faith-based approaches are perceived as the resolution to all of America’s, and to a large extent the international community’s, dilemmas. As reported by Lee Marsden, the personal creed and experience of the latest U.S. presidents has underpinned a significant change in resources from secular non-governmental organizations to faith-based organizations (FBOs), assuming that secular organizations are less effective than FBOs. George W. Bush began to show his approach to faith-based initiatives when he was Governor of Texas; while Obama started during his experience of working on Church-sponsored community programmes in Chicago⁶⁹.

Especially under Obama’s presidency, faith-based approaches have been increasingly adopted within the US foreign policy apparatus, as he revealed in a speech in Ohio during his

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ See Maria OTERO, *Remarks to the Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group*, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/176344.htm>, last access on 7 May 2016.

⁶⁸ Alessandro SPECIALE, *Per capire il mondo bisogna capire la religione*, available at <http://www.lastampa.it/2012/07/23/vaticaninsider/ita/documenti/per-capire-il-mondo-bisogna-capire-la-religione-b1qxBP3bscheOuC5FWSNZI/pagina.html>, last access on 7 May 2016. Personal Translation.

⁶⁹ MARSDEN, *Obama, Bush and a faith-based US foreign policy*, op. cit., pp. 956-957.

presidential campaign on 1 July 2008: “And my Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships will also have a broader role – it will help set our national agenda [...] We know that faith and values can be a source of strength in our own lives. That’s what it’s been to me. And that’s what it is to so many Americans. But it can also be something more. It can be the foundation of a new project of American renewal. And that’s the kind of effort I intend to lead as President of the United States”⁷⁰. Therefore, there has been a continuity across the two presidents in favouring faith actors at internal and international level. However, Obama’s initiative appears to be stronger. While the principal identification of Christianity in US politics has generally been with the Republican Party, Obama has been able to overtake the religious gap and foster Democrats to be more involved with religion, making faith a central component of his administration⁷¹. Despite USA is considered the most secular state in the world, it has a population highly religious and it is one of the first countries to have recognized that in the future religion is destined to play an even more important role in international relations.

Also at European level some states seem to have perceived the potential of religion as means to establish good relationships with other countries. In Italy, for instance, an international conference entitled “The dialogue between religions and cultures, conference at Farnesina” took place in March 2010⁷². Several philosophers and religious representatives of different creeds participated and they discussed about the interconnections among religion, culture and human rights, giving particular emphasis to the character of religion in IR. Just few months ago, on 17 March 2016, it has been held another conference on the subject, “Religion and Diplomacy: a new strategic pillar for a comprehensive Mediterranean dialogue” organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI)⁷³.

All things considered, religion may influence who the actors in world politics are, what they desire, what resources they offer in order to mobilize support and making allies, and what rule they respect. Religion helped to shape the system of sovereign states, it transcended it and

⁷⁰ *Obama Delivers Speech on Faith in America*, The New York Times, July 1, 2008. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/01/us/politics/01obama-text.html?_r=0, last access on 20 May 2016.

⁷¹ MARSDEN, *Obama, Bush and a faith-based US foreign policy*, op. cit., pp. 957.

⁷² Press release of the international meeting on the dialogue between religions. Available at http://www.esteri.it/mae/it/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2010/05/20100513_religioni_culture.html, last access on 20 May 2016.

⁷³ Press release of the recent international meeting about the role of religion in diplomacy. Available at http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2016/03/religione-e-diplomazia-insieme.html, last access on 20 May 2016.

still today it bolsters the state-centered international order. It may aid to legitimate state authority, but also undermine it. Religion can help to define the territorial boundaries of a state, though creates loyalties and networks that pass over boundaries. Among the potentialities of religion, which are far broader than those of politics, there is the ability to facilitate improbable alliances or on the contrary ruin obvious ones. Religion may influence politics by forging its organizational and network structures and by affecting its values and motives.

Today religion has begun to play an important role as a fundamental element to prevent and resolve identity-based conflict that overpass the reach of traditional diplomacy⁷⁴. This is due to the religion's special potential to endanger system-wide change. Religion is also essential for ethnic identity; in fact, it has also played an important political role in many developing countries during the years of colonialism.

To conclude, what is distinctive about religious subject matter in international relations? The answer can be that it is singular in the sense that it has introduced into IR issues of norms, values and beliefs that go beyond the traditional secular involvement of international relations-war, peace, security-while opening up the terrain of IR analysis to the participation of numerous non-state actors motivated by religious interests⁷⁵. We will see in the next chapter how the religion has influenced the foreign policy and consequently the alliance between United States and Israel.

⁷⁴ Atsuhiko KATANO, *Conflict prevention and Peacebuilding*, in Jeffrey HAYNES (edited by), *Routledge Handbook of religion and politics*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 352.

⁷⁵ SNYDER, *Religion and International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 1-3.

CHAPTER 2 – A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

CONTENTS: 2. *A special relationship* – 2.1. *The Jewish presence in America* – 2.2. *Zionism in America* – 2.3. *The United States and Palestine* – 2.4. *The characteristics of the special relationship after 1948* – 2.4.1. *A strategic cooperation* – 2.4.2. *Economic ties* – 2.4.3. *Academic connections* – 2.4.4. *Shared values*

2. *A special relationship*

“Our relationship would never vary from its allegiance to the shared values, the shared religious heritage, the shared democratic politics which have made the relationship between the United States and Israel a special - even on occasion a wonderful - relationship [...] The United States admires Israel for all that it has overcome and for all that it has accomplished. We are proud of the strong bond we have forged with Israel, based on our shared values and ideals. That unique relationship will endure just as Israel has endured⁷⁶”.

Special and unique relationship, strong bond, “the friendship, the alliance is strong and solid⁷⁷”, these are some of the words used by the American Presidents, and not only, when talking about U.S.-Israel relationship. By special relationship is here intended the ties between the United States and the State of Israel, that have over the last half century flourished not just into a thick forest of strategic and military links, but also into uncommon economic, academic, religious and personal bonds. In order to better analyse and comprehend the alliance between the two states taken into consideration, this thesis should begin with a brief history of the first Jewish settlements in the New World discovered by the Italian Christopher Columbus.

⁷⁶ Letter from Bill Clinton to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on occasion of Israel's 50th birthday. Available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/US-Israel/presquote.html>, last access on 5 March 2016.

⁷⁷ George Bush speech during the President's News Conference in Japan, February 25, 1989. “The friendship, the alliance between the United States and Israel is strong and solid -built upon a foundation of shared democratic values, of shared history and heritage that sustain the moral life of our two countries. The emotional bond of our peoples goes- it transcends politics”. Available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/US-Israel/presquote.html>, last access on 5 March 2016.

2.1. *The Jewish presence in America*

Jews had been part of the American experience long before the establishment of the State of Israel⁷⁸; they were part of the failed settlement efforts to colonize Roanoke Island, Virginia, Plymouth with its Pilgrims Fathers⁷⁹ and Jamestown.⁸⁰ The first marks of a Jewish presence in America has to be found in 1654, when a small group of twenty-three Jewish men, women and children made landfall at New Amsterdam, a strategic village on the southern edge of the Manhattan Island and the core of the colony of New Netherland⁸¹. They arrived from northern Brazil, from where they had been forced to flee due to the reassertion of Portuguese rule in that colony⁸². While many of Brazil's Jews returned to Holland, other went toward the islands in the Caribbean and some sailed for the Dutch Island of Manhattan.

Over seven months other Hebrews from Holland arrived in America in order to trade. Surprisingly, they moved from their homeland without the intention of settling in the New World definitively. They came to work, to trade and then they return back to Europe. Ten years later, only few Hebrews of these first ones remained stable along the American seacoasts. Paradoxically, at that time the land of opportunity without limits was Europe, not the North America. As written by Jacob R. Marcus "if the Hebrew of that time wanted to have a future, he would have it in Europe, not in the back-country of America".⁸³ Nevertheless, the promise

⁷⁸ For a detailed chronology of the events that led to the creation of the State of Israel see http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/israel/large/index.php; for the document that attests the United States recognition of the birth of the State of Israel, see http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/israel/large/documents/index.php?documentdate=1948-05-14&documentid=48&pagenumber=1.

⁷⁹ They were a group of English Puritans, who seeking religious freedom, set sail from their homeland and landed in America. They were the original settlers of Plymouth Colony.

⁸⁰ For an interesting narration about the history of the first American colonies see: Jones, MALDWYN A., *Storia degli Stati Uniti d'America: dalle prime colonie inglesi ai giorni nostri*, Milano, Bompiani, 2001.

⁸¹ The Dutch colony expanded from the Delaware River to the south, northward along the Hudson River to present-day Albany, and even beyond.

⁸² Jews had originally come to Brazil in the late 1620s, when the Dutch, who worked for the Dutch West India Company, took possession of the Portuguese territories. The Netherlands remained there in control until 1654, when a Portuguese naval force reconquered Lisbon's erstwhile colony, forcing not only all Dutch non-Jews to leave, but also the entire Jewish population, since Portugal for more than a century had prohibited the presence of Jews in its territories. See MORISON, Samuel ELIOT, *The growth of America Republic, USA*, 7th ed., Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 150-158.

⁸³ Jacob R. MARCUS, *The Colonial American Jew, 1492-1776*, vol. I, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1970, pp. 253.

included in the New World, would be in a little while revealed and those few Hebrews established in the American colonies would have caught the deepest meaning.

The first sign of Jews' intention to remain in New Amsterdam was the acquisition of land in 1656 where to establish a cemetery, which was the first religious action that a Jewish population had to take upon establishing a new community. Despite their intentions to stay, around the mid-1660 many of them were obliged to leave the city due to the colony's trade domination of four non-Jewish commercial houses that did not allow interlopers or newcomers to thrive. New colonies such as Newport and Rhode Island became their destinations. In spite of this leaving, Jewish settlers reappeared on Manhattan Island between 1680 and 1681 and by the time of 1695 approximately a hundred Jewish inhabitants resided in New York, comprising 2,5 percent of the town's population⁸⁴. The New York Jewish community's maturation coincided with the emergence of new Jewish settlements in several other locations such as Savannah, Georgia, Philadelphia, Charleston and Newport. This expansion was facilitated by the fact that Hebrews families sent sons, brothers, nephews and cousins, from one port to another in order to serve as commercial representatives for their affairs. By the middle of the eighteenth century Jewish settlers dwelled in five of early America's port towns⁸⁵.

The contact with the American soil and population was positive, principally because Jews found in America those values they were searching for: religious freedom and the possibility of economic development. Once they felt sufficiently well established, they began to organize their life forming congregations, formulating its rules of administration and governance based on the Torah, constructing a synagogue, conducting a school. In other words, not only were they preparing for their religious life, but also for their worldly affairs. For what concerns the society, the integration was not easy. Jews were not allowed to travel and trade, to buy real estate, to have public religious functions, to participate to the militia of the city and finally they were submitted to a discriminatory taxation⁸⁶. Despite these obstacles and discriminations, in the American colonial society the religious liberty had never been a serious problem for Jewish people⁸⁷. Anti-Semitism achieved also the New Land, but differently from

⁸⁴ Eli FABER, *Early America's Jewish Settlers*, in "History Now. The Journal of the Gilder Lehrman Institute", pp. 2. Available at <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/religion-and-eighteenth-century-revivalism/essays/early-america's-jewish-settlers>, last access on 5 March 2016.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁶ Giuliana IURLANO, *Sion in America. Idee, progetti e movimenti per uno Stato ebraico (1654-1917)*, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2004, pp. 24-29. Personal translation.

⁸⁷ Since the beginning, the Jew had not found difficulties to obtain the religious freedom and none of the colonies had never expelled a Jew because of his religious. Jacob R. MARCUS, *Early American*

that it developed in Europe⁸⁸. The difference can be found in the particular American experience. American colonial society was absolutely not immune to anti-Semitism of Christian origin, but the particular conditions in which the English colonization took place and the experimentation of the social democracy had generated a “new man”: the American⁸⁹. Jews people transplanted many typical elements of the European Jewish community in the New World, but at the same time they integrated quickly in the new reality becoming an essential part of the American population⁹⁰. A significant example of their integration was the participation as active protagonists to the American Revolution in 1776. Jewish lived the revolutionary events in the same way all other settlers of the New World experienced them⁹¹. They felt inhabitants of this new land. They were Americans, Jewish Americans who shared the same democratic ideals and who contributed to their affirmation.

A further relevant manifestation that the Jewish presence was growing in the new land, was the adoption of various Hebraic laws by Americans for their own governance, especially by the Puritans. They used the Torah, the Holy Book of Judaism, as a model for organizing their own colonial governments⁹². The earliest legislation of the colonies of New World was all determined by Scripture. Thirty-eight of seventy-nine statutes in the New Haven Code of 1665 derived their authority from the Hebrew Bible⁹³. In America, differently from other countries, there was far more freedom to experiment the use of Biblical Law in the legal codes of the colonies. This fact would influence the organization of the Republic of United States, its democracy and its alliances. Further information concerning this issue will be analysed in the third chapter.

Jewry: The Jews of pennsylvania and the South, 1655-1790, vol. II, Philadelphia, Jewish Publications Society, 1953, pp. 517-518.

⁸⁸ The majority of American discrimination’s cases derived from the Christian certainty of the collapse of Hebraism and from the comparison between the “new and authentic Israel” and the “old Israel”. See IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 50-51. Personal translation.

⁸⁹ In Crèvecoeur opinion, the American is a new man because he has left the European prejudices; religion in Europe drove the man to fanaticism, whereas in America he is tolerant, he feels free and responsible. J. Hector St. John DE CRÈVECOEUR, *Letters from an American Farmers [1782]*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1981, pp. 83.

⁹⁰ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 46-57. Personal translation.

⁹¹ *Ivi*, pp. 32-36.

⁹² Ken SPIRO, *Jews and the Founding of America*, available at <http://kenspiro.com/article/history-crash-course-55-jews-and-the-founding-of-america/>, last access on 6 March 2016.

⁹³ Paul EIDELBERG, *Jewish Roots of the American Constitution*, available at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/5817#.VtyAlMfrvVo>, last access on 6 March 2016.

Regarding the connection between the American society and the Jewish one, it has likewise to be noticed the clear divergence between the European Jewish community and that established in the United States. Differently from what was happening in Europe, where Jewish people were defined as belonging to a separate nation - that did not exist yet- and where the community claimed to universal authority forming a compulsory community, in America early Jewish settlers began to experiment with and to develop the contours of a voluntary community⁹⁴. They were the first members of Jewish faith in the modern world to do so, realizing what in fact would be eventually become the norm among Jewish communities everywhere in the world. A famous and important historian of the liberal thought, Alexis de Tocqueville, observed in 1830 that what they were doing was very American since voluntary associations permeated in American culture, doing much of society's communal work⁹⁵.

After having struggle for the American Independence and for their rights as all Americans, Jews tried to undertake a relationship with American institutions, in particular with the White House⁹⁶. One of the first successful attempt was the letter of gratitude written by Moses Seixas, the president of the Newport Hebrew congregation, to the first President of the United States, George Washington. The Hebrew congregation reported through this letter its appreciation for the establishment of the new government and its hopes of cohesion among all citizens of the just born Republic of the United States of America, whatever their background and religious beliefs⁹⁷. The President answered with a letter that represents the starting point of a long correspondence between Hebrews congregations and the American Presidents and which can be considered an important element of the tight relationship that would grow more and more during years between the Jewish community and the United States. In his letter written on the August, 21, 1790, George Washington assured Hebrews with the following words: "It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights.[...] For happily the Government of the United States gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they, who live under its protection, should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support. Everyone shall sit in safety under

⁹⁴ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 49-57. Personal translation.

⁹⁵ Alexis DE TOCQUEVILLE, *La Democrazia in America*, 1835, Milano, Rizzoli, 1995, pp. 52-53. Personal translation.

⁹⁶ The official residence and the principal workplace of the President of United States.

⁹⁷ George WASHINGTON, *To the Hebrew Congregations, January, 1790*, in William B. ALLEN (edited by), *George Washington: A Collection*, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 1988, pp. 545-546.

his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid⁹⁸.” The tone of this writing was different from the letters the President wrote to the other religious groups. It was declarative, assertive, and unusually crisp compared with Washington’s ordinary style⁹⁹. It was a definite call that has echoed down through the centuries. The first President of United States promised not just tolerance, but full liberty of conscience no matter what one’s religious beliefs happen to be. He was preparing the way for the First Amendment¹⁰⁰, which would be added to the Constitution on December 15, 1791 and which represents also today, as at that time, one of the most important pillar of the new nation. Not only represents this declaration the first formal recognition from a Chief of State that Jews were citizens of a nation, but it has also paved the way of what it would later become the dense exchange of letters and opinions between American Jews and the White House, about the considerable question of the Jewish National Home¹⁰¹.

Over the course of time the number of Jewish, who populated American cities, rose to 280.000 at the end of nineteenth century, especially due to the significant migration of Jews from Germany in 1834 and later - in 1881 - due to mass migrations of Russian and Polish Hebrews, who escaped from pogroms and famine¹⁰². As Jews increased, also the American interest towards them and their culture grew. The American attention towards the Jewish population was followed by an even greater involvement into Jewish affairs. This fact was accentuated by the rise of Zionism¹⁰³ after in Europe and later in America. Indeed, throughout

⁹⁸ George WASHINGTON, *Writings*, New York, Library of America, 1997, pp. 767.

⁹⁹ Ruth Bader GINSBURG, *Reflections on George Washington’s Letter to the Hebrew Congregations*, in Adam STROM, Dan ESHET and Michael FELDBERG (edited by), *Washington’s Rebuke to Bigotry: Reflections On Our First President’s Famous 1790 Letter To The Hebrew Congregation In Newport, Rhode Island Institute for Religious Freedom*, Brookline, Facing History and Ourselves, 2015, pp. 180.

¹⁰⁰ « Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. » Available at [http://www.senate.gov/civics/constitution_item/constitution.htm#amdt_1_\(1791\)](http://www.senate.gov/civics/constitution_item/constitution.htm#amdt_1_(1791)), last access on 6 March 2016.

¹⁰¹ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 41-43. Personal translation.

¹⁰² Elena LOEWENTHAL, *Atlante Storico del Popolo Ebraico*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1995, pp. 174-175. Personal translation.

¹⁰³ As defined by James L. Gelvin, one of the most important historian of the Palestinian Conflict. James L. GELVIN, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict. One Hundred Years of War*, New York, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 8-12.

the nineteenth century a dense debate concerning the Jewish Restoration¹⁰⁴ and the Promise Land¹⁰⁵ started in the United States, as proved by the contents of some documents presented at the Conference on the Early History of Zionism in America.

“Palestine has always occupied a special place in American hopes and dreams. The return of Hebrews to their ancient homeland had always constituted, since immemorial time, a favoured topic of romantic poetry and of rhetorical scholastic exercises. The universal accepted principle to be taught was that every Hebrew, in the deep of its heart, desire to come back to the land of its Fathers”¹⁰⁶. This contest led to anticipate early the idea of a Jewish State and to elaborate real projects to achieve it, as did Theodor Herzl writing the famous book “Der Judenstaat” (The Jewish State)¹⁰⁷.

2.2. *Zionism in America*

A special role has been played by Zionism, representing an important and particular form of Jewish presence in the United States. In few words Zionism is a Jewish nationalist movement which emerged in eastern and central Europe in the late nineteenth century as a reaction to European anti-Semitism and various nationalist movements that excluded Jews from political communities¹⁰⁸. It originally supported the Jewish return in the Promised Land and the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland in the ancient Land of Israel.

The idea of a return to Palestine emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries thanks to some messiahs¹⁰⁹, who tried to persuade a returning back to their Promised Land.

¹⁰⁴ The term includes the desire and the belief of the Jewish population to return to their Holy Land, the Land of Israel as the fulfilment of ancient prophecies.

¹⁰⁵ According to the Hebrew Bible, it represents the land that God promised to Abraham and his descendants. It corresponds to the territories from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River. (Genesis 15: 18-21)

¹⁰⁶ Milton PLESUR, *The American Press and Jewish Restoration During the Nineteenth Century*, in Isidore S. MEYER (edited by), *Early History of Zionism in America*, New York, American Jewish Historical Society and the Theodor Herzl Foundation, 1955, pp. 55-76. Papers presented at the Conference on the Early History of Zionism in America, convened by the American Jewish Historical Society and the Theodor Herzl Foundation, in New York City, 1955.

¹⁰⁷ This book, published in 1896, is considered to be the manifesto of Zionism. It included the theoretical basis for the creation of a Jewish State, without which otherwise Jews would continue to be persecuted.

¹⁰⁸ James L. GELVIN, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict. One Hundred Years of War*, New York, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 8-12.

¹⁰⁹ According to Judaism, a messiah is the expected king of the Davidic line who would deliver Israel from foreign bondage and restore the glories of its golden age. Definition is taken from the

However, in the eighteenth century the Jewish Enlightenment movement (also called Haskala) supplanted this idea with a need to assimilate Jews into Western secular culture. The conception of a homecoming to their Eretz Yisra'el¹¹⁰ had always been in the heart and mind of every Jew and during the nineteenth century Christian millenarians kept alive this dream. In spite of the Haskala, eastern European Jews did not assimilate and, in response to tsarist pogroms, they formed a movement called Lovers of Zion (Hovevei Ziyon) with the aim of promoting the settlements of Jewish farmers and artisans in Palestine. As a result, by the 1914 there were about 90,000 Jews in Palestine, a quarter of whom lived in Jewish agricultural settlements.

A turning point in the history of Jews was given by an Austrian journalist, Theodor Herzl, who launched the Zionist movement in 1897. He thought that assimilation of Jews into Western culture was desirable, but impossible to realize. Adhering to the promises of the Enlightenment meant renouncing to their ethnic identity in order to be accepted by gentiles and their society¹¹¹. At the beginning the nationalist movement appealed mostly the East European masses, who were living an extremely difficult situation under czarist oppression. In 1897 during the first Zionist Congress at Basel, Herzl delineated the purposes and the program of the nationalist movement declaring that “Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law”¹¹². Zionism and its leaders have been able to transform Jewish emancipation and forms of racist anti-Semitism into enthusiasm and courage, that constituted the base for a plan of national regeneration and resettlement.

The English approach to the Jewish cause was immediately clear: already in 1903 England offered to Zionism a piece of territory in Uganda, where to create a Jewish homeland. The outbreak of the World War I gave new energy to the movement. Firstly, the leadership passed to Russian Jews, who lived in England, like Chaim Weizmann¹¹³ and Nahum Sokolow¹¹⁴. Secondly, it made possible the Balfour Declaration, through which Zionism had had the English support to the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The biblical promise of a land for Jews and a return to the Temple in Jerusalem were enshrined in Judaism

Encyclopaedia Britannica, available at <http://www.britannica.com/topic/messiah-religion>, last access on 11 April 2016.

¹¹⁰ It is the Hebrew word to say the Land of Israel.

¹¹¹ Theodor HERZL, *Lo Stato Ebraico*, Genova, Il Melangolo, 1992, pp. 13-18. Personal translation.

¹¹² Extract from the definition of Zionism from Encyclopaedia Britannica, available at <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism>, last access on 22 April 2016.

¹¹³ He was an important Israeli politician and chemist. He was a Zionist leader and served as President of the Zionist Organization. Later he became the first President of the State of Israel.

¹¹⁴ He was another famous and important Zionist leader, who is considered to be the pioneer of the Hebrew journalism.

and sustained Jewish identity during the long periods of persecution and exile, until the founding of the State of Israel.

The history of Zionism in the United States is particularly significant as it strictly intertwines with the evolution of Jewish communities in the New World. Zionism was introduced in America thanks to Richard Gottheil¹¹⁵, who in 1898, after having attended the Zionist Congress in Europe, founded the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ). This organization was initially composed of Hebrew societies, Chovevei Zionists and Jewish nationalist clubs that all supported the Basle programme. In 1918 the FAZ was renamed Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) and it will remain until today even if with a different function comparing with the past. Initially the role played by these organizations was limited. Most American Jews and the American Jewish Committee were originally opponents to the Jewish national movement¹¹⁶. They were worried about the problem of “dual loyalty”. American Judaism feared that a behaviour in support of Zionism could have been disliked by American gentiles and consequently the American Jew would have been accused of lacking loyalty to the United States¹¹⁷. Only before the World War I, American Zionism began to gain important approvals. The most creative period, ideologically considered, was between 1903 and 1916. Precisely, it began to spread the idea that although Jews were political citizens in different countries where they lived, they belonged also to one common historical entity, to one people¹¹⁸.

One of the most significant figure during these years was Louis Brandeis, an American lawyer who successively became an associate justice on the Supreme Court and the President of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs. He brought new vitality

¹¹⁵ He was Professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University. He played an important role in the fusion of different American Zionists groups into, firstly the Federation of Zionist Societies of Greater New York and Vicinity, and later the Federation of American Zionists. Gottheil, together with Wise, prepared the ideological basis of the American Zionism and he always worked hard to give a unitary configuration of the American movement.

¹¹⁶ They affirmed their disapproval to any attempt to establish a Jewish State; in their opinion the real meaning inside the concept of “mission of Israel” passed over political and national borders and it would expand to the extent to promote, at global level, the universal religion proclaimed for the first time by Jewish prophets. Moreover, they declared that the object of Judaism was neither political nor national, but rather spiritual. For a detailed study about the reformed Judaism opposition to Zionism see Joseph P. STERNSTEIN, *Reform Judaism and Zionism, 1895-1904*, in Herzl Year Book, vol. V, 1963 pp. 11-31.

¹¹⁷ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 244-246. Personal translation.

¹¹⁸ Concept contained in the word “Jewish peoplehood” popularized by Mordecai M. Kaplan. See Mordecai M. KAPLAN, *Judaism as a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of American-Jewish Life*, New York, Forgotten Books, 4° ed. 2015, pp. 3.

and prestige to the movement, not only in the Jewish communities, but also in American politics. The principal idea of Brandeis was that Zionism was a legitimate phenomenon in American life, since there was an identity of ideals between Americanism and Zionism: both stress social justice and democracy¹¹⁹. As a good Zionist was necessarily a good American, he concluded that Zionism is a matter of moral obligation, of “noblesse oblige” for every consciously American Jew.

American Zionism had a different history compared with the one developed in Europe¹²⁰. Although for long time the centre of Zionist actions has been Europe, it was in the United States that the Jewish nationalist movement registered its major success and it found the key of its political triumph with the establishment of the State of Israel. In the New World, Zionism could express all its political and ideological potentialities thanks to the favourable context in which it took place: American liberalism. When the Zionist ideals started to take roots among American Hebrews, they found fertile and receptive ground. The Jewish conviction of the recreation of a national home in Palestine for all Jews, was in complete harmony with the spirit of original American liberalism. The same enthusiasm which had fostered American settlers to struggle against the English oppression to achieve independence, dignity and respect. What is more, the Jewish nationalist movement revolutionized millions of Jewish minds all over the world just because it talked about the same ideals, whom Americans had fight for many years before. This was the reason for whom Americans looked with admiration and affection the struggle of a population who had been tortured for centuries. Louis Brandeis leveraged the commonality between the principles of American liberalism and Jewish aspirations to a complete social and civil life. The following right step was the fair Jewish claim to a homeland, such as American settlers had claimed independence from Great Britain.

¹¹⁹ In one of his speeches, he tackled the problem of the “dual loyalty” with the following words: “There is no contradiction between loyalty to America and loyalty to Judaism. Jewish spirit, that is the product of our religion and our experiences, is basically modern and American... The American Constitution aims to do of the human brotherhood a reality, and this brotherhood has become the fundamental law of Jews 2500 years ago. In the XX century the higher aspiration of America is the social justice. For centuries also Hebrews has aimed to it...Indeed, loyalty to America requires that every American Jews become Zionist”. Abba EBAN, *Eredità. Gli ebrei e la civiltà occidentale*, Milano, Mondadori, 1986, pp. 266-267. Personal translation.

¹²⁰ We cannot talk of an “European” Zionism, because in every country Zionism reflected the conditions and characteristics of local Jewry. As a consequence, Polish Zionism was different from the German brand, English Zionism from the French one and so on. Evyatar FRIESEL, *The Influence of American Zionism on the American Jewish Community, 1900-1950*, pp. 130-148.

Brandeis explained explicitly how the Zionist ideals were perfectly in harmony with the spirit of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. A declaration of affinity which made progress in leaps and bounds to the Zionist cause in the United States.

Many historians have accused Zionism of being an influential group of politics, economists and academics, who try to skew U.S. foreign policy in favour of their interests¹²¹. Brandeis' role in the Wilson's decision to sustain the Balfour Declaration in 1917 can be seen in this way. Wilson's decision to sustain the Balfour Declaration can be understood as the result of individual influence of a man like Brandeis¹²². Actually, this kind of accusation derives from a superficial analysis of Zionism and it will be shown below the reason. The famous Balfour Declaration was a simply letter written by the English Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, expressing Great Britain's view with favour for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people"¹²³.

It was evident that Brandeis's suggestions impacted on the American President's choice, but two factors have to be taken into consideration. First of all, Brandeis was the leader of a movement that achieved an important political significance among Americans who firmly believed in the self-determination principle. The idea of Zionism had become positive and appealing even for non-Jews, who were imbued by the echoes of the Old Testament, fundamental to the Zionist philosophy. Secondly in Woodrow Wilson's eyes, Jews were entitled to be recognized as a nation and as a consequence to be legitimized to have an own homeland¹²⁴. Such certainty found somehow confirmation in religious background of the United States President, which has immediately and enthusiastically made him sensitive to the Zionist ideal¹²⁵. For these reasons Wilson's initiative to advocate the Balfour Declaration was an outcome of his own opinion and creed.

¹²¹ The emblem of this thesis are John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt. See in particular John J. MEARSHEIMER and Stephen M. WALT, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. foreign policy*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

¹²² Antonio DONNO, *Gli Stati Uniti, il Sionismo e Israele (1938-1956)*, Roma, Bonacci Editore Roma, 1992, pp. 25-27. Personal translation.

¹²³ Philip MATTAR, *Balfour Declaration (1917)*, Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa, 2004, available at http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Balfour_declaration.aspx. Official document available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp. last access on 8 March 2016.

¹²⁴ Wilson believed resolutely that, in order that a group of person would be legitimately recognized as an independent nation, it should have something more than a separated racial, ethnic or religious identity. He did not think that all nationalities were prepared to organize politically as sovereign national States. Lloyd E. AMBROSIUS, *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 22-23.

¹²⁵ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 410-411. Personal translation.

In the meantime, Zionism and its objectives had evolved. In 1942 took place the Biltmore Conference, a congress of the four major Zionist organizations: the Zionist Organization of America, Hadassah, Mizrachi and Poale Zion. It was an important moment of the history of Zionism, as for the first time it established a clear political goal for the movement. Moreover, it represented a singular compromise between the moderate wing of Zionism and the part more inflexible. Finally, only in 1948, 50 years after the first Zionist congress and 30 years after the Balfour Declaration, Zionism achieved its aim of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine.

2.3. The United States and Palestine

The United States emerged in the European and Middle East scenario in the early twentieth century as a world power with vast influence and responsibilities. The precise historical context was the outbreak of the World War One in 1914 and its relevant consequences. One of the most important outcomes of the war was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the division of its territories, which extended from Algeria until Iraq, into numerous smaller political entities that would have become the independent States of the contemporary Middle East. As a result, the direct administration of these territories was entrusted partially to Great Britain and partially to France through an international mandate¹²⁶ established by the fifty-two countries of the League of Nations. Actually, this partition of territories was the consequence of an agreement made in 1916 by British and French, called Sykes-Picot Treaty¹²⁷. This agreement defined French and British spheres of interest in the Near East and called for the internationalization of Palestine, as demonstrated in the picture¹²⁸. English purposes in these territories had always

become the independent States of the contemporary Middle East. As a result, the direct administration of these territories was entrusted partially to Great Britain and partially to France through an international mandate¹²⁶ established by the fifty-two countries of the League of Nations. Actually, this partition of territories was the consequence of an agreement made in 1916 by British and French, called Sykes-Picot Treaty¹²⁷. This agreement defined French and British spheres of interest in the Near East and called for the internationalization of Palestine, as demonstrated in the picture¹²⁸. English purposes in these territories had always

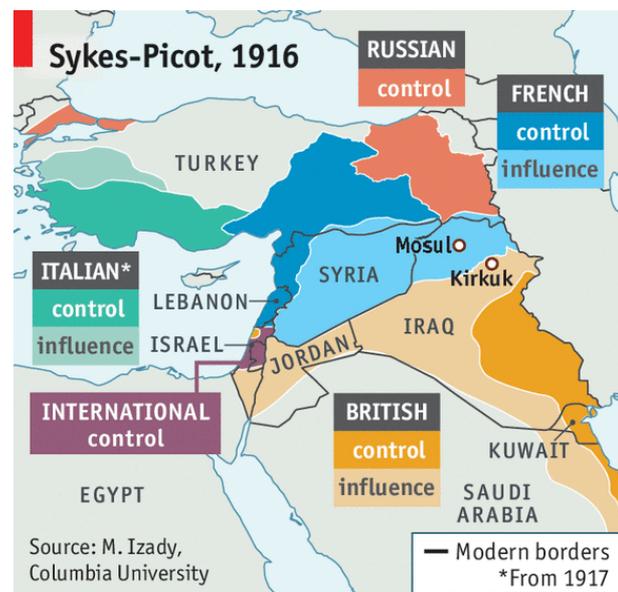


Figure 1

¹²⁶ A new institution intermediate to a colonial annexation and the complete sovereignty.

¹²⁷ According to this Treaty, of 1916 May, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine were controlled by the English, while Syria and Lebanon by the French.

¹²⁸ Special Report of The Economist, *Unintended consequences, The Sykes-Picot carve-up led to a century of turbulence*, May 14th 2016, available at <http://www.economist.com/news/special->

been quite explicit: Palestine constituted the missing link in order to connect the two principle areas of the British Empire. The long line of English territory from Cape Town until the Suez Canal would have been connected with the wider and bigger east area, which included Persia, the Indian Empire, Burma, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. Palestine was therefore a strategic zone to increase Great Britain influence¹²⁹. To this extent the Sykes-Picot Treaty was insufficient. On the other hand, Zionism and its leaders could have been a trump card in order to bypass the problem of the dangerous French proximity and to face the possible German move to earn the international Zionist liking.

On the ground of these events, on November 2, 1917, the English Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour decided to announce English sustain for the Zionist cause¹³⁰, but before making it popular he assured the backing of the United States on this initiative. Until that moment, the United States had not been involved with the problem of Europe's Jews, simply because the American government did not need to take a stand on this issue. Contrary to the European powers, who had a strengthened imperial tradition, American foreign policy was still taking the first steps into the international arena. With the outbreak of World War I, however the situation began to change. Woodrow Wilson, whose professional interests had always focused on educational, religious and national politics themes, found himself to manage a presidency concentrated on international relationships¹³¹.

By May of 1917, Brandeis had been in touch with Weizmann and with Arthur Balfour. The British were prepared to issue a Zionist declaration, but they wanted some sign of support from the American Government. Wilson's situation in that period was delicate: America was not at war with Turkey but only with its allies. A public statement about a possible American approval of the Balfour Declaration, which would impinge on Ottoman sovereignty, would certainly worsen U.S.-Ottoman relations- relations already severely stretched by the war and this Wilson did not want. After a period of hesitation principally caused by political reasons¹³², on October 13, 1917, Wilson looked at his correspondence on the declaration, he concurred

report/21698442-sykes-picot-carve-up-led-century-turbulence-unintended-consequences, last access on 20 May 2016.

¹²⁹ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 401-404. Personal translation.

¹³⁰ He made it official in the form of a letter from Foreign Secretary Balfour to Lord Rothschild as representative of the Zionist Federation.

¹³¹ Antonio DONNO, *Gli Stati Uniti, il Sionismo*, op. cit., pp. 25-27. Personal translation.

¹³² The negotiations between Weizmann, Balfour and the American Zionists led to the beginning of a division between the State Department and the Presidency on Palestine. This division would characterize American foreign relations for three decades.

with the English text and he informed the British about his decision. The American approval became official on August 27, 1918, in occasion of the Rosh Hashanah¹³³, when Wilson wrote a letter to rabbi Wise¹³⁴ greeting to the Jews of New York and stating in careful language his satisfaction at the progress of Jewish settlement in Palestine since the Balfour Declaration¹³⁵.

In 1919 it followed the Paris Conference, where the winner countries of the World War I outlined the new geopolitical situation of Europe and Middle East¹³⁶. Wilson thought that the Middle East was completely a special province of Great Britain, but he had not been fully informed of the Sykes-Picot agreement and of the British guarantees to the Arabs¹³⁷. For this reason, he considered worthwhile a re-examination of the whole issue of Turkish territory. An Inter-allied Commission was set up to go again and attempt to determine the wills of the people in the former Ottoman Empire. French refused to cooperate in sending representatives to this Commission and so did the British in response of the French rejection. Obviously the non-participation on the Commission would facilitate non-cooperation with whatever findings would have emerged. The final result was a United States commission headed by Henry C. King, President of Oberlin College and Charles Crane, Vice-Chairman of Mr. Wilson's 1912 Presidential campaign. The King Crane commission arrived in Palestine in the summer 1919 and accidentally their inquiry coincided with an Arab nationalist convention at Damascus in July¹³⁸. The commission was very impressed¹³⁸ by this congress which called for full Syrian Independence in an area which included Palestine. On the other hand, the Arabs called for the United States to serve as a mandatory power. The outcomes of the King Crane examination were two reports, in which the majority of people asked for reducing Jewish immigration and support. American observation was that further Jewish immigration would cause Arab unrest

¹³³ Literally it means "Head of the Year". For Jews it represents the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve.

¹³⁴ Rabbi Stephen Wise was the most prominent leader of the American Jewish community during the 1930s and 1940s, and served as President of both the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress. He is known to be the American Jew most recognized and admired by the Gentile society.

¹³⁵ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 444-445. Personal translation. The State Department refused to recognize this greeting as United States approval of the principles of the Balfour Declaration; the Department argued that it was not a statement of foreign policy.

¹³⁶ DONNO, *Gli Stati Uniti, il Sionismo e Israele*, op. cit., pp. 28-30. Personal translation.

¹³⁷ Through a correspondence between Mc. Mahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt and Hussein bin Ali, the Sherif of Mecca, Britain assured to recognize Arab Independence after the World War I, in the limits and boundaries proposed by Sherif of Mecca.

¹³⁸ *Ibidem*.

which could only be controlled by a large military force¹³⁹. Unfortunately, neither the majority or minority reports of the King Crane commission were taken into consideration and published until 1922. The United States initial incursion into European affairs had involved a bloody war and frustrating attempt to reconstruct the world along idealistic principles.

In April 1920 the Conference of the Supreme Council of European Powers took place at San Remo. On that occasion the representatives of the European powers discussed about the partition of the territories which before the war belonged to the Ottoman Empire. At the end the Supreme Council decided to place Palestine under the responsibility of Great Britain¹⁴⁰, while the United States participated at this conference only as an onlooker, because the Senate had refused to join the League of Nations. Once again the fate of the Jews was strictly a matter of European consideration.

With the coming to power of republicans, at the beginning of 1920, the American policy toward Palestine changed nature. In particular, the new-isolationism and the lack of United States in the League of Nations Assembly were the starting points of the American distancing from the Zionist issue.¹⁴¹ The policy of the following thirty years was based on the belief that the American government had little interest in the area except in the protection of its citizens who were working as missionaries or within the Yishuv¹⁴² settlements. During these years American Zionists continued to sustain the Yishuv in every possible way, but their efforts to have the government apply pressure on Great Britain in favour of the Jews were futile.

A proof of the substantial American indifference toward the issue was the Congress resolution of June 30, 1922, signed by Harding on the 21 September of the same year and which was a dull dictation of the Balfour Declaration. In addition, a statement of the Assistant Secretary of States, Breckinridge Long, defined very clearly the American attitude towards the Palestine issue. “ But the question of Palestine has a larger significance...We have been

¹³⁹ King-Crane Commission Report available at <http://www.hri.org/docs/king-crane/>, last access on 7 April 2016.

¹⁴⁰ The Balfour Declaration was incorporated into the Turkish Treaty on April 25, 1920. Great Britain was made mandatory of Palestine, while France received Syria. The Palestine mandate was then ratified by the League of Nations on September 29, 1923.

¹⁴¹ DONNO, *Gli Stati Uniti, il Sionismo e Israele*, op. cit., pp.30-32. Personal translation. For a further reading see Carl J. FRIEDRICH, *American Policy toward Palestine*, Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1944; F.E. MANUEL, *The Realities of American-Palestine Relations*, Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1949.

¹⁴² This term refers to the Jewish residents in the land of Israel before the establishment of the State of Israel.

interested from the point of view of the larger aspects of world security and of world peace, as well as the rights of humans and humanitarian sympathies and the religious sentiment involved”¹⁴³.

From the other side, the Department of State from the presidency of Wilson until Truman, followed a steady anti-Zionist policy. This was principally due to the American desire to maintain excellent bilateral relations with Great Britain, as in that period it was the mouthpiece of American interest in certain areas of the world. Thus between 1924 and 1933, it was a period of substantial American disinterest toward the matter of the National Home for Jewish people in Palestine, even if there were a growing Arab hostility which culminated in some violent events toward Jews in Palestine in 1929¹⁴⁴.

Roosevelt administration proceeded with the traditional American policy of 1920s of non-interference in the international affairs of the British ally. He substantially conducted an ambiguous doctrine being quiet and endorsing every English decision. In the meanwhile, in Europe came to power Hitler who began to implement a violent racist policy toward Jew people and in 1933 there was the outburst of the Second World War. From Roosevelt’s administration point of view, the war would have ended in few weeks and the consequently liberation of millions of Jews would have been close. But the events did not occur in the way Roosevelt had believed. He and his government assumed none effective initiative in order to open the doors in Palestine and give shelter to a notable quantity of Jews persecuted. Nothing was made to avoid the Holocaust. The sharing of opinions between the President Roosevelt and State Department prevented the administration to tackle the Palestine issue in a concrete way¹⁴⁵. Only in the 1943 there was a more intense American diplomatic activity about the Middle East question.

A turning point in the American Government attitude toward the Palestine issue was the election of Henry Truman as United States President in the 1945. It was immediately evident the contrasting viewpoint between the State Department and the President. According to Truman, the Jewish matter had to be connoted as a real American foreign policy problem in the context of American alliances in a strategic area after the end of the war. On the contrary the State Department, represented by Marshall, Forrestal and Kennan, retained appropriate to act

¹⁴³ Carl J. FRIEDRICH, *American Policy toward Palestine*, Washington, Public Affairs Press, 1944, pp. 22.

¹⁴⁴ DONNO, *Gli Stati Uniti, il Sionismo e Israele*, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

¹⁴⁵ Peter NOVICK, *The Holocaust in American Life*, New York, Mariner Books, 2000, pp. 47-59.

along the lines of British policy. This last one was based on one side on an alliance with Arab states as guarantee of leadership in the control of oil, and on the other side on a support for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

Truman tried to remove the deep ambiguity towards the Palestine which had characterized the previous presidencies and to give priority to humanitarian questions instead of oil problems. The President was emotionally and morally involved in the suffering and tragic vicissitudes of Jew people, whose history he knew well¹⁴⁶.

After the World War II, Great Britain thought to continue its ambiguous and full of change of mind policy toward Palestine and also Zionism. In reality the international situation was completely different compared to the conditions before the outburst of the Second World War; the greater Zionist fighting spirit and the horrors of the concentration camps by now of public domain made such English policy unfeasible. In 1946 the Jewish community began a cruel fight against the British, who had drastically limited immigration in Palestine in the previous years¹⁴⁷ and these events led Britain to replace the mandate under the League of Nations. Indeed, on 8 April 1947 Great Britain accepted the United States proposal to create an inquiry commission composed by neutral States. In so doing, they gave rise to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (hereafter UNSCOP), who had the task to examine all the aspects of the Palestine issue and to present some operational proposals within the 1st September 1947¹⁴⁸. The conclusive report suggested the division of Palestine into two sovereign States, one Arab and one Jewish, with the international trustee administration of Jerusalem. The reaction was positive on the Jewish side, but negative on the Arab one. This division plan accelerated events: it caused a violent Arab reaction, the British announcement of its near retirement from Palestine and the menace of a soviet radicalization in the Middle East. All this made Truman's position even more difficult.

On 19 March 1948, the United States, represented by Warren Austin, proposed to the Security Council of the League of Nations an American mandate in order to make the division plan more secure and easier and to fill the political gap that would be created after English retirement¹⁴⁹. This proposition caused heated reactions inside the liberal American world, who was disappointed, and among Zionists. The situation turned completely around when, on the

¹⁴⁶ Peter GROSE, *Israel in the Mind of America*, New York, Schocken Books, 1984, pp. 221-225.

¹⁴⁷ Through the emission of the White Paper, which limited the Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 immigrants over the following five years, on the basis of the economic absorptive capacity.

¹⁴⁸ GELVIN, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, op. cit., pp. 151-164.

¹⁴⁹ DONNO, *Gli Stati Uniti, il Sionismo e Israele*, op. cit., pp. 105-115. Personal translation.

same day the English mandate came to an end - on 14th May 1948 - and David Ben Gurion, leader of Worldly Zionist Organization, proclaimed the birth of the State of Israel in Palestine. Truman recognized the provisional Jewish government as *de facto* authority of the Jewish state just few minutes later¹⁵⁰. The *de jure* recognition of the State of Israel was extended on January 31, 1949. The President had always been in favour of Jewish aspirations as the following words, written confidentially in a letter to Chaim Weizmann on 29 November 1948, show: “What you have received at the hands of the world has been far less than was your due. But you have more than made the most of what you have received, and I admire you for it¹⁵¹ ”. Furthermore, Truman’s decision was influenced by Clifford actions and suggestions. His special advisor Clark Clifford¹⁵² presented several times the Jewish question to Truman not only in humanitarian terms, but also with all the possible political national and international implications. However, humanitarian aspects had played the decisive role in the decision to support and recognize the establishment of the State of Israel. With Truman there was the perception that the right time to resolve the problem of the Jewish diaspora had arrived, rehabilitating at the same time the American position in the international arena¹⁵³. As written by the Truman biographer David McCullough, Truman’s support for the Jewish State was wildly popular throughout the U.S¹⁵⁴.

The American *imprimatur* of the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine constituted the beginning of interstate relations between the United States and the State of Israel, that would gradually evolve into a special alliance. Before continuing with the next chapter, one thing is worthy to be mentioned. What was undoubtedly surprising and distinctive from any other country, was the fact that the contribution to the elaboration of a Jewish State’s idea was not a prerogative of Jews, but also many American “Zionist Gentiles”¹⁵⁵ paid attention to the problem

¹⁵⁰ The Proclamation of the Jewish State of Israel was to come into effect at 6 p.m., Washington time, May 12, 1948. At 6:11, the White House announced the recognition of the new State of Israel. For a colourful account of the days before the proclamation based on Clark Clifford’s (presidential adviser of Truman) papers and interviews read Dan KURZMAN, *Genesis 1948*, New York, World Publishing Company, 1970.

¹⁵¹ Harry S. TRUMAN, *Memoirs, Volume Two: Years of Trial and Hope*, New York, Doubleday & Company, 1956, pp.169. Available at <https://archive.org/stream/memoirsbyharryst012833mbp#page/n7/mode/1up>, last access on 7 April 2016.

¹⁵² Clark Clifford was the White House Chief Counsel of the Cabinet of President Truman Harry.

¹⁵³ DONNO, *Gli Stati Uniti, il Sionismo e Israele*, op. cit., pp. 74-84, 105-114. Personal translation.

¹⁵⁴ David MCCULLOUGH, *Truman*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1993, pp. 526.

¹⁵⁵ The term “Gentile” stands for non-Jews. Together with the adjective Zionist it designates those non-Jews who support the return of Jews in Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel.

of a Jewish national awakening and of the restoration of the biblical Holy Land¹⁵⁶. In doing so they forewarned what numerous American Jewish communities would have done in successive years.

2.4. *The characteristics of the special relationship after 1948*

Before considering in detailed the focal point of this essay, it is helpful to describe the main features of the US-Israel special relationship and to retrace the most significant events and data that have marked it, positively or negatively, until today. It follows a personal summary of the developing alliance between these two nations, devoting particularly attention to military, economic and academic bonds. The religious dimension of it will be dealt carefully in the third chapter.

2.4.1. *A strategic cooperation*

Two or more subjects generally cooperate in order to join individual capabilities and resources and in so doing they maintain or increase a competitive advantage over other subjects. This kind of interaction often permits the participants to achieve far more than they could alone and it can likewise be called “strategic cooperation”, which concerns principally security, military and economic support. In the following lines it will be analysed security and military assistance in the U.S.-Israel coalition, while economic collaboration will be the subject of the next paragraph.

As already anticipated in the previous paragraph, for many years, U.S.-Israel military ties were non-existent. The American elites, who determined U.S. foreign and defence policy, viewed Israel as a burden for its most vital strategic objective in the Middle East, namely the security of access to the vast oil reserves of the Persian Gulf¹⁵⁷. In addition, from Israel’s creation in 1948 until the mid-1960, State Department and Pentagon officials debated about the supplying of American arms to Israel. They were concerned that this action would provoke the Arabs to ask the Soviets and Chinese for more weapons, which in turn would stimulate a Middle East arms race. The United States’ rejection to Israelis’ repeated requests of arms during 1954-

¹⁵⁶ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 48-50. Personal translation.

¹⁵⁷ John J. MEARSHEIMER and Stephen M. WALT, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007, pp. 51-99.

55 was a confirmation of this policy. Consistently on the policy of reluctance to provoke negative Arab reactions, up until the mid-1960 Americans did not provide Israel with arms¹⁵⁸. The starting point of a closer cooperation between U.S. and Israel has to be placed in the broader and historical context of the Cold War. This was a period characterized by ideological, political and military contrasts between western¹⁵⁹ and eastern powers¹⁶⁰. The United States and Israel began with a collaboration on armed forces and defence establishments with the aim of facing common threats and ensuring Israel's security.

The approach and the subsequent identification of the State of Israel as a strategic asset had been gradual. The 1962 Kennedy administration decision's to sell Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to Israel is considered, by many scholars, to be the first relevant manifestation of a turning point in the American foreign policy toward Israel¹⁶¹. Actually a subtle but profound change of the American policy toward Jerusalem has to be traced four years earlier, during the second administration of Eisenhower¹⁶². This policy shift began as a progressive recognition of transformations in the region and in particular after the July 1958 crises in Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. In that period the pro-Western government of Iraq, led by King Faisal II, was overthrown, while in Jordan, the Hashemite monarchy of King Hussein appeared endangered. In Lebanon the political situation was so unstable that the American President Eisenhower and his administration decided to send U.S. Marines to Beirut for some months. During this time of serious instability, the State of Israel showed itself to be the only steadfast pro-Western power in the region. Eisenhower's decision to intervene was justified by the even more aware recognition of Israel as a strategic asset and not a burden for the United States, as it had been considered by previous administrations.

The following democratic administrations and Presidents, especially Kennedy¹⁶³ and

¹⁵⁸ Rahid KHALIDI, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*, Boston, Beacon Press, 2004.

¹⁵⁹ United States and NATO's allies forming the Western Block.

¹⁶⁰ The Soviet Union and its allies through the Warsaw Pact, forming the Eastern Block.

¹⁶¹ See Mitchell G. BARD and Daniel PIPES, *How Special is the U.S.-Israel Relationship?*, Middle East Quarterly, June, 1997; David SCHOENBAUM, *The United States and Israel*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1993.

¹⁶² Abraham BEN ZVI, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998.

¹⁶³ John Fitzgerald Kennedy was President of the USA from 1961 until 1963. In 1962 he sold Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to Israel in response to the Soviet furnishing of long-range bombers to Egypt.

Johnson¹⁶⁴ acted in favour of Israel in order to secure the Jewish vote in certain key states¹⁶⁵ and these partisan electoral considerations overbalanced more hard-headed and long-standing estimations of America's crucial interest in the Middle East. In line with this reasoning U.S. policy particularly evolved after the 1967 war: it was time to provide Israel with a qualitative military edge¹⁶⁶ (hereinafter QME) over its neighbours.

A manifestation of progression of American policy towards Israel was the Lyndon Johnson's 1968 agreement to sell Phantom jets to Israel. This act determined likewise the United States as Israel's main arms supplier. Yet, up to this point, these sales issued from a consideration of Israel's needs and from domestic political considerations, not from an assessment of U.S. security interests. The reason was that Israel did not play any role in defending the West and in American officials view, this was due to the lack in the military might to contribute to the NATO policy of containment¹⁶⁷. This perception began to change in 1970, when the Nixon administration called on Israel for help to bolster King Hussain of Jordan¹⁶⁸. United States had always tried to establish good relations with Arab states, but regimes in Egypt, Syria and Iraq were more friendly to anti-Western forces. Despite the reconciliation between Egypt and the United States as a result of the signing of the peace treaty with Israel in 1978¹⁶⁹, U.S. could not rely on any Arab government for military assistance. Therefore, as it became clear that no Arab state would contribute to Western defence in the Middle East, the Carter administration began to implement an implicit form of strategic cooperation with the more western country of the region: Israel. He decided to let Israel sell military equipment to the United States and to engage in limited joint exercises.

The arrival of Ronald Reagan at the presidency of the U.S. broke new ground, seeing

¹⁶⁴ Lyndon B. Johnson was in office between 1963 and 1969 and he provided Israel with tanks and aircraft with the intention to avoid any state in the area gaining a military advantage over others.

¹⁶⁵ Among them New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida and California.

¹⁶⁶ The QME has been defined in the American legislation by the Congress as Israel's "ability to counter and defeat any credible conventional military threat from any individual state or possible coalition of states or from non-state actors.", 22 U.S. Code § 2776 - Reports and certifications to Congress on military exports, available at <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/2776>. Last access on 8 March 2016.

¹⁶⁷ Mitchell G. BARD and Daniel PIPES, *How Special Is the U.S.-Israel Relationship?*, in *Middle East Quarterly*, June 1997, pp. 42.

¹⁶⁸ During the Black September Crisis. In this period King Hussain of Jordan tried to restrain an attempt of the Palestinian organizations to upset his monarchy.

¹⁶⁹ It is here intended the Camp David Accords, signed by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on 17 September 1978, at Camp David.

Israel as a potential contributor to the Cold War. He showed his viewpoint just before his election, writing: “ Only by full appreciation of the critical role of the State of Israel plays in our strategic calculus can we build the foundation for thwarting Moscow’s designs on territories and resources vital to our security and our national well-being¹⁷⁰”. Israelis reacted enthusiastically and joined the strategic consensus that America was trying to create. As a matter of fact, the Israelis never viewed the Soviets as their principal threat and they wisely stressed their capacity to deter the Soviet Union¹⁷¹. The first benefit of this approach arrived on November 31, 1981, with the Washington’s signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter MOU) with Jerusalem termed “strategic cooperation”¹⁷². This Memorandum was particularly relevant because for the first time it formally recognized Israel as a strategic ally of the United States. Two years later a new MOU created two groups: the Joint Political-Military Group (JPMG) and the Joint Security Assistance Planning Group (JSAP). The first one was originally intended to discuss the means of counterattacking Soviet threats, but then it focused more on bilateral interests; the second group was formed with the aim of overseeing security assistance and concentrated primarily on Israel’s military provisioning needs.

In 1987, the Congress designated Israel as a major non-NATO ally. By so doing Israeli industries could compete equally with those of NATO countries and other close U.S. allies for contracts to produce some military items. The next year, a new MOU encompassed all prior agreements. By the end of Reagan’s second term, the United States had pre-arranged equipment in Israel, regularly held joint training exercises, began co-development of the Arrow Anti-Tactical Ballistic Missile, and was engaged in a host of other cooperative military efforts¹⁷³.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union had reduced U.S. concerns with arresting the latter's influence. In contrast, the rise of religious extremism in Iran, Sudan, and Algeria and of political extremism in Iraq and Libya, along with the potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region, had presented new strategic

¹⁷⁰ Steven L. SPIEGEL, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan*, Chicago, The University of Chicago, 1985, pp. 406.

¹⁷¹ Shai FELDMAN, *The Future of U.S.-Israel Strategic Cooperation*, Washington, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996, pp. 10-12.

¹⁷² The full text of the 1981 Memorandum of Understanding, *U.S.-Israel Formal Agreements: Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation, November 30, 1981*, is available at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/US-Israel/Strategic_Coop_MOU_of_81.html, last access on 6 March 2016.

¹⁷³ Jeremy M. SHARP, *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel*, Congressional Research Service Report, RL33222, June 10, 2015, pp. 8-9, available at <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>, last access on 6 March 2016.

challenges to Israel and America in the Middle East. In order to face new threats, these strategic ties have further grown in the successive years. A Joint Anti-Terrorism Working Group came into existence in 1996, as did a hotline between the Pentagon and the Israeli defence ministry¹⁷⁴. In early 1997, Israel linked up to the U.S. missile-warning satellite system, which provides it with real-time warnings of hostile missiles. Moreover, the U.S. government has continued to fund the research and development of Israeli weapons systems and military equipment.

As all these agreements and facts demonstrate, the two states cooperate in a surprisingly balanced way on a broad range of international issues. No doubt, relations between the two countries during the past years have been unstable. Structural changes in the strategic environment facing both countries have compounded differences in the worldviews and styles of American and Israeli leaders, yet they continued to work closely toward greater alignment on shared security and diplomatic goals. There are different ways Israel stands out as an American ally and vice versa. There are many examples of their strategic conducts. One of the most evident is the voting records at the United Nations General Assembly. Israel has for many years been far ahead of all other states in terms of voting most often with the United States. In 1995 Israel agreed with Washington on 95 percent of all significant votes¹⁷⁵. Normally, when only one or two states stand with Washington, Israel is one of them. In addition, US security assistance to Israel is the most tangible manifestation of American support, especially during a time of tremendous turmoil in the Middle East. American aid is a vital component of administration and congressional commitments to ensure that the Jewish State maintains its qualitative military edge. U.S. assistance to Israel also serves other U.S. interests. By law, 75 percent of U.S. aid to Israel has to be spent in the United States, thus boosting America's defence industry¹⁷⁶.

In the last few months there has been tension between Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu, basically due to the strong disagreement over the Iran issue. President Barack Obama declared that the Iran nuclear deal, which restrains the Iranian nuclear program in return for sanctions relief, is "a historic understanding with Iran"¹⁷⁷. On the other hand the Israelite

¹⁷⁴ BARD and PIPES, *How Special Is the U.S.-Israel Relationship?*, op., cit. pp. 43.

¹⁷⁵ *Ivi.*, pp. 41.

¹⁷⁶ Reports of the American Jewish Public Affairs Committee, *The Aipac Briefing Book 2016*, pp. 54. Available at <http://www.aipac.org/-/media/publications/policy-and-politics/aipac-analyses/briefing-book/briefing-book.ashx>, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁷⁷ The White House, *Statement by the President on the Framework to Prevent Iran from Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon*, Press release, April 2, 2015, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press->

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in stark contrast, stated that the understandings reached in Lausanne “threaten the survival of Israel¹⁷⁸”. The Iran issue represents a wide gap between the leaders’ positions, but if the two states go beyond it, as it seems, this divergence will further strengthen the special cooperation. U.S.-Israel strategic ties constituted a key pillar of American’s Middle East security frameworks. A new security agreement between United States and Israel is inevitable and forthcoming. Meanwhile Obama has reassured Israel promising 4,444-pound bunker-busting bomb, while it is still dubious the furniture of a massive ordnance penetrator (MOP), a 30,000-pound bomb that could seriously damage the Iranian enrichment facility built into a mountain¹⁷⁹.

Israel's role and standing in the region has been clearly transformed: from a struggling young democracy deserving direct and indirect U.S. economic and military assistance to a robust regional power capable of serving U.S. interests in the Middle East. Starting from military and security aspects, during the years this relationship has evolved into an important component of the overall web of bilateral political, economic and cultural links, which are going to be examined in the following paragraphs. As demonstrated in the concluded United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014¹⁸⁰, ties between these two countries are constantly growing and expanding into new arenas. President Obama has expressed his opinion about this Act with the following words: “Today I have signed into law S. 2673, the ‘United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014,’ an Act that underscores the United States unshakeable commitment to Israel's security and its future. This bipartisan piece of legislation reflects the importance placed by my administration on strengthening and deepening U.S.-Israel bilateral cooperation and ties. It reinforces critical defence and security programs, which have reached an unprecedented level under my administration¹⁸¹.”

office/2015/04/02/statement-president-framework-prevent-iran-obtaining-nuclear-weapon, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁷⁸ USA Today, *Netanyahu: Iran Deal threaten Israel's Survival*, April 2, 2015, available at <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/04/02/world-leaders-reaction-iran-nuclear-deal/70846486/>, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁷⁹ Editorial Board, *Israel and America after the Iran Deal*, The New York Times, September 24, 2015, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/24/opinion/israel-and-america-after-the-iran-deal.html?_r=0, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁸⁰ It is an American legislation Act made to strengthen the strategic alliance between the United States and Israel. H.R. 938- 113th Congress (2013-2014), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/938/text>, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁸¹ Statement by the President Barack Obama on S. 2673, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/19/statement-president-s-2673>, last access on 11 March 2016.

2.4.2. *Economic ties*

It is quite obvious that there is a strong nexus between commercial and security matters regarding U.S.-Israel alliance. Arms sales, joint efforts, aid programs and the resulting American intervention in the Israeli economic system have facilitated the interdependence between the two countries. One often overlooked side of the here examined relationship is the important strategic economic partnership. Like in many other fields, U.S. and Israel have long-standing trade and investment ties that serve to benefit both countries and their close commercial bond props ground-breaking changes contributing positively to the global economy.

In the economic sphere too, the relationship began slowly. It originally started in the form of military aid and loans guarantees. To be precise, during the 25 years between 1949 and 1973, the U.S. government provided Israel with a total of \$3,2 billion in aid, while in the 23 years since 1974, Israel received nearly \$ 75 billion, making it far and away the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II¹⁸². The unprecedented foreign assistance program was inaugurated by the Nixon administration. Since 1976, Israel has generally been the largest annual recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, but has been occasionally supplanted since 2004 by Iraq and Afghanistan¹⁸³. In addition, since 1985, the United States has provided approximately \$3 billion in grants annually to Israel¹⁸⁴. In the past, Israel received significant economic assistance, but now almost all U.S. bilateral aid to Israel is in the form of Foreign Military Financing (hereinafter FMF). They represent approximately one half of total FMF and 20% of Israel's defence budget¹⁸⁵. These data can be seen also in the following table¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸² M. G. BARD, D. PIPES, *How Special Is the U.S.-Israel Relationship?*, op. cit. pp.3-4.

¹⁸³ Jim ZANOTTI, *Israel: Background and U.S. Relations*, Congressional Research Service Report, RL33476, June 1, 2015, pp. 34.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸⁵ Shmuel EVEN, *The Debate over Israel's Defence Budget*, in Anat KURZ and Shlomo BROM (edited by), *Strategic Surveyor Israel 2014-2015*, Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv, March-April 2015, pp. 169-175. Available at [http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/INSS2014-15Balance_ENG%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.inss.org.il/uploadImages/systemFiles/INSS2014-15Balance_ENG%20(2).pdf), last access on 6 March 2016.

¹⁸⁶ ZANOTTI, *Israel: Background and U.S. Relations*, op. cit., pp.35.

Table 1 – U.S. Bilateral Aid to Israel (historical \$ in millions)

Year	Total	Military Grant	Economic Grant	Immig. Grant	ASHA	All other
1949-1996	68,030.9	29,014.9	23,122.4	868.9	121.4	14,903.3
1997	3,132.1	1,800.0	1,200.0	80.0	2.1	50.0
1998	3,080.0	1,800.0	1,200.0	80.0	—	—
1999	3,010.0	1,860.0	1,080.0	70.0	—	—
2000	4,131.85	3,120.0	949.1	60.0	2.75	—
2001	2,876.05	1,975.6	838.2	60.0	2.25	—
2002	2,850.65	2,040.0	720.0	60.0	2.65	28.0
2003	3,745.15	3,086.4	596.1	59.6	3.05	—
2004	2,687.25	2,147.3	477.2	49.7	3.15	9.9
2005	2,612.15	2,202.2	357.0	50.0	2.95	—
2006	2,534.5	2,257.0	237.0	40.0	—	0.5
2007	2,503.15	2,340.0	120.0	40.0	2.95	0.2
2008	2,423.9	2,380.0	—	40.0	3.90	—
2009	2,583.9	2,550.0	—	30.0	3.90	—
2010	2,803.8	2,775.0	—	25.0	3.80	—
2011	3,029.22	3,000.0	—	25.0	4.225	—
2012	3,098.0	3,075.0	—	20.0	3.00	—
2013	2,943.2	2,793.2	—	15.0	—	—
2014	3,115.0	3,100.0	—	15.0	—	—
2015	3,110.0	3,100.0	—	10.0	—	—
2016 Request	3,110.0	3,100.0	—	10.0	—	—
Total	124,467.57	76,723.4	30,897.0	1,708.2	162.075	14,991.9

Notes: FY2000 military grants include \$1.2 billion for the Wye agreement and \$1.92 billion in annual military aid. The figure for FY2013 military grant aid was calculated after factoring in budget sequestration. For information on U.S. loan guarantees to Israel, see CRS Report RL33222, *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel*, by Jeremy M. Sharp.

Thanks to a 10-year bilateral memorandum of understanding, the United States are committed to deposit \$3.1 billion to Israel annually from Fiscal Year 2016 to Fiscal Year 2018¹⁸⁷. In turn Israel uses approximately 75% of its FMF to purchase arms from the United States and to receiving U.S. Excess Defence Articles (EDA). In addition, the United States generally provides some annual funding for American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) and to Israel for migration assistance. Loan guarantees, arguably a form of indirect aid, also remain available to Israel through FY2015 under the U.S.-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act P.L. 112-150. A remarkable fact is that Israel spends a greater percentage of its gross domestic product on defence than does any other advanced nation. U.S. military aid

¹⁸⁷ SHARP, *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel*, op. cit., pp. 2.

has helped transform Israel's armed forces into one of the most technologically sophisticated militaries in the world.

Nowadays Israel still benefits from loans, contributions, and capital investments from the Jewish diaspora, but its economic strength has lessened its dependence on external financing. The American willingness to provide aid to Israel is no longer based purely on need. Rather, the aid today is closely tied to the peace process; any hint of a reduction is resisted on the grounds that it endangers Israel's confidence and so its willingness to take risks for peace. This makes U.S. aid to Israel unlike any other. The continuation of aid remains a mainstay of the two countries' relations. The most obvious indicator of Israel's favoured position is the total amount of foreign aid it has received from America's taxpayers¹⁸⁸.

Concerning the trade, at the beginning of 1970s, Israel became involved in the Generalized System of Preferences (hereinafter GSP), which was a unilateral trade preference program that allowed goods from developing countries to enter the U.S. duty free¹⁸⁹. With the passing of time, the economic linkage between the two states become even more interdependent. Particularly in 1984, when, at a time of economic distress in Israel¹⁹⁰, the American Secretary of States George Schultz suggested the creation of the JEDG: an American-Israeli Joint Economic Development Group to work on Israel's economic challenges. The establishment of this group played an essential role in the formulation of Israel's ambitious and successful economic stabilization plan that included budget cuts, tighter control of the money supply, and devaluation of the shekel. After the implementation of these suggestions, Reagan approved a 1,5 \$ billion emergency aid program, which helped save the Israeli economy from collapse and stimulate a recovery that reduced inflation from triple digits to the low double digits¹⁹¹. These steps laid the groundwork for Israel to have one of the world's fastest growth rates a decade later¹⁹². In order to continuously implement this Joint Economic Development

¹⁸⁸ MEARSHEIMER and WALT, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp. 24.

¹⁸⁹ See *U.S.-Israel Trade Relations*, in the website of the Embassy of Israel to the United States, available at http://www.israelemb.org/washington/Obama_in_Israel/Pages/US-Israel-Trade-Relations.aspx, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁹⁰ This period of distress was years of shouldering the enormous defence burden imposed by Arab hostility and the accumulated result of dependence on imported raw materials and fuel for Israel's industry had led to extensive borrowing and a huge foreign debt. Foreign reserves had plummeted, unemployment was at an 18-year high and inflation was raging at 450 percent per year and rising; Israel required economic assistance, but Shultz insisted on economic reforms that included budget cuts, tighter.

¹⁹¹ BARD and PIPES, *How Special is the U.S.-Israel Relationship?*, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

¹⁹² *Ibidem*.

Group, the two countries have established to meet and discuss every year about the current economic conditions and the possible economic reforms for the coming year.

The cornerstone of the active U.S.-Israel economic relationship was the 1985 Free Trade Agreement (hereafter FTA): the first free trade agreement ever signed by the United States. In this way Israel became the first country to sign an FTA with the United States, while for Israel it was the second, following that with the European Community, which was signed in 1975. The Agreement entered into force in September 1985 after it was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives by a 422-0 vote and by a voice vote in the U.S. Senate¹⁹³. This data has to be remarked because it was the emblem of the behaviour of American Congress relating to aid programs to Israel, without whom the Israeli economic flourishing was no be possible. After the FTA was signed, the President-in-Office at that time, Ronald Reagan, commented it saying: “The Free Trade Area Agreement symbolizes once again our two countries’ deep community of interest and our shared values and aspirations for a better future. It underscores the importance of Israel to the United States as an ally, as a trading partner, and as a friend¹⁹⁴.”

The trade accordance concerned consisted in the mutual liberalization of bilateral trade and the eventual elimination of U.S. economic aid to Israel. Under it, the two countries implemented phased tariff reductions culminating in the complete elimination of duties on manufactured goods on January 1, 1995. Furthermore, the FTA authorized the U.S. and Israel to maintain certain import restrictions, such as quantitative restrictions and fees, other than customs duties, on agricultural products based on agricultural policy considerations. The trade agreement included provisions that protect both countries’ more sensitive agricultural sub-sectors with nontariff barriers, including import bans, quotas, and fees. Between 1984 and 1996, one year after the FTA was fully implemented and ten years after it was signed, bilateral trade in goods tripled from \$3.9 billion to \$12.4 billion, with U.S. exports to Israel scoring \$6 billion and Israeli exports to the U.S. scoring \$6.4 billion¹⁹⁵. To take advantage of the free trade agreement signed by Israel and the United States were Jordan and Egypt through the formation

¹⁹³ See *U.S.-Israel Trade Relations*, op. cit., available at http://www.israelemb.org/washington/Obama_in_Israel/Pages/US-Israel-Trade-Relations.aspx, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁵ United States Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers Association of Israel, *Re-Energizing the U.S.-Israel Commercial Relationship: A Policy Framework for Trade, Investment, and Innovation*, December 2015, available at <https://www.uschamber.com/press-release/us-israeli-business-community-celebrate-fta-anniversary-provide-framework-continued>, last access on 11 March 2016.

of Qualified Industrial Zones¹⁹⁶ (QIZs). Since its enforcement, the FTA achieved the intended purpose of increasing the volume of trade, as evidenced by the exponential growth of the U.S.-Israel economic relationship. In the wake of the favourable outcomes, in 1996 the two countries signed an agricultural trade agreement and during the same year the FTA was amended to permit to reduce tariffs on goods and services from Gaza and the West Bank. Between 1996 and 2010, bilateral trade in goods nearly tripled reaching \$32.3 billion. In general, about 50% of bilateral economic exchanges are concentrated in trade in goods; 30% are in investment; and 20% in trade in services¹⁹⁷. According to data from the U.S. International Trade Commission, the United States is Israel's largest single trading partner, whereas Israel ranks as America's 23rd largest partner¹⁹⁸. The top five U.S. exports to Israel are: diamonds, machinery, agricultural products, aircraft, and optic and medical instruments; while the top five U.S. imports from Israel are: diamonds, pharmaceutical products, machinery, optic and medical instruments, and agricultural products.

The FTA, despite being over twenty-five years old and only twenty pages long, provides a stable business environment and a flexible platform to further enhance the commercial relationship. Moreover, the agreement established a bilateral Joint Committee (JC) in order to provide a structure for discussing the enhancement of trade and issues of mutual concern. The JC meets annually and is headed by the United States Trade Representative (hereinafter) and the Foreign Trade Administration of Israel's Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Labour. The JC's broad mandate has provided the forum to further liberalize trade in agricultural products and establish cooperation on standardization¹⁹⁹. On October 18, 2010 America and Israel announced a decision to create a work plan to ensure the benefit so that the economic relationship is further shared and sustainable. The work plan would have the aim to enhance regulatory cooperation and seek to further liberalize trade in agriculture and services. As initial

¹⁹⁶ These Qualified Industrial Zone allow the two middle east States to export products to the United States duty-free, as long as these products contain inputs from Israel.

¹⁹⁷ . United States Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers Association of Israel, *Re-Energizing the U.S.-Israel Commercial Relationship*, op. cit., available at <https://www.uschamber.com/press-release/us-israeli-business-community-celebrate-fta-anniversary-provide-framework-continued>, last access on 11 March 2016.

¹⁹⁸ In 2014, the U.S. exported \$13.8 billion worth of goods to Israel, and imported \$21.1 billion from Israel.

¹⁹⁹ The United States–Israel Standardization Dialogue was established in 2007 in order to create a forum for the two governments and standardization bodies to work together on issues such as product standards, testing, labelling, and certification requirements in order to facilitate and further enhance trade.

steps under the work plan, the parties agreed to pursue negotiations towards implementation of a Mutual Recognition Agreement for conformity assessment of telecommunications equipment and to explore ways to facilitate trade by looking at the relevant customs procedures and regulations.

Furthermore, the FTA has served as the platform to spur significant levels of bilateral foreign direct investment (FDI). Between 2000 and 2009, U.S. direct investment in Israel scored \$77.2 billion and Israeli direct investment in the U.S. scored \$51.3 billion²⁰⁰. In 2009, Israel was among the top 20 suppliers of FDI to the U.S. in terms of total and per capita investments. These investments have created and supported tens of thousands of jobs in both countries. U.S. direct investment in Israel is primarily in the manufacturing sector, as is Israeli investment in the United States. For instance, Israeli companies such as Teva Pharmaceuticals, Tower Semi Conductors, and Strauss are heavily invested in the U.S. and operate pharmaceutical, medical device, high-tech, homeland-security and defence plants throughout the country. Well known U.S. companies such as Microsoft, Google, IBM, Intel and Motorola have established major research and development facilities in Israel²⁰¹. Over the last several decades, numerous bilateral business organizations seeking to advance and strengthen U.S.-Israel commercial relations were established throughout the U.S. at the state and regional level. In October 2010 the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the Israel America Chamber of Commerce and the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour launched the U.S-Israel Business Initiative. The nationwide initiative seeks to bring together high-level American and Israeli government officials, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators in a national forum in order to advance and strengthen U.S.-Israeli commercial relations.

It is not unusual for the United States to instruct other nations on how to stabilize their economies; however, the Israeli case is unique because rather than the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, was the U.S. Treasury to provide financial assistance. It was also remarkable because the disbursement, along with \$ 3 billion in non-emergency economic and military aid, provoked no real opposition: the Senate vote was 75-19, the House vote was part of a continuing resolution²⁰². Israel may be the only case of a country willingly cooperating

²⁰⁰ United States Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers Association of Israel, *Re-Energizing the U.S.-Israel Commercial Relationship*, op. cit., available at <https://www.uschamber.com/press-release/us-israeli-business-community-celebrate-fta-anniversary-provide-framework-continued>, last access on 11 March 2016.

²⁰¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰² Mitchell BARD, *U.S.-Israel Relations: A Special Alliance*, in Jewish Virtual Library, available at <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/special.html>, last access on 11 March 2016.

with the United States on the development of its macroeconomic policy. Israeli companies looking for a global market for their products have often viewed their American counterparts as partners of choice. So today, Israeli civilian technological innovations are helping the United States maintain its economic competitiveness, promote sustainable development, and address a range of non-military security challenges. Since the signing of the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement 30 years ago, two-way trade has multiplied tenfold to over \$40 billion per year with shared economic benefits for both countries. In a country as small as Israel, it is amazing that over 250 multinational companies have R&D centres there, and underscoring the importance of their relationship, two-thirds of them are U.S. companies²⁰³. Israel is the top importer of U.S. goods in its region, despite representing a mere 2 percent of the population. There are more companies listed on the NASDAQ exchange from Israel than from any country besides the U.S. and China²⁰⁴. And nearly half of all investment into the U.S. from the Middle East comes from Israeli companies.

Economic relations between Israel and the U.S. are also flourishing on state and municipal levels²⁰⁵. Both economies share common commitments to a free market, competitiveness, active support of international trade liberalization and of the multilateral trading system. There is constant dialogue between the governments of Israel and the United States to upgrade their economic relationship and to ensure a continued prosperous partnership. Just take a look at their growing collaboration in areas such as research and development, cybersecurity and energy, which are going to be dealt in the next paragraph.

²⁰³ Intel, Microsoft, IBM, and Cisco have been in Israel for decades, and just days ago, Apple CEO Tim Cook visited Israel to inaugurate the company's largest innovation centre outside of California.

²⁰⁴ Myron BRILLIANT, *The Strategic Imperative of U.S.-Israel commerce*, in "The Hill", March 03, 2015, available at http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/234331-the-strategic-imperative-of-us-israel-commerce#disqus_thread), last access on 11 March 2016.

²⁰⁵ One prominent example is the recently signing of an historic agreement between the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Californian Governor Jerry Brown to export Israeli water technology in order to help overcome the Golden State's deepening drought conditions. One result of this agreement is that the Carlsbad desalination plant is utilizing Israeli technology to provide 300,000 Californians with clean water, generating around \$50 million annually for the region's economy.

2.4.3. *Academic connections*

Another fundamental aspect that contribute to harmonise the relationship between the two states examined in this dissertation are intellectual connections. Israeli academics are uniquely attuned to the life of the mind in the United States. Apparently more Israeli introduce themselves as leading authors in the United States than do their counterparts from any non-English-language country. In several disciplines such as Biblical studies and Middle East studies, Israel scholars not only enjoy a larger role than any other foreign nationality, but they also drive the research agenda in the United States²⁰⁶.

Many universities, such as the Georgetown University, the oldest Catholic and Jesuit institution of higher education in America, have regular slots for a visiting Israel scholar²⁰⁷. Many universities and colleges are correlated to Israeli institutions; they frequently organize student- and faculty-exchange programs, while a great number of them plan even joint degree programs. For these reasons many Israelite Universities host many American students. So numerous are they, that the whole university divisions exist to service mostly American students. The Israel Exchange Program organized by the United Negro College Fund in cooperation with the World Jewish Congress, the World Zionist Organization and the Israelite Office of Academic Affairs exemplify the fruitful links between the American and Israelite academic environment²⁰⁸.

The United States and Israel also coordinate scientific and cultural exchanges through the U.S.-Israeli Education Foundation (USIEF), which is responsible for the administration of Israel's participation in the American Fulbright Academic Program. The program was established in 1956 and since its foundation it has seen more than 1,200 American citizens and more than 1,500 Israeli students that participate to this prestigious exchange program²⁰⁹. Its main goal is to reinforce the basis for peace by improving mutual understanding between the two population involved. To achieve this object student and faculty exchanges at the highest possible level of academic excellence are needed and this is what the USIEF offers.

²⁰⁶ BARD and PIPES, *How Special is the U.S.-Israel Relationship?*, op. cit., pp. 5.

²⁰⁷ BARD, *U.S.-Israel Relations: A Special Alliance*, op. cit., available at <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/special.html>, last access on 11 March 2016.

²⁰⁸ This program consists of two-day orientation at Wilberforce University in Ohio, later one month working on Kibbutz Ramot Menshae, another month teaching English to Israelis in difficulty at a summer camp in Holon and finally a month studying at Hebrew University.

²⁰⁹ Data extracted by the Bureau of Educational and cultural affairs' website, available at <http://eca.state.gov/fulbright>, last access on 11 March 2016.

There is also a governmental side of the academic relationship, which can be spotted in the extremely fruitful collaborations in the area of research and development. Firstly, in 1970 the two nations created two special foundations with the aim of funding joint research. The Binational Science Foundation (BSF), reached two years later, prepared the ground for a huge range of nonstrategic ties between the two friends, that culminated in the funding of three major joint US-Israel research and development foundations. The largest of them is the Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (hereinafter BIRD). Since its establishment in 1977, the BIRD Foundation has granted \$301 million to hundreds of joint Israeli-American projects²¹⁰. These projects have directly and indirectly generated \$8 billion in sales and an estimated twenty thousand American jobs²¹¹. Its objective was to stimulate the development and commercialization of innovative, nondefense technological products, such as computer software, instrumentation, communications, medical devices, and semiconductors. The BIRD represents a useful model for a variety of other joint institutions dealing with agriculture (BARD) and high technology (USISTC). The first one is an ambitious funding program aiming to increase agricultural productivity, especially in hot and dry climates, and to underline plant and animal health, food quality and safety, and environmental issues.

The second institution introduced is USISTC, which stand for U.S.-Israel Science & Technology Commission. It was established in 1993 by President Bill Clinton with the promise of \$ 15 million from each government over three years. Its mission is to stimulate high-tech industries in both countries to engage in joint projects; foster scientific exchanges between universities and research institutions; promote development of agriculture and environmental technologies and assist in the adaptation of military technology to civilian production. The commission has task forces on food standards harmonization, commercialization of military technologies, cosmetic standards, energy and environmental standards harmonization, legal, patent and intellectual property rights, telemedicine and information technology. In 1995 the USISTC established the U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Foundation (USISTF) in order to administer and implement programs and disburse grants funded through the USISTC.

An increasing number of U.S. states, including Massachusetts, Michigan, California and others have recognized the value of enhanced cooperation with Israel, signing R&D agreements with the Jewish state. Dozens of leading U.S. companies have set up technology incubators in

²¹⁰ Ohad COHEN, *USA-Israel economic relations: Opportunity and success*, in “The Times of Israel”, December 1, 2015, available at <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/usa-israel-economic-relations-from-strength-to-strength/>, last access on 11 march 2016.

²¹¹ *Ibidem*.

Israel to take advantage of the country's penchant for new ideas. Likewise, Israeli high-tech firms often turn to U.S. companies as partners for joint production and marketing opportunities in the United States and elsewhere. U.S. companies' substantial cooperation with Israel on information technology has been crucial to Silicon Valley's success. At Intel's research and development centres in Israel, engineers have designed many of the company's most successful microprocessors, accounting for some 40 percent of the firm's revenues last year²¹². Israeli innovators have also come up with novel solutions to the water and food security challenges posed by population growth, climate change, and economic development. By necessity, given the geography of the Middle East, Israel is a world leader in water conservation and management and high-tech agriculture and a number of Israeli companies are leaders in the development of renewable energy sources²¹³. These innovations, bolstered by the substantial American investment in Israel, contribute to long-term U.S. domestic and foreign policy objectives relating to sustainable development.

The United States and Israel both significantly benefit from their wide-ranging economic and technological partnership. The numerous binational programs mentioned above allow American companies and universities to enhance collaboration with Israel's leading institutions and businesses. The two states have launched several programs to stimulate Israeli industrial and scientific research, for which Congress has authorized and appropriated funds on several occasions. The most fascinating thing is that all these foundations were created with no exhibitionism and they operate independently of economic and political pressures.

²¹² Michael EISENSTADT and David POLLOCK, *Friends with Benefit. Why the U.S.-Israeli Alliance Is Good for America*, Foreign Affairs, 2012, available at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2012-11-07/friends-benefits>, last access on 8 March 2016.

²¹³ *Ibidem*.

2.4.4. *Shared values*

Certainly the relationship is characterized also by tense moments. An enduring source of tension was Israel's reluctance to sacrifice territories captured in 1967 and its efforts to settle them. Alternatively, in 1981 when Ronald Reagan and Menachem Begin disputed over the American selling of AWACS to Saudi Arabia²¹⁴ and many others²¹⁵.

How could two different states, as they are the United States and Israel, overtake these challenges and strengthening at the same time their amity? The answer to this question has to be identified in the sharing of ideals, in particular the universal human and Judeo-Christian values, with whom both countries have formed their societies and culture. Despite the disproportion in geographical and demographic size, the affinity between the two countries rests on the fact that both states are democracies and share a host of other lofty values. Israel represents an exception in the landscape of the Middle East for different things, the most obvious is that it is the only democratic country in the region. In their respective regions and throughout the world, the United States and Israel are examples of democratic values of peace, freedom and justice. As such, they are committed to freedom, equality and tolerance for all people regardless of religion, race or gender. Both nations have evolved into democracies that respect the rule of law, the will of voters and the rights of minorities²¹⁶. Furthermore, considering the relevance of the democracy's principle in these two states, they are involved in the process of democratization of the Middle East, favouring stability and peace and changing the political environment that breeds terrorists and funds terrorism. In addition, freedoms of conscience, speech, assembly and press rule in the fabric of both American and Israeli societies and this milieu encourages clearly independent thinking, freedom to develop own talents and a

²¹⁴ Ronald Reagan condemned Israel's bombardment of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981 as well as its siege of Beirut the following year. Americans, in turn, irritated the Israelis with their transfer of sophisticated weapons to Saudi Arabia and their opposition to Israeli arms sales to China.

²¹⁵ Particularly: Presidents Ford and Carter threatened to withhold assistance from Israel unless it made territorial concessions; President George H.W. Bush denied Israel loan guarantees for resettling Russian immigrants in the West Bank.

²¹⁶ Israel, like the United States and in stark contrast to other Middle East nations, has an independent judicial system, which protects the rights of individuals and operates under the principle of "innocent until proven guilty." Israel also features regularly scheduled elections that are free and fair and open to all its citizens, regardless of religion, race or sex. The independent group Freedom House has consistently classified Israel as "Free" in its rankings of world nations. Available at <http://www.aipac.org/learn/us-and-israel/shared-values>. Last access on 8 March 2016.

desire to innovate. As a result, Israel and the United States have forged an intellectual and strategic alliance that works at federal and state levels²¹⁷.

Another common feature, which defined both national historical experiences, is immigration. Both nations were founded by refugees seeking political and religious freedom; both were forced to fight for independence against foreign powers; both have absorbed waves of immigrants seeking political freedom and economic well-being. Like USA, Israel is in large part a nation of immigrants. Israel has welcomed newcomers from all over the world encouraged by the Jewish national liberation movement and its advocates. One of the keys of success of the Zionism movement was to re-draw the Jewish bond to their Promised Land out. This movement is the political expression of the Jewish nation and the fulfilment of the Jewish history²¹⁸. The yearnings and hopes showed by it have moved a large number of immigrants to Israel coming principally from Europe and the Middle East, places of the most brutal persecutions. The United States played a fundamental function in helping Israel with the complicated task of absorbing and assimilating the masses of immigrants in brief periods of time. In addition, in 1948 immediately after the War of Independence, President Truman gave \$ 135 million in loans to help Israel to deal with the coming of thousands of refugees from the Nazi persecutions. In less than three years after the founding of Israel, the number of immigrants more than doubled the Jewish population of the country. Mass immigrations have continued throughout the Israeli history, giving rise to five big migrant's waves, known as *aliyah*²¹⁹.

The logical outcome of the above mentioned joint values is the brotherly love and reciprocal admiration of the two countries' people: Americans admire Israelis and so do Israelis. According to recent polls, the 62% of Americans sympathise with Israel and since 1988 - which

²¹⁷ Outcomes of this kind of cooperation have been analysed in the previous "Academic connections" paragraph.

²¹⁸ James L. GELVIN, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 7.

²¹⁹ The singular of *aliyah* is *aliyot*. Historians have distinguished the flux of immigrants to Israel in five different periods of time. The first *aliyot* took place from 1882 until 1903 stimulated by Russian pogroms. The second occurred between 1904 and 1914, while the third was between 1918 and 1923. The second and the third *aliyot* have a profound impact on the character and development of modern Jewish settlement in Palestine. The fourth occurred from 1924 till 1928 and it was a direct consequence of the economic crisis and anti-Jewish policies in Poland, along with the introduction of rigid immigrations quotas in the United States. The last *aliyot* resulted between 1929 and 1939 as effect of the persecutions and the worsening of situation due to the Nazi accession to power in Germany. There was also an *aliyot* called *Bet* and it refers to the illegal immigrations of Jews during 1920 and 1948. See James L. GELVIN, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

is the starting date the polls take into consideration - the number has always increased²²⁰. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of Israelis have relatives in the United States with whom they keep close contacts²²¹. In spite of the endure violence in the Middle East, tourism has long played an important role between the two states, with hundreds of thousands of Israelis and Americans visiting each other's country every year. Not to mention the numerous faculty exchange programs that move hundreds of students and academics from one country to another. And the common threats that these unique countries have to overcome together, as described before²²².

²²⁰Data taken from a poll about the American sympathy towards Israeli and Palestinians, it is based on yearly averages from 1988 to 2016, available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1639/middle-east.aspx>. Last access on 8 March 2016.

²²¹ A curiosity is that the number of phone calls between Israel and the United States ranks as one of the highest per capita in the world.

²²² See the paragraph above "Strategic Cooperation" pp. 48.

CHAPTER 3 – JUDEO-CHRISTIAN HERITAGE IN THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

CONTENTS: 3. *The singularity of the U.S.-Israel alliance* – 3.1. *First connections between Puritans and Hebrews* – 3.1.1. *The Jewish Bible in U.S. education* – 3.1.2. *The impact on early American colonies' legal order* – 3.1.3. *U.S. Constitution and its Christian elements* – 3.2. *God and Israel in U.S. presidential speeches* – 3.3. *Civil religion in the United States* – 3.4. *Religion in the U.S. foreign policy* – 3.4.1. *The influence of religious beliefs in public opinions* – 3.4.2. *Gentile's inclination towards Israelites* – 3.5. *Other elements of sympathy toward Israel* – 3.5.1. *Two warriors and pioneers' peoples* – 3.6. *The impact of a common cultural heritage in international politics* – 3.7. *Israel foreign policy* – 3.7.1. *Religion in the Israeli political scene* – 3.8. *Civil religion in Israel* – 3.9. *Religion's impact on political parties: two examples* – 3.9.1. *Neoconservatism* – 3.9.2. *Neo-revisionism*

3. *The singularity of the U.S.-Israel alliance*

As described in the last part of the second chapter, the United States-Israel alliance is a relationship of many strands. The two countries are joined in an unparalleled, complex and multifaceted special relationship²²³.

The American engagement to Israel is rooted in strong biblical and historical emotions and ideology, inspired by shared values and ideals on the one hand, and feelings of guilt and obligation arising from the Holocaust on the other. Over the years and the evident progresses in their bilateral relations, U.S.-Israel alliance has been defined by many scholars and observers as a relationship that challenges systemic reasoning; it disregards the predictions of either systemic or domestic politics²²⁴. A constant cohesion allows the strategic partnership to exceed changes in systemic politics and to continue even in the absence of electoral or domestic pressures. Differently from the majority of alliances between states that are based merely on a common antagonism to another party and are often a marriage of convenience, as it was the anti-Iraq Gulf War coalition of 1990-1991, the United States connection with Israel embodies some distinctive traits that make it a singular relationship in nature.

²²³ Bernard REICH, *Securing the Covenant: United States-Israel relations after the cold war*, Westport, Praeger, 1995, pp. 3.

²²⁴ Michael N. BARNETT, *Identity and Alliances in the Middle East*, in Peter J. KATZENSTEIN (edited by), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, pp. 327-328.

As described above, the relationship at issue has endured over decades, managing numerous moments of discord and difficulty and developing over time from a more or less traditional one into the unique relationship of today. Some of the special aspects of the friendship in question developed early, such as the shared values, but others such as the strategic bond came only later through dialogue and actions. The history of the U.S.-Israel relationship is replete with highs and lows, with close quarters times interchanged to period of distancing; endurance and resilience can be retained some distinctive characteristics of this relationship. Yet, the singularity of U.S.-Israel alliance is given by specific hallmarks thanks to which both parties have survived crisis. Judeo-Christian religion traditions and principles, democratic values, ideological and emotional bonds constitute the added value that confers uniqueness to the U.S.-Israel partnership. One of the aim of this dissertation is exactly to illustrate and discuss them carefully.

A complete integration of Israel into the American government strategy was revealed through a huge military and economic assistance only after the 1967. De facto, U.S. extended its security guarantees already in the late 1940s, when the strategic motivation was still missing²²⁵. As already declared, the reason of President Truman's support for the creation of a Jewish state has not to be traced in Israel's strategic value to the United States, nor in its strategic liability; he rather supported it for humanitarian and associated reasons.

Up to this point, a right question could be why the United States should have continued to back the State of Israel and to maintain close ties even though sometimes it clashed with American security goals - as happened during the Cold War when the U.S. tried to improve important interstate relations with the Arab countries -. The key to solve this dilemma is situated in the existence of a shared identity and transnational values. The oft-heard mantras "the only democracy in the Middle East" and "they shares values and principles" are deeply full of meanings²²⁶ which we will attempt hereafter to explain. In this specific case, the assertion "shared identity" implies that the United States view Israel as having a common identity, and in turn Israel's collective identity and associated practices are consistent with those of the U.S. Whence descend this perseverance and affinity? The explanation in few but meaningful lines: "For, liking it or not, Americans who are willing to look see something of themselves in Israel. Even as they go their own way, in pursuit of their own national interests, Americans and Israelis are bonded together like no two other sovereign peoples. As the Judaic heritage flowed through

²²⁵ REICH, *Securing the Covenant*, op. cit., pp. 6.

²²⁶ Seth TILLMAN, *The United States in the Middle East*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, pp. 42.

the minds of America's early settlers and helped to shape the new American republic, so Israel restored the vision and the values of the American dream. Each, the United State and Israel, grafted the heritage of the other onto itself²²⁷. These few words of Peter Grose explain at best the kind of relationship between the two countries.

To a superficial analysis, influenced by what we read in newspaper and we heard on television, the most important value of this special relationship is commonly attributed to the ideal of democracy. What is not generally known, is the presence at the bottom of the relation, of a common Judeo-Christian heritage that has shaped in different ways both national identities. As Ron Lipsman posted in one of his article, both societies can be called “biblical societies”, given that the Bible played a fundamental role in the foundation of the two communities²²⁸. From Israeli point of view, the Old Testament, which constitutes the Holy Text for Jews, represents a pact that the ancient Israelis made with God more than three thousand years ago and through whom they felt bind to their descendants. The present Israel embodies the modern accomplishment of that biblical promise. At the same time the United States trod a similar path a quarter millennium ago, pledging to live respecting the laws expressed in the American Constitution.

3.1. First connections between Puritans and Hebrews

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, while Europe was involved in the Protestant Reformation and the Wars of Religion, the May Flower ship made landfall in America, unconsciously bringing a group of people who would passed into the annals of history of the New World with the name Pilgrim Fathers²²⁹. These colonisers distinguished themselves for their tenacious will to create a religious community separated from the corrupt Christian Church of the motherland. They were believers belonging to a radical trend of the European Protestantism with the intention to build a new society that they defined: the “New Jerusalem”²³⁰. For this reason, they were also called Puritans. This people were searching for

²²⁷ GROSE, *Israel in the Mind of America*, op. cit., pp. 316.

²²⁸ Ron LIPSMAN, *Nine Remarkable Similarities between America and Israel; and One Critical Difference*, *Israel & Jewish Affairs*, August 2014. Available at <http://intellectualconservative.com/nine-remarkable-similarities-between-america-and-israel-and-one-critical-difference/>, last access on 16 May 2016.

²²⁹ It precisely happened in 1620 and they made landfall in Massachusetts.

²³⁰ Bernard BAILYN and Gordon S. WOOD, *Le origini degli Stati Uniti d'America*, Bologna, Il Mulino, vol 3, 1987, pp. 186-187. Personal translation.

religious freedom and having the right to establish a civil government in compliance with their interpretation of God's will represented the greatest form of religious liberty for them. Hence, the New World was a vocation to realize for Puritans.

Moreover, they were rich of resources that the "Promised Land" gave them and they saw it as one of the principal manifestations of God Providence. The puritan philosophy exalted the work conceived as a rational think, the sexual control, the republican soul, the idea to have a mission to accomplish in life, the philanthropic motivation, the will to personalize the relationship with sons and wife, the wait that from the sermon would come something news, the love for science and the feeling of collective responsibility²³¹. These are all elements still deeply-rooted in the American contemporary culture, despite they descend from the seventeenth century. Thanks to Puritans settlements in Massachusetts, theocratic elements were blended in with elements of political participation²³². In effect in these communities, pastor authority began to be asserted, customs were controlled according to norms of behaviour dictated by the Bible and really assemblies open to the adult male participation started to develop and to be the centre of the Revolution²³³. Recalling to mind, the American society of those years was completely different from the European one, and Protestant religion, particularly in its most radical forms, contributed to shape this community.

In the successive years, the Pilgrim Fathers were soon followed by many other religious communities²³⁴, who like them were seeking a better life and religion liberty. Among them there were also Jews as outlined at the beginning of the previous chapter. Already during the seventeenth century the connections with "the "Palestine" and the American society that was emerging, were not lacking. The separatist puritans deemed the new community of Israel to be depositary of a mission to accomplish: to go to the Promise Land and built there the "city on

²³¹ Paolo NASO, *God Bless America. Le religioni degli Americani*, Editori Riuniti, 2002, pp. 26. Personal translation.

²³² Ken SPIRO, *WordPerfect. The Jewish impact on Civilization*, Deerfield Beach, Simcha Press, 2002, pp. 230.

²³³ NASO, *God Bless America*, op. cit., pp. 26-27. Personal translation.

²³⁴ Among these Christian communities, that consequently to the Reformation divided, there were the Quakers, an extremist Puritan sect who did not believe in ministers and for whom a Society of Friends meeting together was good enough to bring down the Holy Spirit; Calvinists, who early on had challenged the Catholic belief that the bread and wine became the body and blood of Jesus in the celebration of the mass; the Huguenots or French Calvinists; the Moravians, followers of John Hus (the protestant martyr from Bohemia); the Mennonites, a Swiss sect of Anabaptists who rejected infant baptism and the Amish, the most stringent of the Mennonites.

the hill”²³⁵. All the puritan American traditions were deeply imbued with Judaism, in particular its basic principle, the covenant theology²³⁶, found its roots more specifically in the Old Testament²³⁷, as proclaimed by the puritan thinker Joshua Moody: “We are all Abraham’s sons and so subjects to the Abraham’s covenant”²³⁸. The idea of the covenant has assumed an extremely importance in the political regime of both the states concerned in this study, as it will be demonstrated below.

The progressive settlement of immigrants in America was accompanied by a religious literature that frequently resorted to theological concepts of Old Testament to move and identify, at metaphysical level, the specificity of the Holy Land with the reality of the New World or to symbolically connect the geographical terminology to that of the Land of Israel. Colonial preachers and pamphleteers frequently described the United States as a new Canaan, “a land flowing with milk and honey”, and reminded their public that just as the Hebrews lost their blessings when they offended God, so too would the Americans suffer if they disobeyed the God who had led them into their promised land²³⁹. In his writing “The Bible and Civilization”, Gabriel Sivan properly describes this reality: “No Christian community in history identified more with the People of the Book than did the early settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who believed their own lives to be a literal re-enactment of the Biblical drama of the Hebrew nation. They themselves were the children of Israel; America was their Promised Land; the Atlantic Ocean their Red Sea; the Kings of England were the Egyptian pharaohs; the American Indians the Canaanites (or the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel); the pact of the Plymouth Rock was God's holy Covenant; and the ordinances by which they lived were the Divine Law. Like the Huguenots and other Protestant victims of Old World oppression, these émigré Puritans dramatized their own situation as the righteous remnant of the Church corrupted by the “Babylonian woe,” and saw themselves as instruments of Divine Providence, a people chosen to build their new commonwealth on the Covenant entered into at Mount Sinai²⁴⁰”.

²³⁵ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 22. Personal translation.

²³⁶ For the term covenant is intended the pact between God and Abraham and it constitutes the principal text of the federal Puritan theology. For more detail see Perry MILLER, *The New England Mind: From colony to Province*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1954, pp. 377-378. Available at <https://archive.org/details/newenglandmindfr009904mbp>, last access on 10 May 2016.

²³⁷ Also the New Testament was revered, but the Old testament is seen as the original and pure source of Christian values.

²³⁸ Perry MILLER, *The New England Mind*, op. cit., pp. 377-378.

²³⁹ Walter Mead RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State*, in “Foreign Affairs”, vol. 87, n. 4, 2008, pp. 29.

²⁴⁰ Gabriel SIVAN, *The Bible and Civilization*, New York, Quadrangle, 1974, pp. 236.

This inclination persisted also at the time of the American Revolution, when the young republic searched in the symbolism of Pentateuch the most suitable images to represent its real roots²⁴¹ and it has continued to permeate the American psyche until nowadays.

3.1.1. *The Jewish Bible in U.S. education*

Puritans conferred a particular importance to instruction and they took Jewish models of education as an example to organize their education system²⁴². Some of the most prestigious American colleges and universities were founded under the advocacy of the various Christian sects. In all these institutions of higher education, not only were both Hebrew and Bible studies required, but also entire courses in Hebrew were taught, event that could happened only in the Land of Liberty.

Several important personalities in the history of the United States of America, who later held relevant tasks in the government and its institutions- such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton- were formed and educated in these universities, absorbing also Jewish civilization²⁴³. Moreover, Hebrew was then deemed as a basic element of liberal education and an essential of gentleman's education²⁴⁴. Surprisingly, this attitude was not merely academic; in 1775 almost on the eve of the American Revolution, Harvard President Samuel Langdon, addressing the Congress of Massachusetts Bay declared: "Every nation has a right to set up over itself any form of government which to it may appear most conducive to its common welfare. The civil polity of Israel is doubtless an excellent general model"²⁴⁵. Judaism and in particular the five books of Moses influenced American higher education of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of the colleges and universities even adopted some Hebrew word or phrase as part of their official emblem or seal. It is the case of the Yale seal,

²⁴¹ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 23. Personal translation.

²⁴² Cremin A. LAWRENCE, *American Education: the colonial experience, 1607-1783*, New York, Harper & Row, 1970, pp. 44.

²⁴³ Paul EIDELBERG, *Op-Ed: Jewish Roots of the American Constitution*, Arutz Sheva, 2005. Available at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/5817#.V0QTeGPAfVo>. Last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁴⁴ IURLANO, *Sion in America*, op. cit., pp. 30. Personal translation.

²⁴⁵ EIDELBERG, *Op-Ed*, op. cit. Available at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/5817#.V0QTeGPAfVo>. Last access on 6 May 2016.

which shows an open book with the Hebrew *Urim Vtumim*²⁴⁶ beneath the banner containing the Latin *Lux et Veritas* (Figure 2), then the Columbia seal with the Hebrew name for God at the top centre and the Hebrew name for one of the angels on a banner toward the middle (Figure 3) and finally Dartmouth college which uses the Hebrew words meaning "God Almighty" in a triangle in the upper centre of its seal²⁴⁷ (Figure 4). There was also a moment in which the interest in the knowledge of Hebrew language was so widespread that the Congress proposed to replace the use of English with Hebrew²⁴⁸. As demonstrate above, Jewish Biblical education affected the American Founding Fathers attitude toward not only ethics and religion, but also politics: the struggle of the ancient Hebrews against the malevolent Pharaoh symbolized the struggle of the colonialists against English tyranny.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

3.1.2. *The impact on early American colonies' legal order*

As the Bible played a significant role in the U.S. institutions of higher learning, so did in the government organization and legal codes. The identification of Puritans with the Bible was so strong that they introduced biblical instructions in all aspects of everyday life, even in the legal codes of the colonies. Considering that Puritanism was principally based on the return of the Jewish concept of the covenant with God, it ensued that laws, regulations and ordinance through which Puritans desired to govern, should be those contained in the Hebrew Bible, or Puritans' Old Testament, since it was through the Holy Scripture that the Lord had manifested His will and revealed the laws that were pleasing His eyes²⁴⁹. This was exactly what the Pilgrim Fathers were looking for, as in England a possible replacement of the English law with other laws deriving from the Old Testament was absolutely forbidden. Therefore, Scripture constituted the source of the earliest colonial legislation of the New World. In support of this affirmation, it is here quoted a part of the speech of John Davenport during the first assembly of New Heaven, in 1639: "Scriptures do hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and

²⁴⁶ It was a part of the ceremonial breastplate of the High Priest in the days of the Temple.

²⁴⁷ Ken SPIRO, *Jews & the Founding of America. The secret amazing story of Jewish influence on the founding of American Democracy*, Jewish Pathways. Available at <http://kenspiro.com/article/history-crash-course-55-jews-and-the-founding-of-america/>, last access on 20 May 2016.

²⁴⁸ Abraham KATSCH, *The Biblical Heritage of American Democracy*, New York, Ktav Publishing House Inc, 1977, pp. 70.

²⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

government of all men in all duties which they are to perform to God and men as well as in the government of families and commonwealth as in matters of the Church [...] the Word of God shall be the only rule to be attended unto in organizing the affairs of government in this plantation. [...]”²⁵⁰.

Although every colony in America developed in different ways and used distinct codes depending on the various circumstances and backgrounds, they all scrupulously followed the example of Hebraic law in their legislative models and the supremacy of the Bible as a guide in the enactment of legislation was not subjected to dispute. As reported by Abraham Katsch, the biblical impulse of the English first settlers in America was self-evident: “It is precisely in their legislative system that this impulse coalesces with the legal portions of the Old Testament to form a Biblical superstructure for the newly founded society”²⁵¹. To strengthen this impression, it had been usually used the image of the “hosts” marching into the “American wilderness” under the direct guidance of God, so similar to the ethical forces that drove the ancient Israelites with such vigour. Such spirit was clearly evident in all the legislation of 1639 and in the following enactments in 1642 and again in 1644.

In 1655, the New Haven legislators adopted a legal code which contained seventy-nine topical statutes, forty-nine of which contained Biblical references and precisely thirty-eight were from the Hebrew Bible²⁵². And like New Haven, Plymouth Colony had a similar law code as did the Massachusetts assembly, which, in 1641 adopted the so-called "Capital Lawes of New England" based almost entirely on Mosaic law²⁵³. They considered the Mosaic ruling and Biblical laws the supreme authority in any question. They had no central authority or national governing body, they felt that God was watching them, and the fear of heaven was a thousand times stronger than the fear of the crown, as it is told in the Bible when after the conquest of Jericho and settlement of Canaan, Israel has no king or central authority and “every man did what was right in his own eyes”²⁵⁴.

These Seven Universal Laws of Morality continue to play an important role even today,

²⁵⁰ KATSCH, *The Biblical Heritage of American Democracy*, op. cit., pp. 97.

²⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁵² EIDELBERG, *Op-Ed*, op. cit. Available at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/5817#.V0QTeGPAfVo>. Last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁵³ They are also called the Seven Universal Law of Morality; for example the Sixth prohibits idolatry, blasphemy, murder, robbery, adultery, and eating flesh from a living animal, while the seventh requires the establishment of courts of justice. Such courts are obviously essential to any society based on the primacy of reason or persuasion rather than passion or intimidation.

²⁵⁴ Judges 21:25.

as they are explicitly incorporated in United States' public law 102-14²⁵⁵. The use of biblical laws by governors contributed to dissolve the numerous ethnic differences among immigrants, moderating the demands of various groups, helping to coordinate their diverse interests and talents, and thereby contributed to America's growth and prosperity.

Thanks to these initial efforts, Hebraic laws and principles extended and prevailed throughout the colonies, up to eventually occupy a central place in the more unified laws of the separate colonies and, still later, in the national system of American constitutional law. In 1775, during an election sermon, Samuel Langdon, one of Harvard Presidents, stated that "The Jewish government, if considered merely in a civil view, was a perfect republic²⁵⁶".

3.1.3. U.S. Constitution and its Christian elements

For too long intellectuals have been largely blind to religion and its continuing role in U.S. societies and politics, as they acted within a framework that presupposed an inexorable weakening of religion in the modern world. Despite these difficulties, the theological essence of the American Constitution cannot be denied.

There has been an open debate concerning the role of religion since the inception of the American Republic. A group of scholars²⁵⁷ sustained that the Founders were guided by secular

²⁵⁵ In 1991, thanks to this law it was designated March 26, as "Education Day, U.S.A.". A part of the law is here quoted: "Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great Nation was founded; Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws; Whereas without these ethical values and principles the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning to chaos; [...] Whereas in tribute to this great spiritual leader, "the rebbe", this, his ninetieth year will be seen as one of "education and giving", the year in which we turn to education and charity to return the world to the moral and ethical values contained in the Seven Noahide Laws; and Whereas this will be reflected in an international scroll of honor signed by the President of the United States and other heads of state: Now, therefore, be it: Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That March 26, 1991, the start of the ninetieth year of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the worldwide Lubavitch movement, is designated as "Education Day, U.S.A.". The President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities." The whole text is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c102:H.J.RES.104.ENR:>, last access on 20 May 2016.

²⁵⁶ EIDELBERG, *Op-Ed*, op. cit. Available at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/5817#.V0QTeGPAfVo>. Last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁵⁷ Among them Edwin Gaustad, Steven Waldman, Richard Hughes, Steven Keillor, David Holmes, Brooke Allen.

ideas and self, class, or state interests. They do not deny that the Founding Fathers were religious, but they argued that they were mostly deists. Similarly, the law professor Geoffrey Stone insists that “deistic beliefs played a central role in the framing of the American republic” and that the “Founding generation viewed religion, and particularly religion’s relation to government, through an Enlightenment lens that was deeply skeptical of orthodox Christianity.” In reality, there is a great deal of evidence that Christian ideas had a relevant impact on America establishment and its Constitution. This last one is rooted in ethical and political principles whose source is none other than the Torah, the Five Books of Moses. The identified elements of connection are many. It follows a brief discussion of the more significant.

The Founding Fathers started from the conceptualization of the covenant²⁵⁸ between people and God; in particular the foundation of U.S. Constitution was perceived by the them as their desire to form a more perfect union in accordance with the expressed objectives of the State. Pursuant to Bible’s teachings, a covenant is a tool of God thought for men in order to establish and regulate their relationships with one another and with God. In line with this, first political U.S. institutions reflected the biblical pattern emerging as federations of people (tribes) that were instituted and reaffirmed by God’s covenant. A sense of cohesion and purpose gathered and bond them to a common constitution and common law²⁵⁹.

Even though not all the founders of the Republic of the United States were Christians, there was a uniform awareness that the heart of man was inclined to evil and thus it was required an external government control. As a result of this approach, the basis of their liberty and so of the constitution, is held in the covenant between God and human being. Many philosophers and influential writers of the eighteenth century, like Blackstone, Locke, Burke, Madison, Jefferson and others, realized that for self-government to work, all people must submit to the "Rule of Law" and that law is not a creation of man but rather, a revelation of God. Without such a philosophical belief, there would be no consistency or predictability in the law and it would work to the ultimate demise of man's happiness. At the same time, they recognized the possibility of corrupting forces and that the government must have been powerful enough to restrain the evil impulses of the masses. They also figured out that rulers possessed sinful

²⁵⁸ “Politically, a covenant involves a coming together (congregation) of basically equal humans who consent with one another through a morally binding pact supported by a transcendent power, establishing with the partners a new framework or setting them on the road to a new task that can only be dissolved by mutual agreement of all the parties to it.” See Daniel ELAZAR, *Covenant and Polity in Biblical Israel*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1995, pp. 17-18.

²⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

natures and therefore they could not be trusted with absolute power. Consequently, to avoid the degeneration of masses into chaos and anarchy, they created a governmental system of checks and balances separating political powers, that is the one of present days.

However, the current United States are well-known to be one of the most secular states in the world and the country where the religious freedom is one of its pillar. Thus, how could the earlier Christian concepts have been embodied in the foundation of the United States of America in 1776 and in the resulting U.S. Constitution of 1787? The following lines are an attempt to answer to this question.

On the basis of what written above, early colonial laws and constitutions such as the Mayflower Compact, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, and Massachusetts Body of Liberties were replete with Christian rhetoric and in some cases, they also incorporated biblical texts wholesale. Worthing to mention is the Declaration of Independence, the most famous document produced by the Continental Congress during the War for Independence, that in its opening sentences proclaimed the following words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Additionally, this text references “the laws of nature and of nature’s God²⁶⁰”, it concludes by “appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world” and noting the signers’ “reliance on the protection of divine Providence²⁶¹.” The Founders’ use of Christian rhetoric and arguments becomes even more evident if one looks at other statements of colonial rights and concerns such as the Suffolk Resolves, the Declaration of Rights, and the Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms—to say nothing of the dozen explicitly Christian calls for prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving issued by the Continental and Confederation Congresses.²⁶² Albeit many of the Founding Fathers of the American Independence were not devout, their political thought was forged in those universities whose curriculum was based very much on Jewish ideas and all of them interpreted the words “Nature’s God,” “Creator,” and “Providence” in reference to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: one God who is active in the affairs of men and nations.

Compared to the first colonial legislations, Christian laws and principles appear in a completely different way in U.S. Constitution, which surprisingly says explicitly little about

²⁶⁰ The United States Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. Full text available at http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html, last access on 7 May 2016.

²⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁶² Daniel L. DREISBACH and Mark David HALL, *The Sacred Rights of Conscience*, New Edition edition, 2010, pp. 220.

God and religion²⁶³. The only specific mention of God can be found in the date the Constitution was written: “in the Year of our Lord 1787²⁶⁴.” Why did they not mention God or other religious elements as they did in the Declaration of Independence? What took place was an acknowledgment that America as a Christian country established by the law was not a right thing, and so they gave paradoxically rise to a “Godless Constitution”. As written by Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Miller, they believed that if there was to be legislation on religious or moral matters, it should be done by state and local governments²⁶⁵. To further this point, they added the famous First Amendment to the Constitution, stating that “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion²⁶⁶”. This means that there were not an established American state or national religion, rather all religions would be respected in the Land of Liberty. Therefore, even if the Founders were deeply affected by Christianity, they did not plan a constitutional order only for fellow believers. Through the First Amendment it was explicitly prohibited religious tests for federal offices and meanwhile it was entrusted that all men and women should be free to worship God (or not) as their consciences dictate. To this proposal, it has to be recalled the already quoted George Washington’s letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, in which he opened the doors to every religion of the world.

After having seen how Jewish ideas are embodied in the foundations documents of the United States, let’s see how they are put into effect in the managing of governmental everyday life. According to an analysis conducted by Paul Eidelberg, contemporary U.S. institutions logically reveal Jewish roots in their laws and principles.

Before proceeding, it should be remembered that the United States are a republic of fifty states ruled by a federal government. This means that there are three main branches divided in the following manner: the legislative branch administrated by the United States Congress, which is composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States; the executive branch, which is conducted by the Executive Government composed of the President

²⁶³ John EIDSMOE, *Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of our Founding Fathers*, Baker Academy, 1995, pp. 16.

²⁶⁴ It is mentioned in the Article VII, at the end of the Declaration. Available at http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html, last access on 7 May 2016.

²⁶⁵ Even Thomas Jefferson observed: “Certainly, no power to prescribe any religious exercise, or to assume authority in religious discipline, has been delegated to the General [i.e., federal] Government. It must then rest with the States, as far as it can be in any human authority.” Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Miller, January 23, 1808, in DREISBACH and HALL, *Sacred Rights*, op. cit., pp. 531.

²⁶⁶ Amendment I of the United States Bill of Rights, available at http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html, last access on 7 May 2016.

of the State, the Vice President and the Cabinet, and lastly the judicial branch with the Supreme Court of the United States (a complete list of the U.S. Presidents can be consulted in Table 3 at the end of this dissertation).

Going into detail, the House of Representatives represents 435 districts of the United States, and the people of each district have the possibility to elect one person to represent their opinions and interests. The concept of district elections is implicit in the Torah: “Select for yourselves men who are wise, understanding, and known to your tribes and I will appoint them as your leaders²⁶⁷”. Similarly, the meaning of election is explained in the Exodus: “...seek out from among all the people men with leadership ability, God-fearing men--men of truth who hate injustice²⁶⁸” and analogous conditions are prescribed in the original constitutions of Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island²⁶⁹. In addition, the idea of district elections is consistent with Jewish law of “agency”, which incorporates the “delegate” and “trustee” concept of representation common to the non-Jewish democratic world²⁷⁰. While the delegate notion connects a representative to the instructions of his constituents, the trustee concept permits him to judge whether adherence to these instructions, when additional knowledge or new circumstances intervene, will damage his constituents' immediate and/or long-term interests. Another evident connection with Hebrew Scripture is the fact that every tribe should select the best men to be their representatives. As Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch comments: “Each tribe (Shevet) is to choose out of its own midst men whose character can only be known by their lives is known only to those who have associated with them²⁷¹.” This corresponds to the modern rule of residential requirements for Representatives and Senators²⁷². Finally, the Jewish law “No legislation should be imposed on the public unless the majority can conform to it²⁷³” coincides with the modern forms of representative democracy, which requires legislators to consider or consult the opinions of their constituents.

For what concerns the Senate, it represents the 50 states of the Federal Union; it therefore embodies the Federal principle, which has to be traced in the Torah and the twelve

²⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 1:13.

²⁶⁸ Exodus 18:19

²⁶⁹ Paul EIDELBERG, *Jewish Roots of the American Constitution*, available at <http://britam.org/eidelberg.html>, last access on 7 May 2016.

²⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

²⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁷² John A. STERLING, *Biblical origins of American Political Philosophy*, available at <http://lawandliberty.org/history1.htm>, last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁷³ Paul EIDELBERG, *A Jewish Philosophy of History: Israel's Degradation and Redemption*, New York, iUniverse, 2004, pp. 48.

tribes. Each tribe had its own distinct identity, its own governor and its own judicial system²⁷⁴. Also in the Unitary Executive, namely the President, can be outlined a biblical principle. In particular they associated the episode of God's declaration to Moses and to the fact that there can only be one leader in a generation²⁷⁵. Particularly on this last aspect mentioned, United States diverged from the State of Israel, since a Jewish law contained in the tractate Sanhedrin²⁷⁶ opposes collective leadership. Actually Israel has a Plural Executive or Cabinet consisting of a prime minister and other ministers representing different political parties in the Knesset.

Relating to the judicial power, key principles of the U.S. constitution are found in Deuteronomy 16:18 - 17:13, where it is theorised the establishment of a civil government which exists primarily to administer justice²⁷⁷. The Bible gives us rather explicit guidance on basic rules of adjudication, rules of judicial procedure, rules of evidence, rules for capital punishment, and guidelines for the establishment of an appellate system. From the Old Testament through the early writings of the founders, it is clear that a primary function of civil government is the punishment of transgressors. The founding fathers clearly recognized that justice and civil authority are legitimate extensions of Divine Law (Natural law) through a covenant relationship with Almighty God. All things considered, any scholars cannot afford to ignore the important influence of faith on the internal American system.

To sum up, while America did not have a Christian Founding in the sense of creating a theocracy, its Founding was deeply shaped by Christian moral truths. What is more, it created a regime that was friendly to Christians, but also to worshipper of other religions. Although the United States is a country open to all religions, this does not imply that its citizens and academics forget about the country's Christian roots, because these roots will shape also American foreign policy. Christian ideas underlie some key assumptions of America's constitutional order. For example, the Founders considered humans as a creation in the image of God and this allowed them to outline institutions and laws with the aim to protect and promote human dignity. Since they were convinced that humans are sinful, they tried to avoid

²⁷⁴ EIDELBERG, *Jewish Roots of the American Constitution*, op. cit., available at <http://britam.org/eidelberg.html>, last access on 7 May 2016.

²⁷⁵ It was when Moses told Joshua to consult with the elders when he was about to lead the Jews across the Jordan, but God countermanded Moses that there can only be one leader in generation.

²⁷⁶ It is one of the ten tractates of Seder Nezikin, a section of the Talmud that deals with damages, like civil and criminal proceedings.

²⁷⁷ STERLING, *Biblical origins of American Political Philosophy*, op. cit., available at <http://lawandliberty.org/history1.htm>, last access on 6 May 2016.

the concentration of power by framing a national government with carefully specific powers. As well, the Founders clearly thought moral considerations should inform legislation. The Founders retained legitimate for the national and state governments to promote Christianity, but this did not impede the development of a pluralistic society.

3.2. *God and Israel in U.S. presidential speeches*

It would be really interesting tracing the history of U.S.-Israel relationship and its common Christian heritage through the speeches and the words of American Presidents. At first sight it could appear as a shallow and cynical way to demonstrate the use of the Bible and God in American society and politics; it can be argued that Presidents have used the name of God and the biblical episodes to reach a wider public and gain more votes. It has been true in some cases, but in most situation the words pronounced by U.S. Heads of State have been testimonial of the close ties between American society and Christianity. Several references to biblical passages and God can be found whether in the pronouncements of Presidents or in working messages sent to the Congress in diverse concrete matters. It can be quoted and studied an innumerable quantity of Presidents speeches. In this context it has been selected the most meaningful for the aim of this dissertation.

According to Bernard Reich, a well-known expert on the politics of the Middle East, Israel's special place in American thinking antedates its emergence as a state²⁷⁸. As a matter of fact, support's demonstration for the aspiration of Jewish people to return to Zion can be traced starting from the declarations of President John Adams²⁷⁹: "Farther I could find it in my heart to wish that you had been at the head of a hundred thousand Israelites ... and marching with them into Judea and making a conquest of that country and restoring your nation to the dominion of it. For I really wish the Jews again in Judea an independent nation. I believe ... once restored to an independent government and no longer persecuted they [the Jews] would soon wear away some of the asperities and peculiarities of their character and possibly in time become liberal Unitarian Christians for your Jehovah is our Jehovah and your God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob is our God²⁸⁰." In a letter to Thomas Jefferson, he talked about Hebrews as the most glorious nation that had ever lived on the world. "The Jews have done more to civilize

²⁷⁸ Bernard REICH, *Reassessing the United States-Israel relationship*, in Efraim KARSH (edited by), *Peace in the Middle east: the Challenge for Israel*, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 67.

²⁷⁹ John Adams was the second President of United States and he stayed in office from 1797 until 1801.

²⁸⁰ GROSE, *Israel in the Mind of America*, op. cit., pp. 16. Extract from a Letter to Mordecai Manuel Noah written in 1819.

men than any other nation... they are the most glorious nation that ever inhabited the earth. The romans and their empire were but a bauble in comparison to the Jews. They have given religious to three quarters of the globe and have influenced the affairs of Mankind more and more happily than any other Nation, ancient or modern²⁸¹” .Even Thomas Jefferson, the man who drafted the American Declaration of Independence, obstinately encouraged the political rights of Jew people since 1776, when he was committed to approve an amendment of Virginia’s legislature, that would permit the acquisition of citizenship to Hebrews, Catholics and other religious groups²⁸².

After the quotations of two important Founders of the American Republic, it follows the contribution of Woodrow Wilson, whose opinions were particularly relevant to the concept of morality. About Zionism, he believed it would be the potential for new ideals and ethical values for mankind and it would spring from having the Jews restored to their land. In reaction to the Balfour Declaration, he declared “in the spirit and essence of our Constitution, the influence of the Hebrew Commonwealth was paramount in that it was not only the highest authority for the principle, that rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God, but also because it was in itself a divine precedent for a pure democracy, as distinguished from monarchy, aristocracy or any other form of government”²⁸³. Furthermore, in one of his works “The State” Wilson acknowledged: “It would be a mistake...to ascribe to Roman legal conceptions an undivided sway over the development of law and institutions during the Middle Ages... The Laws of Moses as well as the laws of Rome contributed suggestions and impulse to the men and institutions which were to prepare the modern world; and if we could have but eyes to see... we should readily discover how very much besides religion we owe to the Jew²⁸⁴.”

Later, Presidents began to talk about the American relationship with Israel and to mention it in many of their speeches, like demonstrated by the following excerpts of different Presidents’ statements in different occasions.

Subsequently having de facto recognized the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, Truman declared “I had faith in Israel before it was established, I have faith in it now.

²⁸¹ Paul EIDELBERG, *Jewish Roots of the American Constitution*, available at <http://britam.org/eidelberg.html>, last access on 7 May 2016.

²⁸² For a further reading on this issue see Daniel L. DREISBACH, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation Between Church and State*, New York, University Press, 2002.

²⁸³ Available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/pressquote.html>, last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁸⁴ Woodrow WILSON and Edward ELLIOTT, *The State. Elements of historical and practical politics*, New York, D.C: Heath & Co Publishers, 1918, pp. 22-23.

I believe it has a glorious future before it - not just another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization”.

Although Dwight Eisenhower (1953-1961) has been frequently considered by many an anti-Israel President²⁸⁵, in a radio address about the situation in the Middle East he asserted “Our forces saved the remnant of the Jewish people of Europe for a new life and a new hope in the reborn land of Israel. Along with all men of good will, I salute the young state and wish it well. The people of Israel, like those of the United States, are imbued with a religious faith and a sense of moral values”.²⁸⁶

The two Presidents who felt and expressed more a religious and moral attachment were Lyndon Johnson (1963-1969) and Jimmy Carter (1977-1981). The first one revealed: “Most, if not all of you, have very deep ties with the land and with the people of Israel, as I do, for my Christian faith sprang from yours. The Bible stories are woven into my childhood memories as the gallant struggle of modern Jews to be free of persecution is also woven into our souls²⁸⁷.” While Carter wrote in his memoirs that he “believed very deeply that the Jews who had survived the Holocaust deserved their own nation, and that they had a right to live in peace among their neighbours. I considered this homeland for the Jews to be compatible with the teaching of the Bible, hence ordained by God. These moral and religious beliefs made my commitment to the security of Israel unshakable²⁸⁸”. About the interstate relations he added: “The United States has a warm and a unique relationship of friendship with Israel that is morally right. It is compatible with our deepest religious convictions, and it is right in terms of America's own strategic interests. We are committed to Israel's security, prosperity, and future as a land that has so much to offer the world²⁸⁹”.

In a more recent scenario, Bill Clinton (1993-2001) is known to be the most pro-Israel President in the history of the United States. He experienced the relationship to a completely

²⁸⁵ Because he refused to sell arms to Israel, during the 1956 war, he forced Israel to withdraw from the Suez Canal and Sinai and he funded arms built up by the Egyptians, the Jordians and the Syrians.

²⁸⁶ Radio Address on Situation in the Middle East, February 20, 1957, available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/presquote.html>, last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁸⁷ Lyndon Johnson told Bené Berith, a Jewish association, in September 1968. Available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/presquote.html>, last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁸⁸ Eli E. HERTZ, *The U.S.-Israel Special Relationship*, in “ Myths and Facts”, available at http://www.mythsandfacts.org/NOQ_OnlineEdition/Chapter17/unitedstatesisrael1.htm, last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁸⁹ Jimmy Carter’s speech on the 1st Anniversary of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty Remarks, on 23rd March 1980. Available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/presquote.html>, last access on 6 May 2016.

different level from his predecessors. “Our relationship would never vary from its allegiance to the shared values, the shared religious heritage, the shared democratic politics which have made the relationship between the United States and Israel a special—even on occasion a wonderful—relationship²⁹⁰.” Alternatively, “The United States admires Israel for all it has overcome and for all that it has accomplished. We are proud of the strong bond we have forged with Israel, based on our shared values and ideals. That unique relationship will endure just as Israel has endured²⁹¹.”

In addition, the special bond between the two states can also be noticed in the laudatory public statement of U.S. officials as well as in the preferential treatment Israel receives from Washington. American candidates for public office give Israel unbalanced and positive attention in their position papers and campaign rhetoric. Also the quadrennial programs adopted by the major U.S. political parties advocate Israel. For instance, the 1992 democratic party plan remarked that even if the Cold War ended, this would have not modified America’s deep interest in the long standing special relationship with Israel, founded on shared values, a mutual commitment to democracy, and a strategic alliance that benefit both nations²⁹².

In turn Israelis have similarly acknowledged the singularity and significance of the relationship with United States, even while recognizing some discrepancies. In July 1992, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin introduced his government to the Knesset and observed: “Sharing with us in the making of peace will also be the United States, whose friendship and special closeness we prize. We shall spare no effort to strengthen and improve the special relationship we have with the one power in the world²⁹³.” It has to be highlighted that also other states have gained a particular significance, but nothing compared to the status achieved by the State of Israel over an extended period of time.

In conclusion, although it can be discussed that Christian references in public life speeches convey to religion a merely ceremonial significance, used in order to assuage the more uninformed people of the community, we cannot diminish the role of biblical images in President’s speech because it is “only a ritual”. Discoursed during solemn occasions are often

²⁹⁰ U.S. President Bill Clinton to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on occasion of the 50th anniversary of Israel’s independence, April 30, 1998. Available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/US-Israel/presquote.html>, last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁹² Bernard REICH, *Securing the Covenant: United States-Israel relations after the cold war*, Westport, Praeger, 1995, pp. 7.

²⁹³ REICH, *Securing the Covenant*, op. cit., pp. 8.

emblematic of deep-rooted values and commitments that are not so clear expressed in the ordinary life.

3.3. *Civil religion in the United States*

In order to deal at length with the influence of religion in American politics, it should be reconsidered the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof²⁹⁴.” In effect, it introduces the notion of separation of powers between church and state, that was instituted in the U.S. in 1789 through the adoption of the Bill of Rights. In few words, this measure has prohibited the government from establishing or promoting a religion as well as from restricting religious freedom. On this basis, the religious creeds and practices are not forbidden and citizens are free to pray and believe in whatever they choose.

An emblematic case of this American separation doctrine is Kennedy’s inaugural speech of 20 January 1961. “We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom--symbolizing an end as well as a beginning--signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago. The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe--the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God²⁹⁵.” He then closed: “Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own²⁹⁶.” In that occasion he mentioned God three times: firstly, in the two opening paragraphs and then in the closing one. The way Kennedy used these references is revealing of the vestigial place of religion in today American society. When the President mentioned God, he did not refer to any religion in particular, he did not allude to Jesus Christ,

²⁹⁴ Amendment I of the United States Bill of Right, available at http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html, last access on 7 May 2016.

²⁹⁵ Presidential address speech available at <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/JFK-Quotations/Inaugural-Address.aspx>, last access on 6 May 2016.

²⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

or to Moses, or to Christian Church²⁹⁷. He wanted only to make reference to the concept of God, a world that can have varied meanings to different people. Thus, the principle embodied in the First Amendment assures the liberty of religious belief and association, but at the same time it isolates the religious sphere, which is perceived to be principally private, from the political one.

Thus, how could religion be assimilated into the American liberal political system? The development of such religion's conception is based on liberal philosophy, whose major representatives were John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Since its development in the seventeenth century, liberalism has had a spiny interaction with religion. In John Locke's opinion, one of the most influential theorists of liberalism, religious toleration is the best way to achieve peace in a society with a diversity of religious traditions²⁹⁸. His liberalism evolved and influenced many Enlightenment thinkers including the Founding Fathers in the American colonies, whose response was the First Amendment's freedom of religion and the development of the separation of church and state²⁹⁹. Moreover, Locke theorized that in a state of nature, where there are no artificial institutions, man would logically agree with the establishment of some forms of administration, so as to avoid self-destruction. In other words, the natural human being condition of sinner can be avoided if man becomes aware of his innate impulses and contract some of his absolute individual power, in exchange of the safeguard of society³⁰⁰. The English philosopher considers this exchange not only reasonable, but also the design of the Almighty God.

The second more influential philosopher was, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who in the chapter 8, book 4 of his work "The Social Contract", coined the term "civil religion". He herein explained the dogmas of civil religion, that are the existence of God, the life to come, the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, and the exclusion of religious intolerance³⁰¹. All other religious beliefs are external to the state perception and citizens can openly adhere to them. As affirmed by Rieffer, the neutrality assumption of liberalism has had the effect of privatizing religion by expressing the view that the state occupies the public realm, while religion occupies

²⁹⁷ Robert N. BELLAH, *Civil Religion in America*, in "Journal of American Academy of Arts and Science", Vol. 96, N. 1, 1967, p. 3.

²⁹⁸ Nicola ABAGNANO, *Storia della filosofia*, vol. II, Torino, UTET, 2013, pp. 346. Personal translation.

²⁹⁹ Barbara Ann RIEFFER, *Religion, Politics and Human Rights: Understanding the Role of Christianity in the Promotion of Human Rights*, in *Human Rights & Human Welfare*, Vol. 6, 2006, pp. 33-34.

³⁰⁰ ABAGNANO, *Storia della filosofia*, op. cit., 347.

³⁰¹ Jean-Jacques ROUSSEAU, *Il contratto sociale*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2014, pp. 205. Personal translation.

the private sphere³⁰². On this account, religion is thought as something which pertains to citizens' private lives, but it should be left out of the public realm³⁰³.

However, in the American lives, the public religion dimension is manifested in a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals that the sociologist Robert Bellah, drawing by Rousseau's concept, has defined civil religion. This concept of religion is reflected in the private life as well as public views of the community. In the American sociologist words, "The central tradition of the American civil religion [is] not [...] a form of national self-worship but [...] the subordination of nation of ethical principles³⁰⁴". The American sociologist defined the civil religion as "what those who set the precedents felt was appropriate under the circumstances...At its best it is a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen in or as revealed through the experience of the American people³⁰⁵". The American civil religion has never been anticlerical or militantly secular; on the contrary it borrowed selectively from the religious tradition. This religion is obviously involved in the most pressing moral and political issue of today.

On the whole, the message of American society seems to be that individuals are free to believe what they want, but that religious beliefs ought to remain private and out of the view of society. This religion conceptualization arose from Enlightenment's ideas of "the inalienable rights of man" and certainly the concept, that these rights come from God, is of biblical origins. The founding fathers put down roots of what it would later become the American civil religion. They did not used the same words, but it is evident to all that similar ideas, as part of the cultural climate of the late eighteenth century, were to be identified among Americans. It is doubtless that religion, especially the idea of God, have a constitutive function in the thought of the early American statesmen.

3.4. *Religion in the U.S. foreign policy*

In the first chapter, we have talked at academic level about the effects of religion into internal and external decisions-making of a state's government. In the following section it will be observed the particular impact on American politics, especially how religion can be involved in U.S. politics in spite of its separation from the public realm. Particularly relevant on this

³⁰² RIEFFER, *Religion, Politics and Human Rights*, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

³⁰³ Will KYMLICKA, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, New Work, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 3.

³⁰⁴ BELLAH, *Civil Religion in America*, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

³⁰⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 8

regard, is the scheme proposed by John B. Judis in which he summarizes the effects of religion on U.S. international affairs through key words³⁰⁶.

Table 2 - Religion and foreign policy in the United States

<i>Period</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Adversary</i>	<i>Means</i>
Pre-revolutionary colonial America (1600–1776)	Millennium	‘Papal antichrist’	Example as ‘city on a hill’
Revolutionary and founding era (1776–1815)	Empire of liberty	Old world tyranny, ‘hellish fiends’ (Native Americans)	Example, continental expansion, without entangling alliances
Manifest Destiny (1815–48)	Christian civilisation	‘Savages’ or ‘children’ (Native Americans)	Example, continental expansion, without entangling alliances
Imperial America (1898–1913)	Christian civilisation	‘Barbarians’ and ‘savages’ (Filipinos)	Overseas expansion, without entangling alliances
Wilsonian Internationalism (1914–19)	Global democracy	Autocracy and imperialism	International organisations and alliances
Cold War liberalism (1946–89)	Free world	Communism	International organisations and alliances
Bush and neo-conservatism (2001–)	Spread of religious freedom and human rights	International terrorism, often linked to extremist Islam; totalitarian states, such as North Korea	Unilateral action with ad hoc alliances

Source: Judis (2005: 3).

In line with the aim of this work, in the following lines it will be examined in what ways religious elements link the United States to the State of Israel. To develop these themes, it is necessary to call to mind what it has been written in the first part of the dissertation about the connections between religion and foreign policy. It has been previously argued that the international affairs of a state are the echo of its internal politics and consequently they are affected by many elements, like national history, economy and religion. This last one in particular constitutes an important part in the U.S. culture.

On the basis of what written above, religion can affect foreign policy through principally three means: religious actors, for example the Roman Catholic Church, religious identity, which shapes citizens’ view of the world, and finally through the cultural heritage of the nation. In the case of United States’ foreign policy towards Israel, it has been usually attributed to the action of the Israel lobby the capacity to influence chief executive and Presidents’ decisions³⁰⁷. Actually, it would be a limited reasoning conferring merely to the Israel lobby the power and

³⁰⁶ John B. JUDIS, *The Chosen Nation: The Influence of Religion on U.S. Foreign Policy*, in “Policy Brief”, vol. 37, 2005, pp. 4.

³⁰⁷ MEARSHEIMER and WALT, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, op. cit., pp. 51.

ability to promote and endure such a unique interstate relation with Israel. Others element should be taken into consideration, which have constructed the favourable mindset to establish such close ties. What I am referring to can be outlined in: firstly the influence of religious beliefs in public opinions, which in turn shape international affairs decisions and secondly the impact of a common cultural heritage on the making of alliances. These two powerful factors are better explained in the hereafter subparagraphs.

3.4.1. *The influence of religious beliefs in public opinions*

According to Mead Russell, one of the most influential American academic, a foreign policy in favour of Jerusalem does not represent the triumph of small lobby over the public will; it rather represents the power of public opinion to shape international relations in the face of concerns by world politics professionals³⁰⁸. On the same opinion was Kenneth Organski, who in order to better explain the US generous assistance to Israel (as data in the previous chapter show), he conducted a study of the record of American aid to Israel since the de facto recognition of the Jewish State. From the data analysed he noticed a striking fact: U.S. aid increased exactly after the 1970; before this year the aid was low, while afterward it was very high³⁰⁹. Logically, this circumstance could not be explained by a persistent factor such as pressure groups, so the author concluded that the Israel lobby could not have played a decisive role. Examining the amount and the historical events occurred, Organski pointed out that it was Nixon administration who changed the aid levels³¹⁰. In particular, this critical change was related to the American attitudes toward Israel.

A quite extensive literature that tried to give an explanation to the remarkable level of American support for Israel over the years rose in particular during the first years of 1990s. A distinctive author was Camille Mansour, who considered U.S. support to Israel as part of a grand design for extending its influence into the Middle East and because of domestic political factors. In his opinion, Israel is generally seen as a burden to U.S. goal and sustained that policy is not determined on strategic merit, but it is rather distorted by domestic American politics, especially by the pro-Israel lobby. Differently from other authors, Mansour studied carefully the subject and concluded that American support is more rooted in values like culture and

³⁰⁸ RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel*, op. cit., pp. 28.

³⁰⁹ Kenneth ORGANSKI, *The \$36 Billion Bargain: Strategy and Politics in U.S. Assistance to Israel*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990, pp. 118.

³¹⁰ ORGANSKI, *The \$36 Billion Bargain*, op. cit., pp. 315.

ideology than in anything else³¹¹. In his book “Beyond alliance: Israel and U.S. foreign policy”, he provided a scientific cast to his explanation, arguing that Israel’s place in U.S. policy incorporates aspects of both burden and asset, in different ratios depending on circumstances and context. He denied the notion of “lobby” as the motor of United States policy, and at the same time he attributed the underlying base of support rather to a “pro-Israeli predisposition” that “precedes any consideration of interest, any concern with cost or damage³¹².” The opinion of these academics does not negate neither the existence of an Israel lobby nor the help, in some cases, in shaping U.S. policy. They intend to state that the ultimate sources of the United States’ policy, particularly in the Middle East, lie outside the Beltway and outside the Jewish community³¹³; the key source of this foreign policy is non-Jewish community.

3.4.2. *Gentile’s inclination towards Israelites*

It would be fascinating understanding the origin of this American gentiles’ predisposition to a supporting foreign policy towards Israel. The starting point of the Americans positive approach to Zionism and its goals has to be tracked from the early nineteenth century, when two different groups of gentile Zionists were created³¹⁴. The first one was composed by prophetic Zionists, who envisioned the Jewish restoration to the Promised Land as the fulfilment of the literal interpretation of biblical prophecy, often related to the revival of Christ and the end of the world. The Presbyterian pastor John McDonald belonged to this group of Prophetic Zionists and in 1814 he predicted that American would have assisted the Jews in restoring their ancient state³¹⁵. The second group of gentile Zionists was represented by less literal and less prophetic Christians who developed a progressive Zionism that would echo in the following decades among both religious and secular gentiles. Among them there were liberal Christians, who believed that God was building a better world through human progress and saw the United States as the new world that God was making. Other progressive Zionists were American protestants, who were convinced that God was acting to restore the humiliated and oppressed Jews³¹⁶. Thus, they backed the founding of a Jewish state because they thought

³¹¹ Camille MANSOUR, *Beyond alliance: Israel and U.S. foreign policy*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 324.

³¹² *Ivi*, pp. 277.

³¹³ RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel*, op. cit., pp. 28.

³¹⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 3-4.

³¹⁵ GROSE, *Israel in the Mind of America*, op. cit., pp. 75.

³¹⁶ RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel*, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

that this would have avoided Jews' persecutions and they could have improved their lives. For these Christians, Zionism was part of a more expansive project of transforming the world by promoting the ideals of the United States.

Prophetic Zionists, for their part, greatly increased after the American Civil War, and their concerns about the return of Hebrews in Palestine evolved. Books and pamphlets underling the predicted restoration of the Jews and speculating on the identity and the return of the "lost tribes" of the ancient Hebrews became perennial bestsellers. After 1880, these groups of gentile Zionists found new allies thanks to a mass immigration of Russian Jews to the United States. As a result of the diaspora of that time, the Methodist lay leader William Blackstone presented a petition to President Benjamin Harrison calling on the United States to use its good offices to gather a congress of European powers in order to persuade the Ottoman Empire to assign Palestine to the Jews³¹⁷. The establishment of such a state would reduce Jewish immigration to the United States. At this point the different strands of gentile Zionists came together. At a time when the American Jewish community was neither large nor powerful, and no such thing as an Israel lobby existed, the pillars of the American gentile establishment went on record supporting a U.S. diplomatic effort to create a Jewish state in the lands of the Bible³¹⁸.

Giving a look to more recent years, it has to be marked that since 1967 a series of religious revivals have spread rapidly over the United States, with important consequences on public attitudes toward the Middle East. Among the effects of this religious awakening there is from one side the decline of liberal Protestant churches' capacity to influence politically and socially, due to their increasing criticism toward Israel. And from the other side it has been observed a considerable increase in prophetic Zionism, with evangelical and fundamentalist American Christians more interested now in biblical prophecy and Israel's situation than ever before³¹⁹. Immediately after the Israel War of Independence, many evangelical and fundamentalist Christians demonstrated relatively little interest in the Jewish cause. The watershed was the Six-Day War, that served as reactor for both the evangelicals and the prophetic Zionists. Many Americans identified the Israelites' triumph as miraculous. The fact that the Temple site was again in Jewish hands was a powerful impetus for the American religious revivals. Since that moment, a series of best-selling books, fiction and nonfiction alike, have attracted the interest of millions of Americans, who saw in this event the end-time as

³¹⁷ GROSE, *Israel in the Mind of America*, op. cit., pp. 92-94.

³¹⁸ RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel*, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

³¹⁹ *Ivi*, pp. 12.

predicted in the Old and New Testaments. Moreover, at the end of the Cold War it has been noted an additional power and energy force to evangelical and fundamentalist churches, strengthening the connections between the state of Israel and many conservative American Christians³²⁰.

To conclude this reflection on how the opinions of non-Jewish community influence American international relations, it has to be pointed out that in the future, as in the past, U.S. foreign policy, especially toward the Middle East, will continue to be moulded primarily by the will of the American majority, not the machinations of any minority, however the level of wealthy or engaged in the political process some of its members may be.

3.5. *Other elements of sympathy toward Israel*

There are also other hallmarks characterizing the U.S.-Israel relationship, which are worth noting and they are briefly examined henceforth.

Israel is seen by US citizens as a like-image state. The underlying factor is democracy, integrated with a common interest in a stable, peaceful and more democratic Middle East³²¹. Israel represents one of the small group of democratic nations that have emerged since World War II and continues to thrive until nowadays. Adversely to other states, the Israeli democracy did not evolve from an authoritarian form of government nor was it forced upon it; it is an inherently democratic state whose concepts and institutions were derived from the Zionist movement and the Jewish community in Palestine (Yishuv) during the British Mandate³²². Today, it has a parliament elected by free and secret ballot and a government that changes at the will of the citizens by peaceful means and not by assassination or military action. Like European democracies, discussions and controversies between and among political parties of different ideological convictions and political attitudes are on the everyday political agenda. While these ideas are central in the Western political order, they are unfamiliar in the Middle East, where responsible and representative governments are uncommon. For this reason, the United States has a profound interest in the survival of the relatively few living democracies. Indeed, U.S. Presidents have always conferred a special relevance to democratic values. On this regard, well noted is Bill Clinton's emphasis on them in his election campaign: "Democracy has always been our nation's perfecting impulse [...] democracy abroad also protects our own

³²⁰ RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel*, op. cit., pp. 46.

³²¹ REICH, *Reassessing the United States-Israel Special Relationship*, op. cit., pp. 66.

³²² Ivi, pp. 80.

concrete economic and security interest here at home³²³”.

Likewise, many American members of the Congress and others view the State of Israel as an extension of their own democratic ideology; in Reich’s words Israel “is a bastion of democracy in a sea of authoritarianism³²⁴.” The declared concern with fundamental values includes support for human rights, pluralism, women’s and minority rights, popular participation in government and the rejection of extremism, oppression and terrorism. These are important values that distinguish U.S. policy from that of most other states.

An additional role is played by the American apprehension for the weak against the strong, the so called “underdog” factor³²⁵. This image of Israel as an underdog is relative to the Arab states and it was originated during the first decades of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On June 24, 1992 the Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian described the U.S.-Israel bond in this term: “the U.S.-Israel relationship is based on the firmest of foundations...shared democratic ideals and values, profound and extensive ties from the grass roots to the official level; and an unshakable U.S. commitment to Israel’s security. U.S.-Israel relation remains active and vibrant in every sphere. This does not mean, and has never meant, that the U.S. and Israel see eye to eye on every issue...our difference should not obscure the fact that U.S. and Israel share fundamental values and that we remain unshakably omitted to Israel’s security and to preserving Israel’s qualitative edge over and likely combination of aggressors³²⁶.”

Another point which must be mentioned is that Americans have traditionally been sympathizing with people striving for nationhood and independence and with persecuted people in particular. As a natural consequence, this understanding allowed gentiles to look with favour on the ambitions of Jewish nationalism. The Zionist claims received a wide hearing due to the presence of millions of Jews in the USA, and encouraged greater receptivity thanks to their association with the Bible and its prophecies. Besides, to a significant extent the political struggles of the colonies were identified with the ancient Hebrews. The confirmation of the permeation of Biblical images in the American psyche was the fact that the first design for the official seal of the United States, portrayed the Jews crossing the Red Sea.³²⁷ The seal was

³²³ Bill CLINTON, *American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal*, in “Orbis”, vol. 37, n. 4, 1993, pp. 651.

³²⁴ REICH, *Securing the Covenant*, op. cit., pp. 20.

³²⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 35.

³²⁶ *Ivi*, pp. 9.

³²⁷ Ken SPIRO, *WorldPerfect. The Jewish impact on Civilization*, Simcha Press, United States, 2002, pp. 20.

encircled by a significant motto: “Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God” (Figure 5). Not to mention the unrestrained use of Biblical motifs and quotations in patriotic speeches and publications during the period of the struggle for independence. In Ken Spiro’s opinion, it is with the birth of American democracy that we have the next milestone in the process of the spread of Jewish ideas in civilization. For the first time in history, Jewish ethical ideas were legally enshrined into the laws of a non-Jewish nation. That country, the United States, would in turn become a powerful model to be emulated by numerous countries around the world.



Figure 5

In addition, the encouragement for the creation of a Jewish state derived from a guilt complex, but at the same time it served as a manner to compensate them for the terrible experience; a Jewish state would have provided a welcome place where they could take refuge the survivors to the Holocaust³²⁸.

3.5.1. *Two warriors and pioneers’ peoples*

Among the common elements, it has not to be overlooked the familiar status of immigrant nations. The American struggle to escape from persecutions and establish an independent national homeland found correspondence in a Jewish state that seemed to reaffirm those ideals through assimilation and integration of immigrants in distress. There is an analogous devotion to the values of pioneering: like the U.S. placed a premium on the pioneers who heeded the call to “go west”, similarly did Israel placing a value on the settlers who moved to the frontiers to develop those areas³²⁹. Russell denominated this parallel condition with the term “settler states”: both are countries formed by peoples who came to control their current lands after having displaced other populations; both states have been strongly shaped by a history of conflict and confrontation with the removed communities, and either have sought justifications for their behaviour from similar sources³³⁰.

The Americans as well as the Israelis have been inspired by the Old Testament, whose consecrated pages tell the story of the conflict between the ancient Hebrews and the Canaanites, the former inhabitants of the Promised Land. Respectively, Americans found the idea that they

³²⁸ Peter NOVICK, *The Holocaust in American Life*, New York, Mariner Books, 2000, pp. 278-280. It is an interesting reading about the American guilt complex and how the Holocaust is perceived in the American society.

³²⁹ REICH, *Securing the Covenant*, op. cit., pp. 48.

³³⁰ RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel*, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

were God's new Israel so attractive, because it helped legitimize their dislocation of the Native Americans.

In addition to the divine promise, the Americans brought other two explanations of their actions: the idea that they were expanding into “empty lands” and John Locke's related “fair use” doctrine, which claimed that unused property is a waste and an offense against nature. Under this conception, U.S. settlers thought they had the right to do it, not just because of the divine design, but also because they would have improved the land, cultivating it and building towns. In the same way they were convinced that the Jews belonged to the Holy Land, and the Holy Land belonged to the Jews³³¹. As written by the Prophet Isaiah, the Jewish population would flourish, only when they would come back to their homeland, and then the land will bloom as when God's grace brings water to a desert land³³². In line with this interpretation, Americans saw the returning fertility of the land under the farming of early Zionists. Oppositely to the viewpoint of the majority of populations, who saw the Jews as the eastern Europe's most deplorable people, the Americans recognize in their force to survive to Nazi savageries, to establish the first stable democracy in the Middle East, to launch a thriving economy in the desert, and to repeatedly defeat enemies, their own most cherished ideals.

A further common feeling for both the two countries concerned is the sense of mission in the world, which is one more time deduced by Hebrew history and thought. The writer Herman Melville expressed his view in this regard: "We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people, the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world³³³." That is to say that from the time of the Founding Fathers to the present day, U.S. settlers believed that God offered them a new land and made them great and rich. Their future prosperity depends on the attainment of their duties toward God or the sacred principles; ignoring these last ones would mean being liable to scourge.

Puritans, preachers, thinkers, and politicians in the United States, secular as well as religious, have seen the Americans as a chosen people, bound together more by a set of beliefs and a destiny than by ties of blood³³⁴. This mythic perception of the United States' nature and destiny is one of the most powerful and enduring elements in American culture and thought. As Russell explains, many modern Americans hold that they bear a revelation that is ultimately

³³¹ *Ibidem*.

³³² Isaiah 35:1-7

³³³ Paul JOHNSON, *A History of the American People*, New York, Harper Collins, 1997, pp. 279.

³³⁴ RUSSELL, *The New and the Old Israel*, op. cit., pp. 36.

not just for them but also for the entire world, as Israelis did. US citizens have often considered themselves God's new Israel. On this account, Americans presume it is both right and proper for one chosen people to support another. They do not feel annoyance when their country helps Israel, a people and a state often isolated and banished, even if this support would possibly create other problems or make the United States unpopular.

Furthermore, the United States' enactment of policies as protector of Israel and friend of the Jews is a way of legitimizing its own status as a nation called to a unique destiny by God. In any case, the United States' special function in the restoration of the Jews satisfied gentile Americans' aspirations about the course of history and confirmed their beliefs about their country's identity and mission.

3.6. *The impact of a common cultural heritage in international politics*

After an overview of the common elements that build such shared cultural heritage between the United States and the State of Israel, it is important to draw attention to the evidence that Judeo-Christian traditions have contributed to constitute a model of western governance. For instance, they have played a particular influential role in the American and in the Israelite political scene. With the term Judeo-Christian traditions is intended those religious and moral principles like liberty, equality, democracy and secularism, which embody the fount and foundations of modern political values and systems. The mention of the last principle, secularism, could rouse stir, since up to this point of the dissertation it has been told that the rise of secularism has caused the removal of religion from the political scene. This is truth, but what it has not been told yet, is that secularism is related to a series of lived ideals which are indebted to religious traditions and practices. There can be many traditions and varieties of secularism: Turkish Kemalism, French "laïcité", American Judeo-Christian, each of which represents a set of powerful political resolutions of the relation between religion and politics³³⁵. The most widespread is Christianity, to whom the modern secularism is indebted.

With reference to this topic, a peculiarly interesting thesis is presented by the studies of Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, in which she argues how the categories of religion and politics profoundly shape international affairs³³⁶. In her opinion, the secularist separation between

³³⁵ Elizabeth Shakman HURD, *Secularism and International Relations Theory*, in Jack SNYDER (edited by), *Religion and International Relations Theory*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 62-63.

³³⁶ *Ibidem*.

religion and politics is not fixed, it is rather socially and historically constructed. Her research focuses on the fact that the “normal politics” of today, in other words the Western political system, is grounded in a set of core values founding in Judeo-Christian traditions that cannot be reduced or denied. Defining the secularism as “a language in which moral and political questions are settled, legitimated and contested”, the American scholar identified two trajectories of secularism which have affected foreign affairs³³⁷. The first one is laicism that is correlated to a separationist narrative in which religion is seen as an impediment to modernization and development, and the second is Judeo-Christian secularism, which seems to have reanimate the dynamic of interstates relations. This last one is based on the assumption that certain moral and political values held in common by Christianity and Judaism are connected to particular Western traditions of law and governance³³⁸. In addition, these moral Judeo-Christian values, that have grounded western practices of secular democracy, together with distinct styles and traditions of politics have become quite powerful and influential to warrant critical scrutiny.

To better explained her thought, Hurd quotes Kant as a forerunner of secularism. In particular, from Kant’s thesis, which maintains that among all the available ecclesiastical creeds, Protestant Christianity is the closest to universal rational religion³³⁹, she deduces that Judeo-Christian values have bequeathed cultural and religious beliefs, historical customs, legal traditions to current domestic and international governing institutions. As a proof of this statement, the thought of the Protestant majority in early America was based on a particular understanding and practice of religion and democratic politics, as it has been demonstrated in the above paragraphs. The protestant influence in early America was evident in legislative prayer, state acknowledgment of Ester, Christmas, Thanksgiving and the Christian Sabbath, and the condemnation of blasphemy and atheism. Not only did the notion of prayer and worship based on the Bible and accepted by all Protestants has become a general establishment, but it also constituted an essential foundation of civilization. As reported by Richard John Neuhaus, “religion was the essential defining feature and moral basis of Western civilization³⁴⁰”.

³³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³³⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 76

³³⁹ William E. CONNOLLY, *Europe: A Minor Tradition*, in Talal ASAD, David SCOTT and Charles HIRSCHKIND (edited by), *Powers of the Secular Modern*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, pp. 80.

³⁴⁰ Richard John NEUHAUS, *Catholic Matters: Confusion, Controversy and the Splendour of the Truth*, New York, Basic Books, 2006, pp. 74-76.

To sum up, Hurd sustains that secularism is involved in the Judeo-Christian culture. Besides, she considers laicism and Judeo-Christian secularism vehicles through which shared interests and identities related to religion become powerful at global level³⁴¹. In other words, states that share a common cultural heritage, what kind it is (Turkish Kemalism, French laicism or American Judeo-Christian), share also interests, identities and political orders, favouring in so doing the making alliances with some countries, rather than others. For example, examining the U.S.-Israel alliance, it has to be remarked that geo-strategically speaking, Israel is a preferable strategic partner to Arab states. However, the membership to the Gulf Cooperation Council implies ideational factors, a shared history and a similar political profile. On the contrary, Israel shares much more ideals, values and political dynamics with the United States in comparison to the Middle East countries. The key to this overseas, but so close kinship has to be located in the particular religio-cultural heritage of Judeo-Christian tradition.

There are many other supporters of this theory. Among them is famous Ted Jelen, who in one of his books writes that Judeo-Christian derived forma of secular order are among the core values of Western civilization and that they have helped to constitute the common ground upon which Western democracy rests³⁴². In his opinion religion plays a fundamental role not outside but rather within secular politics, serving what he describes as “the basis of an ethical consensus without which popular government could not operate³⁴³.”

Worth noting is also Gedicks’ opinion, who states that prior to the Reformation the concepts of “religious” and “secular” did not exist as descriptions of fundamentally different aspects of society. Although there clearly was tension and conflict in the relation between church and state during this time, the state was not considered to be nonreligious³⁴⁴. Both church and state were part of the Christian foundation upon which medieval society was built.

To shortly summarize this part, it should be said that among many elements, what is really distinctive in this overseas friendship is the special position conferred to Israel by U.S. popular opinion and reaffirmed by successive administrations and Congresses. The awareness of the interest and of a pro-Israeli bias and emotional commitment is widespread and generally accepted, even by those who doubt the wisdom of it, thanks to the feeling of sharing a Judeo-

³⁴¹ HURD, *Secularism and International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

³⁴² Ted JELEN, *To Serve God and Mammon. Church-State Relations in American Politics*, Boulder CO, Westview Press, 2000, pp. 11.

³⁴³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴⁴ Frederick Mark GEDICKS, *The Religious, the Secular and the Antithetical*, in *Capital University Law Review*, Vol. 20, n. 1, 1991, pp. 116.

Christian cultural heritage. Some view Israel as the accomplishment of the promises of God to the Chosen people (the Jews), therefore the Covenants of God with the Jewish people endure until the Israelis of today. In turn the Israelis have always seen the USA as a landmark; some of them considered it even their homeland. Once the State of Israel was restored, they adopted the vision and the values of the American dream³⁴⁵. Thus, shared values, cultural affinities, a common ethical and religious heritage bind the United States and Israel together.

In 1978 the Vice President Walter Mondale noted: “So long as America believes in its own professed ideal, there will always be a special relationship... there is no country anywhere in the world which more accurately reflects our basic values, freedom of speech, of worship, of political participation, freedom of every individual to seek his or her pursuits. It is this truth more than any other, the values that we hold in common, which accounts for the special relationship.

3.7. *Religion's impact on Israeli foreign policy*

As partially seen in the previous chapter, the State of Israel is distinctive for its origins, population and ideology. The context in which the Jewish state was founded and continues to live as well as their religious culture significantly influence its foreign policy, which basically focuses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Arab neighbours and the interrelated threats of a possible penetration of their subordinate system.

Concerning the position of Israel as an international actor, some authors, like Harkabi, think that only with the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jews have returned to the world political scene³⁴⁶. Others, on the contrary believe that the Jewish political tradition in either the domestic and foreign affairs has been alive since the inception of Jewish people³⁴⁷. Furthermore, academic as Shmuel Sandler agrees with this view and adds that some of these Jewish political norms and institutions continue also nowadays to affect the internal and foreign policy of the country³⁴⁸. On this regard, particularly relevant is the work of Daniel J. Elazar, who in 1989 advanced the concept of the Jewish community as a political player. The concept is known as “the Jewish Political Tradition” and through it, Elazar offers an extremely relevant

³⁴⁵ GROSE, *Israel in the Mind of America*, op. cit., pp. 315-316.

³⁴⁶ Shmuel SANDLER, *Judaism and the state*, in Jeffrey HAYNES (edited by), *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, New York, Taylor & Francis Group, 2008, pp. 128.

³⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

paradigm for theoretical schools, as he tries to distance from the classical concept of the nation-state³⁴⁹.

Given that foreign policy is a reflection of domestic affairs³⁵⁰, it is therefore indispensable examining the internal politics of the state at issue. Studying the relationship between politics and religion, in the State of Israel is particularly challenging due to the “strange” relation between the secular aspect and the religious one that characterize its system. More specifically, the main question is in what realms the secular and religious dynamics operate in the State of Israel³⁵¹. On this subject, it has to be first of all noticed that in some traits it is the opposite of Western secular democracies: Israel did not follow the European tendency that has prevailed over a century in Europe and America, because it directly brought religion into the state even if in a complicated way. The merely name Jewish State should say it all. Since the birth and development of Zionism, Israel’s Jewishness was not incidental, rather its very purpose. Israel was conceived as a haven for Jews, a temple where to take shelter from the threats of marginalization, humiliation and persecution that have distinguished their life since 1948. In the proclamation of independence issued on May 15, 1948, the founders clearly declared Israel’s central intent to “open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations³⁵².”

But, what does Jewish State really mean and what does it imply in the political life of the country? There is an open discussion on the matter. However, the great majority of Jews agree with the notion that symbols as well as the public policies of the state should reflect its Jewish nature and should serve the interests of the Jewish people, not only those who are citizens of Israel but also Jews throughout the world³⁵³. It is evident that Judaism plays a special role in Israeli society and as stated by Kenneth Wald, it is right to affirm that it has achieved

³⁴⁹ Daniel J. ELAZAR and Stuart A. COHEN, *The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses*, in “Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs”, available at <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/jewpoltraduses.htm>, last access on 20 May 2016.

³⁵⁰ See PHILPOTT, *Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion*, op. cit., pp. 508.

³⁵¹ Guy BEN-PORAT, *Religion and Secularism in Israel: between politics and sub-politics*, in Jeffrey HAYNES (edited by), *Religion and Politics in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*, New York, Taylor & Francis Group, 2010, pp. 74.

³⁵² Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, available at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx>, last access on 20 May 2016.

³⁵³ Charles S. LIEBMAN and Asher COHEN, *Synagogue and State*, in “Harvard International Review”, 1998, Vol.20, n. 2, pp.70.

the status of a de facto established religion³⁵⁴. These can be seen in some privileged issues for Jews. For instance, Israeli citizenship is available also to non-Jews, yet Jews have favourable immigration policy and many social benefits. Alternatively, the Israeli political system explicitly bans anti-Zionist parties access to political elections. Moreover, Judaism's influence on the internal dimension can be found in the prevailing language spoken (Hebrew), its weekly and annual calendar, and many of its state ceremonies, symbols and traditions³⁵⁵.

At the same time, the State of Israel is similar to other Western democratic states in promising “freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture,” the ensuring of “complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion,” and finally committing to “safeguard the Holy Places of all religions³⁵⁶.” The modern Israeli state grants public funding for the religious needs of non-Jewish communities, allows them to choose their legally-mandated day of rest, leaves questions of family law to the religious courts of each religious tradition, and assigns money for educational institutions under Christian and Moslem control³⁵⁷. Electoral regulations deny legal recognition to political movements that advocate racial or religious incitement against minorities. So in Israel rules neither a theocracy, in which religion and states are strictly linked, nor a firm separation between public and private sphere as in the U.S. It is a parliamentary democracy, like most European democratic states.

Nevertheless, not always the Jewish and the Israeli interests coincide; in some occasions the secular and religious aspect disagree one another. It may be that religious entities clash with secularizing trends to protect their preferred religiously oriented way of life³⁵⁸ or vice versa. The highest or lowest, depending on opinions, point of the religious-secular divide in Israel was the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 by a young student. Rabin's murder was followed by a long hate campaign in which his government's decision to offer territory for peace was described by some Israelis as a fundamental betrayal of Jewish values³⁵⁹. This blood episode seemed to worsen future secular-religion relations.

³⁵⁴ Kenneth WALD, *The Religious Dimension of Israeli Political Life*, American Political Science Association, Boston, 1998, pp. 3.

³⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁵⁶ Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, available at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx>, last access on 20 May 2016.

³⁵⁷ WALD, *The Religious Dimension*, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

³⁵⁸ HAYNES, *An Introduction to International Relations*, op. cit., pp. 261-262.

³⁵⁹ BEN-PORAT, *Religion and Secularism in Israel*, op. cit., pp. 76.

Relating to the role of religion in domestic and foreign affairs of the State of Israel, many of the aspects of the contemporary Israeli political system has to be traced in the Torah and the ancient biblical history of Jews; to better comprehend them, a brief excursus on the current political system of the Israel's States is necessary.

Its current system is a parliamentary democracy, in which the executive branch is in the hand of the Cabinet. This last one consists of the Prime Minister, who is also the head of the government and the leader of the party that has won the elections, and its ministers (a complete list of the Prime Ministers of Israel can be consulted in Table 4 at the end of this dissertation). The legislative power is exercised by the Knesset that is composed of 120 members elected every 4 years by the population. Lastly, the judiciary is independent on the executive and legislative branch and it includes secular and religious courts for the different religions present in the state. There is also the figure of the Head of State, but it has a merely representative function.

An uncommon element in comparison to other secular and democratic Western states, is that Israel's political system is not based on a written constitution, it is rather regulated by the so called Basic Laws, which principally deal with government organization and with human right. They were originally meant to be the draft for a future Israeli constitution, as declared in the Israel's Declaration of Independence, but the Constituent Assembly failed in reaching an agreement by October 1, 1948. The delay in the drawing up the Israeli constitution was generated basically by the clash between a secular constitution and the *halacha* (the Jewish religious law)³⁶⁰. Although the State of Israel miss a written constitution, its current constitutional framework is composed by three principal documents: the Declaration of Independence, the Legislation of Constitutional Import³⁶¹ and the eleven Basic Laws³⁶².

Returning back on the impact of religion on the Israeli political system, it is obvious that the core and inspiring component of Jews' living has been the Torah, which in both written (Five books of Moses) and oral (Talmud) forms functions as a constitution. What is very fascinating, is the way Jews faced their dispersion all over the world. Exactly that manner defines still today Israeli internal and external system. In substance, they built a structure that

³⁶⁰ Jewish Virtual Library, *Israel Government & Politics*, available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/Constitution.html>, last access on 7 May 2016.

³⁶¹ It includes the Law of Return and the Covenant between the State of Israel and the World Zionist Organization.

³⁶² Daniel J. ELAZAR, *The Constitution of the State of Israel*, in Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, available at <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles/const-intro-93.htm>, last access on 7 May 2016.

although the communities around the world were autonomous, they had at the same time a central code, like a constitution, that unified them and allowed them to pursue a common ethical code³⁶³. Put differently, they developed a combination of both a centralised authority of judicial decision-making and local interpretation.

Consequently, when in 1948 the State of Israel was established, it was the political tradition that they had developed during these years of diaspora that shaped the Israeli political culture. In addition, the power sharing in the contemporary state of Israel has a long political tradition supporting diffusion of power of over two millennia both in the Diaspora and in the biblical ancient Israel³⁶⁴. Only later, during the mid-twentieth century, the Israeli political system partially experienced the influence of the European states. Nevertheless, the current political order of Israel it is a combination of the Jewish political tradition, that have emerged over two millennia, and the more modern form of government inspired by European countries. This union is evident in the current definition of Israel as a “Jewish and Democratic State”.

To continue the study of religious aspects, the covenant, as in the case of the United States of America, has constituted the basis for the political regime in Israel³⁶⁵; it has represented the justification of the “consent theory”, a form of constitution building³⁶⁶. Over time the notion of the restraint of power has evolved into one of the key principle of Western democracies, but that concept finds its roots in the ancient biblical idea of Covenant, where the omnipotent God takes it upon himself not to exercise all His powers and the Israelites take it upon themselves to live according to His norms³⁶⁷.

Another characterizing factor of the current Israel is the decentralisation of the power, as explained above, which according to Sandler, it has to be traced in the ancient establishment of Priesthood in the desert³⁶⁸. Moreover, Stuart Cohen described that the separation of powers among the crowns of Kingdom, Priesthood, and Torah was formally recognised with the emergence of the Rabbinic era, that is around 100 BC (Before Christ)³⁶⁹. This diffused system has distinguished the Jewish polity until today.

³⁶³ SANDLER, *Judaism and the state*, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

³⁶⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 131.

³⁶⁵ Daniel J. ELAZAR, *Covenant and Polity in Biblical Israel*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1998, pp. 22.

³⁶⁶ SANDLER, *Judaism and the state*, op. cit., pp. 129.

³⁶⁷ ELAZAR, *Covenant and Polity*, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

³⁶⁸ SANDLER, *Judaism and the state*, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

³⁶⁹ ELAZAR and COHEN, *The Jewish Political Tradition*, op. cit., available at <http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/jewpoltraduses.htm>, last access on 20 May 2016.

It cannot be contradicted that the features of the current Israeli foreign policy are rooted in the Biblical Israel. The desire of state building goes back to the ancient Jewish political culture, as well as the evident relation to external threats has to be traced in many episodes narrated in the Holy Scripture, in particular in the follow verses: “Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples; a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen. Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the unsuspecting army. Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army³⁷⁰.” Put differently, the foundation of a state with central institutions has been deemed necessary for collecting strength and face external threats. Moreover, in the Jewish history examples of imperial domestic institutions and Empire building are missing, since these kinds of solutions have rarely dovetailed with the Torah’s teachings and Israeli political tradition³⁷¹.

The approach to international affairs of the different Israeli’s administrations are the proof of the things just state. Since the establishment of the state in 1948, Israeli foreign policy decision making has tended to be highly personalized, politicized, reactive, ad hoc, and unsystematic³⁷². The decision process was dominated³⁷² by a small elite, the early leaders of the state, whose faith, opinions and strategic decisions have conducted the Israeli foreign policy until today. In particular, the Prime Minister has always played the key role in the Israeli government; as more than any other member of the high policy elite, he defines the orientation of foreign affairs³⁷³. The first Israeli Prime Minister was David Ben Gurion (1948-1953, 1955-1963), who endorsed the supremacy of this position in security and foreign affairs. He emphasized on the fact that one person should have the direct control of these fields, possibly sacrificing his control on other areas, such as economics. Ben Gurion enjoyed a wide degree of independence as no other prime minister in the history of Israel has ever experienced. He was followed by Levi Eshkol (Prime Minister from 1963-1968), who used to discuss with a lot of people in and out of his cabinet before coming to a decision, but at the end he always maintained the power in his hands, until the outbreak of the Six-Days-War.

³⁷⁰ Judges 8:12

³⁷¹ SANDLER, *Judaism and the state*, op. cit., pp. 135.

³⁷² Lewis BROWNSTEIN, *Decision making in Israeli foreign policy: an unplanned process*, in “Political Science Quarterly”, Vol. 92, No. 2, 1977, pp. 259.

³⁷³ Ivi, pp.259-261.

The main objective of the Prime Ministers after Ben-Gurion, has been that to preserve their freedom of action in foreign and defence affairs³⁷⁴. Certainly the specific behaviour and the style varied from one Prime Minister to another depending on the personality, stature and thought of the person.

With respect to Israel foreign policy, the thesis of Michael Walzer is very interesting. The author identified four examples of Jewish universalism, that is to say four cases in which the international dynamics of today find an equivalent in Jewish biblical episodes³⁷⁵. For example, according to Walzer, the reproach of the prophet Amos to the neighbouring nations because of their failure to keep international agreements and their responsibility, can be seen in today's political scenario as an accusation of war crimes. In other words, the prophet is appealing for the adoption of what we might define today as international law³⁷⁶. The second example introduced in the book "Universalism and Jewish Values" is similarly to the first one and it has to be found in the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah relating to the end of days, which reflect the current vision and desire of a peaceful world, based upon a pluralistic international system. The third example concerns the Talmudic³⁷⁷ statement that expresses "the law of the Kingdom is law". This statement has to do with Jews' relations to their host state. In Walzer's opinion, the Jewish legal system recognizes the law of the whole state in this declaration and at the same time it constitutes an example of how international law has been adapted to the needs of a Diaspora. Finally, the fourth case is provided by the Seven Noahide Code. The academic argues that the acceptance by the non-Jewish nations of the normative system that was given to the world, even prior to the Jews' receiving of the Torah, facilitates co-existence between Jews and gentiles³⁷⁸. Sandler points out the importance of it in few but significant words, "It offers a modus vivendi for non-Jews living in a Jewish state, as well as for Jews living in a non-Jewish state³⁷⁹." The same Seven Noahide Laws have influenced U.S. political order in which Jews and gentiles co-exist completely respecting one another as in no other countries. The first two examples derive from the Bible and were expressed by the prophets, while the latter two emerge from rabbinic literature. Despite their different origins, the common denominator of the cases

³⁷⁴ BROWNSTEIN, *Decision making in Israeli foreign policy*, op. cit., pp. 262-263.

³⁷⁵ Michael WALZER, *Universalism and Jewish Values*, New York, Carnegie Council, 2001, pp. 10.

³⁷⁶ *Ivi*, pp. 25.

³⁷⁷ The Talmud represents the Jewish oral law

³⁷⁸ SANDLER, *Judaism and the state*, op. cit., pp. 136.

³⁷⁹ *Ibidem*.

just illustrated is that they reflect the support of the normative Jewish attitude to international order.

To sum up, when the loosely confederated tribal structure evolved into a monarchy the Israelites did not construct a lasting centralised polity. It was the mixture of central authority and competing institutions that evolved during Jewish history, including the Jewish Community during the Diaspora³⁸⁰. Significantly, despite its secular character, the contemporary Jewish state has in effect preserved important religious elements from the European political tradition, challenging the secularization paradigm's predictions that forecast the demise of religion and its irrelevance for public life³⁸¹. The tendency to control state's foreign policy by a small group of person, has persisted over the years. As a result of this attitude, Israel's foreign policy seemed to be fix and remote due to the stability of image arrangements and minimal circulations of opinions in the decision-making elite. Starting from the October war, there has been an increased willingness on the part of some Israeli policy makers, especially Allon and Peres, to utilize some "external" experts in the decision process of foreign affairs. In spite of these changes, the basic nature of the Israeli decision-making system remains what the early leaders of the state made it, offering no prospect for a future transformation. Moreover, the foreign policy of Israel has been characterized by a strong resistance to anticipation, initiation and evaluation; it has been defined as almost entirely reactive in nature, without long or medium term plans.

3.7.1. *Religion in the Israeli political scene*

On the Israeli internal and external political sphere, religious issue commonly appears with high levels of intensity. Although religious interests have always been powerful, in the last decades they were not so much as to dominate policymaking, because of the presence of many religious and doctrines of Judaism. This declaration need to be explained.

In the past years, religion was fundamental to instil in Jews all over the world a feeling of peoplehood, it has been the glue that held the Jewish people together during the exile and also nowadays it constitutes the element that links dispersed Jews around the globe. However, it has to be noted that Judaism's nature as ethnic religion permits a wide range of doctrinal postures. For what concerns the religion of the Jewish population, recent statistics have recorded a total population of about 8 million, among them 74,9% are Jews, 20,8 % Arabs, and

³⁸⁰ SANDLER, *Judaism and the state*, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

³⁸¹ BEN-PORAT, *Religion and Secularism in Israel*, op. cit., pp. 80.

the remaining 4, 4 % are identified as non-Arabs, Christians and Baha'i³⁸². The number of stories, laws, moral precepts, parts of theology, social criticism collected in the Hebrew Bible has given rise over the centuries to many different doctrines of the same religion. These varieties can be simplified in two main groups: Ultra-Orthodox, who constitute a growing minority and Modern Orthodox, whose ancestors were the Religious Zionists³⁸³.

Ultra-Orthodox or also known with the name *haredim*, constitutes the 10% of religious Jews of today. They use to curtail relations with other communities and they strictly observe the standards of their religion, refusing whichever compromise with secular ideas and society. They basically differ from the Modern Orthodox because they charged Zionism of heresy, having established a Jewish state without grounds in the Torah. From their point of view, Israel can be considered a really "Jewish state" only when the government enforces the 624 Biblical prescriptions that together constitute the body of *halacha* or Jewish law³⁸⁴. But the Zionist founders of Israel always dismissed the theocratic option expressly³⁸⁵.

Also the Modern Orthodox community professes its faithfulness to the commandments consecrated in the *halacha*, but differently from the Ultra-Orthodox, they have accepted many elements of the contemporary world, without opposition. They seek to follow Jewish law participating fully in society and not isolating in virtual ghettos. According to Peres, the Modern Orthodox community has provided the core constituency for territorial nationalism³⁸⁶. The same community often shares with their secular counterparts a lifestyle that incorporates respect for secular education, commitment to material comfort, and openness to Western traditions in different fields. As a result, the Jew of Israel differ among themselves on religion and politics.

Among the Jews, only approximately one-fifth consider themselves "religious", intending that they are fully or almost fully observant of Jewish law. Those who remain preserve many of the habits and rituals of the Jewish religion and firmly believe that Israel should remain a Zionist or Jewish state. Only a little percentage (10%) of Israeli Jew do not follow any religious custom and do not identify with other Jews. These last one are defined

³⁸² Data available at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/newpop.html, last access on 20 May 2016.

³⁸³ Isra SHARKANSKY, *Religion and Politics in Israel and Jerusalem*, in "Judaism", Vol. 44, n. 3, 1995, pp. 328.

³⁸⁴ WALD, *The Religious Dimension*, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

³⁸⁵ Because they were steeped in European socialism and known for their irreligion if not anti-religious sentiments.

³⁸⁶ WALD, *The Religious Dimension*, op. cit., pp. 10.

post-Zionists and the core of their thoughts is that Israel should be a state for all its citizens³⁸⁷. They basically object the Jewishness of Israel, arguing that its Jewish nature is incongruous with its existence as a liberal-democratic state and they propose to detach with the Jewish past and the Jewish people.

The presence of numerous religious groups within Judaism is obviously reflected also in the political realm of the state. The Israeli scenario of political parties can be synthetically divided in two: on the one hand secularist parties, like Post-Zionists and on the other hand religious parties, as Ultra-Orthodox and Modern Orthodox³⁸⁸. The principal divergence is that the first ones are contrary to the Orthodox religious establishment, while the second ones struggle to enlarge the field of religious legislation in the country.

Even if Post-Zionists represent a small part of the population, they occupy key positions within Israel's cultural life; they are newspaper columnists, academics, writers, and artists. Their principal aim is that of diminishing the presence of Judaism and Jewishness within Israeli life. What is more, is that their opinion has gained the sympathy of other peoples, especially American Jews because of their resentment towards the attempts of some religious parties to deny legitimacy to non-Orthodox religious movements.

Although the religious right has increased their efforts to enact religious laws, in the past two decades it has occurred a declining both by secular and religious parties to the idea of the Jewish state. This fact tendency is reflected in the decline of Israel's civil religion.

3.8. *Civil religion in Israel*

Not only do people talk of a civil religion in America, but they do it also in Israel. The first academics to talk about an Israeli civil religion were Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya. According to their definition, with the term civil religion is intended “any visionary government that would develop a highly articulated system of symbols (rituals, myths, special terminology, shrines, heroic figures, etc.) which defines the boundaries and the meaning of the moral community, legitimates the vision, socializes the population to the values it embodies, and mobilizes them to the efforts required for its realization³⁸⁹”.

In their book “Civil religion in Israel”, they describe how religious symbols were used

³⁸⁷ LIEBMAN and COHEN, *Synagogue and State*, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

³⁸⁸ WALD, *The Religious Dimension*, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

³⁸⁹ Charles LIEBMAN and Eliezer DON-YEHIYA, *The Dilemma of Reconciling Traditional Culture and Political Needs: Civil Religion in Israel*, in “Comparative Politics”, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1983, pp. 53-54.

to construct a system of myths and rituals which served to legitimize the social order and to integrate and mobilize the Jewish population in pursuit of collective goals³⁹⁰. The focal point of their thesis is that Israel, like other Western societies, has experienced a decline in nationalist sentiments³⁹¹. The emphasis on Israel as a Jewish state has been followed by a crisis within the religious dimension itself. As Liebman and Don-Yehiya write, the Jewish culture prospered in the period preceding the establishment of the state and in its early years. However, the authors identify three past periods in which civil religions dominated: Zionist-Socialism, Statism, and over the last 30 years a “new civil religion”. They highlight how during the different periods of time the mass media, the educational system, the army, and the rhetoric of political leaders have been used as instruments of civil religious socialization.

The Israeli civil religions have been a response to changing population characteristics, changing political pressures, and changing sources of support and hostility in the international arena. The authors suggest that Israel needs a civil religion because it is a nation concerned with societal goals and shared conceptions of right and wrong-in words’ authors a “visionary state”- , and not a service one³⁹², that simply satisfies or mediates the competing demands of citizens. In 1948 Israel believed it was a nation like all other nations. The revival of religion in Israel occurred after 1967 Six-Day-War and Yom Kippur Wars, emphasizing that Israel, like its Biblical ancestors, is truly a “people that dwells alone”. So in line with this reasoning, the Holocaust has become a primary symbol of the “beleaguered nation³⁹³.”

About the new civil religion, they argue that it combines old and new elements but, unlike its predecessors, it misses a coherent ideological formulation. The principal dilemma of modern Jewish nationalism appears to be the “loyalty blend”: how much of the Judaism, Jewishness, and “the Jewish people” concept can be combined with the secular, modern, democratic nation-state concept. Furthermore, also the oversimplification of slogans and symbols constitutes another troublesome aspect, as they result inappropriate to the issues facing Israel internationally and at home. Therefore, the new civil religion is an attempt to reconcile the identities of “Israeli” versus “Jew” by relying more on tradition and on Jewishness than in the past³⁹⁴.

³⁹⁰ Charles LIEBMAN and Eliezer DON-YEHIYA, *Civil religion in Israel. Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State*, Berkeley, California University Press, 1983, pp. 215.

³⁹¹ LIEBMAN and DON-YEHIYA, *The Dilemma of Reconciling Traditional Culture*, op. cit., p. 56.

³⁹² Charles LIEBMAN and Eliezer DON-YEHIYA, *Civil religion in Israel. Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State*, Berkeley, California University Press, 1983, pp. 11.

³⁹³ *Ivi*, pp. 57.

³⁹⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 125.

The two authors suggest that in order to reconcile tradition to the needs of a political state and the beliefs and behavioural example of its nonreligious majority, traditional religious symbols had to be reformulated through a process of altering some of their forms and reinterpreting some of their meanings.

However, it is doubtful whether the new civil religion has penetrated the psyche of Israeli society and affected perceptions of reality to such an extent that it is responsible to any significant way for the internal decision-making (for example Israeli invasion of Lebanon) or other military and foreign policies. On the whole, it is important to recall that the vast majority of Israelis still feel ties to Judaism, the Jewish tradition, and the Jewish people. This middle segment of the population, neither religious nor militantly secular, constitutes a silent majority lacking both leadership and a well-articulated ideology.

In the political election of 1996 the religious parties such as Shas and National Religious Party increased their representation from 16 to 23 seats. In that occasion it was estimated that at least 150,000 non-religious voters, out of a total of three million voters, gave their ballots to the religious parties³⁹⁵. This event was the consequence of a political campaign that focused on the need for more Judaism and more Jewishness in Israeli society. There were no promises or threats of religious legislation but rather a promise to strengthen the Jewish climate of the country. The two religious parties that improved their own position most dramatically stressed the fact that non-religious as well as religious Jews supported them. The centrality of Jewishness is unlikely to diminish any further, even if in the most recent political elections, the winner was the Likud, a major center-right and secular political party.

The analysis of the relationship between religion and politics has never been so complicated as in Judaism and it is important to observe that social and cultural processes have an impact firstly on the relations between citizens and politicians and then it has a side-effect on international relations³⁹⁶. This is typical of the political culture in Israel.

3.9. Religion's impact on political parties: two examples

At domestic and pragmatic level, religion impacts on the formation of political parties and their programs. Two real and illustrative cases of this kind of influence are the American Neoconservatism and the Israeli Neo-Revisionism. The ideology of this last one has been

³⁹⁵ LIEBMAN and COHEN, *Synagogue and State*, op. cit., pp. 5.

³⁹⁶ Guy BEN-PORAT and Shlomo MIZRAHI, *Political Culture, Alternative Politics and Foreign Policy: The case of Israel*, in "Policy Sciences", vol. 38, 2005, pp. 177.

embodied by the Israeli right wing political party Likud, which in Hebrew means “The Consolidation” and which during these last decades has viewed a strong power reinforcement. Up to the end of 1970 Likud represented the opposition. Since 1977, when the Likud won the elections and Menachem Begin became the Prime Minister, the right wing party has dominated the Israeli political scenario, except some intervals of Labour (1992-1996; 1999-2001) and Kadima (2006-2008) rule.

In the same years of Likud’s ascension, a group of intellectuals³⁹⁷ of the American democratic party began to conceive ideas and strategies very different from those of their democratic colleagues and they definitively broke with the democratic party. They found many more common elements with the Republican Party and the Conservatism movement, in fact in 1980 they supported the candidature of the right wing republican Ronald Reagan. These intellectuals shared principally a dislike of communism and a disdain for the counterculture of the 1960s, particularly its political radicalism and its animus against authority, custom, and tradition. Thus they represented the Neoconservatives. Their political movement, the Neoconservatism, reached the peak during the republican administration of Ronald Reagan and with the following presidency of George W. Bush Jr. it assumed an even more important role. Many American and Israeli scholars³⁹⁸ notice some common points in their underlying ideology of Neo-Revisionism and Neoconservatism, although the two political parties were born and developed in completely different governmental and geographic surroundings. It has been particularly noticed some common strategies and foreign policy concepts that will be here below presented.

As reaffirmed many times in this essay, since the establishment of the State of Israel, the two countries have cultivated a special friendship, which has been restored, after difficult periods, thanks to the recent American Neoconservative leadership. In the last decades, the American policy appeared to be less pro-Israel, especially when at the White House there were a democratic administration, while in Tel Aviv a right wing cabinet administered the nation. More than a strategic explanation to justify the singularity of this alliance, it has been stressed the moral and the religious elements that bind the two states. In the United States, Christian

³⁹⁷ Among them Irving Kristol, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Norman Podhoretz, Nathan Glazer, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Richard Pipes and Jeane Kirkpatrick.

³⁹⁸ See Ilan PELEG, Paul SCHAM, *Israeli Neo-Revisionism and American Neoconservatism: the Unexplored Parallels*, in “The Middle East Journal”, 2007; Guy BEN-PORAT, *Netanyahu’s Second Coming: a Neoconservative Policy Paradigm*, in “Israel Studies”, 2005; Ilan PELEG, *The Zionist right and Constructivist Realism: Ideological Persistence and Tactical Readjustment*, in “Israel Studies”, 2005.

orthodox groups, according to which the Bible attests Israel's presence as God's will, are still influential. Therefore, Israel is the sole country in the Middle East to share the same American and Western values. These considerations have been highlighted both by Neoconservatives and Neo-revisionists.

3.9.1. *Neoconservatism*

Neoconservatism initially born as an intellectual movement and only after it became a political one, finding themselves particularly in harmony with Reagan's principles and objectives to confer to the U.S. a different role at global level and making the country the symbol of the "moral struggle".

At domestic level, the liberal model, the old conservatism of the internationalist establishment of the republican party, the isolationist point of view and finally the fundamentalism evangelical orientation are the main features that distinguish the Neoconservative political movement from the classical American conservatism. It has to be noted that the movement is not characterized by a unique and absolute political position that can be considered neoconservative. Despite this fact, the political movement has had an important impact on the American society and its adherents have been considered the "men who are changing America's politics"³⁹⁹. One of the distinctive traits of Neoconservatism is its consideration of religion as an essential fundament of a moral society. They agree with religious conservatives in believing the current crisis the main cause of the declining influence of religion in people's lives. In their conceptualization, religion can act as social cement, holding families, communities, and countries together. But religion principles can also be seen in their foreign policy approach. The idea that the human being and the politics are defined by the incessant struggle between good and evil derives clearly from religion. The American civilization, which is a positive symbol, would be always in conflict with negative forces, which are represented by the Islamic fundamentalism today and by the enemy countries.

Moreover, in their opinion the state's foreign policy should have been "informed with a clearer moral purpose, based on the understanding that its moral goals and its fundamental national interests were always in harmony"⁴⁰⁰. In line with this reasoning, a new internal setting

³⁹⁹ Peter STEINFELS, *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics*, New York, Simon&Schuster, 1979, pp. 35.

⁴⁰⁰ William KRISTOL and Robert KAGAN, *Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy*, in "Foreign Affairs", Vol. 75, n. 4, 1996, pp. 19.

of moral standards should have been linked to a new moralization of the foreign policy, since they think that the American principles, held in the Declaration of Independence, are universal virtues. These unchallengeable truths have to be protected by the attacks of the multicultural relativism which is spread globally. For this reason, they find insufficient the defence of Western principles at domestic level, and essential that the United States continues to be the exceptional example to follow also at international level. This kind of thought has been affected by Richard Neibuhr, who hold that realism without a necessary presence of moral dimension would have brought a corrupt policy; in his words, “ Americans needed the love perfectionism of Jesus and the cunning realism of Machiavelli⁴⁰¹”. After the win elections of George Bush Jr. in 2000 and particularly after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Neoconservatives started again to affect considerably the foreign politics of the White House and they have been influential specially in the foreign policy decisions of the last republican administration, changing the relationship between the United States and other states.

Particularly relevant for the development of this political movement were its fervent activities in the media. For instance, “The Commentary” was one their periodical, through which Neoconservatives spread their ideas and it became one of their strong points. Furthermore, numerous neoconservatives and Israelites academics politically closed to Likud wrote in this review. The strong interest toward the State of Israel constitutes one the basic aspect of the American political movement. It has been frequently emphasized the Jewish character of neoconservative origins, which would justify the substantial attention of most representatives with regard to Israel⁴⁰². Indeed, among the majority of the first intellectuals, who gave rise to the movement were Hebrews.

Among the supporters of a connection between Neoconservatism and Jews, it has to be mentioned Buchanan, who states that the political line of Neoconservatives is influenced by Jewish conservatism. Another important advocate of this thesis is Podhoretz, who emphasizes on the intense tie between the two subjects, due to the sharing of democratic elements. In relation to the State of Israel, since 1970s there was a spread of neoconservative publications regarding the American support to it. During the 1980s and 1990s Neoconservatism became

⁴⁰¹ Francesco Brunello ZANITTI, *Progetti di Egeonia. Neoconservatori statunitensi e neorevisionisti israeliani a confronto*, Parma, Edizioni all'insegna del Velto, 2011, pp. 46. Personal translation.

⁴⁰² On this issue particularly important is the work of Murray FRIEDMAN, *The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewishness Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005, in which the author focus on the connections between Jews and conservatism.

the most important pro-Israel and pro-Zionist political movement at global level⁴⁰³. They highlighted in particular the difficult condition of Israel, identifying it as the only State that protects the human rights in the Middle East and hence it deserved the United States' protection. Frequently they inveighed against the Western press that criticized the Israelite actions as incomprehensibly aggressive.

A continuous pessimistic vision, the feeling of persistent threats, fears and perceptions of imminent enemy's attacks were in some way shared also by some intellectuals close to the Israelite Neo-revisionism. An example is an article of David Bar-Illan who talked of the same fears presented in the neoconservative articles. The most neoconservative administration was that of Bush Jr., whose approach to the Israel-Palestinian issue, those few times he approached to, has been influenced by these principles.

3.9.2. *Neo-revisionism*

From the other side of the ocean/globe, the singular ideology and the exclusive Israeli conservative political movement is represented by Neo-revisionism. The first thing to notice is that contrary to the American neoconservatism, it has a distinctive and clear political philosophy to face daily internal and external problems. Neo-revisionism can be considered the heir of the political ideology of Jabotinsky, the revisionism, which was based on the inevitable struggle between Israelites and Palestinians, the right of the Jew people to live on the whole Eretz' Israel and the inclination to use the force in comparison to diplomacy in the international relations. The political party that has embraced partially Jabotinsky's ideology is Likud⁴⁰⁴. A Fundamental date for the right wing Israeli movement was the 1977, when Likud won the political elections and Menachem Begin led the country. This political movement represents the most radical form of the Israeli nationalism and it has to be said that their ideology emerged from the particular condition in which the State of Israel was at the end of 1960s.

One the main principles of Neo-revisionism was that of the "Hadar" that means dignity. This concept implied the recognition of the Jewish honour, the respect that Jews all over the world had never had, and in response to this behaviour Neo-revisionists proposed a new Jew, proud of his condition as Israelite and no more victim of persecution. A key function in this ideology is represented by the Holocaust. Indeed, Likud's philosophy was imbued with a strong

⁴⁰³ ZANITTI, *Progetti di Egemonia*, op. cit., pp. 23-26. Personal translation.

⁴⁰⁴ At the beginning it was Herut, established in 1948 by Menachem Begin, but later it merged into Likud.

sense of the world as evil, dark, negative and ready to attack Israel and all Jews at any time. The continuous perception of an imminent danger and threat characterized the Israeli right wing political movement as did in the American neoconservative ideology. However, in the Jewish case this feeling derives from the experience of the Holocaust, which influenced the political party in a radical way.

Another characterizing factor of the Israeli movement is the role played by religion. As already observed in the American neoconservatism, also in the Likud's philosophy there is a tendency to consider the battles between Jews and others as a struggle between good and evil. This is particular evident in the Israeli policy between 1977 and 1984.

Furthermore, deeply rooted in the ideas of the revisionist movement is the feeling of historical connection between the ancient biblical State and the modern Jewish one. In this sense Bible has often been used as primary source to explain and legitimize state's actions. In Likud opinion, modern Jews have to lay claim to the whole Eretz Israel, because no other peoples have this kind of right, which Ilan Peleg calls "metahistorical right"⁴⁰⁵. The Jewish modern society has always identified themselves with the ancient biblical reign. These beliefs have been emphasized by Likud and its leaders and have guided the administration of Begin and its successors like Yitzhak Shamir and Benjamin Netanyahu. Indeed, Ben Gurion never resorted to the Holy Scripture with the aim of supporting his political choices, while Begin trusted in the Bible and its teachings very often, particularly to defend the control of Israel on the whole Palestine, especially in the case of the colonization policies in the territories occupied in the West Bank. In addition, the Israeli political movement uses biblical images to identify enemies. This happened in the 1980s when it was used the image of the nation of Amalek referring to the Arabs. The Amalek's Reign was the rival to the ancient Reign of Israel and according to God's order it had to be destroyed.

One of the first thing that Likud did was that of greatly highlighting the historical connections between the two reigns, but this relationship would be stronger than a mere presence in Palestine. On the basis of what written in the Bible, no other people should have the right to live and administer those territories. Such a vision has consequently brought to expansive policies. Religion has been a natural ally of Neo-revisionism and Likud. Also the more orthodox religious leaders have constituted an important backing to the consolidation of the party during the years. Clearly all these principles inspired also the foreign policy strategies

⁴⁰⁵ Ilan PELEG, *The Zionist right and Constructivist Realism: Ideological Persistence and Tactical Readjustment*, in "Israel Studies", 2005, pp. 130.

of Likud, principally based on the protection of the Jewish state and its citizens. Religious elements legitimize the affairs at international level too.

The Israeli Neo-revisionist movement is also famous for the use of a series of images and myths in order to assure the support of the public opinion and at the same time to offer a considerable encouragement to their philosophy. One of the most famous myth was that of “a Land without a People for a People without Land”.

Concerning the joint principles between the American neoconservative thought and the Israeli Neo-revisionism, particularly significant were the considerations of Benjamin Netanyahu, who was elected in 1996 and who is still in office⁴⁰⁶. Differently from the precedent right wing administrations, Netanyahu does not see the world outside in such a pessimistic way and he specially has a very positive consideration of the United States. Moreover, the current Prime Minister has had a close collaboration with the American neoconservative and from the 1980s, his political movement has adopted a position deeply pro-religious. In Netanyahu’s plan, a liberal economic policy and the favouring of Jewish immigration in Israel will strengthen the international position of the State of Israel, conceiving also more safety. Like neoconservative, he gives importance to the democratic factor, considering it the requisite to establish good relations with the neighbouring states. As a consequence, in line with his American colleagues, Netanyahu is a great supporter of the “exportation” of the democracy in the Middle East. The most meaningful period for both the political parties was since 2003 when the American foreign policy was influenced by neoconservative while in Israel Netanyahu was nominated Ministry of Finance during the cabinet of Ariel Sharon. After 9/11 Israel foreign policy is more aggressive

To sum up, both Neoconservatives and Neo-revisionists have emphasized the link between religion and politics. In neoconservative’s opinion, the point was not only the connection between American and Israeli interests, but also their spiritual connections. The two political movements share concerns as the democracy, the vision of the struggle between good and evil, the nationalist factor, the idea of greatness of their corresponding country. Two political tendencies, that in spite of the different political and social environments from which they emerged, they are based on common and similar ideologies and political practices based on a similar Weltanschauung.

⁴⁰⁶ Benjamin NETANYAHU, *A Place Among the Nations: Israel and the World*, New York, Bantam Books, 1993.

Very often the positions adopted by both parties have been embraced by ultra-religious forces, which have seen increased their influence in the decision-making of domestic and international policy in both countries. Although the religious element was already important earlier, during these last decades it has become even more fundamental in characterizing both political parties. In these way Neoconservatism and Neo-revisionism were promoter of common elements and strategies influencing the foreign policy of their countries.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusive remarks of this research cannot be better outlined in the following words: “It is up to us to recognize that we can’t lead a world that we don’t understand, and that we can’t understand the world if we fail to comprehend and honor the central role that religion plays in the lives of billions of people⁴⁰⁷”. This is what John F. Kerry, the current Secretary of State of U.S., said in occasion of a speech at Rice University, on 26th April 2016 and this represents exactly one of the main results of this work.

After a deep analysis of the religious elements that constitute a common cultural heritage between the United States and the State of Israel and after having explained in what ways they can shape the foreign policy of both states, it can be therefore deduced that the two countries are bond by a special relationship. Values such as democracy, the spirit of self-sacrifice and of struggle for nationhood as well as the common origins as “settler states”, find ideological roots in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, which is the Holy Scripture for Jews. As explained in the third chapter, these principles have shaped the formation and evolution of both the U.S. and Israeli society, building a shared Judeo-Christian cultural heritage. Exactly this last one has played a particular influential role in the making of foreign policy of both states, contributing in a decisive way to build a commonality of *forma mentis* and therefore to develop an unbreakable bond.

Many observers and academics consider the relationship between the two states as “a special relationship”, principally due to strategic factors and the strong influence of an Israel lobby in America. In reality, in explaining it, it is often omitted the deeper and powerful religious component that crucially contributes to convey singularity to the U.S.-Israel friendship.

As highlighted in some points of this work, the partnership developed over the years has experienced also moments of crisis and tension on some issues. Nevertheless, the strong kinship seems to endure to all the potential disagreements, emerging every time stronger than ever, thanks to the common religious heritage that confers an added value to the alliance here examined.

This does not mean that only religious similarities can explain strong and long standing alliances, while strategic and military interests are insignificant. Following this reasoning, the

⁴⁰⁷ Carol MORELLO, *Kerry explains why religion is relevant to U.S. foreign policy*, in “The Washington Post”, 26 April 2016. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kerry-explains-why-religion-can-play-a-role-in-us-foreign-policy/2016/04/26/b86eacf2-f6dd-4f6d-b1f4-5c16005c7261_story.html, last access on 6 June 2016.

Arab states of the Middle East, that share a common Islamic ideology, should compose an unshakable coalition, but many historical events have demonstrated the opposite. As in the case study examined in this dissertation, also strategic and military concerns occupy a relevant position in determining a state's foreign policy; this fact cannot be denied. However, common religious principles may constitute the added value in the orientation of a country's foreign relations, influencing in such a way the international order.

Concerning the concrete case study here examined, one more conclusive statement can be made. Rather than the powerful influence played by a pressure group, it is American gentiles' opinion that holds strong power in guiding the foreign policy of the U.S; their religious creed and principles, their opinions and ideologies will continue to influence the international affairs of their country, as they did in the past.

Finally, what this work attempts to demonstrate is that contrary to the secularization theory, there has been a widespread global resurgence of religion. Thus, it is time to realize that international relations cannot be understood without taking into account religious elements, as they would otherwise be missing an important component of society and the world politics in general, as normally happens in the explanation of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

A question about the future of the friendship between the United State and the State of Israel may rise. Will this strong alliance survive also in the following years with the same energy and attachment it has demonstrated in the past? Might the American position toward Israel change?

Many has been the challenges that this alliance had to face. For instance, the American disagreement on the continuous Israeli colonization policies in the West Bank, principally because they clash with the democratic principles that both countries deeply share. In more recent time, the Iran nuclear deal has represented a hard moment of tension between Washington and Jerusalem, with Netanyahu feeling dangerously threatened by the American decision to cripple sanctions to Iran in turn of the restriction of its sensitive nuclear activities. However, also in this occasion the two states have found a reasonable solution and the relationship appears as strong as ever. A possible near moment of instability could be the next United States presidential elections in November, even if many things can be deduced by the preceding Presidents. No matter to which political party the President in office belonged, the relationship with Israel has never been questioned; some American Presidents have done it explicitly, others indirectly. However, the amount of remarkable web of connections and the special bond between the two nations has always been recognized in the American political scene.

To sum up, this work suggests that similar ideologies and principles based on religion play a relevant role in the making of international alliances and, like in the case study here examined, they may be the distinctive trait of the relationship between two states or more. Furthermore, as attempted to demonstrate analysing the U.S.-Israel relationship, religion has always influenced international politics in direct or indirect ways, but only in these last decades it has become harder to ignore it.

Table 3

Presidents of the United States				
				
N.	Name	Term	Vice-President	Party
1	George Washington	1789-1797	John Adams	None
2	John Adams	1797-1801	Thomas Jefferson	Federalist
3	Thomas Jefferson	1801-1809	Aaron Burr (1801-05) George Clinton (1805-09)	Democratic-Republican
4	James Madison	1809-1817	George Clinton (1809-12) (a) Elbridge Gerry (1813-14) (a)	Democratic-Republican
5	James Monroe	1817-1825	Daniel D. Tompkins	Democratic-Republican
6	John Quincy Adams	1825-1829	John C. Calhoun	National-Republican
7	Andrew Jackson	1829-1837	John C. Calhoun (1829-32) (b) Martin Van Buren (1833-37)	Democrat
8	Martin Van Buren	1837-1841	Richard M. Johnson	Democrat
9	William H. Harrison	1841 (a)	John Tyler	Whig
10	John Tyler	1841-1845	<i>vacant</i>	Whig
11	James K. Polk	1845-1849	George M. Dallas	Democrat
12	Zachary Taylor	1849-1850 (a)	Millard Fillmore	Whig
13	Millard Fillmore	1850-1853	<i>vacant</i>	Whig
14	Franklin Pierce	1853-1857	William R.D. King	Democrat
15	James Buchanan	1857-1861	John C. Breckinridge	Democrat
16	Abraham Lincoln	1861-1865 (a)	Hannibal Hamlin (1861-65) Andrew Johnson (1865)	Republican
17	Andrew Johnson	1865-1869	<i>vacant</i>	Republican
18	Ulysses S. Grant	1869-1877	Schuyler Colfax (1869-73) Henry Wilson (1873-75)(a)	Republican
19	Rutherford B. Hayes	1877-1881	William A. Wheeler	Republican
20	James A. Garfield	1881 (a)	Chester A. Arthur	Republican
21	Chester A. Arthur	1881-1885	<i>vacant</i>	Republican
22	Grover Cleveland	1885-1889	Thomas A. Hendricks (1885)(a)	Democrat
23	Benjamin Harrison	1889-1893	Levi P. Morton	Republican
24	Grover Cleveland	1893-1897	Adlai E. Stevenson	Democrat

25	William McKinley	1897-1901 (a)	Garret A. Hobart (1897-99) Theodore Roosevelt (1901)	Republican
26	Theodore Roosevelt	1901-1909	<i>vacant</i> (1901-05) Charles W. Fairbanks (1905-09)	Republican
27	William Howard Taft	1909-1913	James S. Sherman (1909-12) (a)	Republican
28	Woodrow Wilson	1913-1921	Thomas R. Marshall	Democrat
29	Warren G. Harding	1921-1923 (a)	Calvin Coolidge	Republican
30	Calvin Coolidge	1923-1929	<i>vacant</i> (1923-25) Charles G. Dawes (1925-29)	Republican
31	Herbert Hoover	1929-1933	Charles Curtis	Republican
32	Franklin D. Roosevelt	1933-1945 (a)	John N. Garner (1933-41) Henry A. Wallace (1941-45) Harry S. Truman (1945)	Democrat
33	Harry S Truman	1945-1953	<i>vacant</i> (1945-49) Alben W. Barkley (1949-53)	Democrat
34	Dwight D. Eisenhower	1953-1961	Richard M. Nixon	Republican
35	John F. Kennedy	1961-1963 (a)	Lyndon B. Johnson	Democrat
36	Lyndon B. Johnson	1963-1969	<i>vacant</i> (1963-65) Hubert H. Humphrey (1965-69)	Democrat
37	Richard M. Nixon	1969-1974 (c)	Spiro T. Agnew (1969-73) Gerald R. Ford (1973-74) (d)	Republican
38	Gerald R. Ford	1974-1977	Nelson A. Rockefeller (d)	Republican
39	James Earl Carter	1977-1981	Walter Mondale	Democrat
40	Ronald Reagan	1981-1989	George Bush	Republican
41	George Bush	1989-1993	J. Danforth Quayle	Republican
42	William J. Clinton	1993-2001	Albert Gore Jr.	Democrat
43	George W. Bush	2001-2009	Dick Cheney	Republican
44	Barack H. Obama	2009-	Joe Biden	Democrat

Table 4

Prime Ministers of Israel					
					
N.	Name (Birth–Death)	Political Party	Term of Office		Elected (Knesset)
1	David Ben-Gurion גוריון-בן גורון (1886–1973)	Mapai	14 May 1948	10 March 1949	—
			10 March 1949	1 November 1950	
			1 November 1950	8 October 1951	1949 (1st)
			8 October 1951	24 December 1952	1951 (2nd)
			24 December 1952	26 January 1954	
26 January 1954	29 June 1955				
2	Moshe Sharett שרת משה (1894–1965)	Mapai	29 June 1955	3 November 1955	
			3 November 1955	7 January 1958	1955 (3rd)
(1)	David Ben-Gurion גוריון-בן גורון (1886–1973)	Mapai	7 January 1958	17 December 1959	
			17 December 1959	2 November 1961	1959 (4th)
			2 November 1961	26 June 1963	
			26 June 1963	22 December 1964	1961 (5th)
3	Levi Eshkol אשכול לוי (1895–1969)	Mapai	22 December 1964	12 January 1966	
			12 January 1966	26 February 1969 ^[2]	
—	Yigal Allon (<i>acting</i>) אלון יגאל (1918–1980)	Alignment <i>Labor</i>	26 February 1969 ^[2]	17 March 1969	1965 (6th)
4	Golda Meir מאיר גולדה (1898–1978)	Alignment <i>Labor</i>	17 March 1969	15 December 1969	
			15 December 1969	10 March 1974	1969 (7th)
			10 March 1974	3 June 1974	
5	Yitzhak Rabin רבינו יצחק (1922–1995)	Alignment <i>Labor</i>	3 June 1974	20 June 1977	1973 (8th)

6	Menachem Begin בִּגִּין מְנַחֵם (1913–1992)	Likud	20 June 1977	5 August 1981	1977 (9th)	
			5 August 1981	10 October 1983	1981 (10th)	
7	Yitzhak Shamir יִצְחָק שָׁמִיר (1915–2012)	Likud	10 October 1983	13 September 1984	1981 (10th)	
8	Shimon Peres פֶּרֶס שִׁמְעוֹן (1923–)	Alignment <i>Labor</i>	13 September 1984 ^[4]	20 October 1986	1984 (11th)	
(7)	Yitzhak Shamir יִצְחָק שָׁמִיר (1915–2012)	Likud	20 October 1986 ^[4]	22 December 1988	1984 (11th)	
			22 December 1988	11 June 1990	1988 (12th)	
			11 June 1990	13 July 1992	1988 (12th)	
(5)	Yitzhak Rabin רַבִּין יִצְחָק (1922–1995)	Labor	13 July 1992	4 November 1995 ^[5]	1992 (13th)	
(8)	Shimon Peres פֶּרֶס שִׁמְעוֹן (1923–)	Labor	(<i>acting, 4 Nov. 1995</i>) 22 November 1995	18 June 1996	1992 (13th)	
9	Benjamin Netanyahu נְתַנְיָהוּ בֶּנֶטְנַיִן (1949–)	Likud	18 June 1996	6 July 1999	1996	14th
10	Ehud Barak בָּרַק אֶהוּד (1942–)	One Israel <i>Labor</i>	6 July 1999	7 March 2001	1999	15th
11	Ariel Sharon אֶרֶל שָׂרׁוֹן (1928–2014)	Likud	7 March 2001	28 February 2003	2001	2003 (16th)
			28 February 2003	21 November 2005		
		Kadima	21 November 2005	(<i>4 Jan. 2006</i>) 14 April 2006		
12	Ehud Olmert אֶהוּד אֶלְמֶרֶט (1945–)	Kadima	(<i>acting, 4 Jan. 2006</i>) 14 April 2006	4 May 2006	2003 (16th)	
			4 May 2006	31 March 2009	2006 (17th)	
(9)	Benjamin Netanyahu נְתַנְיָהוּ בֶּנֶטְנַיִן (1949–)	Likud	31 March 2009	18 March 2013	2009 (18th)	
			18 March 2013	6 May 2015	2013 (19th)	
			6 May 2015	<i>Incumbent</i>	2015 (20th)	

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