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US FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A Critical Appraisal

Dr. Qadar Bakhsh Baloch*

Abstract

It is a hard fact of international trade that the energy resources of the Middle East are providing the lynchpin or the lifeline to the global economy especially of the Western World. It may be emphasized that the oil addiction is the main reason that has prompted frequent involvements and interventions of the former and current empires and super powers including France, Britain, the U.S.A. and the former Soviet Union from the beginning of the 20th century. The significant players driving the American foreign policy in the Middle East since then have been the multi national oil corporations, Israel, and defence industrial complex. American's unquestioned and uncalled for involvement in the Middle East, supporting Israel's occupation of Palestinian and Arab land has produced an endless string of crises, heavily militarized the region, helped change the United States from an object of admiration to an object of hostility in the region, & provoking terrorist acts that have killed and injured thousands of innocent from both sides. In short the oil-addiction has turned into blood-addiction and the whole region is subjected to unprecedented War & Violence. The main contention of this paper is that so long as the present situation is allowed to persist, robbers of one kind or another would keep coming to this region and would keep its cities and street drenched in blood. There are two possibilities that may bring this tragic situation to an early end. One such possibility is that these Western powers are allowed to pump-out the oil and the oil fields are virtually dried-out. The other possibility lies in building up the defense potentials of the Middle Eastern Countries especially by evolving a joint-defense amongst the oil-rich Muslim countries. One may hope that the current guerilla war would prove a preamble to the same eventuality. It may be observed that the youth of this region is particularly anxious to change the monarchical system and introduce nationalist kind of governments that are capable of preserving and protecting their natural resources and spend them for the well-being of their own people. It may be underlined that Western atrocities committed under the game of "War on terror" are directed against the emergence of such nationalist trends in the Muslim World.

* Dr. Qadar Bakhsh Baloch, Associate Professor, Qurtuba University of Science & IT, Peshawar, Pakistan. Email: qbuzdar@yahoo.com

Introduction

It is a hard fact of international trade that the energy resources of the Middle East are providing the lynchpin or the lifeline to the global economy especially of the Western World. It may be emphasized that the oil addiction is the main reason that has prompted frequent involvement and interventions of the former and current empires and super powers including France, Britain, the U.S.A. and the former Soviet Union from the beginning of the 20th century. During interwar period, America was relatively more popular and respected in the Middle East than European powers - colonial masters of almost all of the Middle East region¹. Other than the missionaries work, oil dominant corporate relationship between the US and the Middle East were marked with the signing of the Red Line Agreement² in 1928, followed by the Anglo-American Petroleum Agreement³ signed in 1944. These agreements reflected American interest to control the oil region and prevent the emergence of a powerful regional rival⁴. American President Franklin D. Roosevelt is on record telling British Ambassador in 1944, “*Persian oil is yours. We share the oil of Iraq and Kuwait. As for Saudi Arabian oil, it’s ours*”.⁵ Seeing American quest for Arabian oil throughout the history, Willium Blum quotes Noam Chomsky in his famous book, *Rogue State*;

*It has been a leading, driving doctrine of US foreign policy since 1940s that the vast and unparalleled energy resources of the Gulf region will be effectively dominated by the United States and its clients, and crucially, that no independent, indigenous force will be permitted to have substantial influence on the administration of oil production and price.*⁶

Felt betrayed by the Western powers in fulfillment of their promises in reward of Arab revolt against the Ottoman Caliphate, the Arabs looked towards America as new foreign partner who could be trusted.

Resultantly, in late 1940s, the United States had succeeded in replacing Britain as the dominant player in the region⁷ and consolidated its control over Western Hemisphere resources. However, very soon Arabs found themselves deceived and humiliated by the unconditional support of USA and Europeans alike for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Using UN as tool to devise partition plan, West manipulated to realize as was conspired in Belfour Declaration against the inherent rights of the Palestinians and the Arabs sew seeds of discord and hostility which are constantly growing since then. The immoral proclamation of the independence of the state of Israel was promptly recognized by the United States as its president Harry Truman bluntly declared, “ *I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism, and I don’t have hundreds of thousands of Arabs in my constituents* ”.⁸ Since then the United States succeeded Great Britain as the dominant outside power in the Middle East and was deemed a custodian of Arabian oil and of all illegal and immoral acts of the Zionist state of Israel.

Other significant players are the multi national corporations who are involved in the sale of oil, military and hi-tech equipment; derive huge benefits from the ongoing state of hostility in the region. Massive tax dollars flow to American corporations from aid to many countries in the Middle East, of which the annual aid to Israel is only one part. Israel receives by far the most aid, and 75% of all the aid must be spent with American corporations.⁹ One does not have to review the whole record to establish the interest and the commitment of the U.S. government on oil issues. The study conducted in 1975 by the Senate Committee on the role of Multinational Corporations on Foreign Relations concluded that the companies were instruments of U.S. foreign policy; and the interests of

the companies were basically identical with the U. S. national interests.¹⁰
The study identified the U. S. foreign policy objectives¹¹:

- The United States provides a steady supply of oil to Europe and Japan at reasonable prices for economic recovery and sustained economic growth;
- The stable governments be maintained in pro-Western oil producing countries;
- The American-based firms are to be a dominant force in world oil trade.

Many Middle Eastern countries spend considerable money over and above the subsidies they receive from the US on American weapons and military technology. The recently announced US military deal of \$30 billions for Israel, 13 \$ for Egypt, worth \$20bn arms deal with Saudi Arabia and \$3.5 billions for Qatar over the next decade clearly marks the US priorities in the Middle East. Reportedly package for Israel would include advanced weaponry, missile guidance systems, upgraded fighter jets and naval ships to maintain Israeli military advantage over Arab States.¹² According to a senior Israeli government source; the United States has also agreed to sell the Jewish state the new generation F-35 fighter jet, advanced bombs and laser-guided missiles as part of the defense package.¹³ According to Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “as of 2005 direct U.S. economic and military assistance to Israel amounted to nearly \$154 billion”¹⁴, and Israel “receives about \$3 billion in direct foreign assistance each year, which is about one-sixth of America’s foreign aid budget”¹⁵ that amounts to more than \$ 500 per year for each Israeli.¹⁶ Above all, Israel is the only recipient of U.S. aid that does not

have¹⁷ to account for how the aid is spent. Such special treatment with lavish economic support to Israel far ahead than the widely talked Marshal Plan that provided \$17 billions to entire war torn Western Europe to help its post war economic recovery.

Mearsheimer and Stephen go further that since 1982, the United States has vetoed 32 United Nations Security Council resolutions that were critical of Israel, a number greater than the combined total of vetoes cast by all the other Security Council members together. However, other sources have reported that since 1972, the US has forty four time vetoed UN Security Council resolutions aimed at protecting the innocent Palestinians from Israeli state sponsored terrorism.¹⁸ Few examples in this regard are:

- The U.S. vetoed resolution suggesting to dispatch unarmed human rights monitors to the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- Expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied areas is widely recognized as one of the major obstacles in Israeli-Palestinian peace. US instead of supporting UN resolution calling for withdrawal from the settlements at Palestinian land, has contributed directly or indirectly in reinforcing the permanence of these illegal settlement by providing additional aid to Israel to construct highways linking these settlements and to provide additional security. Indeed such acts of the US are in direct violation of UN Security Council resolution 465, which "calls upon all states not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories."

- US went all out in revoking the U.N. resolution No. 3379 of November 10, 1975 that equated Zionism with racism.¹⁹

Today Israel is the strongest military power in the Middle East. Its conventional forces are far superior to those of its neighbors and it is the only state in the region with nuclear arsenals. American policy in Middle East in last sixty years demonstrates that it has always been dictated by a population of 5.2 million American Jews to a nation of over 296 million. Jews play a major role in American politics. All this creates an atmosphere where many Americans, including decision-makers, have long been favorably disposed toward Israel. American Jews helped Israel to cement a special relationship with the US that meant enormous foreign aid, unprecedented diplomatic protection and an American blind eye to many Israeli actions. Israel provides deterrence; it provides testing for new American technology and facilitates weapons and hi-tech sales all over the world. However, Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003 invasion of Baghdad, Lebanon War 2006, and the living state of Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank testifies that Israel was becoming a strategic burden and complicating America's relations with the Arab World. In fact, Israel is a liability in the war on terror and the broader effort to deal with rogue states. In response to the long record of crimes committed against Jews in Europe and else where, the creation of Israel might be justified but has no justification to let loose the Israel to bring similar crimes against an innocent third party: the Palestinians. On no grounds of moral justification, Israel be given a license to indulge in a genocide of innocent Palestinians. The terrorist issue that is so close to the American hearts is closely related to the Israel's state terrorism as cause and effect and not the other way around.

The main American goal in the Middle East is control of Arab oil, and Israel is a unique ally that stands by the US in achieving it. Eliminate the oil and leave unquestioned support to Israel- the American presence in the Middle East automatically ends; the resentment and hatred to America ends. American policy makers, under the false impression that access and control of Middle East oil require a heavy U.S. presence in the region, strived to conspire, place or keep loyal, client regimes in power. Therefore, in order to maintain control and power to influence over the region, the West has manipulated to place corrupt leaders into positions, kept population at bay and supported the overthrow of those that were not presumed as favorable. The United States, therefore, participated directly, or indirectly, in many wars in the Middle East to prevent any player to challenge his role. William Blum, former employee at the U.S. State Department, where he resigned in 1967 over the Vietnam War is worth quoting here:

*The Eisenhower Doctrine stated that the United States is "prepared to use armed forces to assist" any Middle Eastern country "requesting assistance against armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism". The English translation of this was that no one would be allowed to dominate, or have exclusive influence over, the Middle East and its oil fields except the United States, and that anyone who tried would be, by definition "communist".*²⁰

The starkest examples to this effect are: toppling of Musadaq's elected government in Iran in 1953 and restoration of repressive Shah to power, hiring king Hussain of Jordan with the provisions of dollars and prostitutes for intelligence services ²¹, helping Saddam rise to power in Iraq and then assisting him in war against Iran. In the war over 1 million people died due to the U.S. policy of arming both sides, helping to

prolong the war, assisting Iraq in developing and using chemical and biological weapons.

Once, Saddam followed an independent course and overstepped his bounds, was declared an outlaw justified for regime change on any pretext including the invasion of Iraq. Now America with all its brutal political and military might is trying to setup puppet government that will be loyal to U.S. interests in Iraq and plans are being made to redesign the map of the Middle East that may enable Israel to cherish its long outstanding dream of Greater Israel. Barring very few, each American step taken in the Middle East politics seemed to be taken from the notorious Protocols of the Elders of Zion or from the oil interest.

Though the top American declared strategic objectives pursued during the Cold War and posts Cold War were: oil, communism, and the Islamic fundamentalism, however, Israel has been kept at the center stage throughout. American's unquestioned and uncalled for involvement in the Middle East, supporting Israel's occupation of Palestinian and Arab land at all cost has produced an endless string of crises, helped change the United States from an object of admiration to an object of hostility in the region, provoking terrorist acts that have killed and injured thousands of innocent from both sides. United Nations including Security Council has passed more than 65 resolution criticizing/ condemning Israel on its acts committed in violation of international law and against the international peace. The US's support for the Israel in the face of these crimes discredits the US's claim to be "an honest broker of peace" and contributes to the instability of US Middle East relations. Until the US stops lending its weight to Israel through biased attitude, a truly just peace will remain elusive. However, law of retribution teaches one

lesson that the invading U.S. and Israeli forces have planted more than enough seeds to guarantee a bountiful harvest of sorrow in future.

OUTCOMES OF U.S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Death, Destruction and Enormous Humanitarian Toll: Middle East is the only part of the earth that has witnessed a continued feature of death and destruction with out any let off. Irony of the fate is that this death and destruction is mostly not because of any fault of the Arabian people rather ploy of foreign powers and particularly by the West under the leadership of the USA. Since the plantation of Israel, the region has suffered endless atrocities including hundreds of thousands of casualties, displacements, arrests, economic sanctions and scores of human rights violations. The region that was once chosen for the fight against communism has now been turned as battle ground for War against Muslim resurgents and harvesting a heavy humanitarian toll. Iraq was still not recovered from the 1991 war and sanctions imposed thereafter, during which it received one of the heaviest bombing in world history, destroying much of the country's civilian infrastructure that it was again subjected to another onslaught in 2003. Israel has been let loose by the West to spread death and destruction whenever and wherever feel necessary and the last Lebanon offensive (July 2006) can be quoted as a cold blooded slaughter with the connivance of USA.

Last five years of invasion and occupation of Iraq cannot only be termed as the genocide; it is rather a challenge to the collective conscious of the international community. In Iraq after failing to recover alleged Weapons of mass destruction, USA and its cronies have truly unleashed the Mass Destruction through new-generation cluster munitions, collateral damages, target killing, massacring and terrorizing

the innocent Iraqi population crying for their inherent right of self determination and sovereignty. Iraq is subjected to vast and indiscriminate destruction of human life not for the fault of their own but because of oil wealth they possessed and geographic location as a neighbor of Israel. One of the US-Iraqi study group concluded in October 2006 that as many as “655,000 Iraqis have died since hostilities began in Iraq in March 2003.”²² According to the researchers, the overall rate of mortality in Iraq since March 2003 is 13.3 death per 1000 persons per year as compared to 5.5 deaths per 1000 persons per year prior to March 2003.²³ Whereas, one of the latest survey reports indicates nearly to 1.5 millions death toll over & above the 4 million refugees and internally displaced persons.²⁴ History of US foreign policy is marred with such examples producing death, causing destruction and devastation and taking heavy humanitarian tolls in projecting its power or adding economic prosperity to American people. Arundhati Roy, a renowned Indian author, in one of article describes the death and destruction as result of American sponsored actions:

*“... millions killed in Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia, the 17,500 killed when Israel — backed by the US — invaded Lebanon in 1982, the 200,000 Iraqis killed in Operation Desert Storm, the thousands of Palestinians who have died fighting Israel's occupation of the West Bank. And the millions who died, in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Haiti, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, at the hands of all the terrorists, dictators and genocidists whom the American government supported, trained, bankrolled and supplied with arms. And this is far from being a comprehensive list.”*²⁵

These horrors of Iraq occupation are not ending rather they are creating more terrorists ready to sacrifice their own lives for the

restoration of their sovereignty and take revenge from the invaders. Shehzad Tanweer, one of the alleged London bombers plot of 7 July 2005, in a video aired by Aljazeera in 2006 stated:

*For the non-Muslims in Britain, you may wonder what you have done to deserve this... Your government has openly supported the genocide of more than 150,000 innocent Muslims in Fallujah... What you have witnessed now is only the beginning of a series of attacks, which will intensify and continue to until you pull all your troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq... You will never experience peace until our children in Palestine, our mothers and sisters in Kashmir, and our brothers in Afghanistan and Iraq feel peace.*²⁶

Militarization of the Region

Being a crucial region of the cold War and Post Cold War international power politics, Middle East has become one of the most militarized regions in the world. Majority of American arms sales destined here, yielding enormous profits for weapons manufacturers and resulting to the further militarization of the already overly militarized region. This is why the United States has constantly ignored the UN Security Council resolution 687, which calls for region-wide disarmament efforts, something that may damage U.S. military industries – already faced with declining demand in Western countries. Weapons and their delivery systems are America's number one export to the Middle East, totaling nearly one-third of all exports to the region.²⁷ Billions of dollars worth military aid every year flows from the US to the Middle East on the pretext of maintaining regional stability and bringing peace between Israel and its neighbors as it did in the past under the guise of morally high sounding words:

- World War I was defended as "the war to end all wars."

- The Vietnam War was rationalized as a mean to bring the country "a generation of peace."
- The MX missile, a dangerous first-strike weapon now banned by international treaty, was labeled "the Peacekeeper."
- The Reagan Administration's massive nuclear arms buildup was justified as providing "peace through strength."

The U.S. tries to justify its over \$3 billion annual military aid to Israel on the grounds of protecting that country from its hostile neighbors, though 80 percent of the arms to these Arab states are supplied by the U.S. herself. These rationales are similar to the maxim in George Orwell's famous novel, 1984 that "war is peace."²⁸ The United States arms sale to the Middle East since the Gulf War than all other arms exporters combined, totals more than \$90 billion, excluding the recent announced military aid of \$30 billions for Israel, 10 \$ for Egypt, \$20billions arms deal with Saudi Arabia and \$3.5 billions for Qatar.²⁹

*"It is hard to see exactly what the administration is trying to achieve by this sale. First, it seems incendiary to the point of irresponsibility to dump another \$50 billion in arms into a region as full of conflict and instability as the Middle East. There is the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is the Iraq war. There is the simmering rivalry between the Sunni states and Iran. There is the basic shakiness of governments in many of the states of the region, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt."*³⁰

The sales are to create an alliance to counter the emerging Iranian threat, however, it fails to appreciate that the Iranian threat is Hamas, Hezbollah militias and not the Iranian mainland nor the Iranian Air Force. There's a mismatch between what the United States is doing

and the Iranian threat to Saudi Arabia. The sales also indicate continuation of traditional U.S. policy of supporting authoritarian governments in the Arab world, which President Bush once said the U.S. was abandoning. However, there is no denying the fact that the United States is not the only arms exporters who is to be blamed exclusively, rather Britain and France, among many others, are also very active in substantial arms sales to Arab states, particularly those of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Middle East has historically been the largest arms market in the developing world. According to the U.S. Congressional Research Service:

“In 1998-2001, it accounted for 45.8% of the total value of all developing nations arms transfer agreements (about \$40.4 billion in current dollars), ranking it first, ahead of Asia which was second with about 39% of these agreements. However, during 2002-2005, the Asia region accounted for 48.4% of all such agreements (about \$43.6 billion in current dollars), placing it first in arms agreements with the developing world. The Middle East region ranked second with \$35.1 billion in agreements or 39%. The United States dominated arms transfer agreements with the Near East during the 1998-2001 period with 64.8% of their total value (\$26.2 billion in current dollars). France was second during these years with 14.6% (\$5.9 billion in current dollars). Recently, from 2002-2005, the United States accounted for 50.2% of arms agreements with this region (\$17.6 billion in current dollars), while the United Kingdom accounted for 14% of the region's agreements (\$4.9 billion in current dollars). Russia accounted for 12.2% of the region's agreements in the most recent period (\$4.3 billion in current dollars).”³¹

To view glimpses of the magnitude of the arms sales pouring into the region the figures of year 2006 and estimates of 2007 and 2008 are tabulated below as an eye opener that how big arms stock piling is being done in the Middle East.

Table- 1: Actual and Proposed U.S. Defense Cooperation in the Region.

Table 1: Foreign Military Sales & Construction Sales Agreements (\$ in thousands)					
FY 2006 ACTUAL				ESTIMATED	
	DEFENSE	ART/SERV	CONSTR/DESIGN	2007	2008
Bahrain	93,606	0	93,606	22,000	335,000
Egypt	358,776	13,943	372,719	560,900	830,000
Israel	1,050,799	28,927	1,079,726	857,000	700,000
Jordan	114,825	98,822	213,647	321,000	40,000
Kuwait	791,400	0	791,400	86,200	863,000
Lebanon	1,684	0	1,684	0	0
Oman	18,002	0	18,002	21,900	17,095
Qatar	0	0	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia	796,116	0	796,116	1,509,533	2,403,000
UAE	769,125	0	769,125	805,000	975,000
Yemen	4,123	0		0	0

Source: U.S. Defense Security and Cooperation Agency.³²

On one hand U.S. policy opposes any effort by Arabs states to produce Weapons of Mass Destruction, while on the other it tolerates Israel's possession of sizable nuclear arsenal and deploys own nukes in the Arabian waters. Further more, U.S. is the leading country that rejects

proposal for the creation of Middle East -a nuclear-free zone region. Though US has been maintaining its military presence in Arabian Peninsula in one form or the other since 1950s, however, it overtly succeeded in stationing its military components and occupied almost permanent military / naval bases in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen, Kuwait, in the eastern Mediterranean and Arabian Sea, since the Gulf War 1991. The ongoing U.S. military presence has created an increasing amount of resentment and indeed, the stronger the U.S. military role has become in the region, the less safe U.S. interests have become.

By now it is obvious even to the puppet rulers that U.S. did not wage the Gulf War or Invaded Iraq in 2003, for upholding of international law, self-determination, human rights, or democracy rather to protect U.S. control of Arabian oil, annihilation of Iraq's war machine to strengthen Israel's hegemony in the region, facilitate her pursuit to Greater Israel, and establish a permanent strategic toehold in the region. Just after the fall of Baghdad, in late April 2003, Israeli ambassador in Washington called for invasion of Iran and Syria as overthrow of Saddam was not enough for them. In his words, America "has to follow through. We still have great threats of that magnitude coming from Syria, coming from Iran."³³ American tacit and unconditional support to Israeli invasion of Lebanon in July 2006 doesn't provide any strategic or moral justification, while the rest of the World harshly criticized Israeli naked aggression. Washington's inhuman quest for oil and reflexive support for Israel has not only undermined the US image world over, rather has fueled anti American sentiments through out the Arab and the Islamic world as well. Muslims of the Middle East and elsewhere see US influence as a major root cause of their miseries and problems in the

Middle East, and this feeling has led to a rise in militancy, war and violence, acts of suicidal attacks, and anti-west sentiments, anti-US in particular. Certainly, the stage has reached to a level where, America's warships, cruise missiles, F-16 and nuclear arsenals have failed to deter the sons of the soil who stood to the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan. These determined people who are equipped with the weapon of cold anger, hatred for aggressors, and infused with the spirit of Jihad against invaders seem to be moving forward in liberating their homeland from foreign occupiers in near future.

Non-Democratization of the Arab World: Meanwhile, the Bush administration's post-invasion insistence on democracy promotion in the Middle East as the true motive for war rings hollow in the Arab world. The tiredness of the assertion that America "supports democracy" in the Middle East is increasingly transparent. It was proved false 50 years ago, when US supported and funded Shah of Iran to prevent nationalization of Iranian oil, and it is proving false today when US is backing un-elected dictators in Arab World or in Pakistan. American principles of democracy and human rights are being traded off for economic gains. Results of the election held with in last few years in Palestine, Lebanon and else where in the Middle East, has brought Hamas, Hezb Ullah and alike. This has created fear in the minds of US foreign policy makers that if honest popular elections were held throughout the Middle East, the people in most countries would elect religious minded leaders hostile to the United States. Therefore, elections bringing Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, or Mahmood Ahmdinijad in Iran are unacceptable and supporters of such groups are punishable. The 9/11 compelled America to promote "freedom" as people are thought to be less likely to become terrorists if they are active members of societies that provide

them with political and economic opportunities to live. However, the practices show that such freedom is required only in those countries where US planted / backed dictators are not operating. Last few years have witnessed that more democratic Iraq and Palestine have become more violent in choosing their independent course of action. The US endeavor on democracy promotion is found busy in secularization of the education systems and bringing enlightenment in the Muslim world culture, as existing education system and culture are presumably conducive to radicalization. Reports and articles from the American pundits published on the 5th anniversary of the Iraq invasion carry a lot for the soul searching of Bush Administration. Some of the unpleasant truths about past errors, present circumstances, and future choices debated were:

- The Iraq invasion was rested on fabricated information, false assumptions, and dubious analysis. The invasion of Iraq may be the greatest self-inflicted blunder in the history of U.S. foreign policy. War planners were wrong on all counts, and they should be held responsible for this catastrophe.
- The war plans did not carry any post occupation strategy, policies ignorant of local conditions ending up alienating the population.
- The Iraq invasion and blind support of Israel's illegal acts has destabilized the region, unprecedented pushing up oil prices, discredited democracy and enhanced Iran's influence, thereby resulting into heavy damage to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

- The invasion diverted priority and resources from Afghanistan thereby causing major setback in the war against terrorism. Events like Abu Ghraib and collateral damages in Iraq have made it a new training ground for anti-American elements.
- Heavy war budget with ever increasing trend speaks of that the current operation level will not be sustainable for longer duration and further prolonging of it would weaken US global image and position. In the absence of any prospect for a meaningful victory, staying in Iraq is strategic mistake leading to waste of American human and material resources.

Middle East is confused as to what comes after Iraq? If American forces along with coalition of willing fail to produce an outcome that could be called "victory," then what lessons will the United States draw for its future foreign policy? Will it turn inward, as it did after its defeat in Vietnam three decades ago? Will it turn from promoting democracy to a narrow realist view of its interests? However, the speed and sequence of unfolding of the events and rising awareness about the facts points that the United States does not have the luxury of turning inward no matter what the outcome in Iraq. These are not the problems that US can leave overseas rather they will follow it home. Americans must find ways to respect diversity and the views of others. The lesson that America should carry from Iraq is the importance of developing civil society and the rule of law before trying to hold broad-based elections. Democracy is real involvement of the masses, with freedom of choice, large investments in human development, education, institutions and respect for the power of vote. It is not the voting on

dictation or legitimizing the wrong doings rather a way to introduce accountability to all and not be imposed from abroad.

Wanting Honest Brokering in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

The Palestinian issue is the one of the oldest and the most sensitive issues in the World that is causing Middle East to bleed from the start of the 20th century. It is the issue, which could not be solved because of biased brokering of the US so far. A fairly large numbers of UN resolutions against illegal occupation and atrocities made by the Israel upon the indigenous people of Palestine have been failed because of the veto employed by US. When US needed the support of Arabs to supplement its any foreign policy goal, it propagated stress for its resolution and turned it head as the need is over. American use of veto in favor of Israel, provision of funds for new Jewish settlement in occupied territories is tantamount to the rejection of international consensus, supporting a Jerusalem under largely Israeli sovereignty, encouraging only partial withdrawal from the occupied territories, allowing for the confiscation of Palestinian land and the construction of Jewish-only settlements and rejecting an independent state Palestine outside of Israeli control. The West have heavily armed and backed the Israeli might. To the West, Israel is an ally only because of the oil interests in the Middle East region. US is covertly supporting the Israel's defiance over UN resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces to within internationally recognized boundaries, the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza etc. Under the US pressure Palestinians have already ceded 78 percent of historic Palestine to the Israelis in the Oslo Accords; now the only demand left with the Palestinians is Israelis withdrawal from the lands

seized in the 1967, which Israel is otherwise required to do under international law and UN resolutions. With the U.S. playing the dual role of the chief mediator of the conflict as well as the chief diplomatic, financial and military backer of Israeli occupation forces, the U.S. goal seems to be more that of Pax Americana than that of a true peace. Therefore, there is enormous resentment in the majority of Middle Eastern states and their people, at ongoing U.S. diplomatic, financial and military support for Israeli occupation forces and their policies. Recent events have destroyed the “peace” processes and extremist sentiments on both sides are on the rise again. The US's support for the Israel in the face of these crimes discredits the US's claim to be “an honest broker of peace” and contributes to the instability of US Middle East relations. Until the US stops lending its weight to Israel through biased attitude, a truly just peace will remain elusive. It is high time for US to understand that until U.S. military, diplomatic and economic support of the Israeli government remains unconditional, no let up is likely in Israel's ongoing human rights violations, and respect for previous agreements with the Palestinians. Otherwise, the persistent Arab resentment is likely might reach to the point of no return thereby threatening the long-term security interests of both Israel and the United States. There is a consensus on one point that the just resolution of the Palestinian issue is critical to U.S. national security interests in the region and scarlet thread to reduce violence and extremism. A peaceful resolution of the conflict will help to build a secure, stable, and more democratic Middle East, and in so doing, serve U.S. national security interests.

Hatred for US and Rising Militancy

Though apparently U.S. asserts that Islam is religion of peace and it only opposes terrorism but on the contrary it appears to Muslims that the U.S. equates Islam with terrorism. U.S. policymakers have failed to understand that the current rise of political Islam is in part a response to a perceived threat against Islamic values by Western popular culture and by American military and political domination of the region. The emerging Islamism is viewed as a force that undermines the Middle East peace process, threatens the flow of oil, and leads to the establishment of Iranian-style regimes in the region. The proponents of such approach are wrongly trying to replace communism with Islamism as a parallel ideology and sequential enemy by defining all political Islamic movements, as having the same anti-Western, anti humanitarian agenda. It is ignored that the violence is a reaction both to U.S. support for such countries as Israel, Egypt, and dictators like Musharaf and Hassni Mubarak and on going drive against Holy Prophet, Quran, and other Islamic values. It is better for American policy maker to realize as early as possible that Muslims resent to U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain and else where in the region. Muslims resent consistent abuse of Islamic values and beliefs, they resent to tremendous financial support for Israel and in their eyes, to be at war with Israel is to be at war with America. America must realize that it cannot impose political solutions in Palestine or anywhere else unless the right of self-determination operates freely in all nations. Israel, Egypt and Musharaf of Pakistan along with other corrupt Arab dictators exaggerate the threat of terrorism and Islamism to win massive U.S. aid and to get the U.S. on their side in their battles against local opposition. Accepting these exaggerated assessments, as the basis of its involvement in Middle

Eastern affairs is false. Instead of promoting democracy in the region, the U.S. is buttressing dictators and their human rights abuses, which in turn fuel further Islamist and other violent responses. This does not serve any immediate or long-term U.S. interest. In view of the foregoing discussion it is suggested to the US foreign policy makers to review and modify their approach for the sake of securing long term US interests in the region and reestablish its image as guardian of peace and justice. The U.S. should condemn human rights violations committed by friendly governments with the same vigor with which it condemns Islamists' violence. Aid to Middle Eastern states should be conditioned on progress in democratization and human rights. The U.S. must deal with terrorism not only militarily but also by attacking its root causes—pressurizing Israel, Egypt, and the Arab authoritarian regimes to comply with international law and human rights standards. USA has also to believe in true letter and spirit that Islam is religion of peace and there is no Islamic terrorism as there is no Christian terrorism or of any other religion. However, struggle for the right of self-determination or restoration of national prestige or state sovereignty has nothing to do with the religion rather it is norm of democracy and civilized society. Therefore, instead of blaming Islam for rising militancy or violence it is better for America to vacate illegal occupation of Iraq and other military bases in the region and also facilitate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied land.

Conclusion

US must reevaluate its policy in the Middle East as none of its sophisticated weaponry, economic might, bullions, latest technology, and military or political leadership can stop rising militancy as long as millions of people hate US policies. U.S. was not targeted on 9/11 because it was a “beacon for freedom” (as claimed by Bush) rather it was

targeted because the support of freedom was not part of US policy in the Middle East, which has instead been based upon alliances with repressive governments and support for military occupation. *Stephen Zunes* rightly suggests, “We would be much safer if the U.S. supported a policy based more on human rights, international law, and sustainable development — and less on arms transfers, air strikes, and punitive sanctions.”³⁴ America should understand that its political and military involvements in the region create far more problems than it solves. All Americans will benefit, both in terms of their safety and their economics gains, if we pursue a coherent, neutral foreign policy of non-interventionism, free trade, and self-determination in the Middle East. America’s best serving foreign policy in the Middle East should be aimed at:

- Avoidance of interference in the local conflicts, and behaving as an honest broker to solve the issue without any prejudice against Palestinian.
- Hasten withdrawal of forces from the occupied from the region and reducing the militarization of the area by ending selective military aids. The aid, if any, to Middle Eastern states should be conditioned with democratization process and observance of human rights. U.S. should even handedly condemn Israel, Turkey, and allied Arab governments, whenever they abuse human rights. The aid program should be restructured by allocating more aid to education and the building of civil society and less to armaments and militarization
- Intelligence and law enforcement must be the first line of defense against terrorism; and military force should be the last resort.

- Arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation must be restored as priorities of U.S. foreign policy to stop the proliferation of WMDs. The U.S. must return to the ABM Treaty, end the deployment of national missile defense, and abide by Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to end underground testing.
- U.S. Administration should realize that democracy through regime change with the help of military occupation is always counter productive. Excessive brutalities, continuous occupations, and loss of freedom and national identity arose strong nationalistic reactions.
- International diplomacy, not military action, must be the first option in crisis management. The present strategy of Bush administration to down play the role of international diplomacy in all crisis situations, needs to be changed with immediate effect otherwise it is likely to be catastrophic.
- For Iran, the U.S. must reestablish diplomatic relations, engage it politically and economically, and facilitate forging of regional alignments to end isolation of Tehran.
- America has to understand that ‘injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.’ There can be no peace if the concerns, fears and problems of the people involved are not addressed. Palestinians have endured the injustice of the longest military occupation in the world since long. Waiting simply means more death and destruction of besieged Palestinians living under the

constant threat of collective punishments, military roadblocks, curfews and house demolitions etc.

- The Middle East is the birthplace of the Western Civilization, home land of Western cultural heritage, and cradle of the religions of the children of Abraham - Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Therefore, there should be no higher moral imperative for US policy than to work for peace in this region, in particular peace between Israel and Palestinians, peace in Iraq, and peace in whole of the Arabian Peninsula.
- USA should ensure creation of a viable Palestinian state by pursuing abandonment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and by fostering Israeli acceptance of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.
- If the US can strongly lead efforts for the implementation of UN resolutions and peace in Kuwait, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Afghanistan then why can't it assume the same role in Palestine too? The real answer to this anarchy and disorder is seeking peace through guaranteeing honour, respect and justice for every nation and group, may that be small, large, weak or strong, rich or poor, and developing or developed.

End Notes:

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- ¹¹ .ibid. p. 2
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- ¹⁸ .“U.S. vetoes of UN Resolutions critical of Israel – 1972-2006”,
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