**PAGAM Research Proposal**

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**The Project's Goals**

The goals of this project are straightforward. The researchers intend to:

* Understand how shared interests and values allowed Israel to defend itself by itself and maintain a strategic relationship with the United States (U.S.).
* Draw on the MABAL coursework and identify what potential issues exists at local, regional, and international levels that may strain the relationship between Israel and the U.S.
* Propose solutions to the identified issues.

**The Importance of the Subject to National Security.**

**Context**

From the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, to the present day, Israel has consistently found itself surrounded by countries and terrorist groups hostile to its existence. The level of hostility has run the spectrum, from invasions by Arab armies in 1948 and 1973 to the continued threat posed by Hezbollah and Iran. Throughout history, Israel has asserted its right to "*defend itself, by itself*" (Landau, 2019).

At the same time, Ben Gurion realized that Israel's national security relied on an alliance with a major power to assist Israel with weapons procurement and air superiority (Rabinovich & Brun, 2017, p. 8).For the last several decades, Israel has enjoyed a strategic relationship with the United States that goes well beyond what was initially envisioned by Ben Gurion. It includes strong financial and political support and has become what some describe as a *special relationship* defined by a set of shared interests and values (Reich, 1996, p. 233).

In general, the Israelis and Americans have been united on most national security issues that dealt with common enemies. However, there have been instances where incongruence existed between the Israeli and U.S. governments. Despite the periodic disagreements, the relationship has remained strong. However, today’s global reality is replete with changes to the local, regional, and international systems. It is crucial to understand what variables exist in the new reality that may negatively affect the shared interests and values that have defined Israel-U.S. relations.

**Significance**

Studying the role of shared interests and values by using specific historical cases is vital in developing a broad understanding of the nature of the Israel-U.S. relationship. After identifying the nature of the past relationship, the researchers can then explore how changes in the local, regional, and international systems may affect the future relationship between Israel and the United States. As Barnett explains, “suggesting that shared identities and values are the foundation of U.S.-Israeli relations does not imply that it is impermeable to corrosive forces” (1996, p. 434). It is therefore imperative for the researchers to identify such forces and provide recommendations on how Israel and the U.S. can best address them.

**Research Question and Secondary Inquiries**

**Research Question**

How can Israel maintain a national security concept based on an ability to defend itself by itself while keeping a staunch strategic relationship with the U.S.?

***Sub-question #1***

           How did shared interests and values enable Israel to base its national security strategy concept on defending itself by itself while maintaining a staunch strategic relationship with the U.S.?

***Sub-question #2***

           What changes to the world system will affect Israel's ability to maintain a national security concept based on an ability to defend itself by itself while maintaining a staunch strategic relationship with the U.S.?

**The Research Method**

Sub-question #1 uses a multiple case study design method. Yin (2018) states that case studies are appropriate research methods when the main research questions are "how" or "why" and the researchers have little control over behavioral events. Multiple case studies are useful in studying national security relationships because they "follow an analogous logic. When cases are appropriately chosen, they predict similar results (literal replications) or contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons” (a theoretical replication) (Yin, 2018. P. 125).

        This study uses two historical case studies where shared interests and values influenced the national security relationship between Israel and the U.S. and affected local, regional, or international systems.

* The American Jewish lobby and its reaction to the 1973 Yom Kippur War.
* Common political interests between Israel and the U.S. and the 2007 attack on the Syrian nuclear reactor.

           The researchers will analyze the case studies using metasummary and metasynthesis methodological approaches to "collect, compare, and synthesize the key findings." The metasummary and metasynthesis methodological approaches are well suited for multiple case studies because the approaches' goal is the "inductive and systematic comparison of case studies to draw cross-case conclusions" (Saldana, 2013, p. 204).

           The primary data collection method for sub-question #2 is through document research**.** Once the researchers have collected sufficient data, they will use content analysis to identify contemporary issues that potentially affect the Israel-U.S. relationship at the local, regional, and international level. The problems are drawn primarily from topics introduced in various INDC lectures, but the eventual topics will be selected as a result of document analysis. It is the researchers’ desire to present a variety of issues.

Once the data is collected and analyzed for sub-questions 1 & 2, the researchers will determine how the contemporary issues negatively impact the multiple case study themes. Finally, the researchers will make recommendations on how to mitigate potential impacts, thereby proving an answer to the overall research question (see methodological model below).

**Research Model**



**The Project's Structure**

Executive Summary

Table of Contents

Introduction

1. The goal of the work
2. The research questions
3. Terminology/theoretical background
4. The method
5. The importance to national security
6. The project's boundaries

Part I – Case Study 1: American Jewish lobby and its Reaction to the 1973 Yom Kippur War

1. History of American Jewish lobby
2. Overview of the Yom Kippur War
3. American Jewish lobby’s support to Israel after the start of the Yom Kippur War

Part II – Case Study 2: Shared interests between Israel and the U.S. and the 2007 strike on the Syrian nuclear facility

1. History of Israeli and U.S. cooperation on counter-proliferation
2. Overview of the 2007 strike on the Syrian nuclear facility
3. How shared interests influenced both Israeli and U.S. policy before and after the strike

Part III – Cross case analysis

1. Analysis of major themes

2. Presentation of thematic analysis to answer research question 1

Part IV – Identify and explain potential changes to the relationship between the U.S. and Israel (Examples listed below)

1. Non-Jewish U.S. population’s perceptions toward Israel

2. Israeli relations with U.S. Jewish Diaspora

3. The Jewish lobby in the U.S.

4. The new U.S. administration

5. The Abraham Accords

Findings and recommendations to decision-makers

Summary - reviewing the research question and its objectives

Bibliography

**The Project's Limits**

This project uses historical case studies to identify the nature of the Israel-U.S. relationship. It then uses current data to determine what issues may negatively influence the relationship. This project does not analyze why individual decisions were made and does not examine why a specific event occurred. This project is limited in scope and only uses two specific historical instances to understand the nature of the Israel-U.S. relationship. It only identifies a relatively small number of issues that may affect the relationship. The research is narrow in scope, and research findings may be limited in their generalizability to other settings.

**Terminology**

*Defend itself by itself -* The notion that Israel remains prepared to preempt any threat without asking for foreign troops’ assistance and without the concurrence of foreign governments. The Israel doctrine of self-reliance, The Begin doctrine, and Israel’s national ethos since the War of Independence and rooted in Israel’s right to defend its borders as granted by UN Security Council Resolution 242 (Yaalon et al., 2011, p. 93) are drawn from this notion.

*Special relationship –* The “broadly conceived ideological factor based on positive perception and sentiment evident in public opinion and official statements and manifest in diplomatic support and military and economic assistance [which] has not been enshrined in a legally binding commitment joining the two in a formal alliance (Reich, 1996, p. 245).”

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