

Spojené štáty a Izrael: A Special Relationship? Zahraničná politika USA voči Izraelu v rokoch 1956-1973

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Katarína Strýčková has chosen United States policy towards Israel as the topic of her B.A. dissertation. Katarína is a brave woman to tackle such a complex issue. Not only is the matter at hand complicated, but it is also controversial. First of all, I would like to state that Katarína faithfully consulted each part of the work with me on a regular basis and she took my advice and made changes accordingly. As the dissertation is written in Slovak, not Czech, I can only assume that the writing is grammatically correct. Structurally, Katarína has divided the treatise into an introduction, five main chapters, and a conclusion. In addition, there is an English-language summary. The bibliography is extensive and the illustrations are helpful.

In the introduction, Katarína clearly states that the aim of the work is to discuss the establishment and evolution of the special relationship between the United States and Israel. She seeks to ascertain the reasons behind U.S. policy as well as to discuss the state of the relationship during different American presidential administrations. It is wisely mentioned that the changing nature of the Cold War. Katarína's depiction of the content of each main chapter is accurate and her evaluation of the literature is balanced.

Chapter 1 deals with two main questions. The first is the strategic interests of the United States in the Middle East. Here Katarína defines the American-Israeli special relationship as being unique with a high degree of friendship, confidence, and involving both political and security cooperation. Also, Israel's geographic position, its socioeconomic system,

and elevated military status (thanks to American weapons) make Israel a worthy ally. Likewise, Katarína evaluates the influential role of the Jewish lobby in the United States.

Chapter 2 discusses the genesis of Israel and its relationship with the United States between 1948 and 1955. Katarína successfully recapitulates the historical background and the tricky Cold War balancing of United States foreign policy in the Middle East. She rightly points out that the United States was careful because it did not wish to alienate Arab countries.

Chapter 3 represents an analysis of American-Israeli relations during the Eisenhower administration and the failure to establish a special relationship. Katarína discusses the differing opinions of the traditionalists (State Department) and the pragmatists. The initial unwillingness of the Americans to establish closer ties with Israel and to provide military assistance while the Soviet Union was busy arming Arab countries left Israel isolated. Then, an alliance between Israel on the one hand and France and Britain on the other resulted in the Suez Crisis of 1956. The fiasco caused by Eisenhower's refusal to support the Suez operation left the United States as the sole military guardian of Western interests in the Middle East, but this did not result in the special relationship desired by the Israelis. Only passive Israeli help in Lebanon in 1958 resulted in an American reappraisal.

Chapter 4 discusses United States-Israeli relations during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Katarína analyzes the factors leading to Kennedy's decision to establish closer ties with Israel and to provide military assistance. The key reason for the decision was the continued military buildup undertaken by Egyptian president Nasser. After Kennedy's assassination, his successor, Lyndon Johnson, despite initial reservations, continued

military cooperation and this helped Israel to defend itself in the Six Day War. The Six Day War gave rise to the United States-Israeli special relationship.

Chapter 5 addresses the U.S.-Israeli relationship during the Nixon administration. Here, Henry Kissinger played a decisive role. Israel had captured Arab territory in the Six Day War and this served as a handy bargaining chip in the eyes of American policymakers. Israeli diversionary tactics, which resulted in the salvaging of the Jordanian monarchy during the 1970 civil war in Jordan led to an increase in American assistance to Israel. Though the complete victory of Israel over its Arab enemies in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the ensuing oil embargo radicalized the region, the American-Israeli special relationship survived and perseveres to the present day.

In the conclusion, Katarína reiterates the complex nature of the American-Israeli special relationship, which came about as a result of perceived security interests on the part of both sides. She summarizes her main points and ends by stating that the relationship is the product of mutual security interests.

Katarína has done a wonderful job. The only minor criticism I have is the misspellings of some English words. This, however, is a minor matter. I recommend an **excellent** mark.

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