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Declaration

I, Camilla Klungland Ousdal, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

Dedicated to Svein Ousdal
20.07.1958 – 30.07.2009

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Abstract

New peace talks initiated by the US started up in July of 2013. As the 65 years long search for peace continues between the Israelis and Palestinians, the US commitment to contribute remain central. The involvement of the US is characterized to two seemingly contrasting roles as an "honest broker" and the "best friend of Israel". These two roles make up a paradox which is can influence the peace process. The existing literature concerning these two roles mirrors the conflict in that it is highly divided, thus it mirrors the conflict. The conflicting parties have their own narratives of the conflict, and disputed elements of the narratives are bases for some of the main issues which remain unsolved. Such issues include the right to land, the Palestinian refugee problem and Jerusalem.

I have explored the American paradox based their two roles as "honest broker" and "best friend of Israel", as I seek to find insight and to understand how this paradox is reflected in the US discourse, and to look for potential impact and evolvment in the roles. I have conducted a discourse analysis of US official statements. More precisely, I have analyzed the US public, political discourse found in speeches by presidents and secretaries of state from 2002 to 2013. This is a time period which includes milestone in the process, including the aftermath of 9/11, the Al-Aqsa Intifada and Palestinian upgrade in the UN.

Through this analysis I found that the roles are reflected through the US discourse both directly and indirectly, though in a variety of ways. Furthermore, I found that a potential reason why the US has combined is in order to achieve US interests. The main interests that are expressed in the speeches are to ensure the security or Israel and to find peace. The potential impacts of these roles are linked to the peace process, where the roles might have an effect in getting the conflicting parties to come to the negotiation table. However, at the negotiation table, the roles might collide as their contrasts might be challenging to the other role. During this time, I found some evolvment in the roles, most noticeably in the role as the "honest broker" is somewhat from Bush's war on terror to a speech in Cairo in 2009 when Obama reached out a hand to the Arab and Muslim world, and thus attempted to bridge the gap. In spite of reported tension between Obama and Netanyahu, the US support for Israel remains steady. I found that the US speakers do contribute to maintain the representations of these roles in the discourse.

List of Abbreviations

AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
UN	United Nations
9/11	Terrorist attacks on the US September 11 th 2001

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Objectives and Research Questions.....	2
1.2. The Structure of the Thesis.....	3
2. Literature Review.....	5
2.1. The Literature on the Special Relationship Between the US and Israel.....	5
2.2. The Literature on the US Role as "Honest Broker".....	8
3. Narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.....	12
3.1. The Traditional Palestinian Narrative.....	13
3.2. The Traditional Israeli Narrative.....	15
3.3. Disputed Elements in the Narratives – Issues of the Conflict.....	18
4. Historical Background of the US Policy Towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.....	20
4.1. A Short History of the US Involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from 1948 – 2002.....	20
4.2. Premise for Peace: The US Position on Some of the Main Issues in the Conflict.....	26
4.3. US National Interests in the Conflict.....	27
5. Social Context: Milestones in the Peace Process from 2002 – 2013.....	30
5.1. The First Bush Administration.....	30
5.1.1. The Aftermath of 9/11 and the Invasion of Iraq.....	31
5.1.2. The Al-Aqsa Intifada.....	32
5.1.3. The Road Map to Peace.....	33
5.2. The Second Bush Administration.....	33
5.2.1. Arafat Dies and Hamas Wins Election.....	34
5.2.2. The Annapolis Conference.....	34
5.3. The First Obama Administration.....	35
5.3.1. Operation Cast Lead – The Gaza War.....	36
5.3.2. Direct Peace talks Between the Israelis, the Palestinians and the US.....	36
5.3.3. The Arab Spring.....	38
5.3.4. Palestinian Update in the UN.....	38

5.4. The Second Obama Administration.....	39
6. Theoretical Framework.....	41
6.1. The Narrative.....	41
6.2. Discourse Theory.....	42
6.2.1. Discourse and Hegemony.....	43
6.2.2. Discourse and Identity.....	45
6.2.3. Discourse and Change.....	46
6.2.4. Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity.....	47
6.3. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Concept.....	48
7. Methodology; A Critical Discourse Analysis.....	50
7.1. Research Design.....	51
7.2. Limitations and Challenges.....	54
8. Analyzing the Findings.....	56
8.1. The Role as "Best friend of Israel".....	60
8.1.1. Actual Statements Concerning the Relationship with Israel.....	61
8.1.2. Supporting Israeli Narrative.....	62
8.1.3. Statements on Military, Economic and Diplomatic Support.....	65
8.2. The Role as "Honest Broker".....	68
8.2.1. Actual Statements Referring to the Role as "Honest Broker".....	68
8.2.2. Premise for Peace.....	70
8.2.3. Policy Tools for the "Honest Broker".....	77
8.3. Changes in the Roles.....	80
8.3.1. From War on Terror to Reaching Out a Hand in Cairo.....	80
8.3.2. Tensions Between the US and Israel.....	83
8.3.3. Speaking of Change.....	84
8.4. The US National Interests as Appeared in the Speeches.....	85
8.5. Potential Effects of the Roles.....	88
8.5.1. Potential Effects of the Role as "Best Friend of Israel".....	88
8.5.2. Potential Effects of the Role as "Honest Broker".....	89
8.5.3. The Roles Colliding.....	90
8.6. Rhetorical Tactics to Harmonize the Roles.....	91
8.6.1. Double Message.....	92
8.6.2. Comparing Israelis and Palestinians.....	94
8.6.3. Moral Obligations.....	95

9. Conclusion.....96
10. References.....100
Appendix.....111

1. Introduction

On July 29th 2013, the American President Barack H. Obama announced that new peace negotiations would resume between Israelis and Palestinians. While talking of the difficulties ahead, he stated that "the United States stands ready to support them throughout these negotiations, with the goal of achieving two states, living side by side in peace and security" (Obama 2013c, para. 3). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a highly complex conflict, much due to the fact that the conflicting parties have their own narratives concerning the history of the conflict, and the disputed elements of these narratives are reflected in the difficulties of resolving the main issues in the conflict. The conflict, which has been going on for over six decades, has seen numerous attempts of finding a peaceful end without success. Resolving this conflict remains high on the international agenda and much time and efforts have been spent trying to achieve peace between the Israelis and Palestinians (Peters 2013, p. 1-2).

Previous and present efforts in the peace process illustrate a heavy involvement by the US for more than four decades. Even though some developments have occurred over these years, peace has continued to elude the process, and a long way remains to see a peaceful end to this conflict (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 3). In this involvement, the US role as "honest broker" is based on leading efforts through the years to find peace between the two parties, and the argument by some that the US is the only one who has the ability to take the lead in the peacemaking by dealing with the parties involved (Ross 2004, p. 799). Since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, and especially since developments during the late 1960's, the relationship between the US and Israel has grown uniquely close characterized by high levels of US support of Israel (Quandt 2005, p. 13; Khalidi 2013, p. xix). This is often referred to as a special relationship (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 7). This special relationship is the base for the US role as "best friend of Israel". When placing the roles as "honest broker", which is defined by Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary (2013a) as "a neutral mediator", next to the role as "best friend of Israel", a paradox becomes apparent. It is a paradox which influences the US involvement in the conflict. Some argue that the US involvement as "honest broker" is cancelled out by the role as "best friend of Israel" (Aruri 2003, p. xi). Still, the US continues to adhere to these two roles in their commitment to find

peace, and even though challenges occur as the US involvement in the conflict has been colored by its dual role in the process, the US remain actively involved in the peace process (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 110). Since the conflict has been going on for over six decades without getting any closer to achieving a successful peace agreement, one might wonder why the US is still sticking to both these roles that make up the paradox. This is the paradox which I wish to explore in this thesis.

1.1. Objectives and Research Questions

The American paradox, in which the US have the roles as both the "best friend of Israel" and the "honest broker" remain highly relevant as the search for peace in the conflict continues. Thus in this research I seek to gain a better understand how these roles that makes up the paradox is reflected in the public, political discourse in the US, and I will conduct a discourse analysis. The discursive practice, where discourse is exercised, is a part of the social practice that constitutes the social world. At the same time as discourse constitutes the social world by reproducing or changing other social practices, the discursive practice is also constituted by the social practices (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 28). In my research, I have three research questions:

- How are these two roles reflected in US official statements regarding the conflict?
- Why does the US combine these two roles and how does it impact the US peace initiatives?
- How have these roles evolved over the past decade?

I have chosen to conduct a discourse analysis of US official statements. More specifically, I have chosen to analyze public, political speeches relevant to the conflict delivered by the presidents and secretaries of state. I have chosen these speeches as they usually gain relatively much attention, and thus arguably have some impact on the discourse. I wish to explore the paradox in the recent decade, as major events have taken place in relations to the conflict and the US involvement in it, which makes it an interesting time for exploring the roles and the American paradox. Some of the major events from this time period include the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the US at 9/11 in 2001, which led to some changes in US policy in the Middle East, increased violence in the conflict, including the Gaza War in late 2008, and

efforts to negotiate a peace settlement, including the Road Map to Peace and the new peace talk which started up in 2013. Also, during this time the US was, and still is, a hegemon in the world, which affect the US Middle East policy. Thus I have chosen to analyze the US discourse from 2002 to 2013. The US hegemony remains a central aspect of the discourse analysis as the representations the US present in the discourse might have more impact considering this hegemony. While conducting the analysis I found that the roles of the paradox are reflected in several ways and in several settings, through actual statements concerning these roles and also in indirect manners. For instance, the "best friend of Israel" is reflected through US support of the Israeli narrative, and the "honest broker" is reflected through the US presenting the premise for peace which considers the wants and needs of both parties. Based on the finding of this research, I argue that the US speakers are contributing to maintain representations of the US as both the "honest broker" and the "best friend of Israel". Also, the interests the US express regarding the conflict, correlated with the roles, thus one might argue that US interest, like supporting Israel and finding peace, are reasons for combining the roles. Furthermore, the roles have evolved somewhat, most noticeably from the rhetoric concerning the war on terror from the first Bush administration to Obama reaching out a hand to the Arab and Muslim world in 2009.

1.2. The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into chapters that I will present here. After this introductory chapter, I will present the literature review of relative literature on the special relationship between the US and Israel and the US role as the "honest broker" in chapter two. In addition to the background provided through the literature review, the following chapters three, four and five provide a basic insight to the background and social context of the conflict and the US involvement in it. This insight is important to the further reading of the analysis.

In chapter three, I present an important aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in which the US is heavily involved and where the two roles play out. This aspect is the narratives. The traditional Palestinian narrative and the traditional Israeli narrative are presented, together with a section on some of the disputed elements of the narratives which also reflect some of the disputed issues of the conflict.

In the fourth chapter I provide a historical background to the US policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including to a short history of the US involvement in the complex conflict, some US position on core issues in the conflict and US national interest in the conflict are also included.

Chapter five lists some milestones in the peace process from 2002 until 2013 which serves as social context for the speeches analyzed. Social context is an important aspect of my critical discourse analysis approach. The chapter is divided into four subchapters based on the four presidential administrations that have been in the White House during this time period. Thus it starts with milestones during the first Bush administration, then continues to the second Bush administration, the first Obama administration and ends with the second Obama administration.

In chapter six outlines the theoretical framework for this thesis. I explore the concept of narrative, and present the discourse theory including relevant concepts like identity, hegemony and change. In addition I outline Fairclough's three-dimensional concept which my research draws inspiration from.

In chapter seven I present the methodology of my research which is based on a critical discourse analysis. Furthermore, I outline my research design and discuss the limitations and challenges of the research.

Chapter eight consists of the analysis of the findings. In this chapter, I first analyze the central findings regarding the role as "best friend of Israel" and the role as "honest broker". I continue to analyze the changes of the roles, the US national interest as they appear in the speeches, and then potential effects of the roles. After, I analyze the rhetorical tactics the US use to in their attempts to harmonize the roles.

In chapter nine, I present the conclusion which summarizes the analysis of the findings by answering the research questions.

2. Literature Review

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict there are different perspectives on the conflict, a clash of narratives. The perspectives on both the conflict and the US involvement in it are highly divided, with many different nuances. This is reflected in the literature concerning the issue. In all areas of literature bias can occur, and this area is not different. In the literature concerning the wider field of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict one can often find views that are biased toward one or the other party while presenting the conflict and its history. However, some do manage to remain relatively even-handed on the description of the conflict and its history. The conflict remains a subject of interest among many, which is evident in the enormous amount of literature on the conflict and its surrounding issues. Much of the general literature concerning the conflict mentions the US involvement in the conflict in a central way. Peters (2013, p. 6) argues that the vast amounts of literature can be confusing on those attempting to learn of the conflict through literature. The main focus for this research lies on the literature concerning the US roles as the "best friend of Israel" and the "honest broker" as these roles are the basis for the paradox I am exploring. With this focus in mind, I will familiarize myself with the relevant literature and thus attempt gain an understanding of the views in some of the existing literature.

2.1. The Literature on the Special Relationship Between the US and Israel

The close and special relationship between the US and Israel, which the role as the "best friend of Israel" is based on, remain a central part of the conflict and is discussed by several authors (Ball & Ball 1992; Neff 1995; Chomsky 1999; Aruri 2003; Ross 2004; Quandt 2005; Mearsheimer & Walt 2007; Miller 2008; Shlaim 2009; Makovsky 2012; Khalidi 2013; Kurtzer et al. 2013). Though the special relationship is discussed by many, the different authors do often have dividing views on the relationship. While there are several disagreements on the specific nature, the level of influence and the consequences of the special relationship between the US and Israel, there is a relative broad consensus that some sort of special relationship do exist. As one way of illustrating the support from the US to Israel, Chomsky (1999, p. 9) points to for instance diplomatic, ideological and material support to illustrate what he argues to be a relationship which is both curious and unique. Ball and Ball (1992, p. 10-11) claim that the US have a passionate attachment to Israel which

causes several evils in the US involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, like becoming distorted and ineffective in achieving true action. Neff (1995) refers to the relationship as "uniquely close" (p. 183), and he also argues that the relationship have caused unintended consequences in US foreign policy, including distorting the US goals. A claim from Mearsheimer and Walt (2007, p. 77) is highly critical of the special relationship as they argue that the relationship is contributing to make the US less safe by inspiring anti-American extremists and undermining the relationship the US has with other allies. Though there are some who acknowledge the relationship, but who do not grant it as much meaning as others might do. In his book *Israel and Palestine. Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations*, Shlaim (2009, p. 114-115) claim that there indeed is a special relationship and that there are challenges in regards to the relationship, though he argues that this relationship might be somewhat exaggerated, and that the relationship in itself is more shallow than many would suggest.

Although several authors agree that the special relationship between the US and Israel can be harmful on several levels, there are others who claim that the relationship serves the Middle East region well. Makovksy (2012, p. 22-33) does for instance claim that the special relationship between the US and Israel is the cause for regional stability and the absence of regional war in the region since 1973. In the book *The Missing Peace. The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, Ross (2004, p. 6-7), who was involved in US diplomatic efforts in the conflict, emphasizes the importance of a strong relationship between the US and Israel. He argues that the special relationship is necessary in order for Israel to feel secure and to take part in peace process by making compromises. At the same time the relationship is important in order to illustrate to the Arabs that the US stands firm with Israel. The diplomatic involvement by Ross is discussed in *The Peace Puzzle. America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989-2011* by Kurtzer et al. (2013, p. 127) where they emphasis the distrust between Ross and Arafat which they suggest was based on the Palestinian perception that Ross was conveying the Israeli positions. Furthermore, Kurtzer et al. (2013) argue that the US policymakers need to be aware of their dual role in their future peace process, as they state that due to the "realities of the American politics, there will always be deeper coordination of policy with Israel than with the Palestinians, and the Palestinians will always believe the United States is biased in Israel's favor" (p. 274).

While there are divided views among the authors, some are more diffuse in their evaluation of the relationship and rather address the complexity of it. In his book *Peace Process. American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, Quandt (2005) addressed the US-Israeli relationship as a complex issue, which at times could be in conflict with other interests in the region like access to Arab oil and managing relationship with Soviet during the Cold War (p. 14). Quandt also continues to insist on more complexity in regards to US pressure on Israel. While he agrees with others, that pressure may backfire and lead to resistance, there are several accounts of presidents have put pressure on Israel and made an influence on Israel policy (2005, p, 419).

There are different perspectives on the cause of this special relationship the US has with Israel, and thus how the role as "best friend of Israel" have emerged and stayed so strong. One argued reason for the special relationship, which has gotten much attention in the literature, is the Israel lobby. The impact of the Israel lobby on the special relationship and the US role as "best friend of Israel" is discussed by several with some various arguments. The Israel lobby is the subject in focus in the book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* by Mearsheimer and Walt (2007). They emphasize the Israel lobby as the cause for the special relationship. Mearsheimer and Walt (2007, p. 4-9) claim that the amounts of aid the US supports Israel with is unconditional, meaning that regardless of what actions Israel take, the US keeps giving this aid. The focus of the book is mainly on the Israel lobby, and the argued consequences of this lobby which is the special relationship between the US and Israel. The view on the Israel lobby is still contested. Some authors, like Waxman (2013, p. 364) argue that while the Israel lobby do in some cases enjoy much influence, it is not as powerful as others might suggest. This view was also argued by Chomsky (1999, p. 13) prior to the release of Mearsheimer and Walt's *The Israel Lobby and the U.S. Foreign Policy*. Mitchell Bard (2010, p. 340-341) went as far as calling the theory presented by Mearsheimer and Walt for propaganda and a conspiracy theory in his book *The Arab Lobby. The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America's Interests in the Middle East*. In this book, Bard argues that there is a powerful Arab lobby in the US, who is not as visible as the Israel lobby but still very influential with oil as one of the main drivers (2010, p. x). Most literature acknowledges the existence of an Israel lobby, though with varying degrees of influence on the special relationship. The different

perspective on what effect the Israel lobby has on the special relationship and thus the roles as both "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker" reflects the fundamental differences of perspective on the conflict as a whole.

Several authors have been directly involved in the peace efforts made throughout the years, including Ross (2004), Quandt (2007), Miller (2008) and Kurtzer et al. (2013). This can be both a strength and a weakness in terms of delivering an even-handed piece of literature presenting the past historical events, including their causes and consequences. The possibility of it being a strength lies in the fact that the author has been present for the events they are writing about, and thus do not need to rely on descriptions of others. On the other hand, this could also be a weakness as the authors might be colored by their interpretations of the events and the political positions of their government at the time might also influence them. In addition, some might also be too much influenced by their own convictions. Ross (2004, p. 6) do for instance declare that he identifies with the Israeli people and express solidarity with the Jewish people. Such sentiment could potentially cause a biased involvement and perhaps impact the role as "honest broker".

2.2. The Literature on the US Role as an "Honest Broker"

The existing literature on the US role as "honest broker" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is not as dominant as the literature on the special relationship between the US and Israel. Just as the literature on the special relationship, the literature on the US as an "honest broker" is also rather divided. However, the literature claiming directly and bluntly that the US is an "honest broker" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not very common. Quandt (2005, p. 4-11) states that the US started getting more actively involved in resolving the conflict after the end of the war in 1967, and at this time a peace settlement seemed very distant. The situations called for an outsider to help gain diplomatic progress, and even though the US was reluctant to dive too deep into the conflict, they did. Reasons for this are several, and the close relationship with Israel and the national interests of the US are mentioned by Quandt as a couple. One national interest could be containing the Soviet influence during the Cold War, though he also points out the national interests may vary as it is most often a subjective element. In his article *America: An Honest Broker*, Nitze (1990, p. 12-13) argues that at the end of the Cold War, the

US had a unique ability to contribute to solve international problems and world stability. He continues to mention the Middle East region a place where the US is supporting the peace process and states that no other country has proved to have the same influence necessary to be effective in this role. This belief is shared by Ross (2004, p. 799) as he argues that the ability to lead efforts of a peace process based on issues like security and withdrawal only lies with the US. Shlaim (2002, p. 182) also argues that the only one who can break a deadlock in regards to Israeli politics in the conflict, is the US. Simultaneously, the US has proven to be a good friend who is committed to Israel's security. During the time period from 1992 to 1996, Quandt (2005, p. 339-340) argues that the US acted as a facilitator and received little criticism for its role. Still, the US did support Israel more than the Palestinians. The US support for Israel might be inescapable, but Kurtzer et al. (2013, p. 274) argues that with this reality, the challenge remains for the US to make this position work in a process towards the ultimate goal of peace, as the Palestinians also recognize that the US supports Israel more and thus have a bias. Examples of tackling this challenge could include combinations of pressure and incentives, on both sides.

While some authors have perhaps a more optimistic view of the US role as the "honest broker", others are more critical of referring to the US as an "honest broker" (Aruri 2003, p. xii; Khalidi 2013, p.91-92). During a bipartisan meeting with Palestinian negotiations in 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice did refer to herself as an "honest broker", and Khalidi (2013, p. 91-92) argues that this term stands as an echo from the supposedly part played by the US in the past, though he dismissed the US role as "honest broker" due to the special relationship the US has with Israel. Mearsheimer (2008) wrote an article called *The U.S. Should Act as an Honest Broker*. The title clearly express Mearsheimer's (2008, p. 152) view that the US should treat Israel like any other democracy and then act like an honest broker and be more even-handed towards the two conflicting parties. Thus he indicates that in his view, the US is not acting like an honest broker. There are other pieces of literature that clearly state their view on the US as honest broker, even in the title, including the books *Dishonest Broker. The U.S. Role in Israel and Palestine* by Aruri (2003) and *Brokers of Deceit. How the US has Undermined Peace in the Middle East* by Khalidi (2013). In his book, Khalidi (2013, p. xiv-xviii) argues that rather than being an "honest broker" the US might even have made the search for peace more difficult, and he also argues that the aim of the US was to pressure the Palestinians into conforming to Israel's wants. The validity of the US as an unbiased

conciliator, an "honest broker", is also pointed out by Aruri (2003, p. xi) who focuses on the contradiction of being a neutral party in search for a peaceful solution at the same time as having a close, long-lasting alliance with Israel. He argues that the role as "honest broker" is ruled out based on the changes in 1967 when the special relations between the US and Israel emerged based on a strategic alliance. While Telhami (2002, p. 128) argues that the US have a dilemma in negotiating peace and being very committed to the security of Israel, he also claims that this dilemma can sometimes be exacerbated.

In the literature concerning the US involvement in the peace process, the term "Israel's lawyer" is sometimes used to describe the US role (Miller 2005, Khalidi 2013, p. 92-93). This term was first used by Miller, who has worked as a US advisor in peace efforts, in an op-ed in 2005. The term received both praise and criticism. He claims that one must respect the interests of both sides in a conflict to be a mediator, and furthermore he claims that the US is often heavily influenced by Israel (Miller 2008, 75-76). In addition, Miller (2008, p. 79-80) have also argued that the special relationship the US have with Israel is what makes the US so influential in the peacemaking between Israel and the Arabs. The Arabs are aware of this special relationship, and knows that in the right setting, this relationship can bring about real influence, and in some cases, even pressure. Other authors remain very critical of the suggestion that the US acts as an "honest broker". Falk (1997, p. 5) argues that the US role as an "honest broker" is an illusion at best, and that it is a part of a grander illusion regarding the entire peace process in which the US and Israel squeeze out the Palestinians. Furthermore he claims that the reason why the Palestinians accept the illusion of the "honest broker" is due to lack of choices. Another way of expressing criticism towards the notion that the US is an "honest broker" comes from Bennis (1997, p. 19). She argues that there are no illusion and also no claims that the US is a neutral part. Rather, she claims that the US is an "honest real estate broker" in that the US can take part in the negotiations as evenhanded, but at the same time the US represents Israel and has an interest in seeing Israel succeed.

A reason often stated in the literature for why it might be difficult for a US president to get heavily involved in the issue concerning the Palestinians and in the role as "honest broker", is the American political system itself. Though it might seem like the president have enormous power, there are political realities that is taken into consideration (Quandt 2005, p. 236).

Khalidi (2013, p.83) argues that the domestic political systems of the US and Israel are intertwined, including their funding, media and strategic consultants. In terms of working on a peace process, Khalidi (2013, p. 108-109) also argues that the US politicians have been in need of guidance as they are not necessarily driven by long-term goals, which would be found in achieving peace in the Middle East. Rather, the domestic political system influences the politicians to be driven by short-term goals. These goals include focusing on the current winds in the domestic politics, and also the oil and arms industry. He argues that these short-term goals "favored maintenance of a status quo predicated on preventing a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict" (Khalidi 2013, p. 109). In his book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* former American President Jimmy Carter argues that the role as "honest broker" must in the long run be played by the US. While he argues that the US must support a peace process as evenhanded and enthusiastic, he does also acknowledge that the US will inevitable tilt to one of the sides (Carter 2007, p. 16).

The literature regarding the US roles as the "best friend of Israel" and the "honest broker" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is highly divided, and thus in mirrors the conflict in itself where the views of the conflicting parties on different issues also are highly divided. The use of language remain is recurring in some of the literature. Especially Khalidi (2013, p. ix-x) points to the importance of precise language in such a conflict, and argues that language can be used in certain ways in the negotiations of process towards peace. He points to terms like for instance "honest broker", "peace process", "security" and "terrorism" and argues that terms can come to get a specific meaning within the language of the conflict. The importance of language is central in politics. Words have different meaning and can be interpreted in different ways which can have big consequences. With this literature in mind, I wish to look at both of the roles and explore the paradox between these two seemingly contrasting roles and how they are presented by the US in the discourse. I wish to look into why the US is attempting to combine the roles in the complex the complex conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. One of the main aspects which make the conflict so complex, is the conflicting narratives of the conflict.

3. Narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The historical accounts of this conflict are very much contested as there are several ways of understanding the events that has occurred through history. Some argue that "any attempt to simply recount its main events in chronological order is bound to be contested by someone – even if that account is deliberately neutral in intent, purged of any overt editorializing, and without passing judgment on motive, causes, or effects" (Caplan 2010, p.3). In this conflict, there are very different narratives of the conflict. A narrative is defined by The Oxford English Dictionary (2013) as "a spoken or written account of connected events; a story". The interpretations, the stories, the conflicting parties have of the past have much influence on the political choices and statements they make in regards to the conflict, and it the interpretations of the past are also used to justify the choices made. Caplan (2010) argues that this baggage the parties have contains

" (a) an accumulation of unresolved grievances against, and perceived injustices committed by, the other party, (b) a constantly renewed and refreshed sense of righteousness in its own cause, (c) a constantly renewed and refreshed sense of its victimization at the hands of others, and (d) a degree of pessimism, cynicism, and despair produced by a succession of disappointment over failed efforts and missed opportunities for a just and/or peaceful resolution" (p. 221-222).

The two narratives by the conflicting parties are very difficult to bridge, and this is reflected in the several attempts of negotiation peace between the parties. One reason for this is the difference in how and why certain events have been major turnings points in the two narratives (Rotberg 2006, p. 2). Thus the narratives have an impact on the peace process as it can influence the politics when for instance politicians emphasize different events based on its significance in their narrative. Furthermore, narratives are essential in the identities in a society, both for individual identities and the collective identities. For instance, narratives can contribute to the creation and maintaining of the identity as "righteous victims" in a conflict like this (Scham 2013, p. 42-43).

Following are the traditional Palestinian narrative and the traditional Israeli narrative of the conflict in which the US is heavily involved in the search for peace. There are variations

within these narratives between different groupings related to the two sides, though some of the central points of the narratives most often remain similar. Some of the main points include the historic ties to the land, descriptions of the other party, the start of the conflict, the causes and consequences of the events of the conflict and the rights legality of different issues.

3.1. The Traditional Palestinian Narrative

One of the most important events described in the Palestinian narrative is the war in 1948 which is referred to as the *al-Nakba*, the catastrophe. In this narrative, this event led to the expulsion of Palestinians from their land and the destruction of their society. It also was the start of the Palestinian refugee problem with some 700 000 Palestinian refugees created as a result of the *al-Nakba* (Caplan 2010, p. 7). The refugee issue remains one of the most important one for the Palestinians to date. The Palestinians have continued to identify themselves with a homeland in Palestine and protest their expulsion. They stand firm by the right of all the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes (Scham 2013, p. 35).

The Palestinian narrative reject the notion that Judaism has any inherent ties to the land as it is a religion of revelation, meaning a religion that is based on divine revelations. Thus the narrative rejects any Jewish rights to the land. One of the claims states that though there was an Israelite presence in a short period, this does not grant the Jews rights of ownership to the land Palestine. Palestinians claim to be descendants of all inhabitants previously living there, including Israelites. They base their claim on biblical and archeological evidence which illustrate that the ancestors of the Palestinians, including Canaanites and Jebusites, were in this land before the Israelites, and their ancestor the Palestinians have lived in the land continuously (Scham 2013, p. 33-34). As the narrative claim historical roots, it also argues that Jerusalem stands as a central place for the Palestinian people, both in religion and the administrative (Jawad 2006, p. 74). The narrative talks of a Palestinian identity and nationality that has existed at least since 1920, which makes the Palestinians are distinct from other Arab peoples. While the narrative claims that the Jews are a community of believes as oppose to a nation, Zionism is describes as a European colonialist enterprise who robbed Arabs of their land while systematically expelling Palestinians, at the same time as it superimpose European ideology in the Middle East. Furthermore, the narrative argues that

previous history shows that while Jews have been living in the land, they were being treated well by Muslim leaders and neighbors (Scham 2013, p. 33-34).

A cause leading up to the conflict was the involvement of Great Britain. The Palestinian narrative state that, the British had an imperial plan for the Middle East, and support of Zionism by the Balfour Declaration was a part of this. The Balfour Declaration was a letter in which the British foreign minister promised the Palestinian land to the Zionists. The Palestinian narrative deem the deal a unholy marriage (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 9-11) Such a references is based on the Palestinian claim that the Balfour Declaration was illegal as the land was not Great Britain's to give away to the Jewish people (Scham 2013, p. 34). This narrative clearly claims that the British Mandate on Palestine was created so that they could carry out their colonial plans in the region (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 375). Now, as Jewish immigration increased, frustration and resentment grew among the Palestinians. Revolts, that the narrative deems justified, occurred spontaneously by the Palestinians, and they received harsh punishments by the Zionists (Scham 2013, p. 34). The narrative places much responsibility on Great Britain for supporting Israel in their quest for a Jewish state in the Arab world (Jawad 2006, p. 74).

In 1947, the UN presented what the Palestinian narrative dubbed an illegitimate partition resolution of the land. The resolution was illegitimate because the UN had no right to hand over a part of the Palestinian homeland to the Zionists. A compromise was unacceptable, and all the Palestinians were doing was to try and hold on to their homeland. The Jews was prepared for war and had more armed forces than the Arab armies (Scham 2013, p. 34-45). The decision by the Arab states to attack the newly declared Israeli state was based on an effort to prevent Zionists to overrun the Arabs of Palestine (Caplan 2010, p. 111). In addition, the Palestinian narrative claim that the Jewish leaders always had a plan to expel the Palestinians, and this occurred after the adoption of the partition resolution in November of 1947 to ensure the existence of a Jewish state. Ethnic cleansing occurred though massacres and expulsion during al-Nakba. This event is stated by the narrative to be a reminiscent of the Holocaust from just a few years earlier (Scham 2013, p. 35).

The Palestinian people have at several occasions rose up against what they claim to be an Israeli occupation in attempts to liberate the land from the occupant. The two most important events of such uprisings are the first *Intifada* in 1987 and the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* which started in 2000 (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 375). The Israeli occupation remains at the core of the Palestinian narrative. In regards to a future end of the conflict, the Palestinian narrative claim there can never be a settlement of peace until Israel accepts its guilt in the conflict and offering appropriate compensation, including giving Palestinians the right to return to their homes. The narrative claims that Palestinians have been betrayed by other Arab states who very reluctantly has given refugees a place in refugee camps, and that those Palestinians living on other Arab countries are still living in exile (Scham 2013, p. 34-35). As the Palestinian narrative remains very important for the Palestinians history, identity and base for politics in the conflict, so does the Israeli narrative for the Israelis.

3.2. The Traditional Israeli Narrative

An essential part of the conflict is the central claim of the Israeli narrative which states that the Jews have the right to *Eretz Yisrael*. This is a Hebrew name which translates to "the land of Israel" (Caplan 2010, p.6). In this narrative, it is often referred to as the Holy Land and the Promised Land. This right, they claim, is legitimized by Jewish descent from the ancient Israelis where they inherited religious, legal and historical rights to the land. During the time the Jews spent living away from their Jewish homeland, which is often referred to as the Exile or the Diaspora, the Jews experienced much persecution. A reaction to this persecution was Zionism, which was a Jewish nationalism in support of a Jewish state in the land of Israel (Scham 2013, p. 33). The Jews were no longer to be a minority scattered around the world, but rather their own Jewish state in which the Jewish people were to be the majority (Waage 2013, 29-30). Parts of the Israeli narrative became very important for Zionism as it was used as justifications for the aim of establishing a Jewish state. These justifications, which often are repeated, include claims that this land has remained a homeland to the Jews through the many years living in exile, and the Jews have maintained ties to this homeland, spiritually and physically. Another justification rests on the claim that Jewish life in their homeland never ceased to exist (Bar-Tal & Salomon 2006, p. 26).

When referring to the Palestinians, this narrative claims that the Arabs of Palestine never had any ties to the land, and that they never were a national group. In addition, the narrative states an argument that during the Jewish diaspora, the homeland of the Jews were empty. They claim that after the decline in the Arab Muslim rule, there were no people there and no civilizational achievements. Furthermore, they claim that the land started blooming only when the Jews started returning. This particular claim in the Israeli narrative, excludes the Palestinians from having being present in the history of this land and has been important in Israeli justifications throughout the years (Jawad 2006, p. 73). In addition to arriving at in an "empty" land, the Zionists also claims legitimacy in regards to the Balfour Declaration from 1917. The Balfour Declaration approved a Jewish homeland in Palestine and was ratified by the League of Nations. Great Britain, who the Israeli narrative also claims had an imperial agenda of their own, was initially supportive of the Zionists in this regard, but the Zionists claim the British later turned pro-Arab. The narrative claims that Arabs were attracted to the area by the economic success by the Zionists, and that Arab leaders had instigated the riots that occurred in the 1920, 1929 and 1936 were the British did nothing when Arabs murdered Jews (Scham 2013, p. 33-34). The riots where referred to as "the Disturbances" by the Israeli narrative (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 364).

The cause and responsibility of the war in 1948 is not placed anywhere near Israel in this narrative. The narrative claims that when the UN partition resolution was accepted by the Zionist movement in 1947, the Arabs forced a war on them. The Zionists fought back in self-defense for their survival and to prevent a new Holocaust, and they won. This victory, they claim, was nearly a miracle as the Arabs had larges forces (Scham, p 35). Contrary to the Palestinian narrative which refers to this as the al-Nakba, the catastrophe, the Israeli narrative refers to is as the War of Independence. (Caplan 2010, p. 7) Some draw parallels to the biblical story of David who bravely fought and won over the much stronger Goliath (Caplan 2012, p. 112). In regards to one of the consequences of the war, the Palestinian refugees, the Israeli narrative downplay this issue, and do not put responsibility for any Palestinians leaving the area on Israel. According to this narrative, the Zionists took over more land than the resolution allotted them when they won the war, though they justify holding on to this land due to their own security. The Israeli narrative claim the Palestinians living in the area, were not expelled, but rather fled due to orders from Arab leaders who wanted to make room for Arab armies (Scham 2013, p. 35). Thus they claim that in the early stages of the war in from

December of 1947 and March 1948, as many as 75 000 Arabs, mainly those with means to travel, had already left (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 118). They claim that the Palestinian refugees issue is artificially kept alive by Arab leaders to use them as pawns against Israel. The "right to return" will never be accepted by Israel as they see it as a way of destroying Israel as a Jewish state (Scham 2013, p. 35).

One of the key events in the Israeli narrative since the founding of the Israeli state is the war in 1967, which the narrative refers to as the Six-Day War. The narrative claim this was a war the Israel did not intend nor initiate, but in which Israel still won a major victory (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 214). The name "the Six-Day War" is a reference to the narrative as it highlights the fast victory. This name is used by Israel and much of the West, while the Arabs call this war the June War, and some simply, and more objectively, refer to it as the 1967 War (Scham 2013, p. 41). The violence continued after this, and in 1987 an uprising, mostly fought with stones and Molotov cocktail, called the Intifada started in which the Israeli Defense Forces eventually struck down on, in some cases with very hard force. The Israeli narrative mentions some issues that caused the Intifada which include the personal aspect of Palestinians experiencing humiliation in their everyday life by Israelis, poor Palestinian leadership and the growing presence of the Israeli state which contributed to feelings of defeat among Palestinians. The Intifada became a turning point, leading the two parties to realize that they needed to work together for a peaceful solution and thus opening up for negotiation (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 274-286). The Israeli narrative claims that the continuation of the conflict is really caused by the Arab states that refuse to acknowledge the existence of the Israeli state and whose goal it has been to destroy Israel. Israel claims the responsibility lie with the Arabs leaders for rejecting the UN partition resolution in 1947, and Israel also claim to have offered peace time and again, though emphasizes that they will not do so at the cost of their own destruction (Scham 2013, p. 34-35)

While there is some degree of variation within both narratives, the Israeli narratives experienced a significant division during the late 1980's. At this time, the traditional Israeli narrative was challenged by what was called "new" historians or "revisionists" who came from the political left (Scham 2013, p. 42). One of the forerunners for the challenging of the traditional Israel narrative was Professor Benny Morris with his book *The Birth of the*

Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949 which was published in 1988. In his revised edition of this book called *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (2004, p. 588), he argues that Israel holds more of the responsibility for the displacement of the Palestinians than they previously acknowledged. This illustrates that developments have occurred which have had an impact on the discourse and potentially on the policy, like for instance compromises in the peace process. While some welcomed the accounts of the past being investigated, others were not as welcoming, and much criticism were voiced (Caplan 2010, p. 232-233). This criticism towards the revisionist who challenged the established, traditional Israeli narrative illustrate how deeply rooted such a narrative is, and how difficult it can be to change even a few aspects of it.

3.3. Disputed Elements in the Narratives – Issues of the Conflict

The differences in the traditional narratives as presented above illustrate that there are several disputed elements among the two narratives. Such disputed elements are often the cause of issues in the conflict that are not resolved. Some of the disputed issues involve the elementary need each side has to be in existence (Bar-Tal & Salomon 2006, p. 21). While it not just a territorial conflict, one of the central issues in the conflict is the control of land. Problems within the conflict occur when the parties interpret the rights to the land. They interpret their past differently and use their interpretation to point out what they believe to be true; that they have the rights to the land (Scham 2013, p. 35). For instance, the Jews claim that they have a Biblical right to Eretz Yisrael, though this land which is spoken of do not have defined geographical border (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 364-366). While the Palestinians claim their ancestors lived in the land and that the Palestinians has continued to live there since (Scham 2013, p. 33-34). The acknowledgement of each other's existence, and thus further rights, are disputed in various degrees. The existence of the Palestinian people has been disputed by some Israelis. Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir stated in 1969 that

"there was no such thing as Palestinians. When was there an independent Palestinian people with a Palestinian state? It was either southern Syria before the First World War, and then it was a Palestine including Jordan. It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist" (cited in Khalidi 2013, p. 9-10).

This statement denies the Palestinians their identity and also some right which is linked to the Palestinians core issues, the dispossession of their homeland (Neff 1995, p. 112-113). The question of rights and legality can be found on either side. The Palestinian narrative argues for instance for illegality of the Balfour Declaration and illegitimacy for the expulsion of the Palestinian people (Scham 2013, p. 34-35).

The disputes often center on ownership to the land, and one of the most significant pieces of land in this conflict is Jerusalem. The Jews view Jerusalem as central not only their religion, but also to their own history. The Muslims argue the same about Jerusalem for their own religion and history (Jawad 2006, p. 74-75). Some Palestinians claim Jerusalem to be a 5000 year old Arab city which the Israelis occupied in 1967 (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 375). Given that both have strong attachments to the city, it remains one of the central, and very disputed, issues in the conflict. The narratives with their disputes over land are visible in the language of some politicians today. For instance, a few Israeli politicians, mostly those belonging to the political rightwing in Israel, use the names Judea and Samaria. These are names from the Old Testament in the Bible for the area of the West Bank, a part of the Palestinian Territories (Khalidi 2013, p. 10; Waage 2013, p. 365).

4. Historical Background of the US Policy Towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is very complex, and so is the US involvement in it. Though to provide a backdrop for the American paradox, including the two contrasting roles as "best friend of Israel" and the "honest broker", I will present some historical background. The US policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has changed over time. In the beginning of the 20th century the US held an official opposition against Zionism. Before the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, there was an internal struggle in the US whether or not to support Zionism and its quest to found a Jewish state. The relationship with Israel has grown closer over the years and Israel has become a valuable ally for the US (Neff 1995, p. 2-3). Today Israel is the country in the world that has received the most foreign assistance from the US since World War II, and in 2013 the sum of this bilateral assistance reaches 118 billion USD. Though Israel has received an amount of this as economic assistance, most of this is given in the form of military assistance (Sharp 2013). The close relationship with Israel is a much debated topic in American foreign policy, and some argue that the relationship often is the reason for Muslim anger and anti-American extremism towards the US. Regardless, the relations between Israel and the US remain strong (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 77; Dodge 2012, p. 208). To provide insight for the following analysis of the roles in the American paradox, I present a short history of US foreign policy in regards to this conflict, followed by some of the US positions on the main issues of the conflict and US national interests in the conflict.

4.1. A Short History of the US Involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from 1948 - 2002

The internal struggle regarding support of the Zionist movement in the British Mandate of Palestine divided the US into two brackets. With variations on both sides, one side was more sympathetic towards the Zionist movement and the other side emphasized the interest of the US in keeping a good relationship with the Arabs (Spiegel 2013a, p. 295). In the internal debates, oil was a major theme. Several people, including the then Secretary of State George Marshall, argued that the US access to oil in the Middle East could be jeopardized if the US

supported a Jewish state (Makovsky 2012, p. 25). With the growing unrest in the area, the US became involved in finding a solution. The US, despite the Arabs disapproval of the plan, voted in favor of the partition plan for the land of Palestine. Even though the US knew that the Arabs had access to arms from Europe, the US decided to impose an arms embargo on the area in an attempt to not contribute to the violence. When the British withdrew from the area, much due to the increasing violence, Israel declared their state established on May 15th 1948. The US was the first country to acknowledge the new state (Spiegel 2013a, p. 295-296).

The displacement of Palestinians started in small numbers before the establishment of the state Israel, though the war in 1948 is considered by many as the start of the Palestinian refugee problem (Morris 2004, p. 588). Some argue that there were little to no consideration for the Palestinians at this time. Those supporting the partition generally believed that the Zionist cause was worth supporting after what had happened during the Holocaust. Those opposing the partition did generally do in order to promote American interests in the regions and secure a stable region. The US did support the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 which called for refugees who wish to return to be able to do so, and for compensation to be paid to those who do not wish to return (Spiegel 2013a, p. 296).

When the Truman administration came to the White House in 1945, the president, together with millions of Americans was appalled by the Holocaust and supported the Zionists. Though the US State Department did not support the Zionist aim and argued for the US to stay out of the issue (Waage, 2013, p. 91-92). In regards to the access to Arab oil, the price would come to be relative small for the most part. Saudi Arabia was too dependent on US expertise regarding oil to jeopardize their relationship with the US on the issue of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. This allowed the US to support Israel at the same time as it had access to Arab oil (Khalidi 2013, p. xxv-xxvi). The Truman administration recognized the state of Israel immediately after it was established in 1948, and the administration "is often credited with virtually creating the Jewish state" (Spiegel 2013a, p. 297). The level of support would vary some from administration to administration. When the Eisenhower administration entered the White house, the Cold War was becoming a major preoccupation. As Soviet was entering and gaining influence in the Middle East, the US saw it as a threat to their interests, including the oil in the region (Spiegel 2013a, p. 297). Eisenhower argued that the US

relationship with Israel was directly harmful to the US interests in the region and also towards the US Cold War politics (Dodge 2012, p. 210). In the mid-1950's, tensions rose between Egypt and Israel, and when Israel pleaded for arms the US and Great Britain, they both tried to stall their negative responses to Israel's plea. At this time Israel cooperated with France regarding arms and intelligence (Caplan 2010, p.141). The US remained firm with Israel at this time, and did for instance force Israel to fully retreat from the land Israel conquered during the Suez crisis in 1956. After US pressure, Israel retreated in 1957 (Waage 2013, p. 202-208). In some cases the US would suspend the aid it was providing to Israel if it believed that Israel overreacted in response to Arab attacks. During this time, the interest in the Palestinian refugee increased, and this issue was explicitly mentioned as one of the main issues of the conflict (Spiegel 2013a, p. 297-298).

In the early 1960's, while the Kennedy administration was in office, the focus on Palestinian refugees continued, though the relationship with Israel changed. For the first time since the creation of the Israeli state, the US started selling arms to Israel. This was in an attempt to counterbalance the arms the Soviet Union had been providing for Egypt, and to gain more power in the region. The sales of arms to Israel continued, and escalated with coming administrations (Spiegel 2013a, p. 298). This military partnership would continue to grow in the years ahead. In 1964 the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was established, and at the time secular movements such as the PLO, were seen by the US as a source of destabilization in the region (Telhami 2002, p. 27). The PLO promoted the Palestinian cause with emphasis on issues like a distinctive Palestinian identity, and it embodied the Palestinian nationalism as an organization (Miller 2008, p. 57).

The war in 1967, which is also referred to by some as the Six-Day War or the June War, made for a shift in the conflict and for the involvement of the US. Israel had not been seen by the US as a strategic asset in the region up until the demonstration of military superiority as the victor in the war in 1967. After this war, Israel's strategic value increased substantially, and eventually served as a US proxy in the region during the Cold War, and helped the US contain the Soviet expansion (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 51) The facts on the ground had changed as Israel now controlled the Palestinian territories of West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and in addition controlled Sinai and the Golan Heights. After the war, the Israelis and

Palestinians did not come to any agreement, and their positions were so contradictory that the US was initially reluctant to step in as a mediator. Israelis would not return any land for anything less than agreements on security, recognition and peace, and in addition the Palestinians were not allowed to return to their homes, with a few exceptions (Quandt 2005, p. 3-5). After the war in 1967, the main focus in the conflict shifted slightly. The main focus was now on the Israeli occupation of neighboring states, and regaining the lost territories. A central issue for achieving this would include the Arab states recognition of the Israel (Butenschøn 2008, p. 377). Promise of peace and recognition was not something the Arab regimes were prepared to do. They might have done it if the Palestinians were satisfied, but it would require more than withdrawal for such demands. Both sides were very hesitant to deal with each other (Quandt 2005, p. 3-5).

When Yassir Arafat, who was more independent than his predecessor, assumed control over the PLO after the war in 1967, the dynamics changed. The US came to see the PLO as a challenge to US interests. Violence escalated and the relationship between the US and Arafat, who was close with Soviet, remained complex. The US would come to see the PLO as a terrorist organization that was dangerous and growing more powerful, and the US pledged to Israel not to talk to or even recognize the PLO until the organization accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242 and 338. The PLO also had to accept Israel's right to exist (Spiegel 2013a, p. 299-301). In 1987, the violence escalated and the first Intifada, the uprising, started among frustrated Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The US became diplomatically involved and eventually started talking to the PLO (Quandt 2005, p. 274-278). Thus, during the late 1980's, the relationship between the US and Arafat changed. In 1988, Arafat had accepted three conditions which marked this change which included "recognition of Israel's right to exist, renunciation of terrorism, and acceptance of Resolution 242 and 338" (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 8). In 1988, the Islamic Resistance Movement was established and participated in the Intifada. The acronym for the Arabic name for the movement spells *Hamas*, which is the name most commonly used to refer to the movement. Hamas, an arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, argued that all of the historical Palestine belonged to the Palestinians, and thus they were against the Israeli state on this land (Nasrallah 2013, p. 59). The US viewed Hamas as terrorists due to its use of violence. Khalidi (2013, p. 10) argue that calling an organization like Hamas for terrorist is a tactic for not having to deal with them and the claims they present.

After the end of the Cold War, in which the US had come out as the new superpower, the hegemon in the world, new attempts on peace were instigated. The US started shuttle diplomacy in the region and put some economic pressure on Israel to set in order to set up a multinational peace conference. This conference happened in Madrid in late 1991, though no peace settlement was reached (Dodge 2012, p. 211). When the Clinton administration came to the office, there had been a change in Israeli relations to PLO. The Israelis did previously not view it legitimate to talk to the PLO, but they had now changed this attitude. In 1993 in Oslo, secret talks were initiated between Israel and the PLO. Some breakthroughs were made, including achieving mutual recognition, acceptance of UN Resolutions 242 and 338 by the Palestinians and violence was renounced, and the apparent committed by Israel to withdraw from Gaza and the West Bank. The US was not actively involved in the talks, but supported the talks. The optimism around the secret talks was high, though weaknesses in the agreements were present, and the process did not end in a peace agreement (Spiegel 2013b, 308-309).

Though the US has supported Israel in various ways, including a total of 118 billion USD in bilateral aid since World War II (Sharp 2013), the US has also given support to the Palestinians. Since the mid-1990's, the US has given approximately 5 billion USD on bilateral aid to the Palestinians, and especially during the recent years the objective has been to create a situations in the West Bank which allows for the two-state solution to come to existence and to meet the humanitarian needs. In addition, the economic aid to the Palestinians is also used to fight terrorism aimed at Israel by Hamas and others. It is not permitted to give US aid to Hamas or entities controlled by Hamas (Zanotti 2013). The US gradually took more leadership over the peace process. A new government was elected in Israel in 1996. The new Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu was from the political rightwing and had a massive focus on security during his campaign. He was in opposition of the policy in regards to the conflict by his predecessors Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, and would not carry out postponed implementations of signed agreement on like the Hebron agreements where Rabin and Peres had agreed to withdraw Israeli forces from most of the city Hebron. This led to difficulties in negotiating, and at times there were complete dead-locks (Quandt 2005, p. 342-344). While Netanyahu was less willing to pursue the peace process, Arafat remained willing

to pursue peace. Though Arafat's policies were inconsistent, for instance in his reactions to terrorism. The US found itself standing closer to Palestinians on the major issues of the diplomatic peace process, which was a position the US found politically uncomfortable. The peace process slowed down, though when Ehud Barak was elected new Prime Minister in Israel in 1999, the Clinton administration saw a new hope rising (Spiegel 2013b, p. 308-311).

A new attempt of peace negotiation occurred at Camp David in 2000. Arafat did not feel ready, arguing that his team and country were divided. Clinton pressured Arafat and assured him that he would not be blamed if the negotiations broke down (Spiegel 2013b, 312). The two conflicting parties were far apart on the central issues, and both stood firm on their demands. Eventually, Barak made concessions, and presented a proposal that surprised most. The proposal included a Palestinian state on 84-90 percent of the West bank and Gaza (Waage 2013, 460-461). Though there was some compromise, there were still issues on which they did not agree, including Palestinian refugees. Arafat stood firm on his demand of right to return for Palestinian refugees. Thus Arafat declined Barak's proposal, and Arafat was blamed for the break-down in negotiations. Barak had made some concessions during these negotiations which caused him political problems at home in Israel. Clinton, who was angry with Arafat for not engaging in the positions suggested, criticized Arafat. This criticism was also in an attempt to help Barak in his political situation in Israel. The blame for the break-down of this negotiation has been discussed a lot over the years, and errors have been found also with Clinton and Barak (Spiegel 2013b, p. 312-313).

In 2000, the republican governor of Texas, George W. Bush was elected president of the US. A major issue for this new administration was their skepticism towards Arafat. There were reports of Clinton telling the new president that Arafat was to blame for the failure of the peace talks (Quandt 2005, p. 389). The atmosphere in the Israeli- Palestinian conflict was dominated by escalated violence, tension and disappointment. In early September of 2001, there were rumors of a new policy coming from Washington, but before anything would happen, the terrorist attacks on US soil September 11th occurred and the US became preoccupied in dealing with the repercussions of the attack (Spiegel 2013b, 316-317). Still, the US has remained active in the peace process, and in this involvement they adhere to certain positions.

4.2. Premise for Peace: The US Position on Some of the Main Issues in the Conflict

The role as the "honest broker" entails that the US consider both parties wants and needs in a peace process, and this can be illustrated through the premise for peace which the US presents. The US positions, which were laid out in 1967, and became the basis for the UN Resolution 242 later that year, have remained rather consistent from the Johnson administration to the Clinton administration, with a few minor adjustments along the way. Quandt (2005, p. 5-6) underlines five points which have followed US position through this time. First, the US have relied on the notion of "peace for land", meaning that Israel should not have to give back land unless it can be exchanged for recognition, security and peace. Second, Jerusalem should not be divided, though the status of the city should be agreed upon in peace negotiations. Third, the US have continuously opposed the Israeli settlements that extend beyond the borders pre-1967, while they have not been considered illegal by the US after 1981, the US have repeatedly stated that they consider the settlements to be illegitimate (Deitch 2013). The funds Israel receives from the US is not to be used on these settlements. Fourth, in relations to Palestinian rights, the US did not support the unrestricted right of Palestinians to return to their homes. The US position on Palestinian rights did not include an automatic right to a Palestinian state that was fully independent. The US leaned more towards an option where a Palestinian state was linked to Jordan. This position did fade some around the mid-1990's. Fifth and finally, the US has supported Israeli military superiority in the region (Quandt 2005, p. 5-6).

Former American President Jimmy Carter (2007), who was deeply involved in the peace process, state three basic premises for peace. First, Israel's right to exist must be recognized by the Arabs, including the Palestinians. Second, violence and killings of noncombatants are condoned. And third, Palestinians shall live in their own land with peace as international law specifies, or with modifications through negotiations with Israel (Carter 2007, p. 16-17). After Bush called for a two-state solution with a Palestinian state in 2001, it has been a central part of the US premise for peace and a part of the US role as "honest broker". Obama emphasized this together with some of the other US premise for peace during his speech in Cairo in 2009. He illustrated US priorities by focusing on what he claimed to be some of the major obstacles. This included the lack of recognition of the Israeli state and previous peace agreements,

especially by Hamas, the Israeli settlements and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza together with the failing economy in the West Bank. Though, disagreements remain between the US and the conflicting parties making the peace process challenging (Jensehaugen & Sletteland 2013, p. 68). Mearsheimer (2008, p. 149-151) argues that the level off US support to Israel, including the lack of pressure, allows Israel to continue with the expanding settlement activities. A continuation of expanding settlement activity might lead to severe difficulties of reaching a two-state solution in the future. This could lead to challenges for some of the US interests in the conflict and in the region.

4.3. US National Interests in the Conflict

The US has many national interests, and a few of them are affected by the conflict. This does reinforce the drive to be involved in this highly complex conflict and to play their roles as "honest broker" and "best friend of Israel". A main reason for the complexity of the conflict lies in the different perceptions of the conflicting parties of events and it causes and consequences. The access to the Arab energy reserves, the oil, is a main interest of the US (Chomsky 1999, p. 17; Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 71; Khalidi 2013, p. 109). To secure access to the Arab oil, the US attempt to prevent any single country of gaining monopoly of the oil in the region. Thus if one state grew stronger and more aggressive in regards of the control of oil, this main interest of the US could serve as a justification for the US to interfere (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 71). Telhami (2002) argue that peace between the Israelis and the Arabs, including the Palestinians, is an interest of the US because the "conflict between Israel and the Arabs makes it difficult to manage the dual American objectives in the region: maintaining the flow of oil to the West at reasonable prices and supporting the security and well-being of the state of Israel" (p. 55). In addition to the Arab oil, the security of the US and its own citizens, remain an essential interest. Since the establishment of the state Israel, which the US supported and has supported since, the Palestinian issue has often been included in rhetoric and used in politics by several Arab governments who care for this issue, like for instance when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. This is related to identity and the Arab consciousness in the region which is heavily influenced by the conflict. The US involvement in the conflict and its close relationship with Israel remain a central part in how many in the Arab world have viewed the US (Telhami 2002, p. 96-101). Even though the US does not hold all the cards in the conflict, the actions by the US have major consequences for the

conflict and region. The power Israel enjoys is a consequence of US support (Telhami 2002, p. 126-127). The bloody confrontations during the Intifada in 1987 and the US veto in UN Security Council resolution aimed at protecting the Palestinians are some of the issues which generate anti-American perspectives in the Middle East (Telhami 2002, p. 56-57). Some argue that the anti-American perspectives inspire extremists who may also target the US with violence as they do Israel, and thus it is a threat to the US security (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 62).

Another kind of interest related to the conflict is found in the domestic political system in the US. It is based on the desire of politicians, like the president, to stay in power which most often happens through re-elections. The political system in the US, with four-year cycles, imposes patterns of what is put on the political agenda. Every four years, around election-times, political issues that are more pleasant for Israel supporters are emphasized, as to gain the political support domestically. After the election, the policy usually becomes more evenhanded (Quandt 2005, p. 8). Miller (2008, p. 119-122) argues that no president can ignore the domestic politics in regards to the conflict. Politicians will go to great lengths to not rile up a pro-Israel constituency. While US diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be successful, the domestic system and politics stand as an obstacle. Miller (2008), who served as advisor in the US diplomatic efforts the conflict, claims that "whenever a president or secretary of state engaged in successful Arab-Israeli diplomacy and actually brokered an agreement, U.S.-Israeli relations have always had a certain amount of tension which drew a domestic political reaction. Always" (p. 122).

In regards to the conflict itself, a peaceful solution to the conflict is argued to be a long-term national interest for the US (Khalidi 2013, p. 108). Arguably, several presidents have wanted to see a successful peace settlement of the conflict as a part of their legacy. Since the early 1970's, peacemaking in the Israeli-Palestinian has been expressed to some degree by all American administrations (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 2-3). The commitment to one of the conflicting parties, Israel, stands as one main interest in the region. It is mostly based on their sense of moral after the Holocaust and later also based on Israel as a strategic asset. Though, the commitment to Israel has at times, especially in the earliest decades of the conflict, been a conflicting issue for the US due to its interest of maintaining good relations with the

surrounding Arab countries. Good relations to Arab states were grounded in dominant US national interests in preventing Soviet influence in the region during the Cold War and the oil in the region (Quandt 2005, p. 13). The US interests influence the US as they continue their involvement, both as "honest broker" and "best friend of Israel".

5.Social Context: Milestones in the Peace

Process from 2002 - 2013

In this chapter I present some milestones from the time period of 2002 to 2013. These milestones serve as social context to the following critical discourse analysis. Discourse is a central part of the social practice as discourse both constitutes the social world, but also is constituted by the social practices (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 74). As a social context from this time period from 2002 to 2013 is especially important for my analysis, this segment is somewhat more detailed in the description on the milestones, and a table that lists the milestones together with my data collection of US official statements can be found in chapter 8 (Table 1). In the Israeli-Palestinian developments happen, large and small, all the time. Due to the complexity of the timeline for the conflict and the US involvement and the limitation of this thesis, I will not be able to present all the events, though I will include some events that have had an impact not only on the course of the conflict, but also the US involvement in the conflict. Here I will present some of the main events during the time from 2002 to 2013. During this time period, the US is a hegemon in the world, and in 2002, Bush was halfway in his first term as US president.

5.1. The First Bush Administration

When stepping into office in 2000, the first Bush administration inherited a peace diplomacy with several failed attempts at finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Bush had relatively little experience in foreign policy, and did come to adhere to a unilateralist approach to the US foreign policy much because of his idealist problems of legitimizing and negotiating with regimes he saw as problematic, including Arafat (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p.187). Some argue that during the first Bush administration, the commitment to the Israeli-Palestinian ranked very low in relations other administrations (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 3). Around 2002, the situation in the conflict was very tense and violent. In the very beginning of his term, the Bush administration remained rather passive as they were adamant on not repeating the failure of Clinton at Camp David, as Bush saw democracy as prerequisite for achieving peace. Thus in the spring of 2002, Bush set out on a new direction with emphasis on democracy (Spiegel

2013b, p. 316-317). Still, much of this time was characterized by the US preoccupation with the aftermath of 9/11.

5.1.1. The Aftermath of 9/11 and the Invasion of Iraq

The terrorist attacks by al Qaeda on American soil on September 11th 2001 where nearly 3000 people were killed, became a turning point for President Bush and his administration. The focus on security was maximized, and a war against terrorism was commenced by Bush with his infamous words to the world and its leaders stating that they would now either be "with us or against us". Though the concrete plans were not laid out, a hard line was set up, and the events of this day, which is often just referred to as 9/11, would come to affect all of US foreign policy, including the US policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Several strategies were discussed, and Secretary of State Colin L. Powell argued that there was an urgent need for a solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as this remained one of the root cause of the terrorism, he also wanted to include Arab and Muslim partner in a wider anti-terror effort (Quandt 2005, p. 393-395). In late 2001 and early 2002, Bush attempted to improve US standing in the Arab world and consequently reduce anti-American sentiment, by putting pressure on Israel to stop settlement activity. This was in addition to promote the establishment of a Palestinian state. The US again attempted to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as to not have it be a source of inspiration for more terrorist attacks on the US. However, the US was not able to persuade the parties to make the compromises necessary (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 204). Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was not pleased with this new twist in which the US put some pressure on Israel to restore dialogue with Arafat and a cease-fire with Palestine. The US was outlining a two-state solution for the conflict. While Clinton previously had similar articulations, Bush was the first American president to speak so directly about a Palestinian state in late 2001 (Quandt 2005, p. 394-395).

In January of 2002 the Israeli navy intercepted a ship containing arms, which was destined for Palestine. Arafat denied this. According to the Oslo Accords, arms were not allowed to bring in to Palestine, making this incident a major one. Arafat did not have much credibility in Washington, and this incident made it worse. Bush eventually called for a new Palestinian leadership in a speech held in June 24th 2002 (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 164-165). In March 2003

the US invaded Iraq as a preemptive and preventive attack in the war on terror. The invasion in Iraq remained a priority for the US, and the international society was very critical towards this decision (Quandt 2005, p.399).

5.1.2. The Al-Aqsa Intifada

In late 2000 a second major intifada, called the Al-Aqsa Intifada, had erupted in violent riots. The background for this intifada was based on the continued frustration on the Palestinian side and an incident in September of 2000, where Sharon, the newly elected leader of the rightwing political party Likud, went for a walk to the location of the third most holy place for Muslims; the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Palestinians saw this as a deliberate provocation and an illustration of power and a new intifada started (Waage 2013, p. 462). The intifada would continue for more than four years. Though a peaceful solution was now more urgent, the Al-Aqsa Intifada made it more difficult with the collapse of mutual trust as one of the main reasons. There was an international pressure toward the US to take action in the conflict (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 148-171). In late March of 2002, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield. This was an operation during which time Israel re-occupied most of the West Bank and surrounded Arafat's compound as a response to increased suicide bombings and in attempt to curb the Al-Aqsa Intifada and uproot the terrorist's infrastructure. This was the biggest operation by Israel in the West Bank since the 1967 War and many civilians became victims, mostly due to targeting the refugee camp in Jenin, where many suicide bombers originated from (Lutes 2013, p. 374). Initially there were claims of an Israeli massacre in Jenin. Though, this claim was later dismissed by a UN report (Bennet 2002). After the operation ended in May of 2002, Israel started building a separation fence in the West Bank. In some places the fence was built in the inside of the West bank to incorporate Israeli settlements. This fence created much controversy, and has now become an actual border which has made attempts of a peace process more complicated (Lutes 2013, p. 374-375). Through such events, the US has remained by its role as "best friend of Israel", often by defending Israel's right to self-defense.

5.1.3. The Road Map to Peace

While the administration in Washington was busy with the invasion of Iraq, some attention was also given the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The initiative for peace called Road Map for Peace was negotiated and developed during the fall of 2002. The Quartet on the Middle East, consisting of the US, the European Union, the UN and Russia, worked on the development of the Road Map. One of the conditions the Quartet made was a shift in power in Palestine. They wanted to diminish Arafat's power. Arafat needed to appoint a Prime Minister who would have control over the security forces in Palestine. After much negotiation and persuasion, Arafat asked Mahmoud Abbas, one who had worked closely with him for years, to be prime minister, Abbas accepted the offer March 19th 2003. The Road Map to Peace was published April 30th 2003, and it contained a step-by-step guide which should help the two parts to gradually better the situation in the conflict and reach the establishment of a Palestinian state and a peace treaty. Guidelines included combating terrorism and building institutions for the Palestinians, and the Israelis should stop building settlements and discontinue the settlements that they considered to be illegal (Waage 2013, p. 466-467). The International Court of Justice did rule in July of 2004, that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank were illegal. The US opposed this ruling (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 185). The Road Map to Peace failed. Neither of the sides of the conflict lived up to its obligations in the Road Map and violence increased (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 178).

5.2. The Second Bush Administration

When Bush won the re-election in 2004, not much had been accomplished in the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Efforts had been made, though none resulting in a peace agreement. While Bush did express direct support for a Palestinian state, the US policy towards Israel had grown in support (Quandt 2007, p. 408). A reason for this increased support could be found in a consequence of the war on terror where the US now identified more with the Israeli struggles with terrorism (Kurtzer et al. p. 189). While the US and Israel still had differences, like politics concerning the Israeli settlements, Bush did identify with the some of the Israeli methods of dealing with terrorism, including being preemptive and deterrent (Kurtzer et al. 20013, p. 235). At the end of the term, one last effort was made to find peace. In addition to end the conflict, it was important for the US to illustrate that the new Abbas government in the West Bank could serve as an example of leadership after the

death of Arafat and a counterbalance to the newly elected Hamas government in Gaza (Waage 2013, p. 477).

5.2.1. Arafat Dies and Hamas Wins Election

Arafat had long been a symbol of Palestinian nationalism and when he passed away November 11th 2004, it left a void in Palestinian politics to be filled. Abbas was elected new president in January of 2005. He was well liked among the western powers, and the situation between Israelis and Palestinians were improved. Abbas made some changes, including an effort to establish more democracy by having an election for the Palestinian legislative council. Hamas was well-organized and several Palestinians had grown tired of the broken promises and corruption by Fatah, which is a part of the PLO. Hamas won the election with 74 out of 132 seats in January of 2006 (Waage 2013, p. 471-473). Thus, Abbas lost in an election that was deemed fair by international observers (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 199-201). The Quartet, except for Russia, demanded that the new Hamas government recognized the Israeli state and renounce terrorism of the Quartet would cut all forms of contact with the government and stop all subsidies. The new Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh refused to follow these demands and subsidies were stopped. The conditions in Gaza grew grim, and the Palestinian people were polarized based on who they supported, Hamas or Fatah. The streets saw violent fights, and both sides claimed they were acting in self-defense. By mid-June Hamas assumed control over Gaza when Fatah's leaders of security escaped to the West Bank. Now, Gaza was controlled by Hamas and the West Bank was controlled by Fatah. Gaza remained cut off from the world around and relations between the West Bank and the international community were normalized (Waage 2013, p. 473-476).

5.2.2. The Annapolis Conference

Secretary of State Rice was not willing to give up the pursuit of peace, and one last effort was made. By late 2007, as the second term of the Bush administration was coming to an end, the Bush administration made an attempt to start up peace negotiations (Waage 2013, p. 477). The attempt of reviving the peace process happened in Annapolis in November of 2007. This time the US was a facilitator from afar, and the focus was on face-to-face, bilateral meeting between the conflicting parties. The attempt got off to a rough start when the parties

experienced big challenges agreeing on a joint declaration for the Annapolis Conference. The US pledged to monitor both sides as they were going to work to implement the Road Map to Peace from a few years before. Challenges within leadership on both sides, and a lack of game plan by the US to take the meeting in Annapolis to further negotiation, led to another failed attempt reviving the peace process. Though it did get the parties more involved in questions of permanent-status contra previous talks of political horizons which could be rather diffuse (Kurtzer 2013, p. 219-225).

5.3. The First Obama Administration

The situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which the newly elected democratic President Obama inherited from Bush, was rather tangled with growing violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians (Spiegel 2013b, p. 320). The war on terror which Bush had initiated had contributed to harden the relationship between the parties of the conflict, and his following Annapolis effort proved to be too little too late (Jensehaugen & Sletteland 2013, p. 68). Obama's presidential campaign won with the slogan "Change" which should also apply for a new direction in the US Middle East policy away from Bush's war on terror. This could indicate a change in the US roles as "honest broker" and "best friend of Israel". Only three weeks after he moved into the White House, a ringwing coalition was elected in Israel led by Netanyahu. The urgency to intervene in the conflict grew simultaneously as tensions in the conflict grew (Spiegel 2013b, p. 320). In June of 2009, Obama went to Cairo and delivered a speech that illustrated a new priority of the administration as he reached out a hand to the entire Middle East and the Muslim world. He appointed Senator George J. Mitchell, who had previously been a mediator in the conflict in Northern Ireland, to be a Special Envoy to the Middle East. At this time, Obama did not enjoy much trust among the Israelis (Waage 2013, p. 480). While Obama made efforts early in his first term, there were obstacles along the way and he was not able to step far away from the previous patterns of the conflict. Eventually the US priority of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict faded due to other pressing issues, like the economic situation in the US (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 241-242).

5.3.1. Operation Cast Lead – The Gaza War

In late 2008, there had been a few calm months between Gaza and Israel, though the situation in Gaza was growing ever more difficult as it was practically sealed off from the surrounding world by a security fence built by Israel. The Palestinians were frustrated. On November 5th 2008, Israel liquidated six militant Islamists, and this became the straw that broke the camel's back for the militant Islamist in Gaza, including Hamas. They responded with several home-made rockets and smuggled rockets. Israel's respond was massive with their Operation Cast Lead. A full-scale war, known as the Gaza War, erupted between Israel and Gaza. Israel invaded with the claim of striking down Hamas, though targets for Israeli force included hospitals, schools, refugee camps and properties by the UN. At the end of the very short and brutal war, there were enormous material damage that affected an already poor and fragile Gaza. The war ended January 18th 2009 and Israel withdraw the following days. 13 Israelis were killed and eight were wounded, while more than 1300 Palestinians were killed and 5100 wounded (Waage 2013, p. 478-479). These numbers illustrated the asymmetrical power relations in this conflict. After the war the humanitarian situations in Gaza was especially dire. The Israeli restrictions on Gaza grew more severe after the war, and in May of 2010, a Turkish nongovernmental organization organized a flotilla bound for Gaza was met by an Israeli raid. Nine of the activists on the flotilla died. The brutal response by Israel made the international society to respond with condemnation and the Obama administration put pressure on Israel to lighten the restrictions on Gaza, though the administration also defended Israel with the argument of right to self-dense (Kurtzer 2013, p. 257-258).

5.3.2. Direct Peace Talks Between the Israelis, the Palestinians and the US

In June of 2009, Netanyahu took a step towards the two-state solution. He had previously refused to acknowledge Palestinian autonomy as anything other than a vague notion, and thus it was considered a big deal when he in a speech in June of 2009 spoke of reaching peace with a Palestinian state as long as it was demilitarized and recognized Israel as a Jewish state (Kraft 2009). Though, during this time, Israeli settlements escalated. The Obama administration attempted to revive new peace talks between Israel and Palestine Though, a primary demand by the US administration, which was a halt in the Israeli settlements, had not been met. This changed in November of 2009, when Israel agreed to a ten month temporary halt in settlements, albeit just in the West Bank (Waage 2013, p. 482-483). A few months

later, in March of 2010, the US Vice President Joe Biden was visiting Israel. During his visit Israel's Interior Ministry made the announcement that 1600 new housing units for Jews had been approved for East Jerusalem. Biden, who started the visit with expressing strong commitment to Israel's security, claimed that this move was undermining the trust that was needed and he condemned the move (Bronner 2010). This caused tension to rise in the relationship between the US and Israel, and some of the tension lingered. In July of 2010, Netanyahu approached Obama with the intent to convince him that Israel was serious at achieving peace. Obama accepted the commitment, and invitations to peace negotiations were sent from Washington to the conflicting parties. Palestine accepted the invitation. Israel accepted with three conditions, including security, recognition and a goal peace between a demilitarized Palestinian state and Israel. The US remained an active participant, but despite the effort, the direct peace talks came to a halt in September of 2010. Reasons for the halt included renewed violence which caused Israel to insist on security before bringing anything with real substance to the table. Also, the upcoming end of the ten-month settlement freeze was a looming challenge (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 256-259).

On February 8th 2011, the US once again illustrated their commitment to Israel and their role as "best friend of Israel", as they vetoed the resolution condemning the Israeli settlement in the UN Security Council. The US explained their veto by claiming that this resolution would not have helped getting the two parties to participate in direct negotiation, which the US believes is the way to reach a solution. The US stressed that they do not support the settlements and claims it underlines the peace process. In May of 2011, the relationship between the US and Israel would become strained again when Obama presented a new approach to peace negotiations to which Netanyahu issued a public message of his displeasure regarding the formulations used. Eventually Obama clarified his statements, including a reference of returning to the borders from 1967 with swaps that were mutually agreed upon. Netanyahu argued that the borders from 1967 were indefensible to Israel and thus this would not be viable to ensure a secure Israeli state. Obama clarified by defining "swap", the term he previously used, a formula to which the parties can account for changes made and realities on the ground (Kurtzer et al. 2013, 262-265). In spite of tensions between the two, they still had common interests and domestic politics to consider, and thus both focused on presenting the relationship in a positive manner (Spiegel 2013b, p. 321). With the presidential elections approaching in the US, and Obama having ambitions of being re-elected, the focus was pulled

away from the Middle East (Waage 2013, p.485). At this time, big changes were taking place in the region.

5.3.3. The Arab Spring

While there were a stalemate in the peace efforts, winds of change flew across the Middle East with more democratic attitudes (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 261). Major changes occurred in the region when this revolutionary wave began in Tunisia in late 2010 due to frustration and dissatisfaction among the people with the local governments. The revolutionary wave, which has been called the Arab Spring, spread wide in parts of North Africa and the Middle East influencing several countries, including Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and Libya (The Telegraph 2011). Kurtzer et al. (2013, p. 270) argue that the continued rise of the Arab Spring in 2011 was the cause of new challenges for the Americans in their efforts of a diplomatic peace process in the Middle East, including emerging opinion from the Arab public that were more hostile towards the politics conducted by the US in the region, then what the Arab governments traditionally expressed (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 270-271).

5.3.4. Palestinian Upgrade in the UN

On November 29th 2012, the President of the Palestinian Authority Abbas argued before the General Assembly in the UN for Palestine to gain the status of non-member observer state in the UN, meaning an upgrade from non-member observer entity status. The following vote resulted in an overwhelming support for the resolution concerning the status, and thus the UN General Assembly granted Palestine a non-member observer state status in the UN (United Nations 2012). The US, together with Israel, opposed this decision claiming it will not help the cause for peace in the Middle East. The US rather urged for the parties to resume direct negotiations (Ariosto & Pearson 2012). This was not the first time the Palestinians attempted to gain more recognition in the UN. In 2011, the Palestinians submitted an application to the UN Security Council for full UN membership. The negotiations of this application stalled when the Council could not reach a unanimous recommendation (United Nations 2012). The upgraded status in the UN can allow the Palestinian Authority, the governing Palestinian body, to have cases heard in the International Criminal Court in Hague (CNN Wire Staff 2012).

5.4. The Second Obama Administration

At the start of the Obama's second term, the conflict is not closer to achieving peace. Some argue that Obama might have realized the limits of the US in dealing with the conflict and might have desired to pull out. Though the region still remained a place where the US has interests, and also a place where the US has expressed commitment to be involved (Bowen 2012). There were continued reports that the relationship between Obama and Netanyahu was tense, some say this stems from Obama demanding a halt in Israeli settlements. Some even characterized the relationship as dysfunctional (McGreal 2013). Since this is Obama's last term, with no options of re-election, he might be more flexible, especially in the role as "honest broker", as he is not as confined by the domestic politics related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Three years after the collapse of direct peace talk between Israelis and Palestinians, new talks started up with US mediators in July of 2013 set to be held for nine months. The core issues will be discussed and the main goal of the talks is to reach a peace agreement based on the two-state solution, and thus having a Palestinian state next to Israel. As a part of the deal to go into new peace negotiations, Israel has released Palestinian prisoners. This has caused protests in Israel, though it is argued by some, including an Israeli politician, that this is a price to pay for peace, and that there are not many more chances to try and resolve the conflict (Knell 2013). While announcing the release of Palestinian prisoners, it was also announced that nearly 1200 new settlements were approved for building. This caused anger in the Palestinian camp and they argued that Israel was trying to sabotage the new peace efforts, though the Palestinians did not walk away from the peace talks (Laub & Daraghmeh 2013). In October of 2013, Israel released more Palestinian prisoners, and thus was keeping to their promise to release a total of 104 Palestinian, some of who have been jailed for over 20 years, in four stages (Fisher-Ilan 2013). The negotiations continue in the pursuit of peace, though the process is rather fragile, which also the history can illustrate. The relationship between the US and Israel may have been affected by Obama reassuming contact with Iran after three decades of not talking together. This resulted in a deal concerning Iran's nuclear program. Israel did not appreciate this, and stated that it did not recognize the deal (Sciutto & Brumfield 2013).

The US remains very actively involved in the process playing both the roles as "honest broker" and "best friend of Israel".

6. Theoretical Framework

This research aims to explore the paradox concerning the two seemingly contrasting US roles in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as "best friend of Israel" and the "honest broker", and how this is reflected in the US discourse. This involves analyzing how meaning is presented, not only as a onetime occurrence, but how a meaning is represented in the discourse and also if it is changed within the discourse. I will explore the US discourse as found in US official statements. In this chapter, I will present the theoretical framework for the research. Discourse theory is central in my research, together with several elements which are linked to discourse theory, including hegemony, identity and change. Another concept which is linked to discourse, and which is very central in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is the concept of narrative.

6.1. The Narrative

In this conflict, there are several perceptions of the history of the conflict. Each side has their own traditional set of perceptions which are referred to as a narrative. Scham (2013, p. 36) argues that narrative and history are two different things that often influence one another, and they even intersect at some points. History in itself is not just what happened in the past, but a record of the events of the past as the historian says it happened. A historian selects known events and puts them together in a way that illuminates and makes us understand the past, or some aspects of it. The interpretation by the historian is put as a stamp on the history, and if the stamp is too strong the history may not be as valid, or even become propaganda. When defining "narrative", Stone (1979) states that

"narrative is taken to mean the organization of material in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots.

The two essential ways in which narrative history differs from structural history is that its arrangement is descriptive rather than analytical and that its central focus is on man not circumstances" (p. 3-4).

In narratives, and very often national narratives, the glorification is often found where stories on heroes are emphasized, and potential enemies are portrayed in the darkest way. When growing up with a narrative in a conflict like this one, the narrative of the other side can often

come across as propaganda. In regards to this conflict, it is argued that neither the traditional Israeli narrative nor the traditional Palestinian narrative can claim to legitimately be called history (Scham 2013, p. 36). While this results in both parties seeing themselves as righteous victims, it also removes the frame of reference to emphasize and understand the other part. A narrative is resilient as it is being repeatedly told in various forms. Though the narratives might not get bridged, some argue that the parties can maintain their narratives and still live next to each other. Conflicting parties can acknowledge each other's narratives without necessarily accepting it or attempt to reconcile the narratives. The narratives play a central part in forming the identities, both individual and collective, on both sides. (Scham 2013, p.42-43). Identities and narratives can play an important part in the discursive practice in a society. Following, I will present discourse theory and some concepts relevant for discourse theory.

6.2. Discourse Theory

Several of the methods for analyzing the discourse are based on social constructivist approaches, where the understanding of language comes from theories within structuralism and poststructuralism. These theories claim that our access to reality is gained through the language. The language is a way for us to create representations of the reality around us. Reality gets its meaning only through language (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 15-17). While the world exists without language, we are not able to know this "because the existence of the world is literally inconceivable outside of language and our traditions of interpretation" (Campbell 1998, p. 6). Thus, a representation is how certain things appear to us, not the specific things by themselves, like different issues, peoples or items, but rather how they appear to us through language. Certain things are presented to us a certain way, and this way of presenting a thing is repeated, and thus re-presented. This is how a representation occurs (Neumann 2001, p. 33). If a representation is repeated over and over again, it will eventually start to become institutionalized in a discourse and thus even "normalized" (Neumann 2008, p. 61). Thus if the US roles as "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker" are repeated over and over in a discourse, these roles could start to become normalized. The term "discourse" can be a complicated to define as it has several definitions from different areas of study. Jørgensen and Phillips (1999, p. 9) argues it can be describes as an idea of different structured patterns in our language which people follow within the different social domains of society.

Another way of describing discourse is as "a specific series of representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identified constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible" (Campbell 2010, p. 226).

Michel Foucault is one of the key figures when it comes to discourse analysis, especially based on two ideas he developed. One of the ideas was based on investigating the rules of a specific time in history regarding what was considered a meaningful statement at the time and thus seeing the structures of the knowledge regimes. The rules in a discourse at a specific historic time set the limitations for what could be said and what could not be said (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 21-22). Another idea by Foucault is related to power and knowledge. He argued that power is not just a factor of oppression, but rather a productive factor. Power constitutes our social world and is closely linked to discourse. Discourse is an essential part in producing what we can know something about, and thus our knowledge of the world around us. This also affects how Foucault views truth. He argues that since one can never escape representations, one will never have access to universal truth (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 22-23). A given discourse might have several representation of reality, though there is often one representation which is dominant in the discourse. Such dominance in a discourse is most often linked to the concept of hegemony (Neumann 2001, p. 60). In my research, the fact that the US is a hegemon is central in the analysis.

6.2.1. Discourse and Hegemony

Hegemony plays a significant role in analyzing discourse as the power that lies with hegemony have a significant effect on maintaining or changing the discourse. A state of hegemony exists occurs when a representation emerges as normalized as a result of being more or less uncontested (Neumann 2001, p, 178). Fairclough (1992, p. 92) claims that

"hegemony is about constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes, through concessions or through ideological means, to win their consent. Hegemony is a focus of constant struggle around points of greatest instability between classes and blocs, to construct or sustain or fracture alliances and relations of domination/subordination, which takes economic, political and ideological forms".

Hegemony is seen through a process of negotiation. In this process some people might present a competing element in a discourse which could have the ability to challenge the established discourse, and thus become a source of resistance to the people working to maintain the dominating meaning. By involving the idea of hegemony in the analysis, one can get a better idea of how discursive practice is a part of the social practice. Power relations are a part of this social practice. Within the social practice, there is a hegemonic struggle. As hegemony is not just dominance, but rather a process of negotiation, a hegemonic struggle involves competing discourses that challenges the dominant discourse carries the seed of resistance. This is how a struggle of hegemony occurs. The discursive practice is a part of this hegemonic struggle, where the order of discourse is set. The discourse contributes to the existing power relations, of which it is a part of itself, by reproducing and transforming the current order of discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 87-88). The order of discourse is a social field in which there is an ongoing competition among the discourses that belongs to the same terrain to give meaning in their own way (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 69). Since the US is a hegemon, the representations US speakers present in a discourse might have more impact than that of those who do not have the hegemonic position of the US.

The reproduction and change of the meaning is generally what politics is concerned with. Laclau and Mouffe see politics as creating the society in one way at the same time as excluding others from creating the society in other ways. Thus this is tied up with the hegemonic struggle where different people or groups of people attempt to establish their meaning as natural (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999, p. 47). A sense of objectivity can occur through hegemony when alternatives to the established discourse are excluded, start to fade away and eventually are forgotten, and the sedimentation of the established discourse become complete (Laclau 1990, p. 34). In a conflict where territory is a central issue, the discursive hegemony is vital in order to establish control over the territory in question. An example of this could be found in the Israeli use of the Old Testament names of Judea and Samaria for the West Bank (Khalidi 2013, p. 10). Israel might be attempting to make the Old Testament names of Judea and Samaria a part of the discourse, and furthermore change the dominant representation of the area known as the West Bank, and thus impact the meaning of the area.

While analyzing discourse, Fairclough (1992) argues that hegemony can be helpful as it gives a way to "analyze the social practice within which discourse belongs in terms of power relations, in terms of whether they reproduce, restructure or challenge existing hegemonies" (p. 95). In addition, hegemony provides discourse analysis with a "way of analyzing discourse practice itself as a mode of hegemonic struggle, reproducing, restructuring or challenging existing orders of discourse" (Fairclough 1992, p. 95). When new discursive elements are implemented in the articulation, changes can occur, including to the power relations (Jørgensen & Philips 1999, p. 87-88). Such changes can also have an impact on the identities found in a discourse.

6.2.2. Discourse and Identity

One of the definitions the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2013b) provides for the word "role" is "the part that someone has in a family, society, or other group". The part one has in society is closely linked to identity, thus the roles as "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker" is linked to the way the US identities itself. The aspect of identity is important in order to understand how someone may act in a given situation. We can use discourse to examine someone's identity. We all have several identities, and these identities are not set in stone or fixed by nature, rather identity is constructed in relation to something different (Campbell 1998, p. 9). According to Laclau and Mouffe (2001), we find our identities in relations to another identity. We can see the reality as "us" and "them". To put it simply, one can say that "to be something, is always not to be something else (to be A implies not to be B)" (p. 128). Thus differences occur among people, and such differences can lead to conflicts. In the Israeli- Palestinian conflict, there are perceived differences among the two. Such differences can be maintained through discourse by repetition, and this can affect the conflict as the "other" remain a central part of a conflict. The reality we know is presented to us by representations in the discourses. Identity is a part of this reality. As identities are constitutive, they bear the ability to define a reality in which there is a "we" (Neumann 2001, p. 94). A reality in a conflict like this one could entail identifying with being a victim who fights someone very different from oneself.

A subject or group gets its identities through representations in s discourse, and as discourses can change over time, so can identities. Identity is seen as something that occurs entirely in the social, and not as an internal process that is expressed by each individual. Rather identities are a part of the discursive process where the identities that are developed can be accepted, refused or challenged, like other parts of the discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 55-56) Discourses are not cut off from the past, and thus memories of the past can be an important contributing factor when identities develop. An example of this could be the different memories the conflicting parties have of the war in 1948. The same way identity can change over time, so can memories change through a process that is ongoing. Some argue that when memories are being handed down through the spoken word, events and injustices will be remembered longer as opposed to when such memories are filed away in an archive (Neumann 2001, p. 58-59). Narratives, as the traditional Israeli or the traditional Palestinian, can often be handed down to the next generation by the spoken word.

Identity play a central part in politics in regards to discourse analysis. When studying what is considered normal in a set of politics, the pattern of politics, and the conflicts that occur, it is essential to look at what part identity plays. Efforts to show "who we are", is often a central part of politics (Neumann 2001, p. 124). In regards to foreign policy, the threats and dangers to the state are central. Campbell (1998, p.3-4) argues that dangers and threats are not objective, but rather interpreted. He continues to propose that "United States foreign policy be understood as a political practice central to the construction, production, and maintenance of American political identity" (Campbell 1998, p. 8). In regards to identities of a state or a person, there are always possibilities of changes occurring through the discourse.

6.2.3. Discourse and Change

Neumann (2001, p. 179) argues that the way the world appear to us, is in constant flux. This entail that there are continuous changes in the discourse. One of the ways the social world is changed is through changes that occur in the discourse. In most discourses, especially the open ones, there are constant struggles. These struggles in the discourses involve the representations and whether they are reproduced or challenged (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p 18). When a discourse is reproduced, it is repeated and thus maintained as a normalized

discourse. And when a discourse is challenged, the existing discourse is presented in a new way or completely new elements are introduced to the discourse, creating changes in the discourse. Motivation for discursive change occurs when the people have problems with the established conventions, and then contribute to change in discourse by adapting the conventions in new ways. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both parties might attempt to change the dominant discourse in the direction of their own narrative, as they both might use their narratives to justify their choices in politics. Furthermore, to achieve discursive change, people stop articulating the existing discourse and start repeating new articulations which contain the changes they wish to see in the discursive practice. If a change is achieved in a discourse by the initiators of new articulations, it could affect the hegemonic structure and it could also transcend into the larger discourse of the society (Fairclough 1992, p. 96-97). By creating discourse, one must draw on previous discourses and thus take part in intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

6.2.4. Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity

All of the communicative events that occur draw upon previous communicative events. In communicating, one can never start from scratch and thus avoid using previously used phrases or words, including their meaning. One must use the previous phrases and words in order to be understood. This concept is referred to as *intertextuality*, and this refers to how a text is influenced by history and vice versa. Thus texts contribute to changes and developments in history (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 84-85). A related concept to this is interdiscursivity. This concept focuses on the notion that texts are created based on a variety of different discourses (Fairclough 1995, p. 134). *Interdiscursivity* is a concept in which discourses are articulated in a communicative event across a variety of discourses. In doing so, changes in the discourses may occur. If the discourses are articulated in new, creative way, this could lead way for change not only in the discourse, but it could then also lead to a socio-cultural change. In the other hand, if the discourses are articulated in a conventional way, this could maintain the dominant order of discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 84). The US speakers do for instance use Israeli narrative in their speeches. Fairclough (1992, p. 102-103) argues that hegemony is closely linked to the concept of intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The production of text, which is a focus of intertextuality, is not available for all. The availability and conditions for producing text, and discourse, is dependent on the power

relations. Thus it is fruitful to include the concept of hegemony and intertextuality in a discourse analysis.

In my research, I use these presented terms in various ways. The concept of identity remain central for exploring the American paradox with the US roles as "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker", in for instance how the US identity with the conflicting parties, and thus identify themselves and their involvement in the conflict. While I analyze US foreign policy discourse, the fact that the US is a hegemon is an important aspect in considering the influence the findings could have on the discursive practice. As this research also explore how the roles have evolved over the time period, the concept of change in discourse will also be present. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity are important concept in exploring some of the elements of the discourse, including changes. In addition to using such concepts in the analysis, I will also draw inspiration from Fairclough's three-dimensional concept of discourse.

6.3. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Concept

Fairclough (1992, p. 71-73) introduces a three-dimensional concept of discourse. This concept of discourse consists of the three dimensions which are *text*, *discursive practice* and *social practice*. Fairclough uses the concept of "text" in a wide term, which includes "an product whether written or spoken" (Fairclough 1992, p. 4). Thus transcripts of written words, like speeches, are referred to as text. A critical discourse analysis based on Fairclough's three-dimensional model, starts with examining the characteristics of the text. Second, the production and consumption of the text is analyzed. This entails how people intertextually draw on existing discourses to produce and make sense of the text. Third, relevant social practice for the communicative event is analyzed. At this level, one analyzes the consequences of the discursive practice on social practice, for instance, whether the discourse changes or reproduces a given practice (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p.80-82).

In my research I will draw inspiration from this concept by including aspects of all three dimensions in my analysis. In regards to the first dimension, I will analyze the textual

material, the speeches, in question to examine how the US roles as "best friend of Israel and "honest broker" are expressed. To study the second dimension, I analyze what previous discourses the texts draw upon, including elements from the traditional narratives of the two conflicting parties. Because the speeches are in dialogue with existing narratives, they provide insight not only in how the US administrations produce texts, but also how they consume the parties' narratives. In doing so, I will examine how the discourse in the texts can be interpreted in the existing discursive practice. To examine the third dimension, I will look for significant changes in the discourse during the time period, and discuss potential effects of the roles.

7. Methodology; A Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is not one specific approach, but rather several interdisciplinary approaches for different areas of study. In a discourse analysis, theory and method is connected, and as it is described as a social constructivist approach, there are some important lessons to take into consideration. The tradition stresses the importance of being aware of and having a critical approach to the knowledge that is taken for granted, and of the connection between knowledge and the social processes and actions. In addition, the tradition offers methods to advance our awareness of the historical and cultural impact on our knowledge. The way we view the world and ourselves is based on our history and culture. Thus the knowledge we possess is historically and culturally specific (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p 9-14). A typical characterization of the methodologies of discourse analysis relates to how it conceptualizes the relationship between ontology and epistemology. Ontology, which is the study of the existing – what the world is made up of – is not as central in this type of analysis as in most tradition within the social sciences. Epistemology, which studies the nature of knowledge, is the essential component in discourse analysis. A discourse analysis is centered on the study of how our knowledge of things became what they are, and just as essential, how this knowledge is maintained or challenged. In the social science that is discourse analysis, the main focus centers on how and why things appears a certain way to us, and thus ontology often takes a backseat (Neumann 2001, p. 14).

A discourse analysis can draw inspiration from different approaches to create one's own package for a research (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 12). In my research I have mostly drawn inspiration from the discourse analysis approach known as critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analysis which "seeks to link language and its modes of use to the significance of power and social difference in society" (Bryman 2012, p. 528). The term "critical discourse analysis" can refer to two different directions. First, it can refer to the approach to discourse analysis is presented by Fairclough (1992; 1995). Second, it can refer to a wider direction within discourse analysis, where also Fairclough's approach would belong (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p 72).

When conducting a discourse analysis there is no concrete blueprint one can follow throughout the analysis. Though, there are different ways of approaching such an analysis based on the nature of the project itself, also each analysis has their own view of discourse (Fairclough 1992. p. 225). In my study I will use the critical discourse analysis approach as laid out by Jørgensen and Phillips in their book *Diskursanalyse som teori og metode* (1999, chap. 3) in which they base their approach on Fairclough's guidelines in his book *Discourse and Social Change* (1992, chap. 8). This approach, based on Fairclough's guidelines, claims that discourse both reproduce and change knowledge, but at the same time discourse is also formed by other structures and practices in the social place. Thus the discourse is, according to this critical discourse analysis approach, both constitutive and constituted (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 76-77). Fairclough (1992) himself puts it like this:

"On the one hand, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels: by class and other social relations at a societal level, by the relations specific to the particular institution such as law or education, by systems of classification, by various norms and conventions of both discursive and non-discursive nature, and so forth. (...) On the other hand, discourse is socially constitutive" (p. 64).

The discursive practice is one aspect of social practices, which is in a dialectal relationship with other parts of a social practice in that they both constitute each other. While parts of social practice affects and can change the discourse, the discourse either reproduces or changes the existing parts of social practices. However, some parts of the social practice, like economics, cannot be analyzed by discourse analysis. Together with the other social practices, the discursive practice constitutes our world (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 28).

7.1. Research Design

Jørgensen and Phillips (1999, p. 89) present a research design based on the guidelines of Fairclough (1992, chap. 8) which this research is has drawn inspiration from. The main aim of the analysis is to illustrate the connections between the discursive practices found and the social practices with potential changes in the structures. The social practices are a base for the first step in the research design, the research problem. In this research I look into the American paradox in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with the role as both the "best fiend of Israel" and the "honest broker". These perceived roles are based on background knowledge of

the conflict and previous literature on the subject. To analysis this, I have three research questions:

- How are these two roles reflected in US official statements regarding the conflict?
- Why does the US combine these two roles and how does it impact the US peace initiatives?
- How have these roles evolved over the past decade?

I will answer these in the forthcoming analysis, and keeping in mind that the discourse both mirrors social changes, and at the same time, it contributes to changing it (Jørgensen & Phillips 1999, p. 89).

The next step is the choosing of material for conducting this research. As I wished to analyze the public, political US discourse concerning the roles, I chose to analyze US official statements on the matter. More specifically I have chosen to analyze relevant speeches made by the American presidents and the secretaries of state, from state visits and other events where the conflict is discussed. I chose to include speeches from both presidents and secretaries of state as both of these speakers deliver public, political speeches relevant to the US involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These speeches are chosen for the analysis as this is a central place where the US discourse regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is expressed. Thus this is a central place to explore the American paradox with the roles as "honest broker" and "best friend of Israel" as expressed through the US discourse.

Furthermore I was interested in exploring the recent developments of this discourse, so the speeches were chosen from within a time period between 2002 up until 2013. This choice was based on the state of the situation, both in the conflict and the US involvement, in 2002. The US was, and still is, a hegemon in the world, and after 9/11 in 2001, there was a shift in the US policy towards the Middle East. Furthermore, there have been significant events in the region since 2002, including the continuation of the Al-Aqsa Intifada which started in 2000, Hamas's electoral win, attempts to revive peace talks and Palestinian upgrade in the UN.

My data collection, the transcripts of the speeches, was retrieved from the online archives of the White House and the US Department of State. I looked at the overview of speeches made

by the presidents and secretaries of state during the time period in question, and retrieved those relevant to my research. These relevant speeches are most often held in regards to official visits by heads of state or other central figures in the conflict. In these speeches the conflict with its related issues remains a central issue. The amount of data available for a discourse analysis is enormous, and thus delimitations are necessary for this task to become manageable within the limitations of this thesis. Foucault, one of the central figures within discourse analysis, insisted that one should read and study everything. As this is not practically possible within the scope of this thesis, one has to make certain qualified delimitations. At some point one has to be able to say with a good conscience, that one has read a sufficient amount data for the analysis (Neumann 2001, p. 56-57). In this research, I found approximately 100 relevant speeches, and after having read and conducted a relative simple analysis to gain an overview of which speeches were the most relevant. I delimited this amount to 35 speeches. Through this process I gained a wider picture of the discourse, which enabled me to see the broader patterns which were also visible in the 35 key speeches. These speeches were elected based on content and also the context of the speeches, though also with an intent to represent all the speakers, both the presidents and all four secretaries of state, and including speeches from the entire time period.

A methodological framework often used in qualitative analyses is grounded theory, in which a theory emerges through a process in which data is gathered systematically, while it is analyzed. In this process the data collection and analysis are not two separate steps, but rather they continuously refer to each other. There is a close relationship within the process between the central components like data collection and analysis (Bryman 2012, p. 387). This framework has been helpful in the research, especially concerning coding. When using coding, the data is divided up into codes which are based on the interpretations of the data by the researcher and given names (Bryman 2012, p. 568). Thus, while conducting the analysis, I operationalized the research questions by creating codes and a coding scheme. I first analyzed approximately 100 relevant speeches with an open mind, to get an overview using simple codes. The insight for the first analysis gave me improved understanding to develop more intricate codes, and thus I developed a coding scheme. This coding scheme was first developed based on the two roles, and then I developed codes linked to the different aspects of the two roles. Then I also developed a code for rhetorical attempts of harmonizing the roles, with associated codes for the different aspects of these attempts. The coding scheme

changed somewhat during the coding process. The last version of my coding scheme is found in the appendix (see Appendix 1). After the first round of analysis I was able to retrieve what I found to be the most relevant speeches, as the limitations of the thesis did not allow me to do in-depth analysis of all 100 speeches. This resulted in 35 the key speeches which were thoroughly analyzed using codes and a coding scheme. A list of these 35 key speeches, together with the contextual milestones, is found in chapter 8 (Table 1). I divided the 35 speeches into four parts, based on the four presidential administrations during this time. I used four separate, but identical, coding schemes, one for each of these four parts. This was done for practical reasons, but most importantly in order to more easily detect potential changes and thus evolution of the roles. While all of the 35 key speeches were analyzed, some of these speeches were more central to the analysis of the roles than others, like for instance Bush's speech in the Knesset in 2008 and Obama's speech in Cairo in 2009. Some are also longer than others, and thus some speeches are more present through quotations in the analysis.

7.2. Limitations and Challenges

The main challenge of the research lies in the delimitations of the data scope due limitations in time. While I have found, read and analyzed the relevant speeches, which amounted to approximately 100 speeches, there is always a risk that some data has been overlooked. During my research I have attempted to take measures to achieve credibility of my research process. To achieve credibility one must use techniques to gain confidence in the findings of the research. Such techniques may include theories, methods and triangulation of sources (Lincoln & Guba 2013, p. 104). In regards to credibility I have drawn inspiration from the critical discourse analysis approach based on guidelines by Fairclough (1992, chap. 8) and theories concerning discourse. In the analysis, I have included triangulation by first analyzing the speeches with an open mind, and then analyzing the speeches using codes and a coding scheme. In addition to taking measures to achieve credibility in the findings, I have also made efforts to reduce my own bias in the research. This I have done by using several sources both concerning the historical background and social context, but also concerning the data collection for the discourse analysis. Through the process I have worked systematically to prevent bias with focus on coding scheme that explore several sides of the research. To ensure that my process has been consistent, I have kept records of all the phases of my research.

A challenge related to both reading and writing about this conflict lies in the language. Concerning this conflict there are several ways of interpreting and understanding the conflict, and the different interpretations are often presented as the "truth". Authors, who do not wish to come across as biased in their writings, need to be very careful in what words they use. By for instance using certain names and terms in regards to events of the conflict, an author can unintentionally come across as being biased to one side. One example of this is the war in 1967. This war is often referred to as the June War or the Six-Day War. Some do argue that by referring to the war as the Six-Day War, this indirectly glorifies the win by Israel, and thus humiliating or offending the Arabs (Caplan 2010, p 3-7). As I have been aware of this challenge throughout my research, I have remained critical to secondary sources and made an effort not to use words that could make my thesis come across as biased. In regard to the data I have analyzed, the speeches, I have also remained critical to the material. Diplomatic speeches are often colored by its genre with diplomatic language, including masking of agenda and flattery. I have kept this in mind while conducting my analysis.

8. Analyzing the Findings

Now I will present and analyze my findings from the presidential speeches and secretary of state speeches. The speeches I have used from 2002 until 2013 include speeches by President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Colin L. Power, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, President Barack H. Obama, Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton and Secretary of State John F. Kerry. I will first present and analyze the central issues found in the speeches related to the both the role as the "best friend of Israel" and the role as "honest broker". Next, the changes in the roles as found in the speeches are presented. Then, the US national interests in relations to the conflict are presented as they appear in the speeches. After this I present the potential effects the roles may have, separately, but also what could be the effect when the roles come together. In the final part of this chapter, I present the rhetorical tactics the US use in attempt to harmonize the two roles. Before I emerge into the analysis of the findings, I present a table (Table 1) with a list of the 35 key speeches I analyzed using a coding scheme, together with the contextual milestones I have previously presented.

Table 1: List of 35 key speeches together with contextual milestones.

Contextual Milestones	Date / Location of the key speeches	US Speaker(s) / Title of Speech
<u>The First Bush Administration</u>		
<u>Late 2000</u> : Violence escalated as the Al-Aqsa Intifada started. This uprising continued for more than four years.	January 29 th 2002 / Washington D.C.	Bush / President Delivers State of the Union Address
<u>September 2001</u> : 9/11 terrorist attack on the US.		
<u>January 2002</u> : Israel intercepted ship containing arms headed for Palestine.		
<u>March 2002</u> : Israel launch biggest operation since 1967; Operation Defensive Shield. Most of the West Bank is re-occupied. Serious humanitarian situation occurs.	April 4 th 2002 / Washington D.C.	Bush / President to Send Secretary Powell to Middle East
	April 13 th 2002 / Jerusalem	Powell / Humanitarian Assistance to Palestinian People

	April 18 th 2002 / Washington D.C.	Bush and Powell / President Bush and Secretary Powell Discuss Middle East
<u>May 2002</u> : Israel starts building separations fence in West Bank. <u>Fall of 2002</u> : Start development of Road map to Peace.	June 24 th 2002 / Washington D.C.	Bush/ President Bush Calls for New Palestinian Leadership
<u>March 2003</u> : Abbas accept Arafat's request to be prime minister. <u>March 2003</u> : US invasion of Iraq starts and it became a priority in US foreign policy. <u>April 2003</u> : The Road Map is published.	March 30 th 2003 / Washington D.C.	Powell / Remarks at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's Annual Policy Conference
	July 25 th 2003 / Washington D.C.	Bush / President Bush Welcomes Prime Minister Abbas to White House
	July 29 th 2003 / Washington D.C.	Bush / President Discusses Middle East Peace with Prime Minister Sharon
<u>The Second Bush Administration</u>		
<u>July 2004</u> : International Court of Justice ruled Israeli settlements illegal. The US opposed the ruling. <u>Late 2004</u> : Arafat dies. Abbas elected early 2005.	February 2 nd 2005 / Washington D.C.	Bush / State of the Union Address
<u>2005</u> : Abbas made democratic efforts and it was decided to have an election for the Palestinian legislative council.	April 11 th 2005 / Crawford, Texas	Bush / President and Prime Minister Sharon Discuss Economy, Middle East
	October 20 th 2005 / Washington D.C.	Bush / President Welcomes Palestinian President Abbas to the White House
<u>Late 2006</u> : Hamas wins election. Battle for Gaza ensues. Hamas gains control over Gaza, Fatah's leader escape to the West Bank. <u>Late 2007</u> : The Annapolis Conference.	November 27 th 2007 / Annapolis, Maryland	Bush / President Bush Attends Annapolis Conference

	December 3 rd 2007 / Washington D.C.	Rice / Remarks at the U.S.-Palestinian Public-Private Partnership Promoting Economic and Educational Opportunities for the Palestinian People
<u>2008</u> : Re-election year for Bush.	January 10 th 2008 / Ramallah	Bush / President Bush and Palestinian Authority President Abbas Participate in Joint Press Availability
	January 13 th 2008 / Abu Dhabi	Bush / President Bush Discusses Importance of Freedom in the Middle East
	May 15 th 2008 / Jerusalem	Bush / President Bush Addresses Members of the Knesset
<u>Late 2008</u> : Cast Lead Operation – The Gaza War. caused dire humanitarian situation in Gaza.	November 8 th 2008 / Jenin	Rice / Remarks With Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad
<u>The First Obama Administration</u>		
<u>Early 2009</u> : Ring-wing coalition led by Netanyahu won election in Israel.	March 3 rd 2009 / Jerusalem	Clinton / Remarks With Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni
	May 18 th 2009 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Remarks by President Obama and prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel in press availability
	June 4 th 2009 / Cairo	Obama / Remarks by the President on a New Beginning
<u>June 14th 2009</u> : Netanyahu delivers a speech where he talks of reaching a peace with a Palestinian state, thus for the first time taking a step towards a two- state solution.	June 17 th 2009 / Washington D.C.	Clinton / Remarks With Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman
<u>November 2009</u> : Israel agree to ten month temporary settlement halt.		

<u>March 2010</u> : Israel announced new settlement while US Vice President Biden visited Israel. Tensions rose between the US and Israel. <u>May 2010</u> : The Gaza Flotilla Raid.	June 9 th 2010 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Remarks by President Obama and President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority after Meeting
<u>July 2010</u> : Direct peace talks between the Israelis, Palestinians and the US. <u>September 2010</u> : The peace talks come to a halt. <u>Late 2010</u> : Arab Spring starts, and it spreads in parts of North Africa and the Middle East.	July 6 th 2010 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel in Joint Press Availability
<u>February 2011</u> : US vetoed UN Security Council resolution that condemned Israeli settlements.	May 19 th 2011 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Remarks of President Barack Obama--As Prepared for Delivery--"A Moment of Opportunity"
<u>May 2011</u> : Obama presents new approach to peace negotiations which displeased Netanyahu. The relationship was strained.	May 20 th 2011 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel After Bilateral Meeting
<u>2012</u> : Re-election year for Obama.	March 4 th 2012 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Remarks by the President at AIPAC Policy Conference
<u>November 2012</u> : Palestine upgraded to non-member observer state I the UN.	July 27 th 2012 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Remarks by the President at Signing of the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act
<u>The Second Obama Administration</u>		
	March 21 st 2013 / Ramallah	Obama / Remarks by President Obama and President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority in Joint Press Conference
<u>Early 2013</u> : Reports of tension in relationship between Obama and Netanyahu.	March 21 st 2013 / Jerusalem	Obama / Remarks of President Barack Obama To the People of Israel

	April 8 th 2013 / Jerusalem	Kerry / Remarks With Israeli President Shimon Peres Before Their Meeting
	May 23 rd 2013 / Jerusalem	Kerry / Remarks Before His Meeting With Israeli President Shimon Peres
	May 23 rd 2013 / Jerusalem	Kerry / Remarks With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Before Their Meeting
<u>July 2013</u> : New peace talks between the Israeli and Palestinians resume.	July 29 th 2013 / Washington D.C.	Obama / Statement by the President on the Resumption of Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations
<u>August 2013</u> : Israeli announced release of Palestinian prisoners as part of new peace talks, and nearly 1200 new settlements.	July 30 th 2013 / Washington D.C.	Kerry / Remarks on the Middle East Peace Process Talks
<u>October 2013</u> : Israel released more Palestinian prisoners. <u>November 2013</u> : The US re- establish contact with Iran and made a deal concerning Iran's nuclear program. Israel did not appreciate this.	November 6 th 2013 / Jerusalem	Kerry / Remarks With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Before Their Meeting

8.1. The Role as "Best Friend of Israel"

I have linked the findings concerning the role of "best friend of Israel" to three categories. First there are the actual statements concerning the relationship itself and the issues concerning the relationship. Second is the more indirect illustration of this role, which focuses on statements in the speech which supports Israel through support of the Israeli narrative. This includes the use of terms and names from the Israeli narrative which is used in speeches by the president or secretaries of state. Third, I present the statements from the speeches linked to military, economic and diplomatic help to Israel.

8.1.1. Actual Statements Concerning the Relationship with Israel

The special relationship between the US and Israel is mentioned directly several times in these speeches. In such actual statements concerning the relationship between the US and Israel, the nature of the relationship is made very clear. There is often an emphasis on Israel being a very close ally with shared values, shared history and shared beliefs. When Bush visited the Knesset in Jerusalem, he stated that

"America is proud to be Israel's closest ally and best friend in the world. The alliance between our governments is unbreakable, yet the source of our friendship runs deeper than any treaty. It is grounded in the shared spirit of our people, the bonds of the Book, the ties of the soul" (Bush 2008a, para. 4-5).

Direct statements like this one, which concerns the close relationship between the US and Israel, is repetitive throughout the speeches both by the presidents and the secretaries of state. There are no efforts to hide or downplay the relationship between them. For instance, when speaking in Cairo, the largest city in the Arab world, Obama made the US relationship with Israel clear when he said that "America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable" (Obama 2009b, para. 30). During a speech at an American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) policy conference, Obama implied that this support has not always been easy for the US. Obama referred to a speech he made before the UN General Assembly, where he reaffirmed the unshakable support for Israel even at difficult times. After having mentioned this, he continued to state that "people usually give those speeches before audiences like this one -- not before the General Assembly. And I must say, there was not a lot of applause" (Obama 2012, para. 22-23). Without saying the actual words, Obama is clearly insinuating that the support Israel is getting from the US does have some consequences. One could argue that by insinuating this, it is an attempt to gain more credit with Israel, and thus one can detect a hint of self-interest for the US in these kinds of statements.

There are several descriptions of the nature of the relationship, including friend, ally and partner. In addition, when talking about the relationship it is often referred to as a bond that they and that the US is very committed to Israel, and especially Israel's security. Even though descriptions of the special relationship with Israel are often repeated, one can still wonder

what this special relationship would concretely entail. For instance, one could wonder if the US will support the Israeli state no matter what it does, as one aspect of the relationship which is repeated is the statement that "Israel has the unshakeable support of the most powerful country in the world" (Obama 2013b, para. 64). Such a statement certainly indicates that there is nothing that can happen, nothing Israel can do, that will end the support from the US. This kind of constant reassurance is present in many of the speeches. While in Jerusalem, Kerry spoke to Israel about threats, including the threat they see in Iran. He said to Israel that

"you have a friend in President Obama. You have friends in this Administration, in the Congress, and in America. We understand the nature of the threat of Iran. And as the President has said many times – he doesn't bluff; he is serious – we will stand with Israel against this threat and with the rest of the world, who have underscored that all we are looking for is Iran to live up to its international obligations" (Kerry 2013c, para. 6).

As he reassures that Obama does not bluff, it could be in reference to the social context in which there at times were reports of tension between Obama and Netanyahu (McGreal 2013).

8.1.2. Supporting Israeli Narrative

The relationship between the US and Israel is also illustrated indirectly through US support for the Israeli narrative and the use of Israeli names and terms in speeches. By using Israeli terms and supporting the Israeli narrative, US speakers take part in reproducing the representations from the Israeli narrative in this discourse. Taking into consideration the US hegemony, this can often have a great impact and contributes to the representations from the Israeli narrative stay solid in a discourse. This is important as Israel at times use their narrative to justify choices made and actions taken in the conflict. The term "Jewish state" is repeatedly mentioned by the US speakers. In some cases it might be a description of the state or simply a reference to the state. Bush stated in 2003 that "America is firmly committed to the security of Israel as a Jewish state" (Bush 2003b, para. 4). While using the term "Jewish state" it illustrates that the US supports one of the central issues in the Israeli narrative, which is the goal to attain an independent state for the Jews where the Jewish people make up the majority. Within the Palestinian narrative, the support the US show for the Israeli narrative could be seen as support for what is used as Israeli justification of events that has led to the

dislocation of the Palestinian people. In Ramallah in 2013, Obama used the term by saying that "we seek an independent, a viable and contiguous Palestinian state as the homeland of the Palestinian people, alongside the Jewish State of Israel" (Obama 2013a, para. 19). Here, Obama uses the term "Jewish state", but he also refers to a future Palestinian state as the homeland for the Palestinian people, and thus perhaps indicating that the Palestinian people do not have a homeland in Israel, which is rather a state for the Jewish people.

In 2008, Bush used another term which supports Israeli narrative when addressing the Knesset as he stated that "you have raised a modern society in the Promised Land, a light unto the nations that preserves the legacy of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" (Bush 2008a, para. 31). By using the term "the Promised Land" while referring to Israel, Bush is indirectly supporting the narrative that the Jews have a religious right to the land which was promised by their God. In the same speech, Bush talks about the founding of the Israeli state and states that "followed was more than the establishment of a new country. It was the redemption of an ancient promise given to Abraham and Moses and David -- a homeland for the chosen people Eretz Yisrael" (Bush 2008a, para. 3). Bush used the Hebrew name Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael translated to "Land of Israel", and refers to the land, with undefined borders, which was promised to the Jewish people by God. It was a land where Jews lived during the first and second temple with religious and political independence (Adwan et al. 2012, p. 364-366).

Furthermore, several of the speeches indicate support to Israel not only through the usage of Israeli names and terms, but by referring directly to the traditional Israeli narrative of the conflict. For instance, the founding of the Israeli state is retold several times. The elaboration of the story varies, but it often includes an emphasis on the struggles of the Jewish people through the centuries culminating in the Holocaust and the notion of the Jewish people returning to their homeland promised to them by God. In retelling the story Bush states that "centuries of suffering and sacrifice would pass before the dream was fulfilled. The Jewish people endured the agony of the pogroms, the tragedy of the Great War, and the horror of the Holocaust" (Bush 2008a, para. 6) and he continues by referring to the promise in saying that "yet they could not take away the spirit of the Jewish people, and they could not break the promise of God" (Bush 2008a, para. 6). He praises the hard work of "a free people who refuse

to let any obstacle stand in the way of their destiny" (Bush 2008a, para.8). The story is also repeatedly retold by Obama. In 2013, in Jerusalem he stated that

"for the Jewish people, the journey to the promise of the State of Israel wound through countless generations. It involved centuries of suffering and exile, prejudice and pogroms and even genocide. Through it all, the Jewish people sustained their unique identity and traditions, as well as a longing to return home. And while Jews achieved extraordinary success in many parts of the world, the dream of true freedom finally found its full expression in the Zionist idea -- to be a free people in your homeland (Obama 2013b, para. 13).

This statement supports the story of a victimized Jewish people returning to their home, and leaves out the part of a people living in the area to which the Jewish people returned home. As one can detect on this quote, there is often sympathy for the Jewish people, especially in regards to the Holocaust.

Sympathy for the Jewish and the Israeli people is also detected in regard to newer times, but there is often more emphasis on security. When visiting Cairo, Obama stated that "threatening Israel with destruction -- or repeating vile stereotypes about Jews -- is deeply wrong, and only serves to evoke in the minds of Israelis this most painful of memories while preventing the peace that the people of this region deserve" (Obama 2009b, para. 31). This illustrates sympathy for the Jews and could remind of a big brother telling bullies to back off his little brother. Simultaneously it supports the part of Israel's narrative which emphasizes its need for security and the end of terror. These issues are repeatedly mentioned throughout the speeches, and the American presidents and secretaries of state underlines over and over again the importance of ending terror and allowing Israel to live in security. In 2005, Bush said that "the United States is committed to Israel's security and well being as a Jewish state, including secure and defensible borders. We're committed to preserving and strengthening Israel's capability to deter its enemies and to defend itself" (Bush 2005a, para. 2). Also in 2009, Obama said that "I was along the border in Sderot and saw the evidence of weapons that had been raining down on the heads of innocents in those Israeli cities, and that's unacceptable" (Obama 2009a, para. 47). The speeches illustrate the extraordinary involvement of the US on Israeli security, not only in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also in regards to other parties seen as potential threats, like Iran. This supports a claim made by several authors, including

Ross (2004, p. 6-7), Quandt (2005, p.13), Mearsheimer and Walt (2007, p. 3) Miller (2008, p. 77-79), Khalidi (2013, p. xix) and Kurtzer et al. (2013, p. 274), that the US and Israel have a very special relationship with exceptional strong and close bonds. This also illustrates the US role as "best friend o Israel".

However, while the Israeli narrative does receive indirect support in the speeches, there are some elements of the Israeli narrative which the US speakers do not mention. This is for instance the use of the names Judea and Samaria which are names from the Old Testament for the area of West Bank. These names are not mentioned by the US speakers, though it does occur that Israeli politicians use these names while delivering their speech at events with US speakers. In 2009, Clinton and Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, talked about the settlements and Lieberman said "we really don't have any intention to change the demographic balance in Judea and Samaria" (Lieberman 2009, para. 17). As the US speakers do not use these names, this could indicate that they do not support this use of names which others have argued is found mostly in the rightwing politics of Israel. This is also supported by the US repeatedly expressing that they find the settlements illegitimate (Deitch 2013). By not supporting this, the US speakers might indicate in some way that they do not support all aspects of the Israeli narrative, especially this rather radical use of the Old Testament names.

8.1.3. Statements on Military, Economic and Diplomatic Support

One of the central aspect with the special relationship between the US and Israel is the continued support in the fields of military, economic and diplomatic. Security is one of the core issues in regards to US support for Israel, and this is illustrated in actions taken. In the speeches, several things are mentioned which show the support coming from the US to Israel. In the speeches, there are repeated reassurances of Israel's security. In 2009, Clinton made it very clear when she said "as I pledge again today, and as President Obama has said, we will do everything necessary to ensure Israel's security now and into the future" (Clinton 2009b, para. 11). Most references to actual assistance are linked to military and security, and it is mostly announcements of more assistance coming Israel's way. When Powell spoke at AIPAC's annual policy conference in 2003, he said "I am very pleased that President Bush has included in his supplemental budget request that just went to Congress \$1 billion in

Foreign Military Financing funds to help Israel strengthen its military and civil defenses. And that's just for starters. The President is also asking for \$9 billion in loan guarantees" (Powell 2003, para. 19). This aspect of the special relationship and the role as "best friend of Israel" is also evident in the numbers laid out in the report by Sharp (2013) which stated that Israel has received a sum of 118 billion USD since World War II.

There are several of these announcements where the very special relationship once again becomes visible. As Obama talk to the AIPAC in 2012 he claims that the cooperation in military and intelligence has never been stronger between Israel and the US, and that security assistance to Israel continues to increase every year. He then claims that

"this isn't just about numbers on a balance sheet. As a senator, I spoke to Israeli troops on the Lebanese border. I visited with families who've known the terror of rocket fire in Sderot. And that's why, as President, I have provided critical funding to deploy the Iron Dome system that has intercepted rockets that might have hit homes and hospitals and schools in that town and in others" (Obama 2012, para 14).

Obama mentions the Iron Dome several times, which is an air defense system that the US helped fund. In his speech in Jerusalem in 2013 he again claimed that the security relationship between them has never been stronger as he listed some facts of the relationship, like "more exercises between our militaries; more exchanges among our political and military and intelligence officials than ever before; the largest program to date to help you retain your qualitative military edge. These are the facts" (Obama 2013b, para. 25).

Diplomatic support is also a characteristic of the special relationship between the US and Israel, and this is visible in the speeches. The UN is an arena in which much diplomacy plays out, and this is also the case for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The US has not always been satisfied with the actions taken in and by the UN. Bush makes a statement in 2008 after having talked about the US admiration for the Israeli state and human rights. He said that "we believe that democracy is the only way to ensure human rights. So we consider it a source of shame that the United Nations routinely passes more human rights resolutions against the freest democracy in the Middle East than any other nation in the world" (Bush 2008a, para 12). In his diplomatic efforts towards Israel, Obama was somewhat stricter when regarding

the Israeli settlements when started out in the beginning of his first term than in later years. After he had delivered a speech together with Netanyahu in Washington D.C. in May of 2009, he was asked by a journalist about the critical state of the conflict and the importance of seizing the moment so that the conflict would not escalate more. After having talked of what the Palestinians needed to do to achieve peace, Obama was rather direct in his assessment of the settlements. He said that

"Israel is going to have to take some difficult steps as well, and I shared with the Prime Minister the fact that under the roadmap and under Annapolis that there's a clear understanding that we have to make progress on settlements. Settlements have to be stopped in order for us to move forward. That's a difficult issue. I recognize that, but it's an important one and it has to be addressed (Obama 2009a, para. 46).

At times, statements on the Israeli settlements are less direct. This might be to improve the relationship between Obama and Netanyahu which suffered from reported tension. The issue of settlements was one of the major issues that caused such tension. In his speech in Jerusalem in 2013, Obama was not as direct when addressing the issue of settlement. During this speech he said that "Israelis must recognize that continued settlement activity is counterproductive to the cause of peace, and that an independent Palestine must be viable with real borders that have to be drawn (Obama 2013b, para. 57). While still reminding Israel of the US stand on the issue, Obama expressed himself less strict than previously, perhaps in an effort to remain strong in the role as "best friend of Israel".

Diplomatic support is also visible by things that are not said. After most of the speeches, the press often gets an opportunity to ask a few questions. On a few occasion the speaker has been asked whether or not the US will do anything to pressure Israel into stopping the settlements, which the US has states several times undermine the peace process, and every time the speaker answers very vaguely or avoid answering completely. For instance, when Bush was delivering a speech with President Abbas in 2005, he was asked by a journalist what the US would do to get Israel to stop the settlement activity. Bush first responded by talking about the difficulties of resolving the issues, the Road Map and the importance of trust, and then eventually he said that " and so to answer your question, yes, we hold people to account for their promises made on the road map" (Bush 2005b, para. 45). This way Bush answers the question in a very diffuse manner, though in some way he did not answer the

question at all. A reason for this might be because he was unable to give a direct answer that did not harm their roles as "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker".

8.2. The Role as "Honest Broker"

The findings for the role as "honest broker" have been divided into three categories. First, I present and analyze the actual statements in the speeches where the American presidents and secretaries of state refers to the US as an "honest broker" or to actions the US have taken indicating that they in fact are an "honest broker". I also look at the reasons stated for acting as an "honest broker". Second, I present the indirect ways the role as the "honest broker" emerges in the speeches with emphasis in the premise for peace concerning the core issues of the conflict and the importance of compromise. Third, some policy tools for the "honest broker" is presented, which include diplomacy and economic and military incentives. This third category contains similarities to the third category under the previous section regarding finding on the role as "best friend of Israel". Both categories are related to tools to practice the different roles.

8.2.1. Actual Statements Referring to the Role as "Honest Broker"

In the speeches there are several statements referring to the US role as the "honest broker", though these references come in many shapes. The speakers often talk of the hard work that lies ahead and that the US is committed to being heavily involved in the work. The work that is referred to is the work of achieving peace. The speakers also mention different ways they will contribute, including facilitating, being a partner, monitoring and supporting. They present themselves as a party with a genuine interest in achieving peace. In 2011, Obama talked of what role the US would play in the Middle East as the Arab Spring was blooming in the region. He presented the US role by stating that

"the question before us is what role America will play as this story unfolds. For decades, the United States has pursued a set of core interests in the region: countering terrorism and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons; securing the free flow of commerce, and safe-guarding the security of the region; standing up for Israel's security and pursuing Arab-Israeli peace" (Obama 2011b, para. 18).

In this statement he refers to interests related to both the role as "best friend of Israel", who stands up for Israel's security, and the "honest broker" who pursues peace. This illustrates that the US speaker continue to focus on representations related to both of the roles. In Jerusalem in 2013, Kerry talks about the peace process and said that "the United States of America, through President Barack Obama, is completely at the disposal of both parties to try to help bridge the divide. We will work as hard as we can" (Kerry 2013a, para.12). A shared desire for peace is also mentioned several times, in addition to a pledge to continue the hard work. Optimistic words and future pictures of peace is mentioned, but it can come across a somewhat diffuse. There are very little specifics mentioned. This could of course be due to the often ongoing peace process. In regards to the new peace talks in 2013, Kerry said this concerning confidentiality:

"The only announcement you will hear about meetings is the one that I just made. And I will be the only one, by agreement, authorized to comment publicly on the talks, in consultation, obviously, with the parties. That means that no one should consider any reports, articles, or other – or even rumors – reliable, unless they come directly from me, and I guarantee you they won't" (Kerry 2013b, para. 7).

Confidentiality could be a central part of acting as an "honest broker". Trust is essential in negotiations, not just among the conflicting parties, but also with the facilitator.

In addition to a shared desire for peace, the speakers repeatedly refer to a commitment, a responsibility and an obligation the US has to work towards peace. When talking about the secretary of state laying down a framework for achieving peace, Bush said that "the United States has an obligation to do just that, and he did. And I have done that. And we will continue to do that" (Bush & Powell 2002, para. 17). When presenting the peace process as an obligation for the US, it certainly makes it more difficult to walk away from when things get tough. On the other hand, the difficulties of being involved in the peace process are also mentioned in a speech. When talking about the commitment to peace in Jerusalem in 2013, Obama point out the difficulties for him as president to do just that because of the domestic politics. He states:

"Politically, given the strong bipartisan support for Israel in America, the easiest thing for me to do would be to put this issue aside -- just express unconditional support for

whatever Israel decides to do -- that would be the easiest political path. But I want you to know that I speak to you as a friend who is deeply concerned and committed to your future" (Obama 2013b, para. 42).

By pointing this out, he indicates that the job of being an "honest broker" is not easy and therefore the efforts taken by the US in finding a peaceful solution illustrate true commitments on their part. He illustrates an interdiscursive reference to the US domestic political discourse where the subject of Israel is a controversial issue, which can cause domestic debate and become a major challenge for politicians in their work, including the president.

The US express commitment and ability to achieve peace, for instance as Bush did by saying that "today America is using its influence to foster peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land" (Bush 2008c, para. 19), but on the other hand, the limitations of the US in the peace process is acknowledged. While the commitment to work for peace is repeated, so is the notion that the US cannot force a peaceful solution among the two conflicting parties. Such an acknowledgement of limitations indicates that the US is acting as an broker, and not forcing parties to do their will. During the Annapolis conference in 2007, Bush made the role of the US clear by saying that "the outcome of the negotiations they launch here depends on the Israelis and Palestinians themselves. America will do everything in our power to support their quest for peace, but we cannot achieve it for them" (Bush 2007, para. 23). This is a way of being committed, at the same time as demanding commitments from the parties involved, and also indirectly stating that the US is not responsible if the peace process were to fail.

8.2.2. Premise for Peace

By supporting premise for peace that includes the needs and wants for both parties, the US could have a role as an "honest broker". In this time period, the US speakers remain solid on two of their main premise for peace which is to ensure Israel's security and establish a Palestinian state. In a speech in 2011, Obama laid out the US views on the premise for peace. In addition to repeating the issue of a Palestinian state and security for Israel, he stated that

"the United States believes that negotiations should result in two states, with permanent Palestinian borders with Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, and permanent Israeli borders with Palestine. The borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states. The Palestinian people must have the right to govern themselves, and reach their potential, in a sovereign and contiguous state" (Obama 2011b, 61).

The direct approach to the issue concerning the Palestinian state started with a speech by Bush in late 2001 (Quandt 2005, p. 395), and has continued to be a central part of US policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Bush does address this issue repeatedly, and he remains very clear. In 2002 he stated that "the United States is on record supporting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a Palestinian state" (Bush 2002c, para. 6). An American president directly acknowledged the need for a Palestinian state for the first time, and then wrote this down as a premise for peace.

The support of the Palestinian state is not without conditions and responsibilities. Democracy and an end to terror are the main conditions. In a speech in 2002, where Bush called for new Palestinian leadership due to a strained relationship with Arafat, Bush addressed the issue of terror once again. He said that

"my vision is two states, living side by side in peace and security. There is simply no way to achieve that peace until all parties fight terror. Yet, at this critical moment, if all parties will break with the past and set out on a new path, we can overcome the darkness with the light of hope. Peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born" (Bush 2002a, para. 3).

Bush continued to talk about the responsibilities of the Palestinians, and he clearly stated that "the United States will not support the establishment of a Palestinian state until its leaders engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists and dismantle their infrastructure" (Bush 2002a, para. 11). Such conditions for the Palestinian state continue to color the US policy towards the conflict, and it also serves as a reassurance of their commitment to Israel's security.

Still, the speakers also express a concern for the Palestinian people, and acknowledge their sufferings, despair and that they do deserve a state or their own. The speakers express a commitment by the US to help built the Palestinian state and the institutions that are needed. After having talked about the history and suffering of the Jewish people, Obama then talks about to the Palestinians. He said:

"On the other hand, it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people -- Muslims and Christians -- have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years they've endured the pain of dislocation. Many wait in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and neighboring lands for a life of peace and security that they have never been able to lead. They endure the daily humiliations -- large and small -- that come with occupation. So let there be no doubt: The situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. And America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own" (Obama 2009b, para. 32).

While being very clear in this speech, Obama might also send some indirect messages to those who oppose a two-state solution and a Palestinian state, by being so direct. In addition, Israel is directly urged to take part in supporting a Palestinian state for their own good. Bush said that

"Israel also has a large stake in the success of a democratic Palestine. Permanent occupation threatens Israel's identity and democracy. A stable, peaceful Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel longs for. So I challenge Israel to take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state" (Bush 2002a, para. 16).

Also, Rice stated that "ultimately, the establishment of a Palestinian state, is in the interest of Israelis, as well as Palestinians" (Rice 2008, para. 49). This is also repeated by Obama in May of 2009 (Obama 2009, para. 7). One month after this, in June of 2009, Netanyahu announced a possible Israeli acknowledgement of a Palestinian state (Kraft 2009). This could illustrate the hegemonic position the US has, not only in the social world, but also in the order of discourse.

The US commitment to the two-state solution and Palestinian state is repeated frequently, though it is most often mentioned in relations with the peace process. Thus it could be

interpreted in a way which the establishment of the Palestinian state should be a part of a peace settlement, a part of the premise for peace. One could then argue that the way the idea of the Palestinian state is presented in the speeches, the US is in support of a Palestinian state, but only when established is a result of a peace agreement. The link between a Palestinian state and peace is found several places in the speeches. At times the link is somewhat diffuse, though when such a link is repeated throughout the speeches, it has some impact. Kerry said in 2008 that

"the United States will work continuously with both parties as a facilitator every step of the way. We all understand the goal that we're working towards: two states living side by side in peace and security. Two states because two proud peoples each deserve a country to call their own. Two states because the children of both peoples deserve the opportunity to realize their legitimate aspirations in security and in freedom. And two states because the time has come for a lasting peace" (Kerry 2013b, para. 8).

In a speech in October of 2005, Bush commends Abbas, who was elected President earlier that year, for a job well done this far, and continues to state that the US will help the Palestinians to "carry out their responsibility to end terror attacks, dismantle terrorist infrastructure, maintain law and order, and, one day, provide security for their own state" (Bush 2005b, para. 7). In this context, Bush used the words "one day". These two words are diffuse. One could argue that the meaning behind these two words is linked to that "one day" when the Palestinians fulfil their responsibilities and a peace agreement is signed, that is the day they could have their own state.

In addition to repeatedly expressing commitment to the two-state solution, the US also repeatedly laid down premise for peace concerning other core issues. One of the core issues which is most often repeated when addressing the premise for peace, is the Israeli settlements. Over and over again, the speakers all state, in various manners, that the US does not support the legitimacy of the settlement, and argue that it undermines the peace process. This is and has been an issue in which the US and Israel have expressed strong disagreements. Still, Israeli continues to build settlements which often lead to headlines in the news and sometimes reports of tension. Though the US speakers at times express the Israeli policy of the settlements diffusely, the speakers remain clear in their position and do also at other times express this position directly. In in Cairo in 2009, Obama said:

"The United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. (Applause.) This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop" (Obama 2009b, para. 37).

In addition to arguing for the settlements to stop, or in some cases indirectly encouraging the Israelis to stop the settlement activity, there is also a call for the occupation to end. This is also repeated, though not as often as the call to stop the settlements. There might be several causes for this, though one cause could be that using the word "occupation" put more responsibility on Israel, as Israel is the occupant. In the Palestinian narrative, the Israeli occupancy is the central core of the conflict. While the US views the continued settlement activity as problematic and an obstacle to peace, they might not put as much emphasis on it as the Palestinians do. Thus the US might avoid putting too much emphasis on the occupation, and rather focus on a peace process, in an attempt to stay on good terms with Israel. Nonetheless, the occupation is mentioned a few times.

In April of 2002, Bush talks of both the settlement and occupation when talking about ongoing attempts of negotiations. He states that "Israeli settlement activity in occupied territories must stop. And the occupation must end through withdrawal to secure and recognize boundaries consistent with United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338" (Bush 2002c, para. 19). At this time Israel was conducting their Operation Defensive Shield, in which they re-occupied large portions of the West Bank. Bush in this speech talk of the horrors of the increased violence, and he continues to denounce terrorism and expresses support for a Palestinian state. In addition also urges Israel to distinguish between terrorists and civilians. At this time, in 2002, Israel was building what they have called the separation fence or security fence. Some call it the wall. This issue is barely mentioned in the speeches, though Bush is asked directly about this after one of his speeches he responds by saying that "I think the wall is a problem, and I discussed this with Ariel Sharon. It is very difficult to develop confidence between the Palestinians and the Israel -- Israel -- with a wall snaking through the West Bank" (Bush 2003a, para. 49). He continues to states that this is an issue that will be discussed further with the Israeli Prime Minister, but like in the case of settlements, the US speakers did not express any agenda to pressure Israel on the issue of the separation fence. In March of 2009, not long after Operation Cast Lead, also known as the Gaza War, Obama linked the Israeli blockade of Gaza to Israel's security. He stated that

"the fact is, is that if the people of Gaza have no hope, if they can't even get clean water at this point, if the border closures are so tight that it is impossible for reconstruction and humanitarian efforts to take place, then that is not going to be a recipe for Israel's long-term security or a constructive peace track to move forward" (Obama 2009a, para. 48).

In a speech in 2010, Obama addressed the middle way between the need and wants of the parties concerning some of the conflicting issues of the conflict, where Israel on the one side wants better security and Palestinians suffer more due to Israeli security precautions, like the separation fence. Obama said that "with respect to the broader issue of lifting the blockade, as I said before, I think the key here is making sure that Israel's security needs are met, but that the needs of people in Gaza are also met" (Obama 2010a, para. 45). In addition to the issue of Israel's security, could also illustrate a reference to a core issue for the Palestinians, which is the Palestinian refugee issue. Though the US has supported UN General Assembly Resolution 194, which recommends that the refugees who want to live in peace should get to return or get paid compensation (Spiegel 2013a, p. 296), the refugee issue is not emphasized much in the speeches. However, the speakers occasionally express sympathy for the Palestinians and acknowledge that that the Palestinian refugee problems needs to be resolved, though at the same time they do not embellish or make clear statements on the US position on the issue, unlike what they have done in regards to for instance settlements. An example of this is the speech called *A Moment of Opportunity* held by Obama in 2011. When talking about some of the main issues, Obama stated that "two wrenching and emotional issues remain: the future of Jerusalem, and the fate of Palestinian refugees" (Obama 2011b, para. 63). The issue of water is another essential issue on the conflict of which the speakers do mention, but do not emphasis or embellish.

While not all core issues are emphasized, some clear obligations are stated for both parties. These are mentioned in several speeches, and the speech by Obama in Cairo in June of 2009 is one of them. In this speech he emphasized Palestinian obligations like abandoning violence and focusing on building institutions which provides them with capacity to govern their own future state. Obama addressed Hamas especially, and emphasizes their obligation to recognize Israel's right to exist and past agreements (Obama 2009b, para. 35-36). Furthermore, Obama

emphasized Israeli obligations like acknowledging Palestine's right to exist, stopping the settlements and take concrete measures to make sure that Palestinians are able to develop their society (Obama 2009b, para. 37-38). In addition to emphasizing the obligations the US holds the parties responsible for, the speeches also emphasizes the need for hard choices and compromises by the parties.

The role as the "honest broker" appears in the context of compromise. As I have mentioned above, the US acknowledges the limitations of their involvement, and states clearly that they cannot force peace on any conflict. The speakers also talk repeatedly about the obligations the parties need to take responsibility for, and the compromises and hard choices that need to be made to reach a peace agreement. At the Annapolis Conference in 2007, Bush refer to peace by stating that "achieving this goal is not going to be easy -- if it were easy, it would have happened a long time ago. To achieve freedom and peace, both Israelis and Palestinians will have to make tough choices" (Bush 2007, para. 14). Further in this speech, Bush also reminds the parties that "the success of these efforts will require that all parties show patience and flexibility -- and meet their responsibilities" (Bush 2007, para. 23). Responsibility is put on both of the parties, also its "best friend" Israel.

The speakers do also acknowledge the historical difficulties of not only reaching a peace agreement, but even just reaching the negotiation table. Encouragements to take the efforts seriously and consider their responsibilities to their people are also repeated. In 2013, Obama encouraged them all to "get out of some of the formulas and habits that have blocked progress for so long. Both sides are going to have to think anew. Those of us in the United States are going to have to think anew" (Obama 2013a, para. 24). He continued to say that "we're going to have to have courage. We're going to have to be willing to break out of the old habits, the old arguments, to reach for that new place, that new world" (Obama 2013a, para. 26).

Furthermore, when asked about the possibilities for peace he stated that

"I absolutely believe that it is still possible. But I think it is very difficult. I think it's difficult because of all sorts of political constraints on both sides. I think it's difficult, frankly, because sometimes, even though we know what compromises have to be made in order to achieve peace, it's hard to admit that those compromises need to be

made, because people want to cling on to their old positions and want to have 100 percent of what they want, or 95 percent of what they want, instead of making the necessary compromises" (Obama 2013a, para. 32).

The emphasis on compromise in not to be missed, and he also acknowledges the difficulties of the tough choices. By referring to tough choices, he could be indicating some of the issues, or all of the issues, which are difficult to discuss directly. In this conflict, compromises may be more important than usual as the two narratives of the two conflicting parties are quite contrasting at times.

When commitment to making compromises is shown, this is highly encouraged. In 2013, during the run up to the new peace negotiations Kerry expressed hope in the light of attitudes toward compromise. He stated that "their commitment to make tough choices, frankly, should give all of us hope that these negotiations actually have a chance to accomplish something" (Kerry 2013b, para. 5). Such encouragement is central for the US while being a part of a peace process. It can help the process move in the direction the US wish to see. The US sometimes used other policy tools in attempts to alter the direction of the conflict, including sanctions, incentives, aid and diplomacy.

8.2.3. Policy Tools for the "Honest Broker"

The US has, as illustrated above, some views on how some issues concerning the conflict could or should be resolved. The conditions for a Palestinian state and the end of Israeli settlements are a couple examples. To alter the direction of the conflict in a direction they want, the US have some tools outside of the negotiation room which comes across in some of the speeches. For instance, there are diplomatic efforts linked to the process. When one or both of the parties do something which the US considers to be a step in the right direction, the speakers acknowledge this. By acknowledging this and speaking kind words of the parties, one could argue that the parties could gain credibility and improve their reputation in the world. In addition the parties might feel that they are heard in the process, and more trust could be established. This could serve as an incentive for the parties to follow in that direction. In 2013, Obama said this while in Ramallah:

"I want to commend President Abbas and his Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, for the progress that they've made in building the institutions of a Palestinian state. And the United States is a proud partner in these efforts -- as the single largest donor of assistance that improves the lives of Palestinians, both in the West Bank and Gaza. As your partner, we salute your achievements and we mourn your losses" (Obama 2013a, para. 15).

Both parties receive credit for positive achievements, but the diplomacy works the other way as well. When the parties take steps in the wrong direction, according to the US, or refrain from taking the right steps, this often leads to criticism. The criticism can be rather direct, like when Bush talked about Arafat in 2002 when Israel had re-occupied parts of the West Bank, and surrounded his compound (Lutes 2013, p. 374). Bush said:

"the situation in which he finds himself today is largely of his own making. He's missed his opportunities, and thereby betrayed the hopes of the people he's supposed to lead. Given his failure, the Israeli government feels it must strike at terrorist networks that are killing its citizens" (Bush 2002c, para. 10).

Given the strained relationship the Bush administration had with Arafat at this time, it might not be surprising that the criticism was so direct. Not many politicians receive such direct criticism. When Israel take steps the US do not approve of, the response is much milder. As mentioned above, Israel often enjoys diplomatic support from the US. Rather than criticizing Israel, the speakers usually encourage or challenge Israel to take certain steps. In the aftermath of the Gaza flotilla raid in 2010, Obama said that "as part of the United Nations Security Council, we were very clear in condemning the acts that led to this crisis and have called for a full investigation" (Obama 2010a, para. 5). Though the word "condemning" is used, it is somewhat diffuse as to whether or not the condemnation refers to Israel or not. When Obama said "the acts that led to this crisis" he might be referring to the acts taken by those who initiated the flotilla, and not Israel. Further in this speech, Obama stated that "Israelis have the right to prevent arms from entering into Gaza that can be used to launch attacks into Israeli territory" (Obama 2010a, para. 6).

The US speakers remain careful in uttering direct criticism towards Israel. Rather they encourage Israel to go in certain direction. While the Al-Aqsa Intifada took place, Powell announced humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. Regarding Israel, he said that

"Israeli forces must exercise the utmost restraint and discipline. (...) We call upon Israel to respect international humanitarian principles and to allow full and unimpeded access to humanitarian organizations and services to provide basic humanitarian services, including evacuation of the wounded and deceased. In this regard, we are particularly concerned at the humanitarian situation in Jenin" (Powell 2002, para. 1).

This statement was likely in response to reports of harsh treatment of Palestinians by the Israeli force. At this time, there were claims of Israeli massacre in Jenin, though these claims were rejected later in a UN report (Bennet 2002). Despite harsh claims at this time, Powell is not criticizing the Israeli directly, but rather encouraging them to show restraint and respect.

While diplomatic support can be commonly found in the speeches, there are also mentions of other types of support. The speakers often talk of the economic and military support to Israel, and in addition, the US economic support to the Palestinians is also repeatedly talked about. In 2007, after Hamas was elected to power in Gaza, Rice said that "last month, as we blocked funds to Hamas, our financial assistance to the Palestinian people actually increased. And for the next fiscal year, we have asked Congress to approve \$400 million in economic support for the Palestinian Government and its people" (Rice 2007, para. 10). Here she illustrates both that the US gives aid, but also that the US is capable of ending the donations if they see it fit, as they did when Hamas came to power in Gaza. However the US repeatedly talk about their commitment to help the Palestinians, also in Gaza. In 2010, Obama talked about the hard work that lay ahead, and he said

"in the meantime, the United States -- which is already the biggest humanitarian aid donor in Gaza -- is going to be announcing an additional \$400 million in assistance for housing, school construction, business development -- not only in Gaza, but also in the West Bank, because we think it's important for us to reaffirm once again our commitment to improving the day-to-day lives of ordinary Palestinians (Obama 2010a, para. 8).

Also, economic incentives are presented if the Palestinians take the right steps. This is illustrated in a speech by Bush in 2002 where he stated that

"ultimately these steps toward statehood depend on the Palestinian people and their leaders. If they energetically take the path of reform, the rewards can come quickly. If Palestinians embrace democracy, confront corruption and firmly reject terror, they can count on American support for the creation of a provisional state of Palestine" (Bush 2002a, para. 12).

8.3. Changes in the Roles

Changes are can always occur in discourses, though a discourse can over time also be characterized by continuity. The fact that the US is a hegemon remains important for the changes or continuations in the discourse. While there have been some changes in the time period from 2002 to 2013, the time period is characterized by more continuity than change. Since Bush directly addressed the need for a Palestinian state, not much has changed concerning the US policy on the specific issues in this conflict, though the peace talks that started up in 2013 illustrate a new, comprehensive attempt to find a solution. A peaceful, two-state solution through direct negotiations remains their main objective. All the speakers emphasize the highlighted policy-lines including the end of terror, security to Israel and an end to Israeli settlement activity. Though there might not be much change in the policy-lines, there is a slight shift in the relationship between the US and the Arab world.

8.3.1. From War on Terror to Reaching Out a Hand in Cairo

The biggest changes over the time period found in the speeches, is the US relationship with the Muslim and Arab world. In 2002, the speeches by both Bush and Powell focus very much on terrorism, and the war the US waged on terrorism, including in Iraq, in Afghanistan and entities like Hamas, is emphasized repeatedly. In the State of the Union Address in 2002, Bush illustrated the war on terrorism with strong statements, especially when talking about Iraq. He states that "states like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world" (Bush 2002b, para. 21) and he continues to state that "our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished

on our watch -- yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch (Bush 2002b, para. 24). Hamas is mentioned as a part of the "terrorist underworld" (Bush 2002b, para. 14), and is thus a part of the group which Bush is waging war against. While the US, together with Israel, view Hamas as terrorists, some Palestinians, especially in Gaza, may look to Hamas for resistance the occupation, as evident in the democratic electoral victory Hamas had in 2006. By these statements made by Bush, he somewhat indirectly wages war on a movement that would come to be a democratically elected body representing one of the parties in a conflict in which the US is heavily involved in the attempts to find peace and where they take on the role as "honest broker".

The gap between the US and Palestinians were also visible in the dissatisfaction expressed over Arafat, and the call for a new Palestinian leadership (Bush 2002a). This gap was not as present in the continued presidency of Bush, as he did express good relationship with Abbas who he describes as "a man devoted to peace and to his people's aspirations for a state of their own" (Bush 2005b, para. 2). The war on terror declared by Bush in the beginning of his term did cause some of this gap between the US and the Muslim and Arab world. This gap between the US and the Muslim and Arab world remained, and it was addressed and attempted mended in the first term of Obama's presidency. Obama's effort to mend this gap can be seen as a response to the development in the relationship between the US and the Muslim and Arab world after the war on terror. During his speech in Cairo in June of 2009, Obama reached out a hand to the Arab and Muslim world. Even the location of the speech, the capital of Egypt and the largest city in the Arab world, can be interpreted as a message to bridge the gap between the US and the Arab world. During this speech, Obama addressed the gap directly when he said that "we meet at a time of great tension between the United States and Muslims around the world -- tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate" (Obama 2009b, para. 2). He continues to talk of the mistrust and fear between the conflicting parties. Instead of letting differences define them, Obama urges all to seek together. He said:

"I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition.

Instead, they overlap, and share common principles -- principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings" (Obama 2009b, para.5).

This could indicate a new direction in US Middle East policy in which the relationship with the Arab world is closer, and as a result cooperation in a peace process could be more fruitful. This new US direction in the Middle East might be illustrated in regards to the reassumed contact and the deal made with Iran (Sciutto & Brumfield 2013). As Palestinians are a part of the Arab and Muslim world, it could have an impact on the US involvement in the conflict. If the US were to manage to bridge the gap, it might lead to a change in the US relationship with the Palestinians and perhaps a more balanced US involvement between the parties of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and thus impact the role as "honest broker".

In addition to directly stating that he wished to reach out a hand in Cairo, Obama also had several references to the Muslim and Arab world. He quoted from the Holy Koran and praised the Islamic culture by statements like "as a student of history, I also know civilization's debt to Islam" (Obama 2009b, para. 8) and "throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality" (Obama 2009b, para. 8). Obama's speech contains several attempts of bringing Islam and the US closer, including a promise to fight negative stereotypes of Islam and an encouragement to do the same for the perception of the US in the Muslim world (Obama 2009b, para. 9-11). However, the special relations between the US and Israel is still reassured with familiar phrases like "America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable" (Obama 2009b, para 30).

While the Israel narrative is supported repeatedly in the discourse of the speeches, the Palestinian narrative is rarely represented, which could illustrate a strong role as "best friend of Israel". However, in the speech in Cairo, one can detect a hint of Palestinian narrative. After having talked about the sufferings of the Jewish people, Obama talked of the Palestinians who he said had suffered "in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years they've endured the pain of dislocation" (Obama 2009b, para. 32). One might argue that by using the word "dislocated", Obama might refer to the fact that the Palestinian people is not where they belong, and that they too have a homeland. This is related to the US role as "honest broker" as

it presents one of the central US premises for peace. Though, he said "a homeland", and not "their homeland", which is rather diffuse, and it does not refer to a specific place. That could be a way of avoiding giving the Palestinian people claim to the land which they once lived in, and which is a part of Israel now.

In regards to a homeland, there is a slight difference in the use of the name "Palestine". While the acknowledgement of a Palestinian state was made by Bush in 2001, the use of the name Palestine by itself has not been common. Rather the US speakers often talk of a "Palestinian state". If the actual name Palestine is used, it is mostly while talking of a future scenario. Like in 2002 when Bush said that "the outlines of a just settlement are clear: two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, in peace and security" (Bush 2002c, para. 7). In more recent times, the name Palestine has been used in an arguably more equal manner. In Jerusalem in 2013, Kerry talked about the difficulties of ending the conflict, and he then stated that "I am convinced, with great humility, that this moment is a really critical one for the region and particularly for Israel, for Palestine, for Jordan. I think there is an opportunity" (Kerry 2013a, para. 11). Here the name Palestine is listed next to acknowledged states like Israel and Jordan. This could indicate a change in the use of this name, and if the hegemon that is the US would start using the name Palestine equal with other names of states, then this could have an impact on the discourse which could create a political environment in which the establishment of a Palestinian state is more accepted. Thus the use of the name Palestine could lead to social change. If a hegemon like the US were to continue to use the name Palestine more frequently and on equal terms as other state names, it could become normalized in the discourse. This could help set the social and political climate for recognition of the state when the time comes. The opportunity for establishing the Palestinian state might also come sooner if the US contributes to normalize the name and notion of Palestine. Regardless of potential change in US politics towards the Palestinians, the support for Israel remains steady.

8.3.2. Tensions Between the US and Israel

The US support of Israel has remained very stable, even during times of reported tension between Obama and Netanyahu. If there are any changes, it would be during the time leading up to Obama's reelection in 2012. At this time, one could argue that there is a slight

intensification of expressed support and reassurances toward Israel. Though, this intensification could be an attempt to mend a possible tense relationship. At an AIPAC conference in March of 2012, Obama addressed his personal commitment to Israel. He directly stated that "I have Israel's back" (Obama 2012, para. 16). He talked of the different thing he had provided for Israel, and then referred to the coming political season, said that if "you hear some questions regarding my administration's support for Israel, remember that it's not backed up by the facts" (Obama 2012, para. 17). After his re-election, he rather directly addresses the reported tension between him and Netanyahu. He referred to Netanyahu by his nickname "Bibi", and said that "I want to clear something up just so you know -- any drama between me and my friend, Bibi, over the years was just a plot to create material for Eretz Nehedere" (Obama 2013b, para. 4). Eretz Nehedere is a satirical television show in Israel. Whether or not the relationship between Obama and Netanyahu was tense or not it is not an issue that is spoken of in the speeches. While there are many reports of these tensions between the two, the speeches could be an arena for Obama to attempt to mend the relationship. Direct criticism towards each other is not found in these speeches, though some differences in the views on the politics, including settlements, are mentioned a few times. After having mentioned the principles for a peaceful solution, Obama said "obviously there are some differences between us in the precise formulations and language, and that's going to happen between friends" (Obama 2011a, para. 9).

8.3.3. Speaking of Change

While direct and harsh criticism of Israel is not found in the speeches, indication of change or encouragement to change is found. After having delivered a speech in 2009, Clinton was asked by a journalist how she could see any progress with certain Israeli conditions on peace talks which the Arabs refused. She indirectly hinted to the fact that some change had to happen, Israel might need to make changes. She talked about previous changes by Israeli prime ministers, and furthermore she said that

"in the process of evaluating what was in the best interests of Israel, and that has to be the primary obligation of any leader of Israel: What is in the best interests of my people and the future of my state?"

And these prime ministers have moved to positions that they never would have thought they could have advocated before they started looking hard and thinking hard about what the future should be. But that's what negotiations are for" (Clinton 2009a, para. 23-24).

In this respond, Clinton is in a very subtle way, implying that a change needs to happen on the Israeli side. Though it is said in such a careful manner, that the relationship with Israel is not put at risk. Such statement could also illustrate what has been mentioned before, that the US and Israel have disagreements. When Kerry entered the picture as secretary of state in 2013, he put a lot of emphasis on the ideas of compromise and hard choices in the run up to the new peace talks in 2013. While repeatedly reminding the parties to make tough choices, he also reminds them of the goal on the horizon, a peaceful end to the conflict. Kerry stated that "each side has a stake in the other's success, and everyone can benefit from the dividends of peace" (Kerry 2013b, para. 9).

8.4. The US National Interests as Appeared in the Speeches

Specific US national interests, like for instance the Arab oil, are not expressed directly. Rather, two main, subjective US interests in the setting of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appear in the speeches. These main interests are to support and secure Israel and to find a peaceful solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These two main interests correlate to the roles as "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker", and they are interlinked as Israel's security is dependent on peaceful relations with its neighbors, and finding a peaceful solution will entail the premise of Israel's security. These interests are repeated over and over, and are thus contributing to maintain the representations of the US as both the "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker". Though, in addition to these main interests, the US might have additional self-interests related to the main interests. Self-interests which are secured by establishing these roles. One clue in the speeches regarding this, is the way the US speakers often put different priorities in the speeches in relations to who they are speaking to, instead of putting equal emphasis on their roles regardless of who their audience is.

The role as "best friend of Israel" is prioritized in settings with an audience which is more concerned with the needs of the Israelis, like in Jerusalem or at an AIPAC conference. One

example is Bush's speech in the Knesset in Jerusalem in 2008 where he puts very much emphasis on the special relationship between the US and Israel. He talks of the fight between good and evil, and mention killers who "reserve a special hatred for the most ardent defenders of liberty, including Americans and Israelis" (Bush 2008a, para. 17). This sort of depiction of the US and Israel as joined against a common enemy might be aimed at strengthening the relationship as partners and especially allies. Since the US started viewing Israel as a strategic asset in the region during the Cold War (Mearsheimer & Walt 2007, p. 51), the US has continued to maintain their close relationship with Israel as evident by the visible role as "best friend of Israel" in these speeches. The US speakers often portray the special relationship with emphasis on the historic tie, emotional bond and shared values. At an AIPAC conference in 2003, Powell expressed this when he stated that

"from the very moment of Harry Truman's historic decision, in war and peace, the United States has stood proudly at Israel's side. Our two nations and peoples are bound together by our common democratic values and traditions. So it has been for over 50 years. So it will always be" (Powell 2003, para. 5).

When there were reports of tension between Obama and Netanyahu, the speeches by Obama were used to attempt to mend or even deny these reports, instead of using such an opportunity to discuss the potential differences which created a possible tension. This would probably hurt the US-Israeli relationship even more, and thus Obama refrain from this. By refraining from this, it might demonstrate that the US indeed does regard the special relationship with Israel as a national interest.

Speeches in settings with a Palestinian or Arab audience often contain a reminder of the US support to Israel is often mentioned, though main focus remains on the role as the "honest broker". When Bush was in Ramallah in 2008, he talked of the US involvement. He said that

"I was asked yesterday at a press conference, you know, what do you intend to do; if you're not going to write the agreement, what do you intend to do? I said, nudge the process forward -- like, pressure; be a pain if I need to be a pain. (...) In other words, we can help influence the process, and will. But the only lasting peace will be achieved when the duly elected leaders of the respective peoples do the hard work" (Bush 2008b, para. 26).

In regards to getting the two conflicting parties to a negotiation table, such a statement could be very important, especially to the Palestinians. By talking of nudging the process, this could entail putting pressure on the parties, including Israel. US pressure on Israel has been an important factor during some negotiations, for instance during the Suez Crisis in 1957, where Israel withdrew from conquered parts of Egypt after US pressure (Waage 2013, p. 208). Statements this this, might have a positive impact on the Palestinian negotiators to agree attend the negotiations.

In the speeches, the notion of the US being an "honest broker" is repeatedly indicated, and thus one could argue that it is an important issue for the US to get across. There could be several reasons for this, some of which include self-interest of the US. For one they repeatedly express that it is their commitment and responsibility to help reach a peaceful solution, and thus might want to continue establishing their role and importance in global conflict management. Another US interest could be to gain a better standing the in the Arab world due to the US interest in Arab oil. The US interest of oil is claimed by several authors, including Quandt (2005, p. 14), Khalidi (2013, p. 109) and Spiegel (2013a, p. 297). While the actual US interest in the Arab oil is not a direct topic in the speeches, there are constant attempt to improve the relationship between the US and the Arab world which could be seen as a necessity to maintain US access to this oil. This is for instance done through expressed sympathy for the Palestinians and the announcements of US aid to the Palestinians. During his speech in Cairo in 2009, Obama directly address the tension between the US and Muslims in the world, and attempted to bridge the gap between them as he referred to what they have in common. The attempt of bridge the gap includes the Palestinian people, as a majority of Palestinians are Muslim. He said that

"Islam is a part of America. And I believe that America holds within her the truth that regardless of race, religion, or station in life, all of us share common aspirations -- to live in peace and security; to get an education and to work with dignity; to love our families, our communities, and our God. These things we share. This is the hope of all humanity" (Obama 2009b, para. 14).

By attempting to bridge the gap between them, he might be attempting to ensure the US interest for its own safety. Ensuring US safety is related to the anti-American extremists

which Mearsheimer and Walt (2007, p. 77) argues is linked to the unconditional support of Israel.

There are many possible interests in a complex conflict as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, though they are not expressed in the speeches. One could argue, based on what is expressed in the speeches, that the role as "best friend of Israel" and the role as the "honest broker" is combined by the US in order to ensure their interests on some level. So by attempting to ensure their expressed main interests in supporting and securing Israel and finding a peaceful solution to the conflict, other addition interests may be linked to these main interests. The roles might then have a potential effect in the US involvement I regards to the interests, especially considering the US hegemony.

8.5. Potential Effect of the Roles

The potential effects of these two roles can be very wide, though in this context I have focused on the potential effects related to the credibility and potential trust of the US, and also what potential impact the roles might have in the US peace initiatives. I explore in what way the US roles can influence the central aspect of peace process, like getting the conflicting parties to accept an invitation to attend peace talks. As the US has said repeatedly that they cannot and will not force a peace agreement, the involvement is mostly based on getting the parties together and keeping the negotiations going until a peace settlement is found. The role as "honest broker" is central to the potential effect in the actual peace process. The role as "best friend of Israel" is central to creating trust and credibility with Israel.

8.5.1. Potential Effects of the Role as "Best Friend of Israel"

Though the special relationship with Israel is not only based on supporting and securing Israel in the conflict, this stands as a central part of the relationship. This is illustrated not only in the speeches by sympathy expressed for Israel, but also in the different types of assistance from the US to Israel, including military devices like the Iron Dome. The potential effect of this role in regards to Israel is related to trust. The repeated description of the close relationship has a very strong presence, like for instance in 2003, when Bush and Prime

Minister Sharon spoke in Washington D.C. They mentioned that it was their eighth meeting. Bush continued by saying "that should indicate to everybody that our nations have a deep and abiding friendship" (Bush 2003b, para. 3). One could argue that the description of such a special relationship entails that there are trust between the parties. A trust that is useful in getting Israel to agree to come to the negotiation table. In May of 2013, not long before the announcement of new peace talks, Kerry said that "I would reiterate that the United States of America is committed now, as it always has been and will be, to the security of Israel. The security of Israel is paramount in our discussions with respect to the peace process" (Kerry 2013d, para. 7). By reassuring that the US is committed to one of Israel's main issues, Israel might be more inclined to accept an invitation to peace talks. This aspect was discussed by Ross (2004, p. 6-7) who argued that the special relationship between the US and Israel would allow Israel to feel secure enough to make compromises in a peace process. Thus, perhaps such reassurances might not have had the same affect by someone else that did not have the role as "best friend of Israel", and thus did not have the trust necessary. At the same time, as Miller (2008, p. 79-80) argued, the role as "best friend of Israel" can contribute to get the Arabs to the negotiating table since well as they understand that the US have some influence on Israel can could use this in negotiations.

8.5.2. Potential Effects of the Role as "Honest Broker"

The intended effect of the role as the "honest broker" might lie in the words, to take active part in the peace resolution by brokering honestly. In the speeches, this part is emphasized especially in settings with a Palestinian or an Arab audience. A potential effect, and most likely the one the US hopes for, is to be able to bring the two conflicting parties together for successful peace talks. The commitment to seek peace is repeated in the speeches, for instance by Obama in 2010. When he and President Abbas where speaking in Washington D.C., Obama talked about the US commitment in the conflict and he said:

"That commitment has not wavered. And I think the American people want to see a resolution of this issue that is equitable. We will continue to work side by side with you, as well as the Israelis, to resolve this in a way that is good for the children and future generations both in Israel and in a future Palestine" (Obama 2010a, para. 14).

Obama uses the opportunity to present a setting in a peace process where the parties are equal, and working side by side. This illustrates the desired setting of an "honest broker". While the US commitment to Israel is repeated in most of the speeches, it is not as central here, but the attempted role as "honest broker" is very present.

When the US speakers present premise for peace, in which the needs and wants of both of the parties are included, like security for Israel and the establishment of a Palestinian state, the role as the "honest broker" is present. Such premise could make it more interesting and encouraging for the parties to join negotiations. In July of 2013, shortly after the announcement of the new peace talks, Kerry spoke of the road ahead. He presented the agenda which focused on negotiating the core issues for both parties. Kerry said that

"the parties have agreed here today that all of the final status issues, all of the core issues, and all other issues are all on the table for negotiation. And they are on the table with one simple goal: a view to ending the conflict, ending the claims. Our objective will be to achieve a final status agreement over the course of the next nine months" (Kerry 2013b, para. 7).

The statement presents the negotiations as a forum in which the parties are rather equal, and where all the core issues are open for negotiation. Such a statement could indicate some presence of an "honest broker" who presents an agenda which could prove to be fruitful for both parties. Though, while the roles might contribute in getting the conflicting parties to accept invitations to the negotiation table, the roles might then start colliding after the parties have arrived.

8.5.3. The Roles Colliding

The role as an "honest broker" is arguably challenged by the role as the "best friend of Israel", and vice versa. Though the roles have elements which could be interlinked, for instance regarding Israel's security, the core natures of the two roles are rather contrasting. This is for instance found through the speeches when the different roles are prioritized in different setting, as they might be difficult to combine in all settings. Some, like Khalidi (2013, p. 92) dismiss the idea of the US being an "honest broker" due to the special relationship with Israel.

Though, it is difficult to say with absolute certainty what effect the special relationship has on the ability of the US to act as an "honest broker". That said, the historical context do illustrate several failed attempts of finding peace. Nonetheless, there have in fact been several attempts, which is more than no attempts at all. Thus, one might argue that the roles have a positive effect in bringing the parties to the negotiating table, though at the table, the roles start colliding. This might happen due to the contrasting nature of the roles, as one of the roles focus on the close relationship with Israel, while the other focus on attempting to maintain neutral and considering the wants and needs of both parties involved. While in a given setting of negotiating, the role as "best friend of Israel" can become a challenge in the US of acting as an "honest broker", and the role as an "honest broker" can become a challenge the US of acting as the "best friend of Israel". In 2009, Obama and Netanyahu spoke in Washington D.C. when Obama stated that "it's going to be difficult, but the one thing that I've committed to the Prime Minister is we are going to be engaged, the United States is going to roll up our sleeves. We want to be a strong partner in this process" (Obama 2009a, para. 49.) Here, Obama illustrates that they will commit to hard work in negotiations. The findings in the speeches do illustrate, although perhaps in a more indirect way, some contradictions between being the "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker". This is a contradiction discussed in literature by others, like Aruri (2003, p. xii). So, while the US is actively involved in the attempt of achieving peace in the conflict, the actions taken by the US, in relations to the roles, during the peace process can have an impact. Thus the US must walk a thin line while attempting to harmonize these two roles.

8.6. Rhetorical Tactics to Harmonize the Roles

As one role can be a challenge for the other, and have an impact on the US involvement in achieving a peaceful end to the conflict, some measures might be necessary to try and deal with this. In these speeches, some rhetorical tactics for handling and harmonizing the roles as "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker" are found. First there are some occurrences of double messages, where the main message might be veiled by another message, which often could be some sort of indirect criticism. Second, I find there to be repeated comparison of Israeli and Palestinians, this often in attempt to generate empathy and illustrate the similarities between the two conflicting peoples. Third, I look at the moral and ethical issues raised in the

speeches, including the obligation to make peace and not let the task of ending the conflict fall on their children.

8.6.1. Double Message

Since the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a controversial topic, not all things are easy to say directly. I have already touched upon some issues where the speakers are not very direct in getting their message across, like instead of directly expressing criticism towards Israel, the speakers rather encourage them to take certain steps. The Israeli blockade of Gaza is another issue which appears to be difficult to talk directly about. In 2003, Bush acknowledged this. He said that

"the fence is a sensitive issue, I understand. And the Prime Minister made it very clear to me that it was a sensitive issue. And my promise to him is we'll continue to discuss and to dialogue how best to make sure that the fence sends the right signal that not only is security important, but the ability for the Palestinians to live a normal life is important, as well" (Bush 2003b, para. 40).

Bush here reassures Israel's security issues, but at the same time implies that the fence does not allow the Palestinians to live normal lives. Since the ability for Palestinians to live normal lives is dubbed important, one might argue that Bush has a double message telling Israel to take action regarding the fence that would lessen the burden on the Palestinians. When Obama was in Jerusalem in 2013 and spoke to the people of Israel, he encouraged all to seize the opportunity for peace, as peace is possible. Furthermore he said that "I'm not saying it's guaranteed. I can't even say that it is more likely than not. But it is possible. I know it doesn't seem that way. There are always going to be reasons to avoid risk. There are costs for failure. There will always be extremists who provide an excuse not to act" (Obama 2013b, para. 53). He addressed the major issues for Israel, security and end of terror, and he indirectly encourages Israel not to use the extremists as an excuse for inaction in the peace process.

Another form of double messages, are the messages which are filled with flattery. The speakers flatter the parties at the same time as the US express an expectation of the parties to do something. What the parties are expected to do, is often diffuse, though one can assume it

refers to the premises for peace which the US has supported, like ending terror and stopping settlements. In 2009, Obama spoke of the opportunity for peace, and about the importance of the parties living up to their obligations from the Road Map. He then said this about Netanyahu:

"I think Prime Minister Netanyahu has the benefit of having served as Prime Minister previously. He has both youth and wisdom (...) and I think is in a position to achieve the security objectives of Israel, but also bring about historic peace. And I'm confident that he's going to seize this moment (Obama 2009a, para. 11-13).

These kinds of remarks are present several times, while they boost the confidence of the leaders they also indicate indirectly that the parties are responsible for their own future. Thus a failure to seize the opportunity will be a responsibility the leaders must bear. When asked about the partial settlement moratorium in 2010 after a speech he held with Netanyahu, on whether he thought it would be helpful for Israel to extend it, he was very vague in his response. Obama began by saying:

"Let me -- let me, first of all, say that I think the Israeli government, working through layers of various governmental entities and jurisdictions, has shown restraint over the last several months that I think has been conducive to the prospects of us getting into direct talks. And my hope is, is that once direct talks have begun, well before the moratorium has expired, that that will create a climate in which everybody feels a greater investment in success" (Obama 2010b, para. 32-33).

Instead of bluntly responding that Israel must extend the partial settlement moratorium, he delivered flattery to the Israeli government and diffusely talked of a hope of the parties being invested in successful peace negotiations. He was perhaps also indicating that Israel would extend the partial settlement moratorium if they were invested in the peace negotiation, and thus placing responsibility on Israel.

In some cases, the US speakers do directly express what they see as the premise for peace in the different issues, like the end of terror, security and no more settlement activity. Though, in some cases, instead of expressing it directly, they might say it in a different manner. For instance, in 2008, Bush talked about the prospects of peace, and he said "to the people of Israel: You know that peace and reconciliation with your neighbors is the best path to long-

term security" (Bush 2008c, para. 24). Thus, Bush is putting responsibility on Israel and hinting to the fact that Israel knows its own responsibilities in achieving peace and thus also for improving its own security. So, instead of trying to convince the parties with direct words on what they must do, they sometimes attempt to convince them in ways that are more subtle. This could also include comparing the conflicting parties to demonstrate similarities.

8.6.2. Comparing Israelis and Palestinians

The speakers often appeal to the emotions and try to generate empathy between the parties. In a conflict that has been going on for over six decades, there are some deep differences which are evident in the different narratives of the conflict itself. Major differences between the parties can make it easier to continue the conflict as one do not identify with the other. In the speeches there are attempts to bridge some of this gap between the parties. They do this by presenting similarities between the Israelis and Palestinians. One similarity is linked to the religious background, for instance the reference to Abraham, a central figure in both Islam and Judaism. In 2002, Bush stated that "the United States will work for all the children of Abraham to know the benefits of peace" (Bush 2002c, para. 31). After having talked about the responsibility to work towards the day when

"Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims, and a place for all of the children of Abraham to mingle peacefully together as in the story of Isra -- (applause) -- as in the story of Isra, when Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, peace be upon them, joined in prayer (Obama 2009b, para 41).

This could be attempts to change a discourse in both in the Israeli camp and the Palestinian camp that emphasizes the differences where they might identify themselves as victims. It could also be a way to challenge the narrative which separates the two peoples with much distance between them. This distance was addressed in Obama's speech in Jerusalem in 2013. He said:

"Four years ago, I stood in Cairo in front of an audience of young people -- politically, religiously, they must seem a world away. But the things they want, they're not so different from what the young people here want. They want the ability to make their own decisions and to get an education, get a good job; to worship God in their own way; to get married; to raise a family. The same is true of those young Palestinians that

I met with this morning. The same is true for young Palestinians who yearn for a better life in Gaza" (Obama 20013b, para. 59).

By attempting to bridge the gap between the Israelis and Palestinians, more trust might begin to appear between the parties. Trust essential in achieving anything potential peace negotiations. If the conflicting parties identified more with each other, the conflict might be more challenging for them to continue, as they might feel more of a moral obligation for the other party.

8.6.3. Moral Obligations

In both the role as the "best friend of Israel" and the "honest broker", there is a sense of morality. In some cases the morality is focused on the sufferings of the Jewish people, and others of the sufferings of the Palestinians, especially those in Gaza. Most often these two focuses of morality is placed next to each other, and sometimes the focus of morality is focused on both sides simultaneously. Thus, the roles as "best friend of Israel" and "honest broker" become more diffuse and perhaps merge into one another. While emphasizing the moral obligation, the future and children are most often mentioned. It is a means of expanding the view of the party beyond the preconditions set for negotiations and domestic politics. At an AIPAC conference in 2002, Powell referred to the future when talking about the hard work they are doing. He stated that

"because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has taken too many lives -- Jewish, Muslim, and Christian -- and ruined far too many more. We must find a way to ensure that Israeli children, Palestinian children can grow up in peace and dignity and live in mutual respect of each other. We must recommit ourselves to making a better future for men, women, children, and generations yet unborn (Powell 2003, para. 50).

The responsibility for the children's futures is put on the leaders of the conflicting parties. In 2013, Obama argued that the children of the future are why they cannot give up. He argued for the "young Palestinians and young Israelis who deserve a better future than one that is continually defined by conflict" (Obama 2013a, para. 26). This is a statement both parties can agree with, and thus they might feel the weight of the moral obligations weighing down on their political decisions.

9. Conclusion

The US has been actively involved in the peace process of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for more than four decades, and still a successful peace agreement continues to elude them (Kurtzer et al. 2013, p. 3). The US involvement is characterized by two roles as "honest broker" and "best friend of Israel" which make up a paradox which has been the subject of this research. The research set out to explore the roles that make up the paradox through the public, political discourse in the US. The research provides an answer to three research questions:

- How are these two roles reflected in US official statements regarding the conflict?
- Why does the US combine these two roles and how does it impact the US peace initiatives?
- How have these roles evolved over the past decade?

Through my discourse analysis I found that the two roles as the "best friend of Israel" and the "honest broker" are both reflected in US official statements, though they are reflected in somewhat different ways. The role as the "best friend of Israel" is expressed very directly through actual statements on the commitment in special relationship between the US and Israel, with extra emphasis in settings with an Israeli audience, or an audience who sympathizes with the Israelis. In addition to expressing the special relationship directly, the US speakers illustrate an indirect support for Israel by supporting the Israeli narrative. In addition to retelling actual parts of the narrative, like the founding story of the Israeli state, it is also illustrated by the use of names and terms from the Israeli narrative. In this conflict, the two parties have their own narrative of the history of the conflict. Since the US is a hegemon, the US support for the Israeli narrative has a great impact on maintaining the representations from the Israeli narrative in the discourse. The maintaining of such representations in the discourse is important for Israel as it might use the narrative to justify some of their actions in the conflict. While the role as "best friend of Israel" is reflected through direct statements of US commitment to Israel and support of Israeli narrative, the role also entails US diplomatic, economic and military support to Israel, which is also reflected through the speeches.

I found that the role as the "honest broker" is also expressed through direct statements, though in different shapes, including facilitator, partner, monitoring and supporting. However, it is expressed mostly through the repeated talk of the US commitment to peace. The US speakers place themselves very actively in the peace efforts by stating that they have an obligation and responsibility to take part in the work towards peace. The role as "honest broker" is indirectly illustrated through the US premise for peace which is presented in the speeches, which illustrate that they do take wants and needs from both parties into consideration, for instance Israel's security and the establishment of a Palestinian state. There is also a significant emphasis on compromise and repeatedly mentioning of responsibility of both of the conflicting parties. Efforts in the peace process of acting like an "honest broker" may entail different policy tools that the speeches reflect, including tools linked to diplomacy, economy and military. Such tools are used in attempts to alter direction of the conflicting parties in efforts of achieving peace. Both of the roles are reflected repeatedly in the speeches, both directly and indirectly, thus the US speakers contribute to maintain these representations of the roles established in the discourse.

Some reasons why the US has combined these two roles are detected in the speech through the US interests that are expressed. While the US has several interests, two main interests are expressed in the speeches. These are to support and ensure Israel's security and to find peace in the conflict. In having these two main interests in the region, the US has combined the roles in order to achieve them both. While the core natures of the roles are contrasting, there are elements within the roles that are interlinked, like interest of Israel's security which is the main focus of "best friend of Israel" and a part of the premise for peace of the "honest broker". In the speeches, the roles are combined by using rhetorical tactics to harmonize them. Such tactics include delivering double messages, where the main message could be wrapped up in another message. This happens for instance when the US wish to give a message as an "honest broker" but without being too direct and jeopardizing damaging the special relationship with Israel and thus role as "best friend of Israel". Another tactic found in the speeches was to compare the Israelis and Palestinians. This illustrated an attempt to bridge the gap between the two conflicting parties which could lead to more understanding and perhaps take them one step closer to finding peace. Also, moral obligations are detected as such a tactic. The moral obligation is based on their job to find peace and to not let the conflict continue to be a burden for the children of the future.

The potential impacts of the paradox with these roles in the US peace initiatives are found in the effects the roles have on bringing the conflicting parties to the negotiating table. The role as the "best friend of Israel" contributes to support Israel and thus maintain trust between the US and Israel. This can in some settings impact the ability of the US to get Israel to agree to take part in negotiations for a peace initiative. On the other hand, the role as the "honest broker", which focus on the premise for peace, can put the important issues of both conflicting parties on the table, and thus make it more interesting and encouraging for them both to take part in a peace initiative. However, as the roles can have an impact in bringing both of the parties to the negotiating table, the roles can then collide at the table and cause problems. This can also be illustrated through previous peace negotiations that has eventually failed. In a given setting in a peace initiative, the role as the "best friend of Israel" can be a challenge for the role of the "honest broker", while the role as "honest broker" can be a challenge for the role as "best friend of Israel". Thus the paradox with the two roles can contribute in the peace process by starting negotiations, though at the same time it might also provide challenges.

Based on the finding from the speeches, the roles have evolved some over the past decade. The most significant change is found in the rhetoric Obama uses when he illustrates a new direction, away from the war on terror policy that Bush presented in the beginning of his first term. During a speech in Cairo in 2009, Obama reaches out a hand to the Muslim and Arab world in an attempt to bridge the gap between them. This is linked to the role as "honest broker" where a further development could lead to the US having somewhat more balanced relationship to the conflicting parties, if they manage to bridge the gap. Some changes in the discourse are present in the speeches by some of the words used. The US support of the Israeli narrative is dominant through the speeches, though at one point there is a hint of support of the Palestinian narrative as well. Also, in recent times the name "Palestine" has been used in a new manner. Instead of using the name to describe a future situation, it was listed together with other state names like Israel and Jordan, which could indicate a new representation by the US which could change the discourse and place a future establishment the Palestinian state one step closer. While the support for Israel remained steady, the role as "best friend of Israel" did see some indications of change in the tension between Obama and Netanyahu.

While the tension in itself is not played out in the speeches, there is at a very few occasions where it is acknowledged and then dismissed as rumors. One indirect way this tension is reflected, is when the US speakers talk of changes. This does not happen often in the speeches, but at one point, Clinton implies that Israel might change and that changes made by Israel could lead them closer to peace. Thus placing a big amount on responsibility on Israel and illustrating that the US does not always agree with Israel. Even though some evolvments have occurred in the roles, the US continues to adhere to the roles of the paradox in their continued involvement in finding peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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Appendix 1: Coding Scheme

CATAGORY	CODE	DATA	REFERENCES
Main catagories + subcatagories	Analytical codes	Empirical data for the speeches – key words	References to the texts to use as data

1. "Best friend of Israel"			
1a. Actual statements			
	Identity	Shared values, history, belief etc	
	Nature of relationship	Friendship, ally, bond, commitment, etc	
	Self-interest (what's in it for the U.S.)		
	Contribution (what's in it for Israel)		
1b. Supporting Narrative			
	Names Terms	Jewish state, Promised land etc.	
	Plot	The traditional Israeli narrative	

	Present perspective	Security, self-defense	
1c. Sanctions/incentives			
	Military	Iron Dome, Financial support to military.	
	Economic	Aid, loans	
	Diplomacy	Veto in UN etc.	

2. "Honest broker"			
2a. Actual statements			
	US role as "honest broker"	Facilitator, mediator, active part.	

	The reason for being "honest broker"	Obligation, commitment (to peace), US interest to find peace.	
	Ability / Limitation	Can help, but not force the parties.	
2b. Supporting Narrative/Premise for peace			
	Premise for peace – core issues	Occupation, settlements, terrorism, refugees, water, security, democracy, etc	
	Need for Palestinian state	Two-state solution, creation of Palestinian state	

	Involvement / responsibility of the two parties	Hard choices, compromise	
	Reaching out to the parties	Bridge gap / Reaching out (Arabs)	
2c. Sanctions/incentives			
	Reward/ incentive for behaving like the US wants	Acknowledgement of commitment / comprise/ progress, more aid	
	Punishment/sanctions for not behaving like the US wants	Refuse to negotiate/include (Hamas), withholding aid etc.	

3. Rhetorical tactics to harmonize roles			
	Double message	Concealed message / "Criticism wrapped in flattery"	

	Comparing Israel and Palestinians / Use of empathy	Children, rights, daily fear, concrete persons/victims	
	Moral/ethical arguments	Obligation to make peace, not let conflict go on to next generation.	