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**Approaches of U.S. Presidents to the Issue of Israeli Settlements in the  
Occupied Territories in the 1989–2021 Period**

Continuity and Change through the Lens of the Role Theory of Foreign  
Policy

Master's thesis

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I declare that I have prepared this thesis independently based on the sources listed at the end of this thesis.

In Olomouc on:

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## **Introduction**

The State of Israel was created in 1948 after the declaration of independence which culminated the years of efforts for a Jewish state. These efforts had been negatively perceived by surrounding Arab nations and escalated into violent aggression which broke into the so-called five Arab-Israeli wars after 1948 attracting the world's attention. The Six-Day War of June 1967 led to several crucial changes to the region of the Middle East that are still a matter of discussion in today's world. Since the 1967 war, Israel has occupied parts of the territories of its Arab neighbours. One of the many problematic aspects of this occupation have been the Israeli settlements that are being constructed in these territories. The Israeli settlements are located in the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. In the past, they were also in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, but these territories became the subject of negotiations, and the settlements were withdrawn. The settlements phenomenon is a central subject of this thesis and so in the connection with the foreign policy of the United States of America after the end of the Cold War. This thesis will contribute to the broad debates on U.S.-Israeli relations focusing on the U.S. role.

The Israeli policy of settlements is considered illegal by the international community as it violates the Fourth Geneva Convention signed in 1949 which states that ‘‘The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies’’ (IV Geneva Convention, 1949; Amnesty International, 2022; Bitzur, 2021; ICJ, 2022; ICRC, 2001; UN General Assembly, 2021). The UN Security Council passed several resolutions that called upon Israel to give up its claims to the occupied territories and to halt the settlement's activity (UN Security Council, 2016). Beyond being considered illegal by international law, the settlements are perceived by many as one of the main obstacles to peace (EEAS, 2021; UN General Assembly, 2021; Union Africaine, 2013). However, some on the Israeli side claim they have never been an obstacle to peace (Loewy, 2022). Rosen (2012) suggests that using the settlements freeze as a precondition to negotiations is not useful as they are not that important determinant.

Focusing on the U.S. foreign policy after the Second World War, every president has accepted the idea of value-based foreign policy, however, as Nye (2020) or Mead (2021) elaborates, nowadays those ideals are in retreat. This was evident mostly in the policies of president Donald Trump which are considered to be the first explicit violation of the liberal international order. Wilsonism brought into the U.S. foreign policy the emphasis on moral

values such as the right for self-determination of the people, protection of human rights, determination for peace, rules-based order, and spread of democracy even though their deployment is sometimes driven by different views (Ambrosius, 2002; Mead, 2021; Nye, 2020). This U.S. direction can be also observed in the presidential attempts to play an important role during the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. At the same time, the U.S. have been one of the biggest supporters of Israel, especially after the departure of France and United Kingdom from the region after the 1956 events. The U.S. government officially states that ‘‘Israel has no greater friend than the United States’’ (U.S. Department of State, 2021).

Taking into consideration the international status of Israeli settlements and the U.S. position in world politics, the picture creates an apparent dilemma in the U.S. foreign policy and the Israeli policies in the occupied territories. Kurtzer (2009) mentions that from the end of the Cold War until President Obama’s terms, all U.S. administrations officially made statements against the construction of Israeli settlements. However, the positions of U.S. presidents are not that straightforward. Shalom (2012) also mentions that U.S. administrations are usually in opposition to the construction of Israeli settlements, but they are rather limited to verbal convictions and do not implement it in practice. Neither of them presents a complex analysis of the administrations’ stances on the Israeli settlements.

Since the settlements are majorly perceived as an obstacle to peace in one of the most debatable disputes in the contemporary world, and the U.S. being a major actor promoting democracy and human rights, the question arises of *How the approach to the Israeli settlements was stable throughout the U.S. administrations, and eventually, how did it change between 1989 and 2021?*

The aim of this thesis is to follow the stability and change in the post-Cold War years of the U.S. foreign policy towards Israeli settlements through national role conceptions. The analysis includes the administrations of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump.

The role theory of foreign policy is applied in order to follow the U.S. position in the question of Israeli settlements through the deployment of national role conceptions. The reason behind choosing this theory is that it helps explain the behaviour in foreign policy by focusing on the policymakers’ perception of their role outside the state (Holsti, 1970, p. 240). It helps explain deviations in states’ behaviour without focusing on power. The role theory is concerned with national foreign policy resources and equally respects the importance of the influence of

the international system i.e., external expectations in the form of concepts such as role prescriptions and role set (Beneš, 2010, p. 83; Le Prestre, 1997, p. 5–6).

This thesis is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The first methodology used is thematic content analysis. The content analysis is deployed in order to identify the national role conceptions in the highest-level foreign policy makers' statements in each administration under study. The identification of the NRCs is based on their definition in the theoretical part of this thesis, and it helps to recognise each administrations' stances towards the Israeli settlements, and the changes among them. Second, the calculation of the mean deviation is used, on the basis of the thematic content analysis results, in order to better explain the stability of the researched phenomenon.

The thesis proceeds as follows. First, it reviews the existing debates on the United States and Israel with a focus on Israeli settlements. Second, the theoretical framework is presented. It begins with definitions of basic assumptions of the role theory of foreign policy and its core concepts. Then, the thesis focuses on national role conceptions which are followed in this thesis as a tool for tracing the stability and change in the U.S. foreign policy towards the settlements. Afterwards, it presents the methodology and data collection. The third part of this thesis is empirical. It follows the role projections in the U.S. foreign policy statements on Israeli settlements. Thereafter, there is a discussion on the stability and change of the Israeli settlements phenomenon in the U.S. foreign policy of the 1989–2021 administrations based on the previous part including the calculation of NRCs' mean deviation. The last part summarizes the findings and answers the research question.

## 1 State-of-the-art

The academic debate on the United States and the Israeli settlements is usually included in several topics and it seems there is no complex research on the stability of approach towards the Israeli settlements across all post-Cold War administrations. The aim of this thesis is to fill this gap.

As indicated above, one of the debates is focused on the Israeli settlements and their perception as an obstacle to peace. Kurtzer (2009) discusses the Israeli perspective of both camps, saying either they are an obstacle or they are not. At the same time, he presents the comments from each U.S. administration since 1967 on the Jewish settlements which are in opposition to the settlements and perceiving them as an obstacle to peace. However, there is usually few remarks from each and it lacks a deeper analysis in order to understand completely the presidential position on this phenomenon. On the other hand, Rosen (2012) concludes that the settlements are not a major subject to bring Palestinians and Israelis to the negotiations, and that involving them as a precondition is a mistake. The author comes to this conclusion by analysing the use of the settlements in the negotiations mediated by the U.S. administrations.

Another debate that involves the United States and Jewish settlements revolves around the general overview of the U.S.-Israeli relationship without focusing on or developing concrete aspects of that relationship. The settlements are usually one of the points as authors focus on the administrations' approach to the peace process (Mead, 2021; Nonneman, Asseburg, Moïsi & Silvestri, 2003; Quandt, 2001; Waxman, 2012). In relation to the authors dealing with the U.S.-Israeli relationship, there is a debate focusing on the biased nature of the U.S. approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict. It is analysed through the presidential approaches to the peace process with the conclusion of being biased towards Israel (Al-Rousan, 2013; Christison, 2004; Neff, 1994b).

The most recent debate focuses on Trump's administration and the changes it has brought to the foreign policy towards Israel, including the occupied territories and settlements issues. Trump's decisions regarding the occupied territories further accentuated the U.S. support for Israel, and it brought back the debate on the legality of the settlements (Bitzur, 2021; Erdogan & Habash, 2020; Kattan, 2018; Kattan, 2020).

As indicated in the introduction of this thesis, there is a broad debate on the legal aspect of settlements in the international community. Rodenhäuser (2013) analyses the Israeli claims that they are in accordance with international law however concluding they are illegal. Another

detailed analysis by Poissonnier & David (2020) also assumes the illegal position of the Jewish settlements, as well as Meron (2017) does. In relation to it, the debate branches out to the U.S. approach to the legality of the settlements in the international context which is not that straightforward in terming them illegal (Neff, 1994a).

## **2 Theoretical Part**

This section of the thesis elaborates on its theoretical framework based on the role theory of foreign policy. First, it focuses on the national role theory premises and defines its core concepts essential for this thesis. Subsequently, it describes the selection of national role conceptions (NRCs) used in this thesis and their definitions. A table was created for a better overview of the NRCs found in Appendix 1. Further, it presents the methodological framework which includes the thematic content analysis, mean deviation, and data collection.

### **2.1 Role Theory of Foreign Policy**

The role theory of foreign policy helps to understand foreign policy behaviour from the analysis of shared ideas of elites about what is the state's role and purpose in the international arena (Beneš, 2010, p. 73). It helps explain deviations in states' behaviour without focusing on power. The role theory is concerned with national foreign policy resources and equally respects the importance of the influence of the international system i.e., external expectations in the form of concepts such as role prescriptions and role set (Beneš, 2010, p. 83; Le Prestre, 1997, p. 5–6). The role theory was incorporated from sociology into the study of foreign policy behaviour of states in 1970 by Kalevi Holsti in his seminal article *National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy*. In this article, he reacted to the lack of approaches to the study of foreign policy as most of the work was concentrated on bipolar rivalry. Further, he responded to an oversimplified view of the roles accepted by individual actors in the international system (Beneš, 2010, p. 73; Holsti, 1970, p. 242).

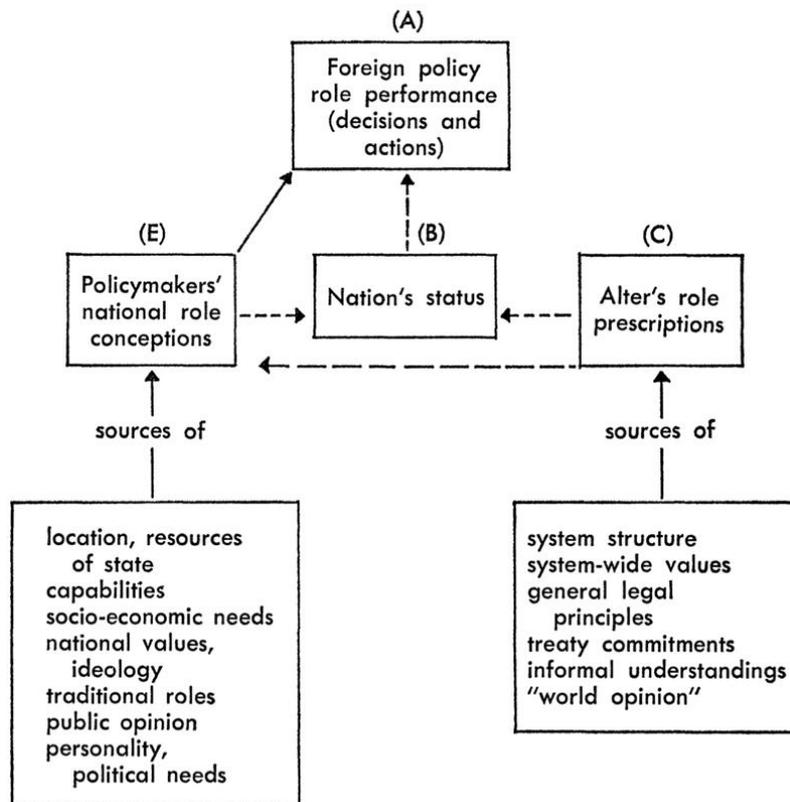
The basic assumption of the role theory is that the main focus is on the top foreign policymakers who determine national role conceptions (NRCs) (Holsti, 1970; Chafetz, Abramson & Grillot, 1996; Wish, 1980). The main premise of the theory is the existence of a correlation between NRCs and practical foreign policy behaviour (Caisová, 2017, p. 6). ‘‘Role theory assumes [...] that states are actors who behave consistent with specific roles with which they identify’’ (Chafetz, Abramson & Grillot, 1996, p. 732).

The concept of role (or role performance) is perceived by Holsti as “behaviour (decisions and actions) and can be kept analytically distinct from role prescriptions, which are the norms and expectations cultures, societies, institutions, or groups attach to particular position” (Holsti, 1970, p. 239). Further, Holsti concludes it can be assumed “that the role performance (decisions and actions) of governments may be explained primarily by reference to the policymakers’ own conceptions of their nation's role in a region or in the international system as a whole” (Holsti, 1970, p. 240).

Holsti (1970) assumed four concepts from social context which help analyse foreign policy: “(1) role performance, which encompasses the attitudes, decisions, and actions governments take to implement (2) their self-defined national role conceptions or (3) the role prescriptions emanating, under varying circumstances, from the alter or external environment. Action always takes place within (4) a position, that is, a system of role prescription” (Holsti, 1970, p. 240).

However, Holsti suggests using the term status rather than the term position since the concept of position (systems of role expectation) is too explicitly defined for use in the context of the international system. The term status indicates “only a rough estimate of a state's ranking in the international system and which may or may not have appreciable consequences on the ways that policymakers define what they believe to be the appropriate international orientations or tasks for their nation” (Holsti, 1970, p. 244).

Similarly, Holsti argues that in the international context, the role prescriptions have a less effective and indirect influence on role performance, moreover, the national role conceptions rather impact the role performance more than the role prescriptions in contrast to the social context. The reason for that is the lack of an explicit definition of role prescription in the international arena. However, he does not exclude their existence of impact (Holsti, 1970, p. 241–244). The relationships between these concepts are depicted in the diagram (Figure 1) below where it is apparent that the emphasis within the national role theory is on role conceptions and sources of those conceptions which result in role performance.



*Figure 1 Role Theory and Foreign Policy: National Role Conceptions and Prescriptions as Independent Variables*

*Source: Holsti (1970, p. 245)*

National role performance is then “general foreign policy behaviour of governments” (Holsti, 1970, p. 245). National role conceptions are “policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in the subordinate regional system”, and they represent “an important aspect of the total intellectual setting in which day-to-day decisions on foreign policy are made” (Holsti, 1970, p. 245–246). In short, Wish (1980) defines NRCs as “foreign policy makers' perceptions of their nations' positions in the international system [...] which affect many aspects of decision making” (Wish, 1980, p. 533).

NRCs are elastic to a certain extent as they are historically variable interpretations of the role of the state in the international community. However, they are relatively stable ideas within the international arena (Beneš, 2010, p. 74). They can be politically contested since they are not precisely defined, however, the NRCs' elements are usually apparent (Krotz, 2001, p.

7–8). This thesis works with NRCs defined in the following section. Holsti concludes that states carry out more NRCs in the international system (Holsti, 1970, p. 277–278).

Another concept, which Holsti does not define, is a role set. It is “a sum of national roles in a given time framework” (Caisová, 2017, p. 8). This thesis deals with five U.S. administrations from the year 1989 until 2021. The role set is then understood as a sum of national roles defined in each administration separately in order to follow the stability of the Israeli settlements phenomenon in the U.S. foreign policy.

This thesis adopts Holsti’s focus on national role conceptions by decision-makers as they rather affect the shaping of foreign policy than the role prescriptions. Neglecting the role prescriptions is included among the limits of this thesis.

## **2.2 National Role Conceptions Typologies**

This thesis adopted relevant national role conceptions from Holsti (1970), Chafetz, Abramson & Grillot (1996), Kara & Sözen (2016) typologies. Moreover, it added one role – *Enforcer* – that reflects behaviour that uses practical tools to influence Israeli policy. The selection of NRCs was preceded by extensive research on this thesis, which resulted in general patterns that were then applied during the selection itself. Thus, the NRCs are chosen to correspond to the subject of this thesis i.e., the Israeli settlements in the U.S. foreign policy. Further, their definition is altered in order to fit this thesis’ subject i.e., the U.S. foreign policy approach towards the Israeli settlements. Moreover, the list of chosen NRCs is rather short since the thesis focuses on a narrowly defined subject.

The national role conceptions in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements used in this thesis are sketched out as follows. They are displayed as well in Appendix 1:

1. *Regional Protector* – States feel a special responsibility to handle regional issues and provide a secure environment in the region (Kara & Sözen, 2016, p. 52). This NRC is attributed to a specific statement on Israeli settlements in case it also mentions the peace process and the whole region of the Middle East or Resolutions 242 and 338<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 were passed after the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars. The SC Resolution 242 “calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories, acknowledges the claim of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the region and calls on the UN Secretary-General to appoint an Envoy to facilitate an acceptable solution to the conflict” (UN Peacemaker, 1967). The Resolution 338 “calls for all parties to cease all firing and terminate all military activities immediately. The

2. *Mediator-integrator* – The themes for this national role conception indicate perceptions of a continuing task to help adversaries reconcile their differences (Holsti, 1970, p. 265). This NRC is attributed in case the statement mentions the need for direct involvement of the U.S. in the peace process. Further, the statement implies that settlements are an essential issue and must be addressed within the peace process.
3. *Facilitator* – States’ effort to facilitate peace talks to maintain dialogue (Kara & Sözen, 2016, p. 53). This NRC is attributed to a statement which calls on the conflict sides to initiate talks. Moreover, it suggests that the peace process should not put so much pressure on the Israeli settlements as an obstacle to peace or that they should be handled first.
4. *Faithful Ally* – A government makes a specific commitment to support the policies of another government (Holsti, 1970, p. 267). This NRC is assigned to the statement on Israeli settlements which also stresses the good U.S.-Israeli relationship or when it expresses the administration’s acceptance of the Israeli settlement policy.
5. *Strategic Partner* – States that shares policy views on important issues such as economy, regional stability, nuclear non-proliferation, and terrorism (Kara & Sözen, 2016, p. 53). In relevance to this thesis’ subject, it expresses the case when the U.S. administration in a statement on Israeli settlements also supports the Israeli policy.
6. *Independent* – The government will make policy decisions according to the state's own interests rather than in support of the objectives of other states (Holsti, 1970, p. 268). This NRC is ascribed to the statement on Israeli settlements if it contains the explicit expression against Israeli settlements policy.
7. *Enforcer* – This NRC expresses the administration makes a decision to use practical tools in order to make others follow its will.
8. *Soft Power* – States’ ability to shape the preferences of other with persuasion than using force (Kara & Sözen, 2016, p. 53). Within this thesis, this NRCs is assigned to the

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parties should implement Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts and immediately and concurrently with the ceasefire, start negotiations with an aim to establish a just and durable peace in the Middle East” (UN Peacemaker, 1973).

statement which expresses conviction against Israeli settlements and a position to do something about it without a reference to use practical tools.

The NRCs presented above can be divided into three blocks and are ordered accordingly. The first three roles, *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, are associated to the statements on Israeli settlements that were taken in relevance to peace efforts. They differ in the importance level of the Israeli settlements issue and the need to address them within the peace process. Roles of *Faithful Ally* and *Strategic Partner* are associated with the statements in which while giving a stance towards the Israeli settlements, the administration stresses the importance of a good U.S.-Israeli relationship. The last three NRCs, *Independent*, *Enforcer*, and *Soft Power*, refer to a level of pressure that a certain administration exerts on Israel in relevance to the settlements.

However, the NRCs present another limitation of this thesis since their attribution to specific top-official foreign policy maker's behaviour is to a certain extent subjective view of the author. This limitation is tried to be reduced by prescribing the NRCs to each statement based on certain criteria which are defined above.

### **2.3 Thematic Content Analysis**

This part presents the thematic content analysis as a procedure for conducting research in order to specify national role conceptions in the U.S. foreign policy towards Israeli settlements. "Thematic content analysis (TCA) is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data" (Anderson, 2007, p. 1). TCA elucidates concrete themes in textual data. It describes "social reality through the creation of theme [...and it] focuses on the explicit description of the content of communication with a limited reflection on its implicit meaning" (Vaismoradi, Jones, et al., 2016, p. 100–101). While analysing the data TCA gives attention to the description and interpretation of the data whilst it considers the context of data and searches for themes (Vaismoradi, Jones, et al., 2016, p. 101).

The procedure for TCA is as follows. The first stage of TCA is to collect all relevant data and to recognize major themes in order to reduce the amount of raw data (Anderson, 2007, p. 2–3; Hermann, 2008, p. 152–155; (Vaismoradi, Jones, et al., 2016, p. 103–105). This phase is further described for this thesis's context in the part called "Data Collection". TCA presents the thematic content of textual data provided for analysis and it identifies common themes in those texts. The themes' names are centred on the actual words of participants in the text i.e., the highest-level U.S. foreign policymakers. The names of the themes should directly reflect

the meaning of the texts as a whole. The naming of the themes is based on the interpretation which is kept to a minimum (Anderson, 2007, p. 1–2). Themes are the main products of data analysis (Vaismoradi, Jones, et al., 2016, p. 101).

As the texts are selected and major themes are defined, the next step is to decide how are the themes followed and coded in relevant texts (Hermann, 2008, p. 157–160). This thesis revolves around two kinds of themes. First, it identifies national role conceptions in chosen texts along the role theory of foreign policy described in the previous section of this thesis. The second recognized theme is reflecting the general stance of a concrete administration called (1) condemnation with direct action, (2) condemnation without direct action, and (3) no condemnation, which is explained further in this thesis. Those two sets of themes serve as coding categories for relevant texts. Thus, the categories of codes are decided along chosen NRCs and three categories which reflect the general stance of concrete administration.

As the codes are decided, the next step is labelling the content of relevant texts with codes (Vaismoradi, Jones, et al., 2016, p. 105). It is done by attributing NRCs to a specific texts that mention Israeli settlements. Also, a concrete value is ascribed as reflecting the general stance of the administration in a given year.

The final step is to summarize and interpret the previous part which connected the codes with relevant texts. Moreover, everything is connected with the context of a given period (Vaismoradi, Jones, et al., 2016, p. 107). This phase answers the study question i.e., it uncovers the continuity or change of the Israeli settlements phenomenon in the U.S. foreign policy via the NRCCs and general stances of each administration.

The stability of the Israeli settlements phenomenon in the U.S. foreign policy is monitored in two ways. First, through the NRCs in each administrations' foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. The stability is monitored by the percentage of each NRC recognized in each administration and then it is compared among the administrations to determine the stability or change of the phenomenon. Second, it is determined through self-made classification which determines the general stance of the administration in every year of its term. These stances are compared as well which serves as a simple tool to follow the stability of the phenomenon.

## 2.4 Determination of Stability by Mean Deviation

In order to determine the stability and change in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements during the U.S. administrations of 1989–2021, this thesis uses the mean deviation (MD) of the dependent variables i.e., national role conceptions defined in this thesis subsection 2.2. The NRCs are *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Faithful Ally*, *Strategic Partner*, *Independent*, *Enforcer*, and *Soft Power*. The independent variables are the individual U.S. administrations observed in this thesis i.e., George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump.

The mean deviation is chosen as a method for the calculation of the stability and change because it determines the average distance of the data from the centre point, the mean (Bland, 2006). Due to that, it is used to determine how the dependent variables have changed between the years 1989–2021. Further, it provides the ability to decide which NRCs are the most and the least stable.

The formula for the calculation of the mean deviation is ensuing (Cuemath, undated).

$$MD = \frac{\sum |x_i - \bar{x}|}{n}$$

The explanation of the formula is as follows while it is supplemented by reasoning for this thesis.

$\sum$  represents the addition of values,

$n$  represents the number of observations i.e., five as there are five administrations observed in this thesis,

$x_i$  represents each value in the data set i.e., the percentage representation of the concrete NRC in the specific administration,

$\bar{x}$  represents the mean of the data set i.e., the mean of the percentage representation of the concrete NRC in all observed administrations.

MD is calculated for each NRCs separately. Within the calculations are only positive numbers as the MD is non-negative (Mustafa & Sulaiman 2021, p. 1053). For this reason, the  $x_i$  and  $\bar{x}$  positions' are changed in the calculations.

## 2.5 Data Collection

In order to execute the analysis, first, the relevant data need to be collected. This thesis is time limited for the period from the end of the Cold War to the Trump administration included. Thus, the data are collected on the administrations of the following presidents: George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. Biden administration will not be included as he still holds the office, and it would not be able to determine the overall administration's direction.

Several rules to guide the data collection were applied. In accordance with the national role theory, the focus is on the highest-level policymakers of foreign policy and 'their views on the roles their nations should play in international affairs' (Holsti, 1970, p. 257; Krotz, 2001, p. 7; Wish, 1980, p. 535).

Another rule was to include an explicit statement of U.S. foreign policy towards Israeli settlements. The concrete terms that are looked for are: Israeli settlements, Resolutions 242 and 338, occupied territories, West Bank, East Jerusalem, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, settlers, settlements construction/building, etc. The focus is on every year of each administration separately in order to collect most of the data. According to Holsti's model, a limit was set to at least ten statements on Israeli settlements in the U.S. foreign policy per administration to be collected.

The procedure is to collect as many statements as could be found from U.S. foreign policy officials. The data are collected so it provides the knowledge to study behaviours and events of chosen U.S. administrations in relation to Israeli settlements in order to capture and understand the continuity in the formation of U.S. national roles in this case study. The relevant paragraphs of the texts i.e., statements, are extracted, and a certain NRC is ascribed to them.

Focusing on the U.S. administrations' stances towards Israeli settlements, text-based data are collected including the transcripts of presidential public statements, remarks, and interviews in which they publicly expressed their approaches towards settlement. Moreover, this thesis uses the statements by the relevant U.S. foreign policy officials such as Secretary of State or White House Press Secretary. Those data serve as primary sources.

The data are drawn from the archives of the U.S. and Israeli governmental archives, American Presidency Project, C-SPAN, and Miller Center. Additionally, the data are obtained

from newspaper websites such as Washington Post, New York Times, or Los Angeles Times as no official transcript of the certain statement has been found.

### **3 National Role Conceptions in the U.S. Foreign Policy 1989–2021**

The chapter is divided along the presidential administrations meaning the subsections proceed as follows. First, it discusses the foreign policy towards Israeli settlements under the administration of George H. W. Bush, followed by the administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump.

The subsections are time-structured i.e., they focus on every year of the administrations' term. Each subsection elaborates on NRCs in the specific U.S. administration's approach towards the Israeli settlement. Those NRCs reflect the foreign policy behaviour of the U.S. administrations towards the Israeli settlement policy and are ascribed to the certain administration along the 'National Role Conceptions Typologies' part of this thesis.

#### **3.1 U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of George H. W. Bush 1989–1993**

This thesis's subsection unfolds the national role conceptions in the foreign policy towards Israeli settlements recognized in the administration of George H. W. Bush. The NRCs which were casted in the Bush administration and their representation are visualised at the end of this subsection in Figure 2.

President George H.W. Bush and his Secretary of State James A. Baker made their position towards the settlements clear since the beginning of the administration's term. After the meeting with PM Shamir on 6 April 1989, President Bush said that "[...] the United States is committed to a comprehensive peace achieved through direct negotiations based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 [...]. I reaffirmed to the Prime Minister that we do not support an independent Palestinian state nor Israeli sovereignty or permanent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza" (Bush, 1989).

On 22 May 1989 at the 30th annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Secretary James Baker sent word to Israel "now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel. Israeli interests in the West Bank and Gaza, security and otherwise, can be accommodated in a settlement based on Resolution 242. Forswear annexation. Stop settlement activity" (Baker, 1989). Further on 3 October 1989, the White House Press Secretary Fitzwater reaffirmed the U.S. position in relation to help with the influx of Soviet Jews to Israel "We want to be helpful in any way we can [...] We remain opposed to settlements in the West Bank, and also opposed to the use of

U.S. aid for that purpose”. Secretary Baker reaffirmed “although the administration opposed additional Israeli settlements in the West Bank, we are very sympathetic to Israel's desire to accept Soviet Jewish emigres and to provide adequate housing for them” (Pear, 1989).

The White House Press Secretary and the Secretary of State express the role of *Enforcer* and *Strategic Partner*. However, it was not a political decision yet, the press secretary verbally linked the U.S. and the Israeli settlements. Meanwhile, James Baker supported the Israeli policy of accommodating the Soviet Jewish emigres in the same speech as expressing the attitude against the Israeli settlements.

At the beginning of the Bush administration took the *Regional Protector* and *Mediator-integrator* role. The United States positioned itself in the front of the conflict resolution. It called for comprehensive peace settlements in the Middle East and peace negotiations based on the U.N. SC Resolutions 242 and 338 several times.

Further, President Bush assumed the *Independent* role in a way he was in disagreement with Israeli policy towards settlements. Since the beginning of the Bush administration, there were clear differences between the U.S. and Israel in the approach to the peace process including negotiations between Israel and Palestinians and settlement-building (Anderson, 1989). The Bush administration expressed clearly against the settlements and wanted Israel to halt the construction. On the other side, since the beginning of his term, Likud Prime Minister (PM) Yitzhak Shamir (PM 1986–1992) made his position towards settlements clear. He expressed to seek peace but not sacrifice the settlements, on the contrary, he pledged to expand them as the wave of Soviet Jewish immigrants was coming to Israel (Roanoke Times, 1990). Moreover, PM Shamir aimed to achieve a demographic revolution in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Haberman, 1992).

The Israeli settlements had been an issue since the beginning of the Bush administration, and it became an even more apparent problem in February 1990 when PM Shamir publicly spoke about accommodating Soviet Jewish immigrants in occupied territories. The issue was that he made President Bush assume that a different amount of them was being moved to settlements (Christison, 1994, p. 43).

President Bush remained firm with his position towards Israeli settlements on occupied territories throughout his term. In March 1990 in Palm Springs, California, he said that “the foreign policy of the United States says we do not believe there should be new settlements in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem. And I will conduct that policy as if it’s firm, which it is,

and I will be shaped in whatever decisions we make to see whether people can comply with that policy. And that's our strongly held view" (Lukacs, 1992). In relation to peace efforts, James Baker said that "he did not know what assurances the Bush Administration would seek, except for the standard pledge to use U.S. money only in the lands it held before the 1967 Mideast War" (Los Angeles Times, 1990).

The administration remained to cast the role of the *Independent* in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements during the PM Shamir administration as President Bush reaffirmed his solid position on Israeli settlements which was clearly against what the PM did promote. To a certain extent, the administration played the *Soft Power* role by the expressions of strong conviction against the settlements and pronouncement about standing firm on that position. Above that, the Bush administration chose to act as *Enforcer* in moments when it conditioned the settlement building with U.S. aid.

After the end of the Gulf War, President Bush saw in the aftermath of the war new opportunities for peace efforts in the Middle East which should be in accordance with his conviction as he noted on 6 March 1991 "A comprehensive peace must be grounded in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of territory for peace. This principle must be elaborated to provide for Israel's security and recognition and at the same time for legitimate Palestinian political rights. Anything else would fail the twin test of fairness and security. The time has come to put an end to Arab-Israeli conflict" (Bush, 1991a).

The constant construction of settlements remained a pressing issue throughout the Bush and Shamir administration. In 1991, James Baker decided to convene an international peace conference and to make Israel halt settlement-building. The role of settlements in the peace efforts was that they gave PM Shamir an incentive to enter the peace negotiation as they were linked to the loan guarantees (Christison, 1994, p. 46–47). Further, one of the major clashes between the Bush administration and the Israeli government occurred in relation to Israeli settlements and loan guarantees. The U.S. wanted Israel to meet certain conditions first before receiving the U.S. aid. "This was a truly memorable declaration since it was the first time any administration since Eisenhower's had linked U.S. aid to making Israel conform with U.S. policy". Secretary of State Baker made a statement against the loan in case the money was used in the occupied territories. However, the condition was not linked to the \$3 billion annual official aid (Neff, 1994a: 62). Further, the Israeli government officially requested \$10 billion in loan guarantees from the United States to finance the settlement of the expected approx. 1 million Jews immigrating to Israel from former Soviet Union. The loan guarantees were

additional to U.S. foreign assistance to Israel which was about \$3 billion per year. However, President Bush did not approve the loan guarantees until 11 September 1992 when he formally asked Congress to proceed with the loan (Nowels & Mark, 1994, p. 1–2).

The administration pointed out the issue of the growing number of settlers in the occupied territories throughout its term and perceived it as an obstacle to peace. James Baker stressed this in May 1991 “every time I have gone to Israel in connection with the peace process on each of my four trips, I have been met with the announcement of new settlement activity. This does violate United States policy. It's the first thing that Arab governments, the first thing the Palestinians in the territories - whose situation is really quite desperate - raise with us when we talk to them” (Friedman, 1991), as well as in October 1991 in the letter to the Palestinians sent prior to Madrid peace conference in Madrid in which he states that “The United States has long believed that no party should take unilateral actions that seek to predetermine issues that can only be resolved through negotiations. In this regard, the United States has opposed and will continue to oppose settlement activity in the territories occupied in 1967, which remains an obstacle to peace” (United States Institute of Peace, 1991).

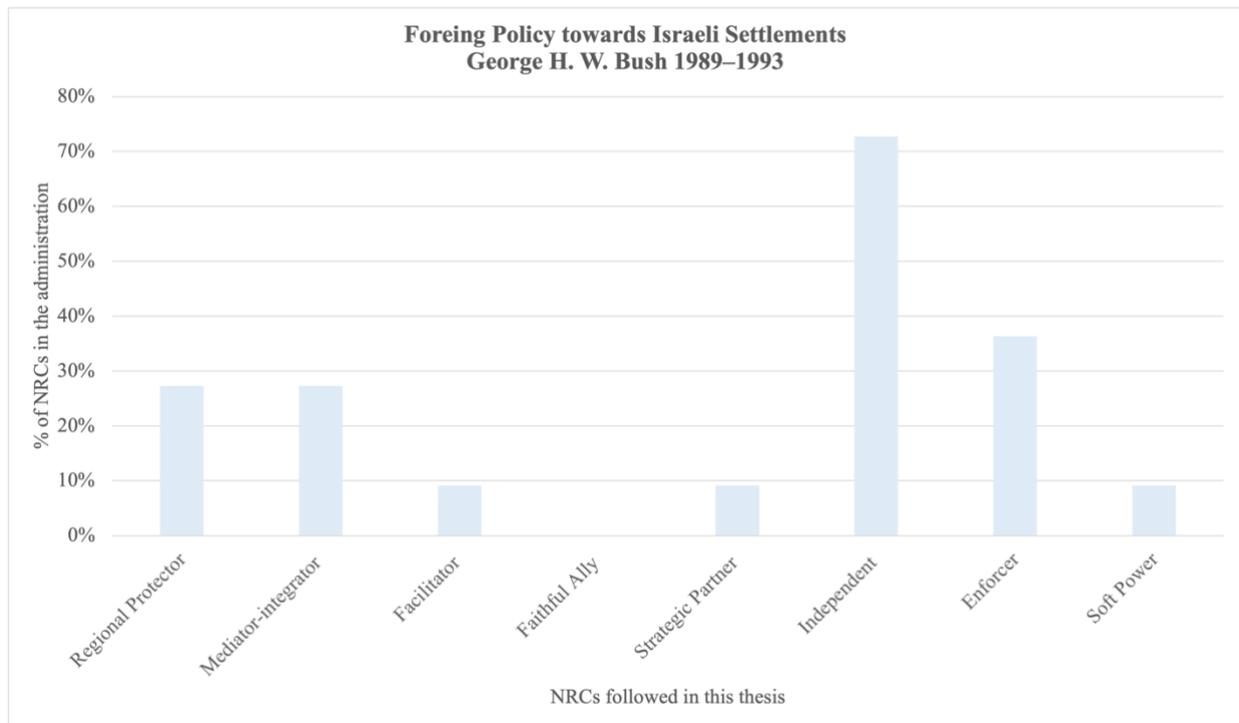
On 12 September 1991, President Bush commented on the important step he took regarding U.S. aid to Israel and Israeli settlements. “A few days ago, I asked Congress to defer consideration for 120 days of Israel's request for \$10 billion in additional U.S. loan guarantees meant to help Israel absorb its many new immigrants. I did so in the interests of peace. I did so because we must avoid a contentious debate that would raise a host of controversial issues, issues so sensitive that a debate now could well destroy our ability to bring one or more of the parties to the peace table” (Bush, 1991b). In that way, the U.S. played its *Enforcer* role in the relation to Israeli settlements.

As mentioned above, the Gulf War gave the Bush administration new confidence, and it again stressed the *Regional Protector* role at the beginning of its term by presenting the opportunity for peace and stability in the Middle East. By urging for peace, it also retook the *Mediator-integrator* role. Further, the administration cast the role of *Independent* when explicitly opposing the Israeli settlement policy. The U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements continued to assume the role of *Independent* since it was still expressively against their construction. Further, with the calls to open negotiations, this administration is given the role of *Facilitator*.

In February 1992, the Bush administration again reaffirmed its position on linkage of U.S. aid and settlements as the Secretary Baker stated “This administration is ready to support loan guarantees for absorption assistance to Israel of up to \$2 billion a year for five years, provided though there is a halt or end to settlements activity” (Goshko, 1992). The administration stood by its convictions in practice as well, not approving the \$10 billion in loan guarantees until President Bush believed that Israel would halt settlement construction.

With the victory of the Labour party in the 1992 election, it seemed that Israeli settlement policy might have come closer to the U.S. president’s vision. Yitzhak Rabin (PM 1992–1995) talked about limiting the settlement construction in the territories concerning \$10 billion U.S. loan guarantees (Haberman, 1992). During his meeting with President Bush, he managed to persuade the President about his intentions to curtail settlement-building and thus ensured the \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees went forward in September 1992. President Bush put a condition that in case of money used in occupied territories, the amount would be deducted from the following \$2 billion payment. However, PM Rabin divided the settlements according to their purposes into strategic and political settlements with no intention of limiting the strategic settlements. Also, he also stuck to finishing what was already under construction in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Golan Heights (Devroy, 1992; Neff, 1994a: 65–66; Nowels & Mark, 1994, p. 2).

Even though the Bush administration eventually did accept the loan guarantees it remained conditioned by the cessation of settlement construction. Of this fact, the U.S. remained to play its *Enforcer* role.



*Figure 2 NRCs in the U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of George H. W. Bush*

*Source: author*

As Figure 2 shows, the NRCs used by the Bush administration’s foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements were: *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Strategic Partner*, *Independent*, *Enforcer*, and *Soft Power*. The most prominent role the Bush administration held in its foreign policy toward Israeli settlements was the role of *Independent*. The administration stood firmly against the settlements which was further confirmed by the linkage of the U.S. aid and Israeli settlement policy.

The position against the Israeli settlements was in clear contrast with the Israeli government policy, especially during the PM Shamir administration. By the concrete political steps which the administration undertook in order to pressure Israel to halt the settlement-building, it acted in the role of *Enforcer*. The administration also cast the role of *Soft Power* when decisively expressed against the Israeli settlements but did not use any practical tool.

Further, the administration casted roles connected to peace efforts such as *Regional Protector* and *Mediator-integrator*. There were several calls for direct negotiations in order to conclude a comprehensive peace achieved through the U.N. SC Resolutions 242 and 338. The Israeli settlements were regarded as an important issue to be addressed in connection to the

peace process. As *Facilitator*, the administration called several times to open peace negotiations.

### **3.2 U.S. Foreign Policy towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of Bill Clinton 1993–2001**

This part of the thesis elaborates on national role conceptions identified in President Bill Clinton's foreign policy towards Israeli settlements. The NRCs which are cast in the Bush administration and their representation are visualised at the end of this subsection in Figure 3.

Since the beginning of his administration, President Bill Clinton had focused on promoting peace between Israel and surrounding Arab states (Quandt, 2001, p. 26). Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) followed up the Madrid Conference 1991 and signed a Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Oslo Accords, on 13 September 1993. The Declaration of Principles set, among other things, the general guidelines for the negotiations and the basic principles for permanent status talks which should be based on SC Resolutions 242 and 338 (UN Peacemaker, 1993). Al-Rousan (2013) operates with the American bias to Israel in the context of the Clinton administration and the initiated peace process. He argues that the Clinton administration was inclined to the Israeli point of view during the negotiations.

The President positioned the United States in a role of *Regional Protector* right at the beginning of his term by emphasizing the need to include the region of Middle East. On 15 March 1993 at the News Conference with PM Yitzhak Rabin he stated "we support a solution based on the governing United Nations resolutions. But the important thing is that everything we say or do today sends a clear message, particularly to the other parties in the Middle East, that the time has come to negotiate peace. And the United States is prepared to be involved all the way through the process [...as well as] the United States believes that the full peace process should resume" (Clinton, 1993). Bill Clinton reaffirmed his dedication for peace conclusion on 16 January 1994 at the news conference with president of Syria stating that "from the first days of my administration, the achievement of a comprehensive peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours, based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of territory for peace, has been one of my highest foreign policy objectives" (Clinton, 1994a). Further, the administration undertook the role of *Mediator-integrator* as it called for a full peace process with a relevant U.S. role in it. However, Neff (1994b) claims that at the beginning of the

administration, Clinton had been more favourable to Israel than any administration before which applies also to the issue of settlements (Neff, 1994b, p. 20).

Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) followed up the Madrid Conference 1991 and signed a Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Oslo Accords, on 13 September 1993. The Declaration of Principles set, among other things, the general guidelines for the negotiations and the basic principles for permanent status talks which should be based on SC Resolutions 242 and 338 (UN Peacemaker, 1993). Al-Rousan (2013) operates with the American bias to Israel in the context of the Clinton administration and the initiated peace process. He argues that the Clinton administration was inclined to the Israeli point of view during the negotiations.

When asked if the continuous Israeli settlement policy is against the peace that was striving the President answered ‘‘I believe the question of settlements in disputed areas is one of the things that clearly will have to be resolved in connection with this peace process, consistent with United Nations resolutions and the concept of territory for peace’’ (Clinton, 1994a). Further, the President reaffirmed this position on settlements throughout his administration. At the news conference with PM Yitzhak Rabin on 16 March 1994, the President was asked at what stage are the settlements supposed to be tackled and he replied ‘‘that is a matter for the parties to decide in accord with the declaration. It is something to be ultimately decided at a later point. That’s what we think should be done. [...] Since I think both of them want to make peace with each other, the best thing for me to do is not to say anything which will make their task more difficult’’ (Clinton, 1994b). The President reaffirmed his position again on 3 March 1997 prior to discussion with the PLO chairman Yasser Arafat when answering the question of what does he think about Israeli settlements designed to annex East Jerusalem. ‘‘You know, the important thing is for these people on both sides to be building confidence and working together. And so I would prefer the decision not have been made, because I don’t think it builds confidence, I think it builds mistrust’’, moreover the United States should not do ‘‘anything which seems to prejudge what should be a final status issue between the parties. I think that would be a big mistake.’’ (Clinton, 1997). The Clinton administration stood firmly on this position throughout the term as on 1 July 1999 the President was asked if the U.S. would be willing to tell Israel to curb or stop the settlements building and he answered ‘‘We don’t believe that unilateral actions by any parties, including other interested parties like the United States, which compromise the capacity of the parties to the Oslo accord to reach

agreement on final status issues, should be taken. And that includes provocative settlement actions. We have made that clear and unambiguous” (Clinton, 1999a).

The administration’s careful handling of Israeli settlements cast the U.S. in the role of *Facilitator*. The U.S. saw the Israeli settlements as an issue, however, the administration was rather evasive in its explicit condemnation of the Israeli settlements. The Clinton administration wanted the issue of settlements to be resolved within the peace negotiations while it was not important in what order they are addressed.

There were points in the administration when the President slightly departed from the implicitness, and he expressed more directly towards the Israeli settlements. That way the Clinton administration followed more the *Independent* role in its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. On 16 December 1996 at a news conference with European Union leaders President Clinton was asked if he agreed with the fact that the Israeli settlements are an obstacle to peace to which he replied “Absolutely” (Clinton, 1996b). Also, the President condemned the Netanyahu’s settlement policy as he noted that it appears to be “pre-empting the outcome of something they’ve already agreed should be part of the final negotiations” (Trousoun & Kempster, 1996).

As acting as *Independent* in its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements, the Clinton administration played the *Soft Power* role, however in a limited amount as well. On 8 January 2001 at the Israeli Policy Forum, the President stated that “for their part, the Israeli people also must understand that they’re creating a few problems, too; that the settlement enterprise and building bypass roads in the heart of what they already know will one day be part of a Palestinian state is inconsistent with the Oslo commitment that both sides negotiate a compromise” (Clinton, 2001). That way the President pressured Israel on a few points such as that the settlements must be handled as the territory, they were being built on, had been already decided to be under Palestinian rule. However, this was only limited to occasional pressure as the President was asked if the administration was prepared to enforce their policy on settlements using concrete political means and he replied “Let me say what I have said all along, what I strongly believe. I believe the United States cannot impose a peace in the Middle East. What the United States can do is to create the conditions in which it is easier for peace to be made by the parties because we work to minimize the risks of peace” (Clinton, 1996b).

Another role the Clinton administration acted in a relation to Israeli settlements in its foreign policy was the role of *Faithful Ally*. On 9 July 1996 at the new conference with PM

Benjamin Netanyahu, President Clinton said that ‘‘our commitment to Israel's security remains rock solid, why we'll continue to do whatever is necessary to ensure Israel's qualitative edge, why Israelis and no one else will ultimately have to decide the terms upon which Israel will make peace’’ without giving any pressure on Israel to meet certain conditions while acknowledging that ‘‘the settlements issue can become a contentious one, can become a problem—not the only problem in the peace process’’ (Clinton, 1996a). Neff (1994b) elaborates more on the Clinton administration’s inclination to Israel as well as Al-Rousan (2013).

The administration cast the *Regional Protector, Mediator-integrator, Facilitator, Strategic Partner, Independent, Enforcer, Soft Power* role in its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements when at the beginning of Ehud Barak’s term, the President supported his initial settlements policy (Clinton, 1999b). Moreover, the Clinton administration acknowledged that ‘‘you cannot expect Israel to acknowledge an unlimited right of return to present day Israel, and at the same time, to give up Gaza and the West Bank and have the settlement blocks as compact as possible, because of where a lot of these refugees came from. We cannot expect Israel to make a decision that would threaten the very foundations of the state of Israel, and would undermine the whole logic of peace. And it shouldn't be done’’ (Clinton, 2001).

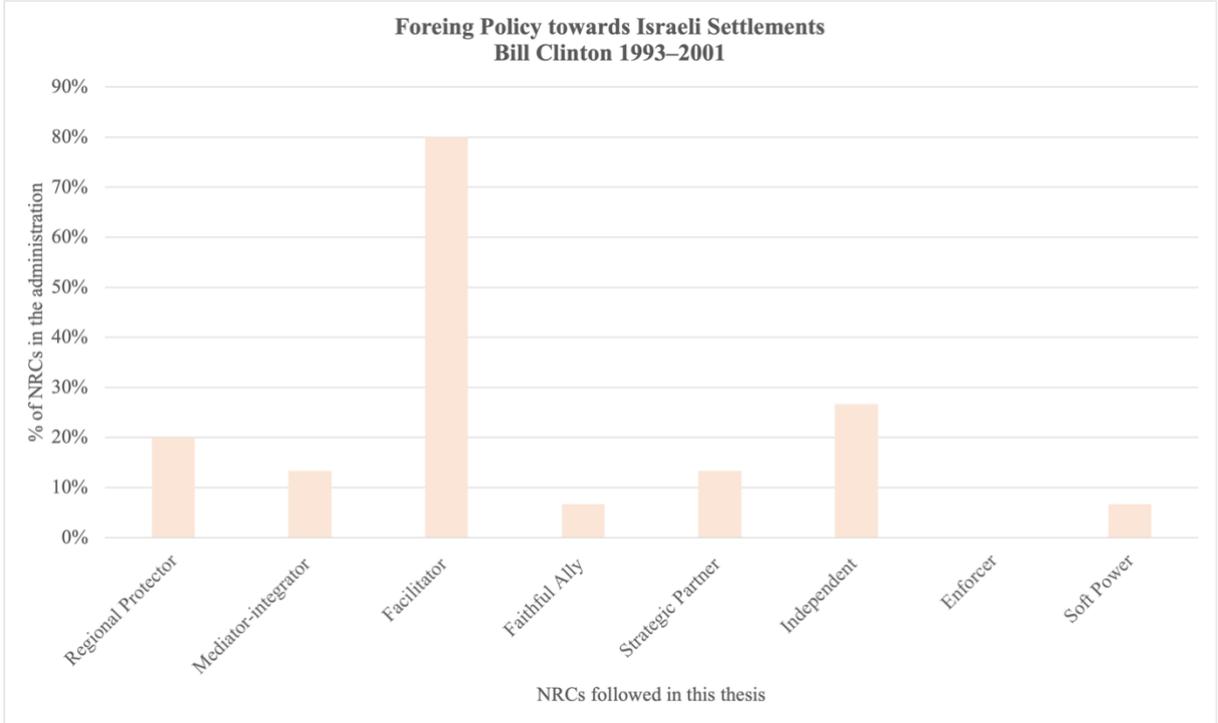


Figure 3 NRCs in the U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of Bill Clinton

*Source: author*

As Figure 3 shows, the NRCs identified in the Clinton administration are: *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Faithful Ally*, *Strategic Partner*, *Independent*, and *Soft Power*, whereas the most prominent role in the administration was *Facilitator*. The administration cast the U.S. in the role of *Facilitator* by carefully handling Israeli settlements. It expressed several times that it did not believe in anything pre-emptive which would threaten the peace process. Moreover, it did perceive the Israeli settlements as an issue but rather implicitly. The Clinton administration wanted to resolve the problem of settlements within the peace process, but without direct pressure from the U.S. and wanted to leave it to the parties of the conflict to handle them. Further in terms of peace process, the administration took over the roles of *Regional Protector* as well as *Mediator-integrator*. Since the beginning of its term, it had called for a comprehensive peace based on Resolutions 242 and 338 with the relevant role of the U.S.

Casting the *Independent* role in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements, the Clinton administration came out against the settlements. Further, the administration played the *Soft Power* role even though it was rather limited behaviour of the Clinton administration to exert pressure on Israel in the matter of settlements. It highlighted that Israel behaves against what was negotiated in Oslo in terms of settlements.

In connection to a mild approach towards the settlements, the U.S. administration cast its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements in the role of *Strategic Partner* as well as *Faithful Ally*. As a *Strategic Partner*, it supported explicitly the Israeli policy at a certain level. The administration reflected that Israel cannot make decisions that would threaten the foundations of the State of Israel. As a *Faithful Ally*, the Clinton administration emphasised the good U.S.-Israeli relationship whereas it acknowledged the settlements as a problem.

### **3.3 U.S. Foreign Policy towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of George W. Bush 2001–2009**

This subsection develops the national role conceptions in the foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements identified in the administration of George W. Bush. The NRCs which are cast in the Bush administration and their representation are visualised at the end of this subsection in Figure 4.

Due to the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001, the main foreign policy feature of the administration of George W. Bush was to fight terrorism which was reflected in the connection to the Arab-Israeli conflict as well. Moreover, Ross (2003) suggests that in the first years of the administration, President George W. Bush moved the U.S. attention from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to focus on terrorism (Ross, 2003, p. 11). Further, Christison (2004) and Shalom (2012) support this argument.

On 5 October 2001 Lawrence Ari Fleischer, the White House Press Secretary, was asked if the Israeli policies connected to the settlements create part of the terrorist problem to what he answered “peace in the Middle East is intrinsically good, in its own merits, on its own, regardless of anything else that is happening in the world. And that's why the President feels so strongly that in the wake of this attack, it's important for people in the region to seize this opportunity and recommit themselves to the peace process” (Fleischer, 2001). As the Bush administration called for peace in the region and settlement based on the U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, it had projected the role of *Regional Protector* in its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. On 24 June 2002, when President Bush called for a new Palestinian leadership, he expressed his stance towards the Israeli settlements and their part in the peace process by saying that “ultimately, Israelis and Palestinians must address the core issues that divide them if there is to be a real peace, resolving all claims and ending the conflict between them. This means that the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 will be ended through a settlement negotiated between the parties, based on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, with Israeli withdrawal to secure and recognize borders” (Bush, 2002).

The administration cast also other roles connected to peace efforts such as *Mediator-integrator*. It was cast through giving direct means of how to accede to peace negotiations while the handling of Israeli settlements was an important part of the efforts. On 30 April 2001 the Mitchell Report, officially Sharm El-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Report, was published to analyse a possible cause of the Second Intifada. The Israeli settlements were recognized as a major cause of the violence and the report recommended, among other things, freezing the settlement activity including the natural growth (Mitchell et al., 2001). The Bush administration made references to that report when Press Secretary Ari Fleischer was asked about the administration's approach towards the settlements, and he replied “that is all part of the Mitchell Accords. And the Mitchell Accords discuss the eventual other items that come with political talks, but it begins with security. And it's hard to get to that point until the cease-fire

can be enforced in the Middle East, and that the parties agree to pursue peace. But the American position is unchanged that the settlement policy is unhelpful” (Fleischer, 2001).

Further, the Bush administration together with Russia, European Union and United Nations (the international Quartet) introduced the road map<sup>2</sup> to bring peace which was based on President Bush’s 2002 Vision for Peace. According to that plan the Israeli settlement activity was supposed to be frozen in Phase I including the natural growth of settlements as recommended in the Mitchell Report (Economic Cooperation Foundation, 2003). The administration had reiterated its commitment to the road map several times. On 6 October 2003, White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan answered the question of whether Israel should stop occupation with the word “the President has made it clear that as we move forward on the road map, that the settlement activity needs to end [...] But let me remind you that all parties have responsibilities when it comes to implementing the road map. We have certainly gone through a difficult period here. And the way to move forward toward this two-state vision is for all parties to crack down on terrorism, for the Palestinian Authority to be empowered -- a Cabinet and a prime minister that is empowered to crack down on terrorism, to dismantle terrorist organizations” (McClellan, 2003b). On 14 April 2004, George W. Bush repeated the administration’s vision of the peace process stating that “the two-state vision and the roadmap for peace designed to implement it, command nearly universal support as the best means of achieving a permanent peace and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967” (Bush, 2004). However, as Ross (2003) stated, one condition was to top the construction of Israeli settlements, nevertheless, the roadmap lacked detailed definitions. Above that, none of the sides of the conflict was present during the creation of the roadmap (Ross, 2003, p. 16–17).

As *Facilitator*, the U.S. during the Bush administration emphasized the need to deal with the Israeli settlements through the talks between the parties. On 25 July 2003, White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan mentioned that stance in relevance to Israeli settlements and the wall was being built in the West Bank. “I think what we're doing is talking with the parties, and continuing to work it through those channels. And that's the best way to address it” (McClellan, 2003a). That position was reaffirmed throughout the administration’s term. On 16 January 2007, White House Press Secretary Tony Snow answered the question of whether the

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<sup>2</sup> The Roadmap offered two-state solution and its aim was to set concrete progress in order to conclude peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The comprehensive settlement was supposed to be reached by 2005. The plan was divided into three phases (Economic Cooperation Foundation, 2003).

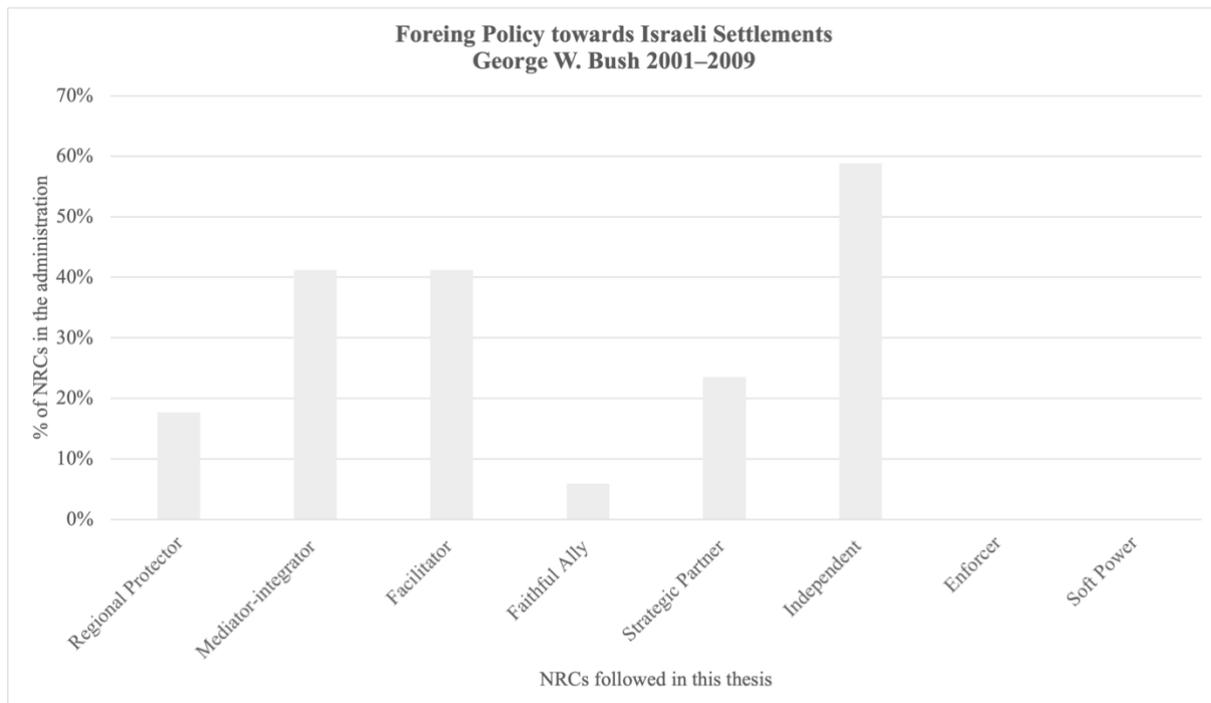
President changes policy regarding the settlements ‘‘Well, again, the President has always said that those are final status issues that the parties are going to have to negotiate’’ (Snow, 2007). On 9 January 2008, President Bush reaffirmed this position when asked if he should apply direct pressure in order to make more progress. ‘‘The step one of any complicated process that is going to require a lot of hard work and serious dialogue, is whether the mindset is right. It's one thing for somebody to say to the President, sure, we're for a two state -- just to make the President feel okay. That's not the case here. The fundamental questions that I was seeking at Annapolis and on my return trip is the understanding about the power of what a vision will do for peace [...]. The second track is to help both parties deal with road map issues. Settlements is a road map issue; security is a road map issue, in a certain limited sense’’ (Bush, 2008a).

While approaching the Israeli settlements issue within the U.S. foreign policy, the other NRC which the Bush administration undertook was the role of *Strategic Partner*. The administration expressed that the settlements are a problem, but at the same time drew attention to an area in which it supports Israel which, in the case of George W. Bush, was the fight against terrorism. The White House Press Secretary McClellan said that the President ‘‘has consistently spoken about how the Israelis need to end the settlements, not in a conditional way. But he also emphasized the importance of fighting terrorism and appreciates the steps that are being taken’’ (McClellan, 2003a). Moreover, the President expressed his support for the Israeli position of not proceeding on the political track after the disengagement from Gaza until a complete break up of terror organizations by justification due to a lack of confidence on both sides of the conflict. President Bush said ‘‘there's a lack of confidence in the region [...]. The Prime Minister is taking a bold step and a courageous step, and basically he's saying that, you know, until he sees more progress, he doesn't have confidence. And I suspect if we were to have a frank discussion about it, the Palestinians would say, well, we don't have confidence in Israel’’ (Bush, 2005a).

The NRC of *Faithful Ally* was cast in the Bush administration as supported in the Christison's (2004) article which argues that the Bush administration's stance on Israeli settlements was biased towards Israel. Moreover, Shalom (2012) considers the Bush administration as being understanding of the settlements (Shalom, 2012, p. 73–74). The administration reached an understanding with the Israeli government about settlement-building in which Israel committed not to establish new settlements beyond already confiscated land (ibidem, p. 82). On 11 April 2005 in a discussion with the Israeli PM Sharon, the President acknowledged that ‘‘new realities on the ground make it unrealistic to expect that the outcome

of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will be achieved only on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities. That's the American view. While the United States will not prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations, those changes on the ground, including existing major Israeli population centres, must be taken into account in any final status negotiations'' (Bush, 2005a).

The Bush administration had expressed explicitly against the Israeli settlements several times during its term by which it casted the role of *Independent* in its foreign policy towards the settlements. On 24 June 2002, President Bush stated that ‘‘permanent occupation threatens Israel's identity and democracy [and] Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories must stop’’ (Bush, 2002). On 26 May 2005 when President Bush welcomed Palestinian President Abbas to the White House, he mentioned that ‘‘Israel should not undertake any activity that contravenes road map obligations or prejudice final status negotiations with regard to Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem. Therefore, Israel must remove unauthorized outposts and stop settlement expansion’’ (Bush, 2005b). Further, on 20 September 2006, Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams reaffirmed that ‘‘the President supported it and continues to support the idea that there should be a withdrawal of Israeli settlements in the West Bank as we move closer to peace’’ (Abrams, 2006). That position was restated by the President on 10 January 2008 at a joint press availability with Palestinian Authority President Abbas. ‘‘Each side has got obligations under the road map. Settlements are clearly stated in the road map obligations for Israel. We have made our concerns about the expansion of settlements known, and we expect both parties to honour their obligations under the road map’’ (Bush, 2008b).



*Figure 4 NRCs in the U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of George W. Bush*

*Source: author*

As Figure 4 shows, the NRCs used by the Bush administration’s foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements were: *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Strategic Partner*, and *Independent*. The NRC that was the most prominent in the Bush administration is the role of *Independent*. However, there were no identified any NRCs which would indicate the direct pressure from the U.S. on Israel to change its settlement policy.

The *Independent* role in the Bush administration’s foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements presents the approach of being against this Israeli policy. The administration had stated several times during its term that the Israeli settlement activity must stop. Further, it had reminded the Israeli obligation under the Roadmap i.e., the freeze of settlement activity. Nevertheless, the administration also chose to play the role of *Strategic Partner*. It condemned the Israeli settlements while emphasized the U.S. support for Israel in other vital policies such as the fight against terrorism. Moreover, the President expressed that it was unrealistic to expect the Israeli full return to the 1949 armistice line as part of the final status negotiations by which it cast the role of *Faithful Ally*.

The Bush administration decided to undertake the NRCs relevant to peace efforts. The *Regional Protector* role was cast by expressing the need for peace in the region, among other

things, in connection to the fight against terrorism. Also, the administration called for a comprehensive peace based on U.N. SC Resolutions 242 and 338. By giving the direct means of conflict resolution the role of *Mediator-integrator* was introduced to the U.S. foreign policy regarding Israeli settlements. The U.S. supported the peace process under the Mitchell Report and Roadmap to peace. The need for approaching the Israeli settlements was perceived as an important feature of those peace efforts. The *Facilitator* role was cast through the acknowledgement that the Israeli settlements present an issue to be addressed within the negotiations between the parties. There was no direct pressure from the U.S. except the provision of talks between the dispute parties.

### **3.4 U.S. Foreign Policy towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of Barack Obama 2009–2017**

The Obama administration's NRCs in the foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements are discussed in this subsection. The NRCs which are cast in the Obama administration and their representation are visualised at the end of this subsection in Figure 5.

Since the beginning of the Obama administration, it had performed the role of *Independent* in its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. On 18 May 2009 after the meeting with PM Benjamin Netanyahu, the President expressed his stance that ‘‘under the roadmap and under Annapolis<sup>3</sup> that there’s a clear understanding that we have to make progress on settlements, that 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). Barack Obama reiterated this position on 4 June 2009 ‘‘the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop’’ (Obama, 2009a). Further, the President reaffirmed the U.S. position at the U.N. General Assembly on 23 September 2009 ‘‘we continue to emphasize that America does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements’’ (Obama, 2009c). On 21 March 2013 in the address

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<sup>3</sup> The Annapolis Conference was held on 27 November 2007 in the U.S. in Maryland. The purpose of the conference was to officially renew the peace process between Israeli PM Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmud Abbas. Many international actors attended the conference which signalled significant international support for a peace process (Migdalovitz, 2007). The outcome that the parties reached was a Joint Understanding in which they expressed a determination to end the conflict. They agreed to launch a bilateral negotiation in order to conclude a peace treaty by the end of 2008. They also agreed to implement the obligations under the road map to bring peace issued on 30 April 2003 (Bush, 2007).

to the people of Israel, the President called on Israelis that they ‘‘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, 2013). The Obama administration remained an approach against the Israeli settlements throughout the whole term as White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said on 5 October 2016 that ‘‘our concern is based on our longstanding view that settlement activity and other efforts to change the facts on the ground in the West Bank and East Jerusalem undermines the goal of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Expanding these settlements only makes it harder to negotiate a sustainable and equitable peace agreement in good faith between the two parties’’ (Earnest, 2016). At the end of the Obama administration’s term in December 2016, for the first time, the U.S. abstained from a U.N. SC Resolution 2334 which condemns the Israeli settlements on occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, and labels them as illegal and a major obstacle to peace. It further calls on Israel to stop settlement activities immediately (Freedman, 2017, p. 245; UN, 2016).

To a certain level, the Obama administration played the role of *Soft Power* at the beginning of its term. The U.S. under the Obama administration had consistently put significant pressure on Israel to halt the settlement construction in order to help create suitable conditions for the resumption of peace talks (Cloud, 2009; McGreal & Black, 2009; McGreal & McCarthy, 2009). Initially, the U.S. calls for a settlement freeze were rejected by PM Benjamin Netanyahu (Entous, 2009). The first sign of the effectiveness of the U.S. pressure occurred in June 2009 when Israel accepted the idea of a temporary settlement freeze (Bronner, 2009). Eventually, the Israeli government approved the 10 months cessation of settlement construction in November 2009 in order to restart peace talks. Moreover, PM Netanyahu accepted the idea of a two-state solution. However, the Palestinian side saw the freeze as insufficient as it did not halt the construction completely. The stop of settlement building applied only to the new construction and the ones already underway were to be finished (NBC News Digital, 2009; Reuters, 2009). President Obama tried to prolong the moratorium on Israeli settlements in 2010 as the settlement freeze was supposed to end on 26 September 2010. On 10 September 2010 at a press conference, President Obama ‘‘given, so far, the talks are moving forward in a constructive way, it makes sense to extend that moratorium so long as the talks are moving in a constructive way’’ (Obama, 2010d). Further on 23 September 2010 in the address to the U.N., the President reiterated his stance on Israeli settlements as he said that ‘‘our position on this issue is well known. We believe that the moratorium should be extended’’ (Obama, 2010e). However, the

U.S. pressure was not successful, and the Israeli settlement freeze ended as planned while the peace talks were in doubt (Rabinovitch, 2010).

Moreover, as *Soft Power*, the U.S. under the Obama administration pressured Israel on the issue of settlements in relevance to the U.S. military assistance that strengthen Israeli security. On 5 October 2016, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said in relevance to new settlements planned in the West Bank that “[...] in the wake of Israel and the United States concluding an unprecedented agreement on military assistance designed to further strengthen Israel's security, that Israel would take a decision contrary to its long-term security interest” (Earnest, 2016).

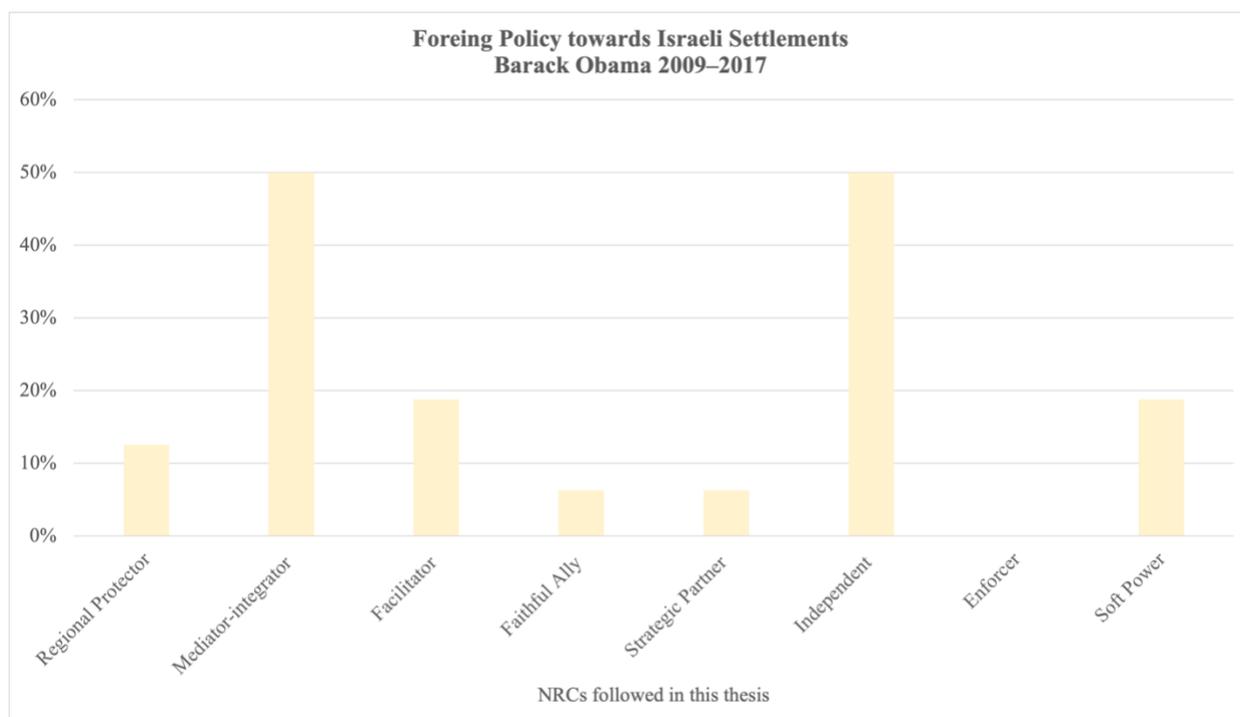
In the Obama administration's foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements, there were also roles that refer to the good relationship between the U.S. and Israel while the administration mentioned the issue of the Israeli settlements. The role of *Faithful Ally* was played in a speech on American diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa on 19 May 2011. President Obama expressed his stance saying that “Israel, our friendship is rooted deeply in a shared history and shared values. Our commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable. And we will stand against attempts to single it out for criticism in international forums. But precisely because of our friendship, it's important that we tell the truth: The status quo is unsustainable, and Israel too must act boldly to advance a lasting peace” (Obama, 2011). The U.S. under the Obama administration also assumed the role of *Strategic Partner*. On 10 September 2010, Barack Obama answered the question of whether he believed “that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should extend the settlement moratorium as a gesture to peace?” with the evaluation of the settlement moratorium as successful even though the Palestinian side was not satisfied with it (Obama, 2010d).

The Obama administration had casted the role of *Regional Protector* since the beginning of its term. On 23 September 2009, Barack Obama talked about peace in the Middle East while he expressed his stance that the Israeli settlements are an obstacle to that peace. “I will also continue to seek a just and lasting peace between Israel, Palestine, and the Arab world [...] And the goal is clear: Two states living side by side in peace and security; a Jewish State of Israel, with true security for all Israelis; and a viable, independent Palestinian state, with contiguous territory that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and realizes the potential of the Palestinian people” (Obama, 2009c). Further on 28 December 2016, Secretary of State John Kerry connected the continuing settlements' growth with the security of the Middle East region as he said that the Israeli settlements are “increasingly making the possibility of two states very

difficult, if not impossible. And that, unfortunately, puts Israel at risk and the rest of the region at risk (Kerry, 2016).

Barack Obama and his administration expressed the need for U.S. involvement in the peace efforts, and it saw the Israeli settlements as an essential issue by which the administration played the role of *Mediator-integrator*. On 9 June 2010 after the meeting with the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, President Obama expressed that “both sides have to create an environment, a climate that is going to be conducive to an actual breakthrough. And that means, on the Israeli side, curbing settlement activity [...and] on the Palestinian side [...] we have to continue to make more progress on both, security as well as incitement issues” (Obama, 2010a). Further in that speech, the President stressed the importance of the U.S. involvement in the process by using the pronoun “we”. “I believe that potentially we can make significant progress before the end of the year” (Obama, 2010a). Moreover, the President highlighted the importance of the settlements in the peace efforts. On 1 September 2010 in his remarks on the Middle East Peace Process, President Obama said that “the goal is a settlement, negotiated between the parties, that ends the occupation which began in 1967” (Obama, 2010c). On 30 November 2012, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the administration “has been very clear with Israel that these activities set back the cause of a negotiated peace” talking about the Israeli settlements (Clinton, 2012). On 21 March 2013 in his speech, President Obama gave direct means not to approach peace by saying that “Palestinians must recognize that Israel will be a Jewish state and that Israelis have the right to insist upon their security. 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, 2013). In October 2016, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest again reaffirmed the fact that settlement activity threatens peace efforts (Earnest, 2016).

The role of *Facilitator* was visible in the foreign policy of the Obama administration when it called for negotiations between the conflict parties. In June 2010, the President invited the parties to negotiate. “The time has come to relaunch negotiations—without preconditions—that address the permanent status issues: security for Israelis and Palestinians; borders; refugees; and Jerusalem” (Obama, 2010a). On 7 July 2010 in an interview with Israeli Channel 2 News, Barack Obama stressed the need to get into direct talks. To a question, if he would “request that Israel extends that settlement freeze after September?” the President replied “what I want is for us to get into direct talks. Now, as I said yesterday, I think that if you have direct talks between Abu Mazen, Netanyahu, their teams, that builds trust” (Obama, 2010b).



*Figure 5 NRCs in the U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of Barack Obama*

*Source: author*

Figure 5 envisages the NRCs identified in the Obama administration which are: *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Faithful Ally*, *Strategic Partner*, *Independent*, and *Soft Power*. The most prominent roles in its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements were *Mediator-integrator* and *Independent*.

The administration casted roles related to peace efforts. The *Regional Protector* role occurred when the administration connected the peace efforts in the region with the issue of Israeli settlements. Moreover, it stressed that the Israeli settlement activities put the region of the Middle East at risk as they threaten peace. As *Mediator-integrator*, the Obama administration stressed the importance of the U.S. role in moderating the progress in the peace process while acknowledging the urgency of the Israeli settlements issue. It expressed that the goal of negotiations was to end the 1967 occupation. Casting the role of *Facilitator*, the U.S. under the Obama administration called on the conflict parties to relaunch negotiations and it stressed the need for direct talks. As displayed above, the Obama administration was significantly interested in trying to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, it was not successful and the disagreement over the Israeli settlements created part of that cause (Freedman, 2017, p. 244).

As *Faithful Ally*, the Obama administration highlighted the good U.S.-Israeli relationship while it acknowledged that it is important to handle the issue of Israeli settlements in order to conclude peace. The role of *Strategic Partner* was played when the administration expressed its support for the Israeli temporary settlement freeze while the Palestinian side labelled it as insufficient.

The Obama administration exerted a certain level of pressure on Israeli settlements by which it casted the roles of *Independent* and *Soft Power*. The *Independent* role had been prominent since the beginning of the Obama term as the U.S. position against the Israeli settlements remained firm and had castigated them several times. Moreover, the President labelled the Israeli settlements as not legitimate. Additionally, at the end of its term, the Obama administration abstained from the U.N. SC Resolution which criticised Israeli settlement building in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Within the role of *Soft Power*, the U.S. exerted the significant pressure on Israel which led to the Israeli approval of 10 months settlement freeze. However, the Israeli government did not halt the construction in a way the U.S. demanded. Still, it was presented as achievement even though the settlement freeze was regarded as insufficient on the Palestinian side. Further, the extension of moratorium on settlements was not realised as President Obama demanded. The U.S. also talked about the settlements as an issue that undermines Israeli security which was significantly supported by the U.S. military assistance.

### **3.5 U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of Donald Trump 2017–2021**

This subsection unfolds the national role conceptions in the foreign policy towards Israeli settlements identified during the administration of Donald Trump. The NRCs recognized in the Trump administration are visualised at the end of this subsection in Figure 6.

The Trump administration had not taken an official position on Israeli settlements at the beginning of its term as Press Secretary Sean Spicer described on 2 February 2017 that the administration “looks forward to continuing discussions, including with Prime Minister Netanyahu when he visits with President Trump later this month” (Spicer, 2017a). At the news conference with PM Benjamin Netanyahu on 15 February 2017, when President Trump was asked about the Israeli settlements, he commented “I'd like to see you hold back on settlements for a little bit. We'll work something out. But I would like to see a deal be made” (Trump, 2017a).

However, at the beginning of its term, Press Secretary implicated the administration's stance as he stated that while the United States "don't believe the existence of settlements is an impediment to peace, the construction of new settlements or the expansion of existing settlements beyond their current borders may not be helpful in achieving that goal" (Spicer, 2017a). By that he casted the U.S. in the role of *Strategic Partner* in the relation to Israeli settlements since he dismissed the idea of settlements being an "impediment to peace" (Spicer, 2017b; Trump, 2017a). Further on 19 November 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo affirmed the position on settlements. "Calling the establishment of civilian settlements inconsistent with international law hasn't worked. It hasn't advanced the cause of peace" (The Times of Israel, 2019). President Trump also undertook this role when asked what compromises he wanted the conflict parties to make in order to reach peace at the news conference with PM Benjamin Netanyahu on 15 February 2017. Answering the question related to compromises needed from the Israeli side, Donald Trump stressed that the administration was about to give Israel more flexibility in order to proceed to a peace deal. By that, he adumbrated the administration's will to accommodate Israel's conditions (Trump, 2017a).

More significantly, the Trump administration casted the role of *Faithful Ally* in its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. On 15 February 2017 at a press conference with PM Netanyahu, Donald Trump stressed the good relationship with Israel while he expressed his willingness to fulfil a pre-election promise of "the Embassy moving to Jerusalem, I'd love to see that happen. We're looking at it very, very strongly" (Trump, 2017a).

The decisive step of transferring the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and declaring Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was undertaken by the administration on 6 December 2017 as it declared that "recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and announcing the relocation of our embassy—do not reflect a departure from the strong commitment of the United States to facilitating a lasting peace agreement. The United States continues to take no position on any final status issues. The specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final status negotiations between the parties. The United States is not taking a position on boundaries or borders" (Trump, 2017b). Even though the statement was that the U.S. does not pre-empt any final status it did not involve any Palestinian right to the city nor in the subsequent remarks (Kattan, 2018, p. 73). Moreover, this move created another grave obstacle to peace as the Palestinians called for East Jerusalem to become the capital of the Palestinian state (Al Jazeera, 2017). Further, in February 2018 in an interview with Israel Hayom, a pro-Netanyahu newspaper, President Trump reaffirmed that the question of Jerusalem is off the table as it is

the capital of Israel. Further, he pointed out that “Obama was terrible. He was absolutely terrible for Israel. I think our relationships are very good. I think they are probably as good as they have ever been” (Bismuth, 2018).

Another step by the administration following the role of *Faithful Ally* was taken on 19 June 2018 as the U.S. withdrew from the U.N. Human Rights Council because of its alleged biased anti-Israeli nature (Harris, 2018). Further, the President proclaimed the recognition of the Golan Heights as part of the State of Israel on 25 March 2019 (Trump, 2019a). On 16 September 2019, Donald Trump was asked about Netanyahu’s call for annexation of West Bank settlements to which he replied “I don’t want to talk about that, but certainly it’s something we were told about that they’d like to do. But, no, I don’t want to be talking about that. It’s too soon” (Trump, 2019b). President Trump did not give a direct answer to that question by which he expressed his willingness to negotiate this issue. However, the annexation of the occupied territory would be most probably viewed by previous administrations as unacceptable as they rather condemned the Israeli settlements. This statement led to another decisively pro-Israeli move made by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a statement on 19 November 2019 declaring that “the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not per se inconsistent with international law” (The Times of Israel, 2019). At the Israeli American Council National Summit on 9 December 2019, President Trump again highlighted this move by saying “my administration has now corrected a longstanding injustice by officially declaring that international law does not prohibit civilian settlements in the West Bank” (Trump, 2019c).

Vice President Mike Pence summarized the U.S. policy towards the Israeli settlements casting the *Faithful Ally* role at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference on 2 March 2020. “President Trump has repeatedly done what no American President before him had the courage to do, like when he recognized Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Like when he rejected half a century of peace-process dogma and proclaimed that Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank are not illegal. And as I had the joy of seeing first-hand, just a few short weeks ago when I visited Israel in January, I had the honor to meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu at the new American embassy in Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Israel. What a joy” (Pence, 2020).

The Trump administration had undertaken the role of *Regional Protector* in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements since the beginning of its term. On 2 February 2017, Press Secretary Spicer stressed that “the President has expressed many times, he hopes to achieve peace throughout the Middle East region” (Spicer, 2017a). At the same time, he

acknowledged the new constructions beyond the existing borders of the settlements might have created an issue while achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians (ibidem). Press Secretary Spicer reaffirmed the role when asked about Israeli settlements to which he replied that peace is the goal, however, without any specific accent to Israeli settlements which are a topic to be discussed within the talks (Spicer, 2017b). The role of *Regional Protector* was also emphasized in the statement of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on 19 November 2019 as he said that ‘‘the United States remains deeply committed to helping facilitate peace, and I will do everything I can to help this cause’’ (The Times of Israel, 2019).

The United States also played the role of *Facilitator* in the foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. On 15 February 2017 at a press conference with PM Netanyahu, President Trump gave his opinion on the peace process accepting whatever the conflict sides decide. However, he left the question regarding the settlements unanswered (Trump, 2017a). James S. Brady, an assistant to the U.S. president, expressed the administration’s stance on settlements on 31 March 2017. He stressed the need to work with both sides of the conflict, however, ‘‘the discussion about the settlements is not one that we want to address at this time [...and the administration] do not anticipate that becoming a focal point for any discussions over the next week’’ (Brady, 2017). In the proclamation of recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocating the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv, the President also undertook the role of *Facilitator* as he wanted certain aspects to remain on final negotiation between the parties. ‘‘the United States continues to take no position on any final status issues. The specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final status negotiations between the parties. The United States is not taking a position on boundaries or border’’ (Trump, 2017b). Further, Secretary Mike Pompeo in the statement recognizing that the civilian settlements in the West Bank are not inconsistent with international law in 2019 casted the role of *Facilitator* when he affirmed that the administration is not ‘‘addressing or prejudging the ultimate status of the West Bank. This is for the Israelis and the Palestinians to negotiate’’ (The Times of Israel, 2019).

The Trump administration also played the role of *Independent* to a limited extent. In February 2018 in an interview with Israel Hayom mentioned above, President Trump recognised that ‘‘the settlements are something that very much complicates and always have complicated making peace, so I think Israel has to be very careful with the settlements’’ (Bismuth, 2018). Further, the administration undertook this role when the White House spokesman Josh Raffel opposed to Israeli claim about the discussion with the U.S. about the annexation of the West Bank settlements saying that ‘‘the United States and Israel have never

discussed such a proposal, and the president’s focus remains squarely on his Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative” (Heller, 2018).

In January 2020, a peace plan was launched which also reflects the administration’s stance towards the Israeli settlements. It stated that “the State of Israel and the United States do not believe the State of Israel is legally bound to provide the Palestinians with 100 percent of pre-1967 territory (a belief that is consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 242) [...The State of Israel] will not have to uproot any settlements, and will incorporate the vast majority of Israeli settlements into contiguous Israeli territory“ (The White House, 2020, p. 11–12).

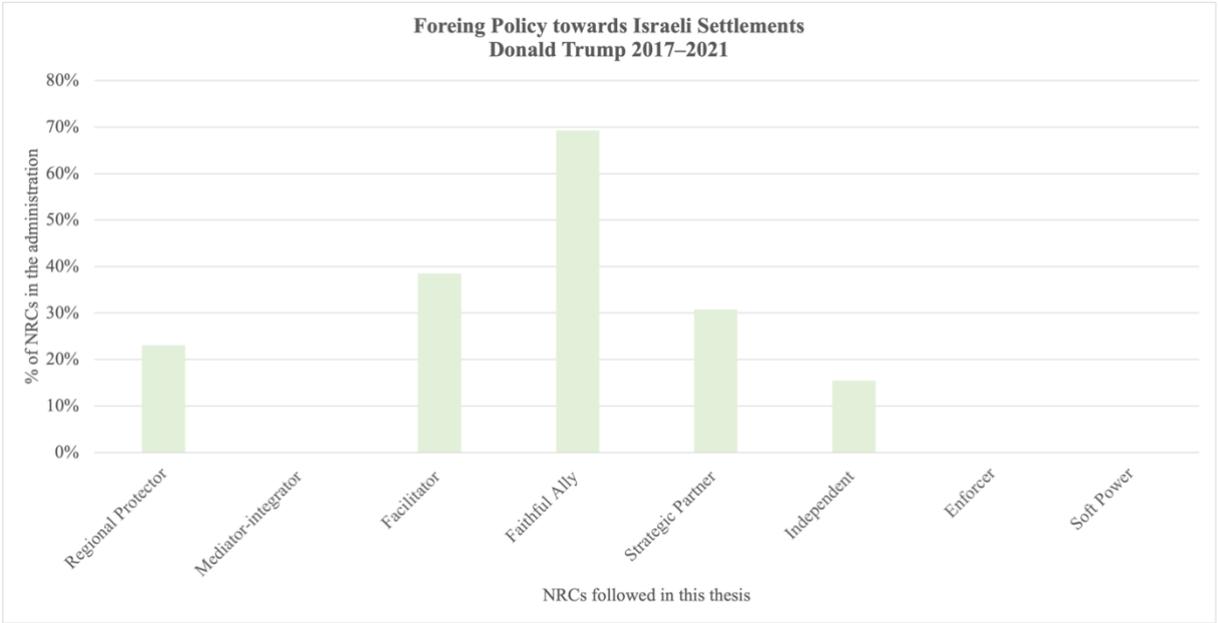


Figure 6 NRCs in the U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Israeli Settlements During the Administration of Barack Obama

Source: author

As Figure 6 visualises, the NRCs used by the Trump administration’s foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements were: *Regional Protector*, *Facilitator*, *Faithful Ally*, *Strategic Partner*, and *Independent*. This administration’s most prominent role in its relation to Israeli settlements was the role of *Faithful Ally*.

As *Regional Protector*, the Trump administration wanted to achieve peace throughout the Middle East region. However, when talking about peace, it did not put any specific pressure on Israeli settlements. While the administration undertook fundamental steps which precluded concluding peace, it still proclaimed the commitment to peace efforts. However more

frequently, it undertook the role of *Facilitator*. There were calls on both sides of the conflict to proceed to peace efforts, but the settlements were not regarded as a focal point of the discussions. The administration acted as *Facilitator* also in a way of leaving the final status of borders to be decided between the conflict parties.

Donald Trump's administration most notably casted the roles connected to the good U.S.-Israeli relationship. As *Strategic Partner*, the administration proclaimed the settlements as not being an obstacle to peace. It claimed that calling them "inconsistent with international law" had not worked to advance the peace efforts. Moreover, as *Faithful Ally*, the administration often stressed a good relationship with Israel, and it accepted Israeli policy on settlements to a certain level. Further, the Trump administration undertook important steps that were significantly pro-Israeli such as the relocation of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and acceptance of Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel, recognition of Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights, and the proclamation that the civilian settlements are not inconsistent with international law.

There were also signs of the *Independent* role in a limited scope. The administration acknowledged that the Israeli settlements complicated the reaching of peace. It also opposed the Israeli claims about the discussion with the U.S. about the annexation of West Bank settlements.

## 4 Stability and Change of the U.S. Foreign Policy on the Israeli Settlements

This chapter follows the analysis of the subsequent U.S. administrations after the end of the Cold War i.e., George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump and the NRCs. It determines the stability and change of certain NRC across the 1989–2021 administrations based on the previous analysis and the mean deviation. Figure 7 below gives a short general overview of all NRCs and their representation and stability in U.S. foreign policy during the chosen period, while Figure 8, at the end of this chapter, displays the mean deviation for each NRC. Further, this part of the thesis synthesizes the findings by which it describes the continuity in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. The chapter is divided by the individual NRCs that were monitored in this thesis and it elaborates on their stability and change in the years 1989–2021.

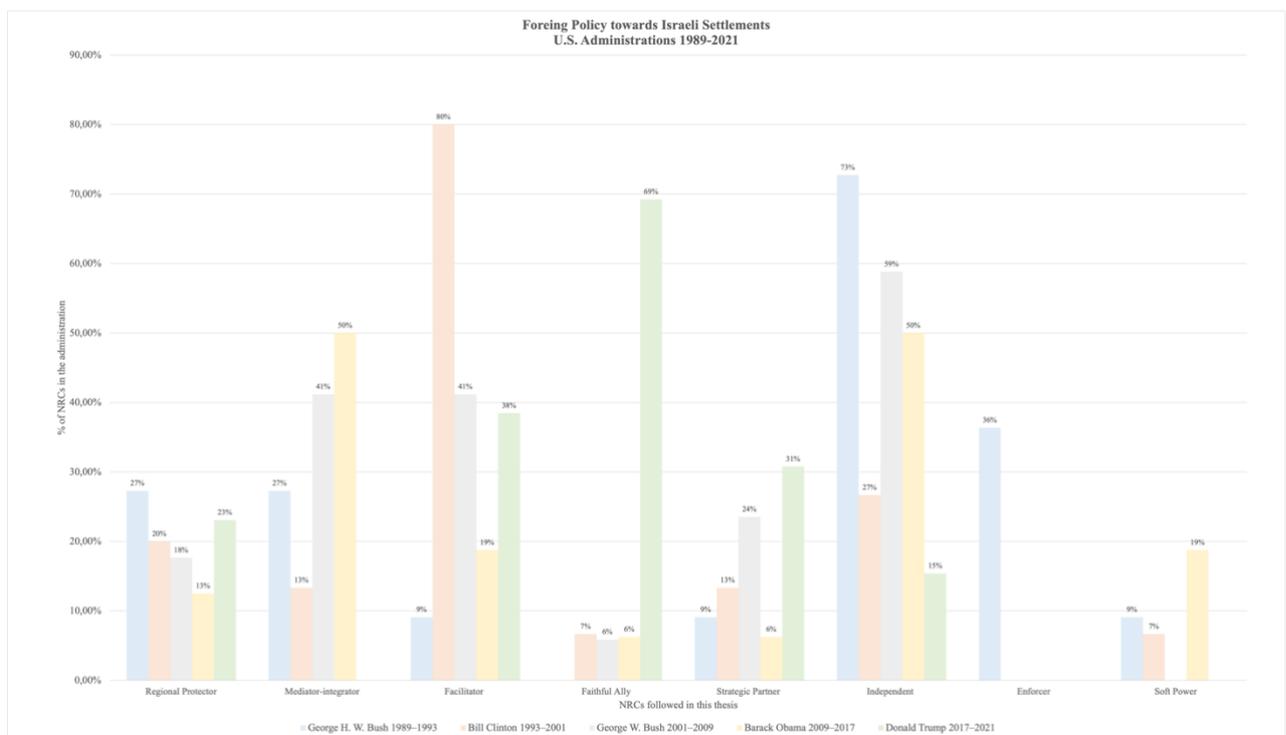


Figure 7 Foreign Policy towards Israeli Settlements in the U.S. Administrations 1989–2021

Source: author

Figure 7 serves as an overview of NRCs' stability and change and their representation in each administration. Further, they are displayed separately in Appendix 2-9. The roles that were casted in all observed administrations were: *Regional Protector*, *Facilitator*, *Strategic Partner*, and *Independent*. The role of *Mediator-integrator* was undertaken by all

administrations except Trump’s. All administrations behaved as *Faithful Ally* concerning the Israeli settlements except the administration of George H. W. Bush. The role of *Soft Power* was promoted by every administration except the one of George W. Bush and Donald Trump. The only administration that casted the role of *Enforcer* was George H. W. Bush’s.

**4.1 Regional Protector**

The role of *Regional Protector* was projected in each administration’s foreign policy, and it was a rather stable feature in the foreign policies of the U.S. administration from 1989–2021 in relation to Israeli settlements as visible in Figure 7 and Appendix 2. Every U.S. administration connected their approach towards the Israeli settlements with the peace process in the Middle East or Resolutions 242 and 338. Comparing the U.S. administrations, it was the most prominent in George H. W. Bush’s administration which called for a comprehensive peace based on U.N. Resolutions 232 and 338. On the other hand, Barack Obama did not stress this role that vigorously as he was rather concerned with the role of *Mediator-integrator*. Nevertheless, it did not become a major role in either administration.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Regional Protector* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,27 - 0,2| + |0,2 - 0,2| + |0,2 - 0,18| + |0,2 - 0,13| + |0,23 - 0,2|}{5}$$

*Regional Protector*’s mean deviation is 0,0406.

The administration of George H. W. Bush had casted the role of *Regional Protector* since the beginning of his administration. Especially after the Gulf War, it gained confidence and stressed the need to use the new opportunities for the peace efforts that would end the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Bush administration called for the settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338 throughout its term. Likewise, Bill Clinton had supported the need for peace in the Middle East since the beginning of his administration, based on the U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338. His administration had repeated the dedication to peace several times.

George W. Bush’s administration also called for a peace process in the Middle East based on the U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, though, the representation of the *Regional Protector* role in foreign policy was again lower than that of the previous administration. The same is valid for the Barack Obama administration even though the differences are not that

noticeable. Similarly, the Obama administration had casted the role since the beginning of its term. Further, it connected the Israeli settlements' growth with the security, eventually peace, in the Middle East.

The role of *Regional Protector* was projected to a higher extent in Donald Trump's foreign policy. Similarly, the administration had casted the role since the beginning of its term. It called for peace throughout the region of the Middle East and it accepted that the new Israeli settlements construction might create a problem that was about to be discussed within the peace talks.

## 4.2 Mediator-integrator

As portrayed in Figure 7 and Appendix 3, there were greater changes in the stability of the role of *Mediator-integrator*. It had been represented, with the exception of Donald Trump's tenure, in every foreign policy of the observed administrations. Those administrations regarded the U.S. involvement in the peace process as necessary, further, they saw the importance of the Israeli settlements to be dealt with within that process. Out of the 1989–2021 administrations, Barack Obama casted this role the most whilst Bill Clinton the least, excluding the administration of Donald Trump.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Mediator-integrator* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,27 - 0,26| + |0,26 - 0,13| + |0,41 - 0,26| + |0,5 - 0,26| + |0,26 - 0|}{5}$$

*Mediator-integrator*'s mean deviation is 0,157528.

George H. W. Bush's administration had been clear about the U.S. direct involvement in the peace negotiations since the beginning of its term and the role of *Mediator-integrator* played as important role as the *Regional Protector*. Further, it positioned the issue of the Israeli settlement in the centre of the conflict resolution and indicated the settlements as the obstacle to peace. Similarly to George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton emphasized the importance of being involved in peace negotiations as his administration called for a full peace process with a relevant U.S. role. Israeli settlements were perceived as an issue to be resolved within the peace process. However, his administration did not push the question of the Israeli settlements as a

primary issue and rather let the dispute sides decide on that matter by which the role of *Facilitator* was more prominent during the Clinton term.

The administration of George W. Bush gave more importance to the role of the *Mediator-integrator* as it presented direct means of how to reach peace to which it referred throughout its administration. The Israeli settlements were an important part of those means which were the Mitchell Accords and the road map to peace. However, they lacked detailed definitions to be more effective. Barack Obama emphasised this role more in his foreign policy as it was one of the most prominent roles, he decided to project concerning Israeli settlements. His administration stressed the importance of the U.S. involvement in the peace process and saw the Israeli settlements as an essential issue to be addressed.

### 4.3 Facilitator

As Figure 7 and Appendix 4 show, the role of *Facilitator* was used to varying degrees within the foreign policies of the monitored administrations. Every administration casted this role which indicates they stated the need for the conflict sides within the Arab-Israeli conflict to initiate talks without giving the primary concern on Israeli settlements. Within the 1989–2021 administrations, Bill Clinton used the role of *Facilitator* the most, on the other hand, the administration of George H. W. Bush the least.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Facilitator* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,37 - 0,09| + |0,8 - 0,37| + |0,41 - 0,37| + |0,37 - 0,19| + |0,38 - 0,37|}{5}$$

*Facilitator*'s mean deviation is 0,188608.

The administration of George H. W. Bush repeatedly called on the parties to begin peace negotiations, however, it was a rather less prominent role during its term. On the other hand, the administration of Bill Clinton became the most visible advocator of the peace negotiations out of all administrations followed in this thesis. It was the most noticeable role the administration decided to undertake in relation to Israeli settlements. The Clinton administration adumbrated that the Israeli settlements are an important issue but not primarily as an obstacle to peace. According to it the U.S. ‘work to minimize the risks of peace’ but not to decide on the settlements (Clinton, 1996b).

The tendencies to cast the role of *Facilitator* of George W. Bush’s administration were profoundly lower than the previous administration. It perceived the Israeli settlements as an important issue within the peace process and as a matter to be decided as parties negotiate. The deployment of this role continued to decrease with the administration of Barack Obama which called to relaunch the peace negotiations between the conflict parties that address permanent issues including borders.

The role was elevated once again with Donald Trump’s administration. It had said it wanted the final status of the peace process, which includes the border, to be negotiated between the conflict parties, and that the U.S. did not decide on it.

#### **4.4 Faithful Ally**

The role of *Faithful Ally* was a rather variable feature of the administrations that were followed in this thesis as visible in Figure 7 and Appendix 5. The administration of George H. W. Bush did not project it at all. However, there was a stable presence of the role in the subsequent administration of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. With the administration of Donald Trump, the use of the *Faithful Ally* role rose significantly. Deploying this role, the administrations while giving statements on Israeli settlements also expressed good relations with Israel or they somehow proclaimed the acceptance of the Israeli settlement policy.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Faithful Ally* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,18 - 0| + |0,18 - 0,07| + |0,18 - 0,06| + |0,18 - 0,06| + |0,69 - 0,18|}{5}$$

*Faithful Ally*’s mean deviation is 0,206496.

Bill Clinton and his administration acted in their foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements as the *Faithful Ally* as they admitted that the settlements are a problem, however, also emphasized that “our commitment to Israel's security remains rock solid” (Clinton, 1996a). To a similar extent, the administration of George W. Bush deployed this role as it took a rather permissive approach regarding the settlements. It acknowledged the fact that Israel cannot return to the armistice lines of 1949. Barack Obama’s administration remained at the same level of this role occupation. The President appreciated the shared history and values between both states adding that the U.S. ‘will stand against attempts to single it out for criticism

in international forums” while he commented that the situation must change to approach peace (Obama, 2011).

The role of *Faithful Ally* became a dominant feature of Donald Trump’s administration. It highlighted the good relationship between the U.S. and Israel while talking about occupied areas several times. In sharp contrast with Barack Obama, the Trump administration perceived the Israeli settlements as not illegal. On top of that, the Trump administration had taken several other major steps in its foreign policy towards Israeli settlements which for example include the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, and recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. The recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel the President commented “The specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final status negotiations between the parties” (Trump, 2017b). However, he was rather talking about boundaries than about the borders, signifying the openness for the Israeli policy.

#### **4.5 Strategic Partner**

Every followed administration in this thesis decided to cast the role of *Strategic Partner* in their foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements as Figure 7 and Appendix 6 express. It was a quite stable feature in the foreign policies across the years 1989–2021, however, it was not a main aspect during none of the administrations. When the administrations gave statements on Israeli settlements, they supported some of the Israeli policies in order to show to some extent affection for Israel. Comparing the administrations followed in this thesis, the *Strategic Partner* role was casted the most by the Trump administration and the least by the Obama administration.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Strategic Partner* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,17 - 0,09| + |0,17 - 0,13| + |0,24 - 0,17| + |0,17 - 0,06| + |0,31 - 0,17|}{5}$$

*Strategic Partner*’s mean deviation is 0,084448.

Even though the George H. W. Bush administration did not deploy the role of *Faithful Ally*, it casted the *Strategic Partner* role. While condemning the Israeli settlements regular basis, it expressed the support for Israeli policy of accommodating Soviet emigrants by which it softened the condemnation to a certain level. Rather than the *Faithful Ally*, Bill Clinton’s

administration acted as the *Strategic Partner*, to a greater extent than the previous Bush administration. It explicitly supported the Israeli policy when stressed that Israel cannot do anything that would threaten the foundations of the State of Israel. The administration of George W. Bush followed the trend and deployed this role to a higher extent than the previous administration. It acknowledged that the settlements are the problem but at the same time, it mentioned its support for the Israeli policy of fighting terrorism.

The administration of Barack Obama played a rather limited role of *Strategic Partner* in comparison to other administrations observed in this thesis. It evaluated the moratorium on a settlement freeze as successful even though the Palestinian side expressed rather against it.

Donald Trump and his administration elevated the importance of this role. The administration said it did not perceive the Israeli settlements as an obstacle to peace, even though it acknowledged the settlements' expansion might have not been helpful.

**4.6 Independent**

As Figure 7 and Appendix 7 show, the role of *Independent* was represented in all the administrations that this thesis dealt with. All the administrations gave explicit expressions against the Israeli settlements out of which the administration of George H. W. Bush was the most prominent and the Trump administration the least.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Independent* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,73 - 0,19| + |0,27 - 0,19| + |0,59 - 0,19| + |0,5 - 0,19| + |0,19 - 0,15|}{5}$$

*Independent's* mean deviation is 0,18956.

The *Independent* role was the most prominent feature of the George H. W. Bush administration. It had explicitly condemned the Israeli settlements since the beginning of its term as it repetitively called on Israel to halt or end the settlement activity. The Bush administration's policy was in sharp contrast with the then-Israeli government. The stance had remained clear throughout the term. To a distinctly lesser extent, the Clinton administration played the role of the *Independent*. It acknowledged that they are an issue, nevertheless, not a matter to be pushed by the U.S.

With the administration of George W. Bush, the role of *Independent* regained its importance. The administration had commented explicitly against the settlement policy several times and it called on Israel to stop settlement expansion. Further, it supported the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank as under the road map. Barack Obama had remained the importance of the *Independent* role since the beginning of his term as he stated that ‘we have to make progress on settlements, that settlements have to be stopped in order for us to move forward’ (Obama, 2009a). His administration denoted the Israeli settlements as not legitimate and an obstacle to peace. To a limited extent, the administration of Donald Trump also casted the role of *Independent* as it acknowledged that the Israeli settlements had always complicated the peace efforts.

#### **4.7 Enforcer**

The least deployed, thus the least stable, NRC was the *Enforcer* as visible in Figure 7 and Appendix 8. The only President whose administration underwent concrete steps in order to pressure Israel to follow its foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements was George H. W. Bush.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Enforcer* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,36 - 0,07| + |0,07 - 0| + |0,07 - 0| + |0,07 - 0| + |0,07 - 0|}{5}$$

*Enforcer*'s mean deviation is 0,116352.

The administration of George H. W. Bush verbally as well as practically conditioned the U.S. aid connecting it to the halt or end of the settlement activity. President Bush had postponed the adoption of loan guarantees to Israel in Congress until he was persuaded by the Israeli intention to curtail the activity.

#### **4.8 Soft Power**

As Figure 7 and Appendix 9 show, the role of *Soft Power* in the foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements during the years 1989–2021 was not used stably. Two administrations did not use it at all, and they are the administrations of George W. Bush and Donald Trump. It was casted the most by Barack Obama and to a lesser extent by the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. The administrations made a statement that expressed conviction

against Israeli settlements and a position to do something about it without a reference to the use of practical tools.

The calculation of the mean deviation of the *Soft Power* role between individual administrations is as followed. The numbers in the formula are rounded, however, the calculations were done in whole numbers.

$$MD = \frac{|0,09 - 0,06| + |0,07 - 0,06| + |0,06 - 0| + |0,06 - 0| + |0,06 - 0|}{5}$$

*Soft Power*'s mean deviation is 0,055216.

George H. W. Bush's administration casted the role of *Soft Power* as it exerted considerable pressure on Israel in terms of curtailing the settlement activity without the practical tools. That happened for example in terms of verbally linking the U.S. aid and the settlements building. Proceeding with Bill Clinton, the role did not play such an important part in foreign policy, however, the administration called on Israel to admit they were creating a few problems with the settlement activity which was inconsistent with the Oslo commitment.

The Soft Power role was the most prominent during the Obama administration. Since the beginning of its term, it had pressured Israel to halt the settlement building in order to create conditions that would proceed to peace talks. It called for a settlement freeze that was successful to a certain level. However, it was not as effective as expected, further, the administration did not manage to prolong the moratorium as desired.

### 4.9 NRCs' Mean Deviation

Figure 8 displays the mean deviation for each NRC by which it shows their stability and change across the U.S. administrations followed in this thesis. The lower the column, the higher the stability of a particular role in the foreign policy of US administrations between 1989–2021 as the deviation is low. Analogously, the higher the column, the greater the fluctuation of the role as the deviation is high.

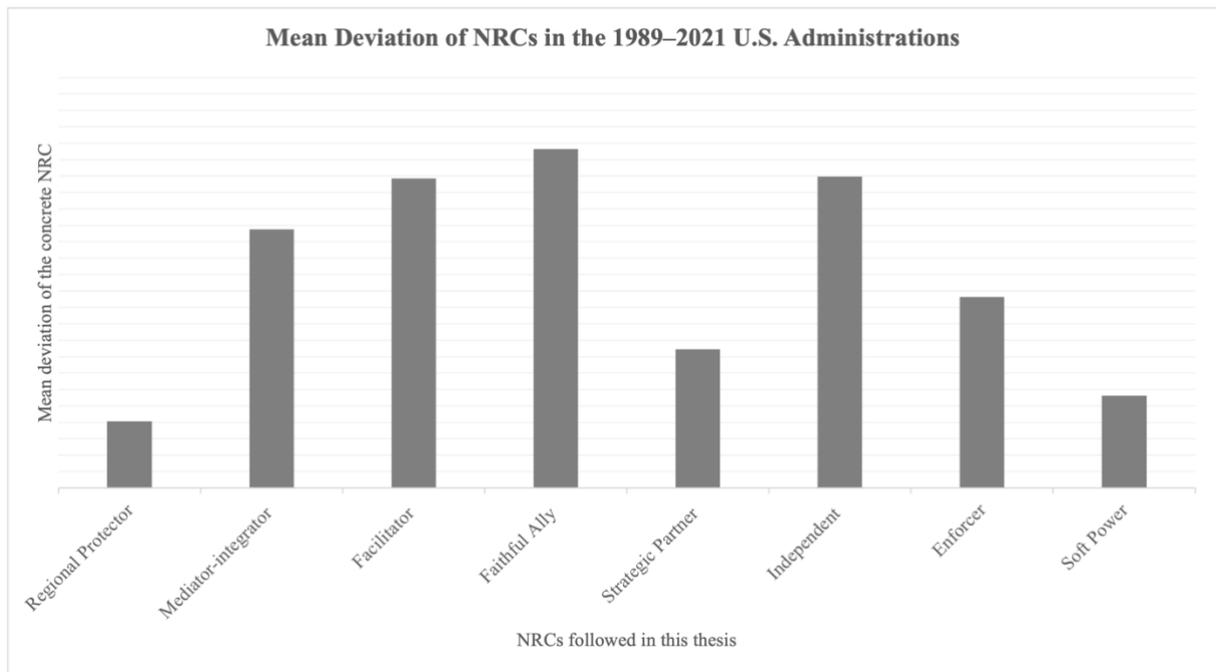


Figure 8 Mean Deviation of NRCs in the 1989–2021 U.S. Administrations

Source: author

Overall, the most stable roles across the observed administrations were those which connect the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements and peace efforts i.e., *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, and *Facilitator*. Most notably during the Clinton administration. On the other hand, the least stable roles were those associated with the statements on Israeli settlements followed by a mention of the good U.S.-Israeli relationship i.e., *Faithful Ally* and *Strategic Partner*. Nevertheless, the main proponent of this approach was President Trump. The group of NRCs that are associated with a level of pressure developed on a certain Israeli government in order to influence the policy of Israeli settlements were most visibly represented in the administration of George H. W. Bush. These NRCs are *Independent*, *Enforcer*, and *Soft Power*.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to follow the stability and change in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements in the administrations of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. In order to answer the research question: “*How the approach to the Israeli settlements was stable throughout the U.S. administrations, and eventually, how did it change between 1989 and 2021?*”, the thesis used the role theory and thematic content analysis.

The stability and change of the Israeli settlements phenomenon in the U.S. foreign policy were determined by two means via qualitative and quantitative methods. First, the phenomenon was examined through the thematic content analysis of administrations’ statements and the following attribution of the national role conceptions (NRCs) to them. Second, the continuity in the U.S. foreign policy was identified by the calculation of NRCs’ mean deviations within the researched U.S. administrations between the years 1989–2021. While the NRCs’ overview helps to determine how active the researched administrations were in a certain role towards Israeli settlements and how the NRCs changed, the mean deviation provides the determination of the NRC’s stability over time.

Based on the analysis, half of the NRCs used in this thesis appeared within the foreign policy of all chosen U.S. administrations for this thesis which are *Regional Protector*, *Facilitator*, *Strategic Partner*, and *Independent*. That explains that all administrations projected the need for peace efforts into their approach towards Israeli settlements, as well as they condemned the settlements to a certain level while they also expressed their inclination to a particular Israeli policy.

The NRCs that were not accepted by all administrations are *Mediator-integrator*, *Faithful Ally*, *Soft Power*, and *Enforcer*. The roles of *Mediator-integrator* and *Faithful Ally* were not deployed in one administration each. That explains that the idea of the need to address the Israeli settlements as an essential issue within the peace talks and the U.S. involvement differed among the administrations. Also, the conviction to stress the good U.S.-Israeli relationship while addressing the reality of Israeli settlements had changed over the years 1989–2021. Two administrations did not identify with the role of *Soft Power* i.e., the determination to exert a higher level of pressure on Israel regarding the settlement policy without the use of concrete steps by the specific U.S. administration had changed over the years. The role of

*Enforcer* appeared only in one administration. No other administration decided to use a decisive step in order to pressure Israel to follow the U.S. will in relation to Israeli settlements.

Overall, noticeable fluctuations in the casting of the NRCs appeared in the cases of *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Faithful Ally*, and *Independent* as there was at least a fifty percent difference in the use of a given NRC between the administration that used the role the most and the one that used it the least, if at all. The changes among the administrations are described in more detail in chapter 4 of this thesis “Stability and Change of the U.S. Foreign Policy on the Israeli Settlements”.

Based on the calculation of the NRCs’ mean deviation, their stability in the U.S. foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements was following, ranked from most to least stable: *Regional*, *Protector*, *Soft Power*, *Strategic Partner*, *Enforcer*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Independent*, and *Faithful Ally*.

As the most stable role was determined *Regional Protector* with the lowest mean deviation. The role was deployed by all followed U.S. administrations by which they all projected the need for peace in the Middle East or the need to proceed according to U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 into their foreign policy towards the Israeli settlements. On the other hand, the most wobbling role was *Faithful Ally* with the highest mean deviation. The role appeared in all administrations except George H. W. Bush’s. It was rather stable among the Clinton, W. Bush, and Obama administrations’ foreign policies towards the Israeli settlements, and the great change came with the Trump administration which used the role significantly.

As mentioned in the introduction, the dilemma in the U.S. value-based foreign policy is confirmed in this thesis. The narratives regarding the Israeli settlements had been majorly favoring the peace efforts, however, when it comes to exerting a higher level of pressure to influence Israeli settlements policy, thus to deal with a major obstacle to peace, the U.S. administrations rather choose not to as it is apparent from the use of the *Enforcer*, and to a certain extent *Soft Power* role.

The author considers the biggest limitation of this thesis to be that it is to a certain extent subjective in terms of attributing NRCs to individual statements given by researched administrations. The attempt to minimize this limit as much as possible was a repetitive assessment of each statement with a time gap between each judgment. Another limitation is the NRCs’ definitions are not precisely defined, however, it is also one of the basic assumptions of

the role theory of foreign policy. This limitation was minimized by narrowing the definitions as much as possible based on the extensive research before writing this thesis which resulted in the creation of general patterns in the U.S. foreign policy towards Israeli settlements.

The dilemma in the U.S. foreign policy was confirmed in this thesis thus as for further research, the author suggests trying to explain what the incentives of the U.S. administrations are to be rather conciliatory towards Israeli settlement policy. Another proposal is to compare the effects of certain policies on the growth of Israeli settlements, if any. Further, the research might compare the behavior of the Republican and Democrat administrations in relation to the Israeli government.

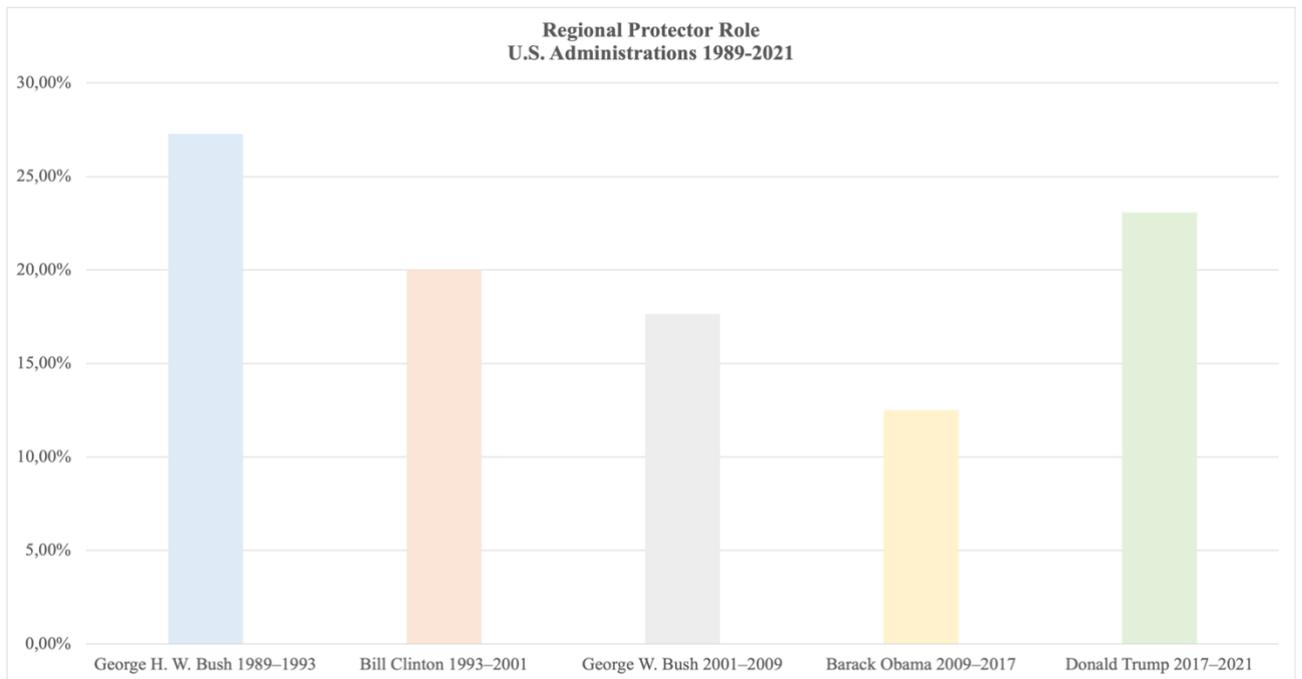
## Appendix 1 – National Role Conceptions Used in the Thesis

National Role Conceptions Used in the Thesis				
Role n.	Role Type	Definition	Author	Adaptation of the Definition
1	<b>Regional Protector</b>	States feel special responsibility to handle regional issues and provide secure environment in the region	Kara, Sözen (2016, p. 52)	This NRC is attributed to a specific statement on Israeli settlements in case it also mentions the peace process and the whole region of the Middle East or Resolutions 242 and 338.
2	<b>Mediator-integrator</b>	The themes for this national role conception indicate perceptions of a continuing task to help adversaries reconcile their differences.	Holsti (1970, p. 265)	This NRC is attributed in case the statement mentions the need for direct involvement of the U.S. in the peace process. Further, the statement implies that settlements are an essential issue and must be addressed within the peace process.
3	<b>Facilitator</b>	States' effort to facilitate peace talks to maintain dialogue	Kara, Sözen (2016, p. 53)	This NRC is attributed to a statement which calls on the conflict sides to initiate talks. Moreover, it suggests that the peace process should not put so much pressure on the Israeli settlements as an obstacle to peace or that they should be handled first.
4	<b>Faithful Ally</b>	A government makes a specific commitment to support the policies of another government	Holsti (1970, p. 267)	This NRC is assigned to the statement on Israeli settlements which also stresses the good U.S.-Israeli relationship or when it expresses the administration's acceptance of the Israeli settlement policy.

5	<b>Strategic Partner</b>	States that shares policy views on important issues such as economy, regional stability, nuclear non-proliferation, and terrorism	Kara, Sözen (2016, p. 53)	In relevance to this thesis' subject, it expresses the case when the U.S. administration in a statement on Israeli settlements also supports the Israeli policy.
6	<b>Independent</b>	The government will make policy decisions according to the state's own interests rather than in support of the objectives of other states	Holsti (1970, p. 268)	This NRC is ascribed to the statement on Israeli settlements if it contains the explicit expression against Israeli settlements policy.
7	<b>Enforcer</b>		author of the thesis	This NRC expresses the administration makes a decision to use practical tools in order to make others follow its will.
8	<b>Soft Power</b>	States' ability to shape the preferences of others with persuasion than using force. The concept also refers to the means of persuasion to resolve international conflicts.	Kara, Sözen (2016, p. 53)	Within this thesis, this NCRs is assigned to the statement which expresses conviction against Israeli settlements and a position to do something about it without a reference to use of practical tools.

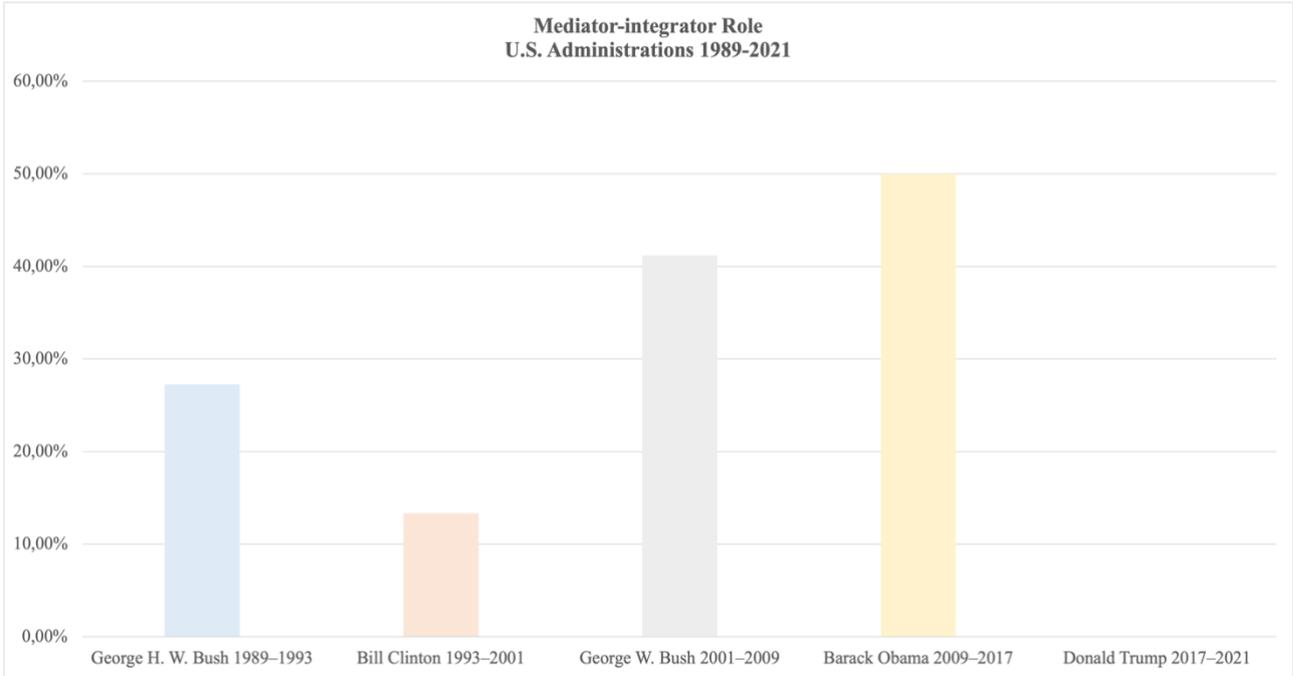
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## Appendix 2 – Regional Protector Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



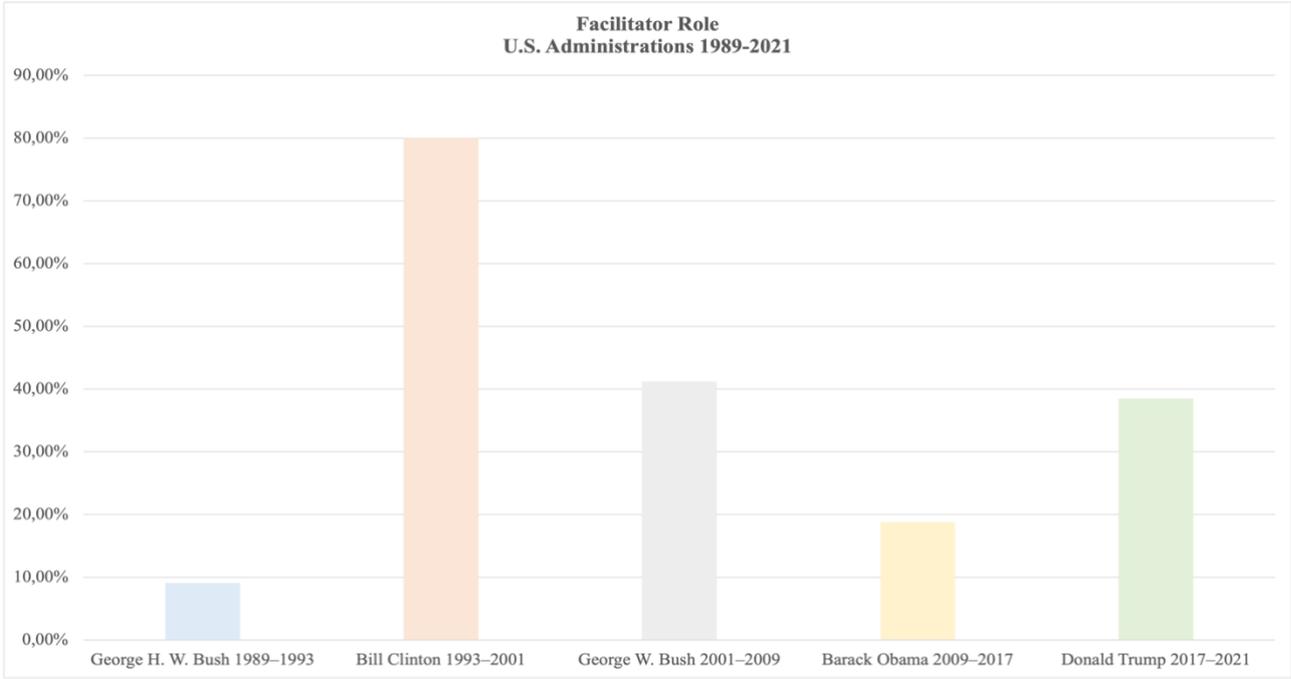
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### Appendix 3 – Mediator-integrator Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



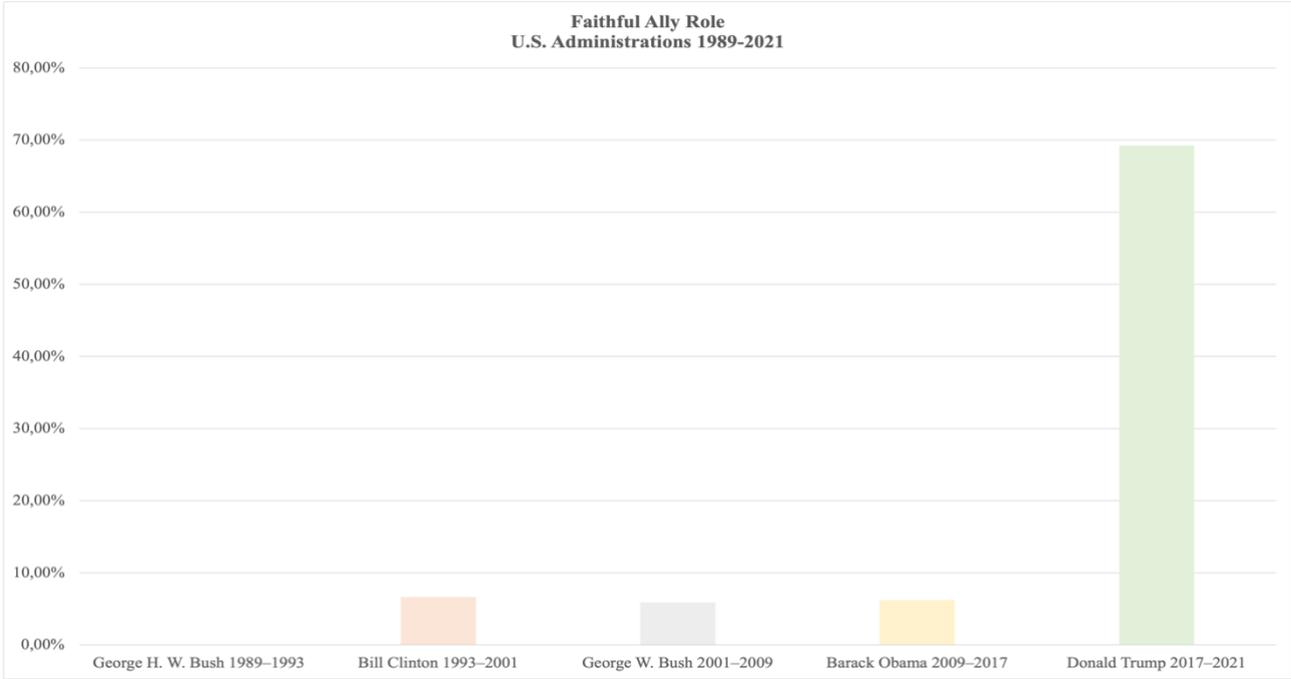
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# Appendix 4 – Facilitator Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



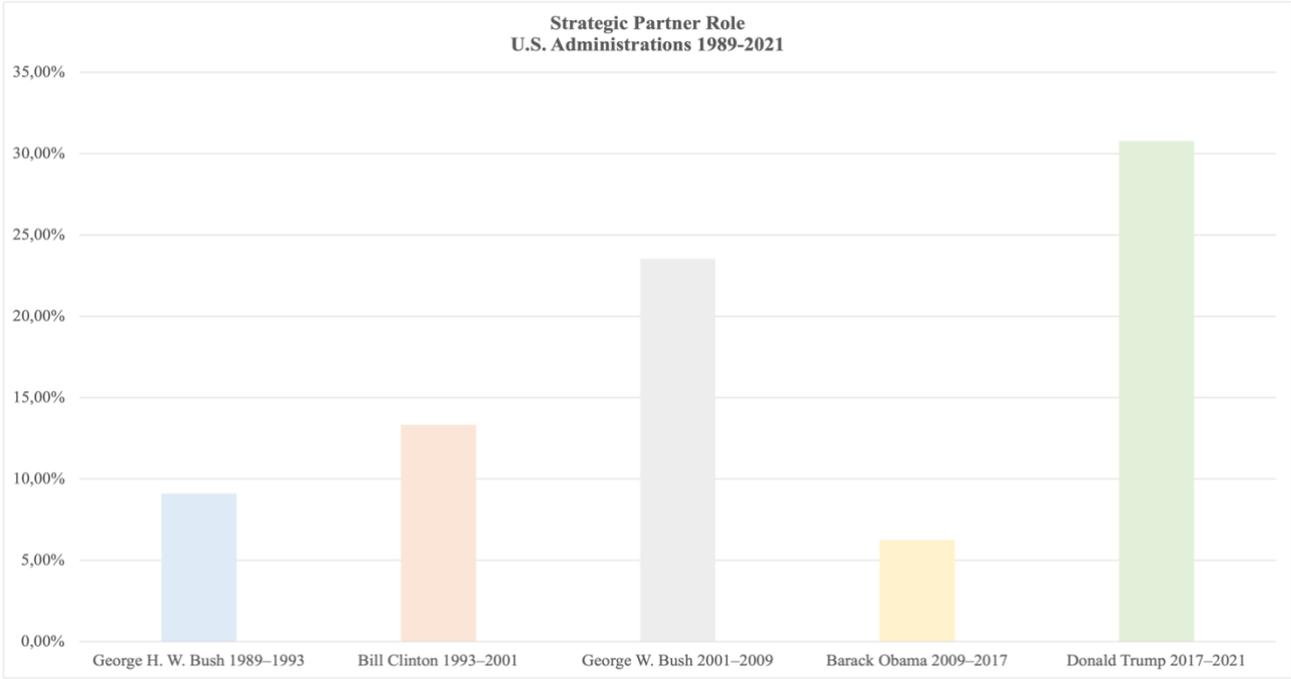
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# Appendix 5 – Faithful Ally Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



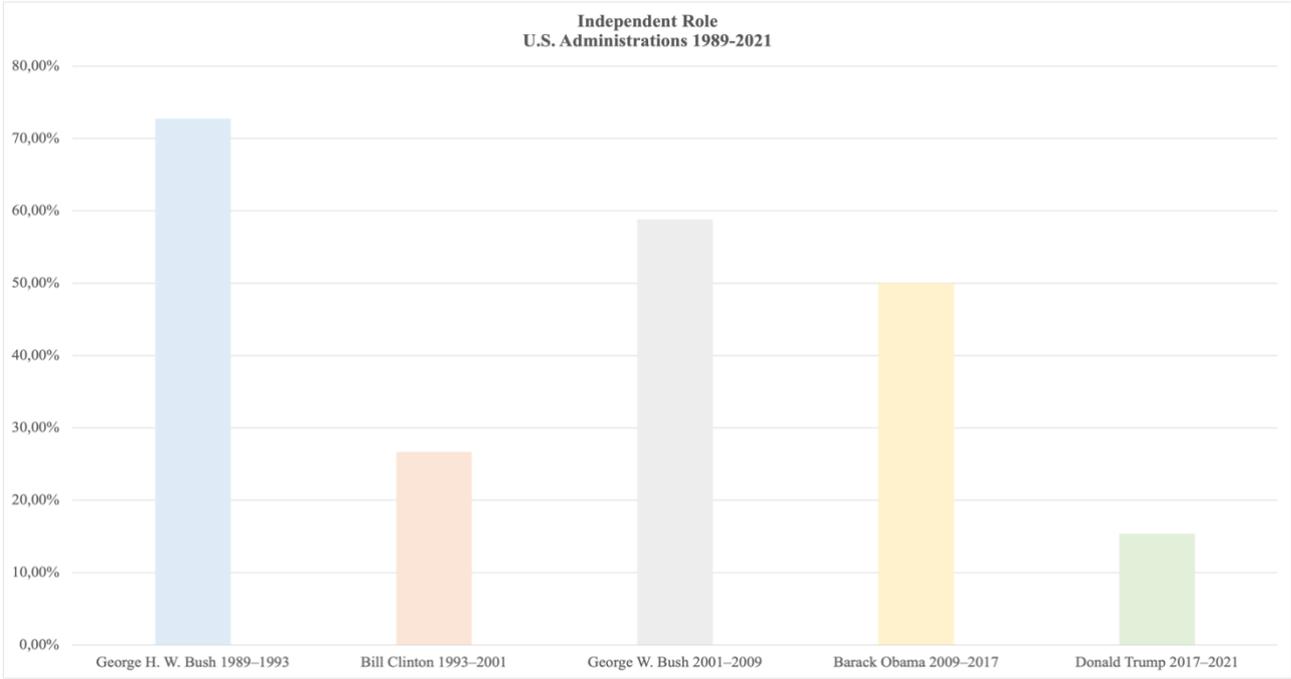
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# Appendix 6 – Strategic Partner Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



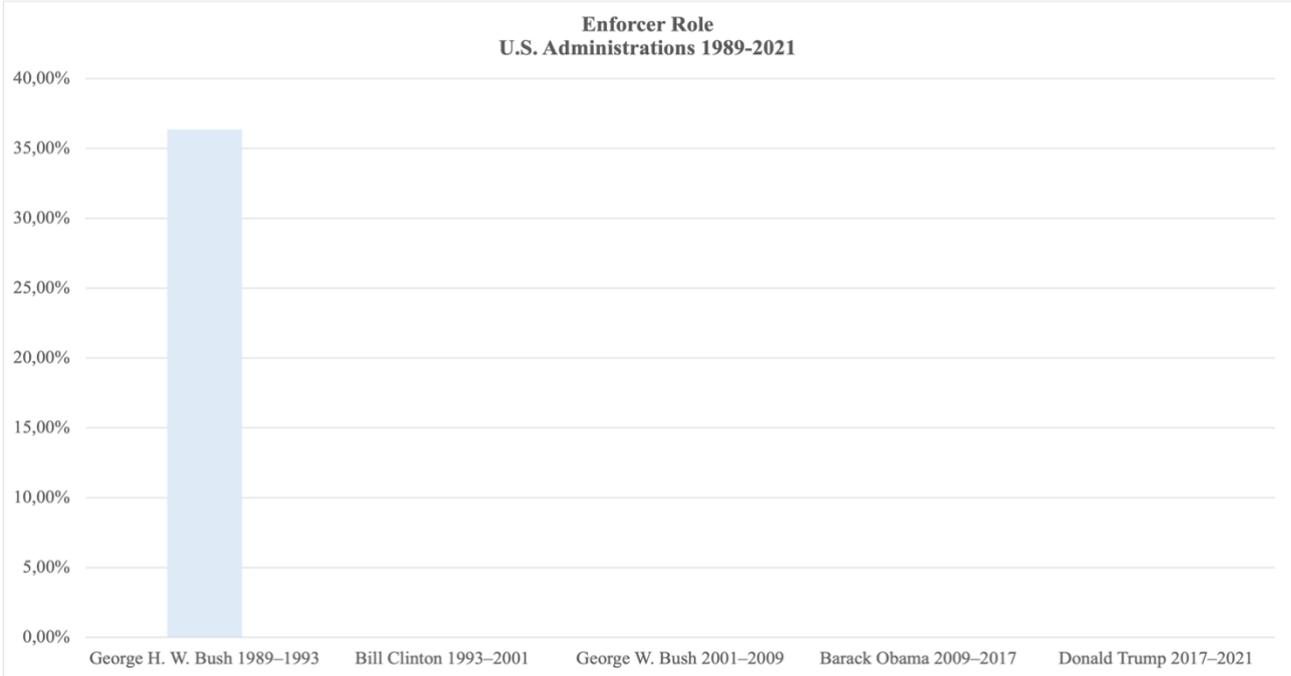
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# Appendix 7 – Independent Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



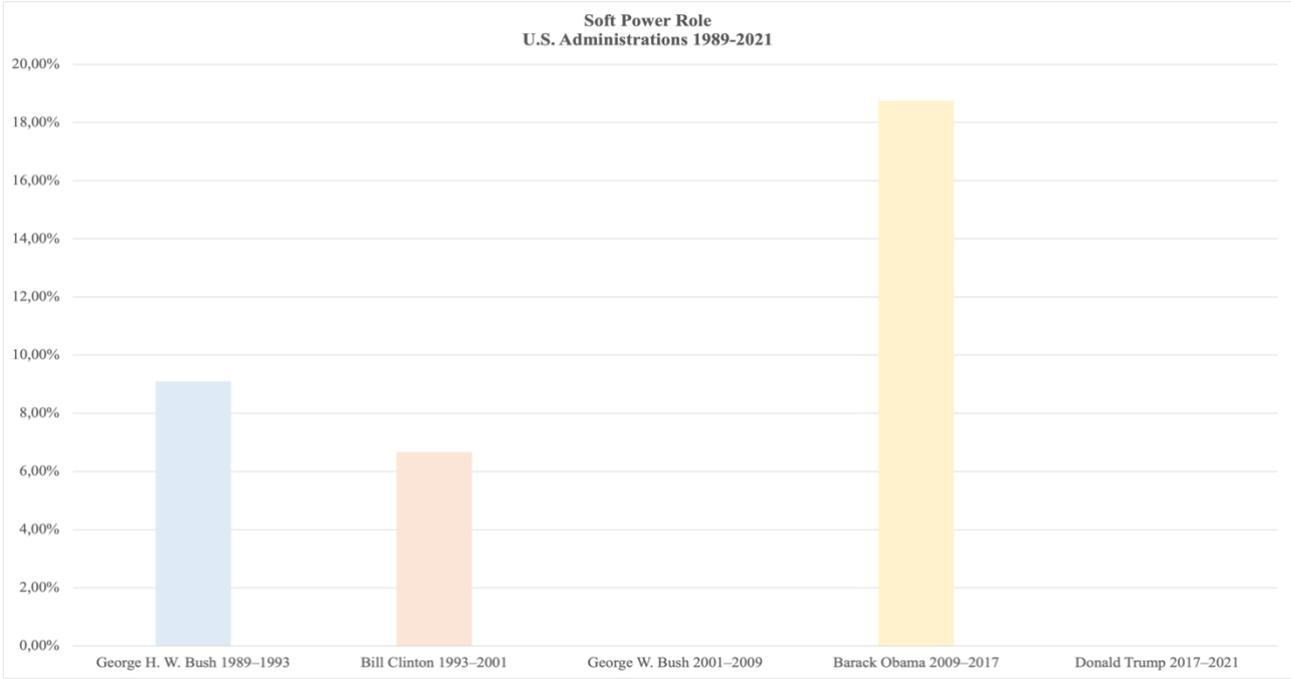
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# Appendix 8 – Enforcer Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



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# Appendix 9 – Soft Power Role – U.S. Administrations 1989–2021



Source: author

## **Abstract**

This master's thesis aim is to trace the stability and change in the U.S. foreign policy towards Israeli settlements in the post-Cold War administrations, i.e. the administrations of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. The continuity is followed through the role theory of foreign policy which explains the state behaviour by the national role conceptions (NRCs). Eight relevant NRCs are deployed, which are *Regional Protector*, *Mediator-integrator*, *Facilitator*, *Faithful Ally*, *Strategic Partner*, *Independent*, *Enforcer*, and *Soft Power*. The thesis combines qualitative and quantitative research method. First, the thematic content analysis of each administration's statements on the Israeli settlements is used in order to identify the NRCs and to follow the change in U.S. foreign policy from 1989 to 2021. Second, the calculation of the NRC's mean deviation is carried out to determine the stability of the researched phenomenon. The thesis observed both, stability and change of the followed phenomenon in the U.S. foreign policy, however each to a different extent. Most consistently, administrations used roles that linked their foreign policy towards Israeli settlements with peace efforts. On the other hand, the biggest changes in behaviour were those that pointed to good U.S.–Israeli relations when mentioning Israeli settlements.

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