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October 7 Attacks: Impact and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is the world's longest-running conflict. An unprecedented strike by Hamas against Israel unfolded on October 7, 2023. There have been serious human rights abuses in the area as a result of Israel's major counteroffensive launched against Hamas since that time. The entire region of West Asia has been impacted by the ongoing confrontation between Israel and Hamas. The United States has consistently maintained a diplomatic and military presence in the region. The attack has impacted U.S. foreign policy in the region and on Israel, the United States' long-standing, trustworthy strategic partner in the area. The region's stability and security framework has been impacted by human rights abuses as a part of the conflict and the involvement of other states in the conflict. This affected U.S. policy in the area as well. Thus, the impact of the October 7 attack and its ramifications for U.S. foreign policy are examined in this essay. In addition, this examines the external and internal factors that influenced U.S. foreign policy in West Asia following the October 7 incident. This paper further discusses the implications for U.S. foreign policy in the region from the attack and US reactions during the past year.

Keywords: Israel; Hamas; United States; Foreign Policy; Iran

INTRODUCTION

Since the creation of Israel in 1948, the Israel-Palestine conflict has been the world's longest-running conflict. Since then, Israel and Palestine have fought four significant wars: in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. Although no significant conflict followed, Israel committed grave human rights abuses in the West Bank and Gaza. Even though the matter remains unresolved, the conflict has lost international attention in the last decades. However, the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas pushed this issue back into the world arena. Since then, Israel has been conducting a devastating offensive in Gaza, which has resulted in numerous Palestinian deaths and grave human rights abuses. This led to severe conflict between the two and other regional players also began to engage in it. Due to its hegemonic interests, the United States has long meddled in the region, and its foreign policy has been greatly impacted by the

Israel-Palestine conflict, which is the most important issue in the area. The October 7 incident occurred against the backdrop of several changes in U.S. policy in West Asia and U.S./presidential elections, despite the United States's consistent pro-Israel position.

OCTOBER 7 ATTACK- HAMAS ATTACK ON ISRAEL

Since the Jewish migration started following the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Israel and Palestine have been engaged in an extended struggle over territorial sovereignty. After Israel was established in 1948, the first significant battle started. The two sides fought several important wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973. Palestinians, represented by several tiny liberation organisations, Arab armies from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, as well as Western nations like the United States, Britain, and France that backed Israeli



interests, were the main players in this conflict.

During the 1987 Palestinian intifada, Hamas, a Palestinian liberation group founded by Muslim Brotherhood members and a Palestine Liberation Organisation religious component, entered the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hamas is an organisation that seeks to establish a Palestinian state on Israeli-occupied territory using Sharia law. It aspires to eradicate Israel by armed conflict and rejects its right to exist¹. To establish a state of Palestine, Hamas, which includes a military, political, and social wing, engages Israel militarily and takes part in social services like health and education in Palestine. Hamas even participated in the 2006 democratic elections and became the legitimate government of Gaza.

In Gaza, Hamas has carried out several armed assaults against Israeli targets since its founding. Since 1989, it has targeted Israeli soldiers outside of Gaza by kidnapping them, carrying out suicide bombings, and even participating in rocket-launching operations. However, Israel's 2008 Operation Cast Lead against Hamas and its 2012 Operation Pillar of Defense marked the beginning of a significant military conflict between Israel and Hamas. Operation Protective Edge was the most recent significant conflict in 2014¹. However, Israel launched all of these against Hamas, and they were all short-lived. Thus, Hamas launched its first significant military operation against Israel on October 7.

On October 7, 2023, one day after the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War, Hamas began their attack against Israel. The Hamas military wing, Qassam Brigades, initiated this attack called Operation Al Aqsa Flood. About 70 kilometres north of Gaza, Hamas launched a massive airstrike with an estimated 3500 missiles onto the coastal communities of Ashdod and Ashkelon, as well as far north as Tel Aviv. At multiple points, an estimated 1,000 Hamas terrorists also broke over the security barrier. After the infiltration attack, terrorists overran many military and law enforcement buildings and targeted the headquarters of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in southern Gaza. Hamas took the IDF off guard, and its forces were able to advance swiftly across the border region, up to 14 kilometres away. Hundreds of Israeli officers and citizens were killed and kidnapped by other terrorists who targeted cities, kibbutzim, and roadways. Approximately 243 captives were taken, and 1200 Israelis were killed as a result of the raid. Following the 1948 war, this was the first such invasion into Israeli territory².

On the same day, Israel declared a counteroffensive against Hamas, named Operation Iron Sword, that would continue "incessantly until our goals are achieved" as stated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu³. Israel targets Hamas leaders with targeted executions, heavy airstrikes, and land operations. Israel continues a total siege of Gaza, cutting off water and power, while its aircraft bombardments have destroyed mosques, schools, and

communities. Food and medication supplies remained in short supply. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, at least 43,391 Palestinians were murdered and 102,347 were injured between October 7, 2023, and October 29, 2024⁴. Other regional players joined the fight as it grew more intense, and it has since expanded to other countries in the region. While the US and other NATO nations provided Israel with arms support, Iran, Lebanon, and organisations like Hezbollah and the Houthis also joined the conflict by supporting Hamas.

FOREIGN POLICY: CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES

Although there hasn't been a significant or comprehensive shift in US foreign policy toward the West Asian region or the Israel-Palestine issue, the October 7 incident did bring about some significant changes. Some significant shifts in U.S. foreign policy include the hypocritical position whereby the U.S. continuously supplied military and financial support to Israel while overtly starting peace and humanitarian initiatives and occasionally taking a slightly critical tone toward Israel.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the U.S. has maintained its pro-Israel position without changing. In his initial reaction to the October 7 attacks, U.S. President Joe Biden⁵ designated it as "terrorism" and stated that "Israel has the right indeed must respond to these vicious attacks, just like every nation in the world". The United States announced an increase in military aid, including interceptors and ammunition, to resupply Israel's Iron Dome. The United States has reaffirmed its backing for Israel and the safety of its citizens, including Jews. "The United States stands with Israel as it defends itself against terrorism," claimed a U.S. press release published on the first anniversary of the attack⁶.

The United States provided Israel with unwavering support and military aid. U.S. President Joe Biden pledged to give Israel whatever it needs to defend itself during his October 18, 2023, visit to Israel⁷. By December 2023, the United States had delivered 15,000 bombs and 15,000 artillery shells to Israel. Since October 7, the Biden administration reportedly sent more than 100 military aid items to Israel. As of October 7, 2024, Israel has received about \$12 billion in military aid from the United States⁸. According to the Costs of War study at Brown University, since October 2023, the Biden administration has provided Israel with \$17.9 billion in military aid⁹. Furthermore, four U.N. Security Council resolutions urging a ceasefire were vetoed by the U.S.¹⁰. The U.S. also took a stance against the international criminal court's ruling that Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu was a war criminal¹¹.

By overtly promoting peace and humanitarian efforts while concurrently backing Israel, the U.S. adopted a hypocritical stance. The United States met with Palestinian



Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on October 13 and decided to prevent the situation from worsening¹². The United States declared that it has discussed opening the Rafah crossing to tourists and providing humanitarian relief to Palestinians trapped in Gaza with Israeli and Egyptian leaders¹³. As early as November 2023, the United States, Qatar, and Egypt were able to secure a ceasefire and free several hostages¹⁴. To transfer humanitarian aid, the U.S. even decided to build a makeshift pier on the Gaza coast. Food, medications, and other necessities were also airdropped into Gaza¹⁵.

For the first time, the U.S. started openly taking a somewhat critical attitude toward Israel on several occasions. President Joe Biden even cautioned Israel against creating a permanent military camp in Gaza on December 12, warning that Israel would lose international backing¹⁶. The U.S. issued a warning to Israel to use weapons per international law or else it would prevent the flow of arms according to a National Security Directive¹⁷. One of the harshest criticisms the U.S. has levelled at Israel was in May 2024, when U.S. President Joe Biden even suggested that Israel might have violated international law by using U.S.-provided weapons¹⁸. Before the Rafah offensive, the United States also cautioned Israel against committing any serious human rights abuses. Vice President Kamala Harris suggested there could be "consequences" for Israel if it moves ahead with a planned invasion of Rafah in its pursuit of Hamas fighters¹⁹. U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris condemned Israel for not doing enough to ease a "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza as the Biden administration faces increasing pressure to govern its close ally while it battles Hamas militants²⁰. The United States has issued several formal warnings to Israel, but never recognised Israeli actions as war crimes. The United States was simultaneously providing Israel with a constant flow of arms and financial backing, and they even agreed with the Israeli government's assertion that it was operating following international law.

Biden's acknowledgement of Palestinian suffering, his implicit denunciation of Israel's military operations, and the White House's efforts to broker a cease-fire were the first steps toward a tense relationship between the U.S. and Israel. After the IDF unintentionally killed seven staff members of the U.S.-based non-governmental organisation World Central Kitchen, the Biden administration greatly increased bilateral hostility and put pressure on Israel to cease activities. Then, the White House shut down weapons, including 2,000-pound bombs, before Israel struck Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. Israeli feeling toward the U.S. has changed, as evidenced by its unwillingness to accept the French and American plan for a 21-day truce. They stopped mindlessly following U.S. orders²¹.

It also had an impact on U.S. efforts to restore relations with the Arab countries and Israel. The United States believed that the Israel-Palestine conflict had lost its signifi-

cance in West Asian regional affairs and that it was possible to eliminate the hostility between Israel and Arab countries because disagreement was one of the primary sources of the hostility. In 2020, Egypt and Jordan, longtime partners in the Israel treaty, were joined by some Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, in repairing their relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords under the U.S. leadership²². U.S. diplomats were encouraging Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to build relations with Israel before the start of the war. However, the conflict prevents normalisation in the near future. On September 19, 2024, a Saudi Prince gave a quite different speech at the yearly opening of the consultative Shoura Council in his kingdom. He said that he was working relentlessly to see the creation of a Palestinian state, and the Palestinian cause was "at the forefront" of Saudi attention. "We affirm that the kingdom will not establish diplomatic relations with Israel without that," he added in a message of caution²³. Thus, the conflict and the Arab world's response have demonstrated the inability to completely disentangle the national interests of Arab States concerning the Palestinian cause.

It also had a significant effect on U.S. policies toward Iran. Some experts concluded that the United States and Iran might eventually be able to resume discussing the restoration of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Months of U.S. engagement with Iran resulted in a significant prisoner exchange and additional one-time sanctions relief one month before the Hamas incursion²⁴. However, the current conflict between Israel and Hamas, as well as Iran's support for Hamas, is creating a chance for direct conflict with Iran, which has been avoided from the beginning of the animosity. As the Hamas attack was a heinous example of the recurring attacks on Western interests orchestrated by Iran and executed by its proxies, it demonstrated the failure of U.S. policies to constrain Iran in the area. The failure of U.S. efforts to prevent these attacks indicates that the U.S. has to rethink its approach to Iran.

The United States announced the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria during the Barack Obama administration. By reducing the size of the National Security Staff in the Middle East, the Biden administration moved the emphasis of total disengagement from West Asia to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy. Jake Sullivan, the U.S. National Security Advisor, said in September 2023 that the "Middle East was quieter than it has been for decades," indicating that the U.S. was anticipating peace in the area. The U.S. was concentrating on several other issues, particularly in Ukraine²⁴. But after October 7, 2023, it had to re-establish itself. Major naval forces were sent to the Eastern Mediterranean after October 7, and Secretary of State Blinken engaged in shuttle diplomacy throughout the region²⁵. Thus, the October 7 attack proved that it was not easy for the U.S. to completely exit from West Asia.



Finally, the United States intended to change its foreign policy emphasis from West Asia to China. The United States chose to redirect its military resources to the protection of Taiwan after determining that China posed a threat to its interests in the Western Pacific²⁵. China became a priority on the U.S. foreign policy agenda under Donald Trump. "At least 210 public actions related to China that spanned at least 10 departments" occurred during the Trump administration²⁶. Biden stuck to the same approach, viewing China as the greatest danger. In congressional testimony, even U.S. intelligence chiefs have called the Chinese Communist Party the "most consequential threat" to American national security²⁷. However, following the October 7 incident, U.S. foreign policy once again turned its attention to West Asia. The United States is involved in several military and diplomatic initiatives in the region, such as the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, military operations against the Houthis in the Red Sea, military operations in Iraq and Syria, and diplomatic discussions with regional leaders.

INTERNAL FACTORS SHAPING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AFTER OCTOBER 7 ATTACK

First, there was intense pressure on the U.S. from inside the country to adopt a critical stance against Israel. The American public criticised the U.S. for its steadfast support of Israel and put pressure on the U.S. to provide humanitarian aid in Gaza. Over the past year, several organisations have conducted surveys of the American public, and the findings show a growing level of rejection of Israel and support for Palestine. About a week after the events of October 7, an economic poll found that 32% of Americans thought Israel's response to the attack was "about right," 22% thought it was not forceful enough, and 18% thought it was too severe. The same organisation conducted a study in September 2024 and found that 32% of participants think Israel's strategy is too harsh²⁸. This illustrates the growing anti-Israel sentiment among Americans. A September 2024 Pew Research Centre study found that 61% of Americans think the U.S. should have a "major" role in finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict²⁹.

Up until, June 2024 twelve government officials have resigned over Biden's policy of relentless support for Israel including Lily Greenberg, a special assistant to the chief of staff at the U.S. Department of the Interior, Harrison Mann, an army officer, Andrew Miller, the assistant secretary of state for Israeli-Palestinian affairs in June 2024, all resigned from various government services in response to the US president's support for Israel³⁰. Along with this, the Democrats including Senator Bernie Sanders, Representatives Ilhan Omar and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez were among the major opposition from within the Government. Thus, the Biden administration was losing support from within the government and party towards its policy of supporting Israeli

actions in Gaza.

Numerous domestic human rights organisations, such as the Center for Constitutional Rights and the Center for Civilian Conflict in the United States, expressed their disapproval of the Biden Administration. Additionally, American colleges such as the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology hosted open protests against Israeli activities in Gaza. Biden was regularly interrupted by pro-Palestinian protests, and he was confronted with banners that said, "Genocide Joe," referring to his inaction on protecting Palestinian civilians³¹.

Secondly, at the time of this tragedy, the United States was about to hold presidential elections. U.S. President Joe Biden was forced to provide Gaza's humanitarian aid demands due to the growing discontent among the American public. This was another example of the United States' dual strategy for the war. During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump's stance on the conflict was unknown to the American public. Trump's advantage was that he didn't want to make any decisions right at the time. Joe Biden who won 60% of the Arab vote lost their support and reduced to 20% as per a survey conducted by Arab American Institute in May 2024³². So, Gaining the support of Arab Americans who strongly disagreed with Biden's support for Israel made up a significant vote bank in U.S. swing states like Michigan, and obtaining their support was crucial for winning the election. Additionally, the university protests demonstrate how young Americans feel about the issue. As a result, the U.S. began to participate in various peace and humanitarian initiatives in the area to accommodate the interests of these Arab Americans and young voters.

Thirdly, for a variety of reasons, even though there was this rhetorical attempt to promote regional peace it was unable to fully condemn or discredit Israel for the U.S. According to the Pew survey, 2.4% of Americans are Jewish, making them a significant vote bank at home³³. Additionally, a powerful pro-Israel lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee have a greater influence on U.S. policymaking and elections. Representative Jamaal Bowman, for instance, was the first Democratic incumbent to lose his primary in 2024. This defeat was largely ascribed to Bowman's early and strong anti-Israel views as well as the significant involvement of AIPAC in favour of his rival, Westchester County Executive George Latimer³⁴. Along with pro-Palestinian public opinion, there was also a significant portion of the public supporting Israel. A Pew Research Centre survey conducted in early 2024 found that 57% of Americans believe Israel has valid reasons for fighting Hamas³⁵. So it wasn't easy to completely neglect them because they are an influential community within the country which became more significant as the country was moving towards elections.



EXTERNAL FACTORS SHAPING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AFTER OCTOBER 7 ATTACK

The worldwide community, which included nation-states, civil society, and organisations, also opposed U.S. support for Israel. The U.S. action was denounced by international organisations including Doctors Without Borders, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations Human Rights Experts. Amnesty International charged Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza in a historic report published in December 2024 and claimed that the United States, Israel's main international backer, had done nothing to stop this. Agnès Callamard, secretary-general of Amnesty International, demanded an urgent ceasefire and urged the United States to halt arms deliveries to Israel³⁶.

America's support for Israel was denounced by both Arab governments and citizens. Nonviolent demonstrations calling for improved protection of Palestinian rights and an end to the violence have already started in several cities, including Casablanca, Algiers, Tunis, Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Damascus, and Baghdad³⁷. Saudi Arabia has declared that until Israel takes decisive action to support the creation of a Palestinian state, it will not move forward with a normalisation agreement. In November 2023, Jordan called back its ambassador to Israel³⁸. Even Jordan's King Abdullah II, a close ally of the United States, publicly denounced the United States' backing of Israel³⁹. Arab nations are moving away from following the U.S. trend and toward expanding their alliances with China and Russia; their dissatisfaction with the U.S. will increase the likelihood of this diversification. To safeguard its oil and other strategic interests in the region, the U.S. must continue to have friendly relations with Arab nations.

The United States's greatest ally, Israel, was attacked, endangering Israel's military and intelligence dominance in the area. Since 1948, Israel has been the United States' principal strategic ally in the area. The United States has provided Israel with around \$310 billion in military and economic aid since 1948. This assistance consists of drawdowns, arms sales, and military funding⁸. Israel is seen by the U.S. as a key instrument for defending US interests in the area, particularly thwarting Iran and terrorist organizations like the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas. So, it is essential to protect the interests of Israel and maintain its supremacy in the region. The threat of Israel's supremacy will lead to the emergence of Iran as a major regional power that is supporting Hamas, which in all possible ways will naturally threaten US interests and supremacy in the region. So, the U.S. provided unwavering support to Israel as military and economic aid to defend and ensure Israel's victory over Gaza.

The rising power of Iran in the region after this conflict is also against the U.S. interests. After the October 7 attacks, Iranian power augmented in the region. Iran formed an

'Axis of Resistance' by creating an alliance between Hamas, Houthis, Hezbollah and other Shi'ite militias in Iraq and Syria to fight for the Palestinian cause and resist the Israeli and U.S. power. The military and security echelons of power in Iran serve as the Axis's logistical and organisational supply chain. Along with this Iran directly retaliated against Israel two times after the October 7 attacks⁴⁰. Iran is seeking to overturn the regional power structure to the advantage of Iran and its partners. This also proved the Iranian power to create an alliance between groups with entirely different ideologies and that Iran is not feared to engage in a direct war with Israel. This also made evident that these terrorist groups which are part of the 'Axis of Resistance' will come together despite the differences in their ideology to fight against U.S. and Israel. So, it was essential for the U.S. to strengthen its support to Israel to defend its interests and obstruct the growth of Iran.

Furthermore, to regain its reputation as a trustworthy partner among other strategic partners, it must safeguard the interests of its primary strategic partner. This is important because, by arming and funding diverse nations, the United States is involved in multiple conflicts with diverse international interests. For instance, since the start of the conflict, the U.S. has committed an estimated \$175 billion in aid to Ukraine in the Russia-Ukraine war⁸. A \$95 billion legislative package that offers security aid to Taiwan, Israel, and Ukraine in 2024 was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives⁴¹. Therefore, other U.S.-aid recipients like Taiwan and Ukraine would question its ability to safeguard Israel in the ongoing conflict. China and Russia, who have hegemonic interests and will inevitably challenge U.S. hegemony, can take advantage of this chance. To strengthen its position in international diplomacy and expand its leadership and influence in the world arena, the U.S. participates in peace and humanitarian initiatives in the area.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY IN WEST ASIA

First, the United States recognised that it could not entirely abandon its focus on West Asia. Due to the activities of Iran, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Lebanon, as well as the conflict's spillover into Syria, Iran, and Lebanon, the conflict has grown into a more significant regional issue. To combat Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, the United States had to develop a more comprehensive strategy for West Asia that included a fresh approach to the Palestinian and terrorism issue. It should also be in line with the American public's demand that Israel cease its abuses of human rights in Gaza. This was reaffirmed following the results of the U.S. presidential election, as Arab Americans who had historically favoured the Democratic Party chose Donald Trump over Kamala Harris due to the Biden Administration's stance on Israel's activities in Gaza. For example, by almost 2,600 votes, Trump defeated Harris in



the Arab-majority suburb of Dearborn⁴². President-elect Donald Trump, who prioritizes China, in particular, needs to reconsider its foreign policy choices.

Second, the U.S. needs to come up with a fresh strategy for dealing with Israel, its longtime friend. Unlike before, Israel is unwilling to fully comply with U.S. directives. The U.S. is now seen as either incapable of influencing a crucial ally or collaborating with Netanyahu. Excessive force will not ensure Israel's long-term stability or maintain the United States's moral and capable leadership in the world. According to Richard Haas, Washington should adopt a separate policy when it disagrees with an ally as a tactful approach to express disapproval without jeopardising the relationship and "America needs a playbook for difficult friends"⁴³.

Thirdly, it recognised that a fresh approach to dealing with Iran needed to be reframed. Following Iran's engagement in the conflict, the United States's present strategy to dissuade Iran in the region has failed. Iran had a significant role in the war by supporting Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis militarily and by giving them safe havens. In April 2024, it even attacked Israel directly with missiles. All of them demonstrate that the U.S. was unable to keep Iran's influence in the area under control.

Fourth, since it is harming the United States's reputation internationally, the U.S. must take seriously the international allegation that it is a complicit collaborator in Israeli human rights abuses. Therefore, the U.S. should be able to use its position as Israel's strategic partner to exert pressure on Israel to stop its homicidal activities in Gaza.

CONCLUSION

Since it emerged as the main security guarantor following the British exit in the 1970s, the United States has played a significant role in the region. Israel was the United States' principal strategic ally in the area, and it consistently backed Israel in the conflict with the Palestinians. The October 7 incident occurred during a time when the United States was pursuing a policy of withdrawal from the region and the Palestinian conflict was not receiving much attention.

Due to several internal and external variables that arose due to the battle, the United States made some substantial changes to its foreign policy in the region after the October 7 attack. Following the October 7 strike, Israel committed heinous human rights violations in Gaza, which prompted domestic pressure from civilians, human rights organizations, and even government leaders. This internal dissatisfaction with the government's stance on the conflict was demonstrated by the outcome of the presidential election. As a result, the US does periodically, albeit mildly, criticize Israel. However, Jews and pro-Israel organizations also played a significant role in American politics and the economy, which resulted in conflicting actions whereby the US supported Israel strategically and militarily while denouncing human rights abuses.

External pressure was exerted on the United States by human rights organizations and foreign countries, notably the Arab nations in the region, who criticized the nation's behaviour. Concern was also raised by Iran's and its supporters' growing hostility toward Israel. The United States was in a challenging situation because, in addition to having a historical and geopolitical obligation to defend Israel, it was also facing harsh domestic and international criticism for doing so.

The newly elected president, Donald Trump, had to adjust its foreign policy toward West Asia and deal with all the ramifications of the conflict. Once again, the area that had been at the back of U.S. foreign policy gained significant attention. Its unwavering support for Israel will not come as a surprise, particularly given Donald Trump's strong pro-Israel stance. However, it is important to watch his approach to Iran and his plans for handling the crisis in the wake of the conflict's internal and foreign pressures.

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