

**US Public Diplomacy Post 9/11: A Study of Middle East
States of Egypt and Saudi Arabia**

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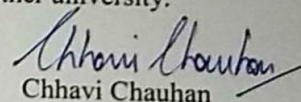


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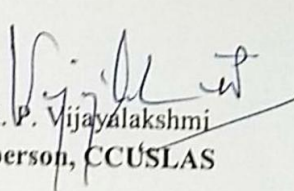
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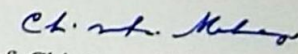
I declare that the dissertation entitled "US Public Diplomacy Post 9/11: A Study of Middle East States of Egypt and Saudi Arabia" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.


Chhavi Chauhan

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


Prof. K. P. Vijayalakshmi
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Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra
Supervisor

To,

Mummy, Papa, Sanjana, Harsh and Aldo

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ABBREVIATIONS

AERONET	Aerosol Robotic Network
AFCP	Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
CAMU	Council for American Muslims for Understanding
CASOC	California Arabian Standard Oil Company
EEI	Eastern European Initiative Office
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
KACST	King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology
MBC	Middle East Broadcasting Groups
MBN	Middle East Broadcasting Network
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPI	Middle East Partner Initiative
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NPT	Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty
NSS	National Security Strategy
NYFA	New York Film Academy College
OCIAA	Office of the Coordinator of Inter American Affairs
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OWI	Office of War Information
PAA	Public Affairs Officers
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
RFA	Radio Free Asia
SCAF	Security Council of Armed Forces

SEED	Support for Eastern European Democracy Program
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TASS	Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
UAR	United Arab Republic
USIA	United States Information Agency
USIA	United States Agency for International Development
VOA	Voice of America
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
YALI	Yemen American Language Institute
YES	Youth Exchange and Study Program

Preface

The US Public Diplomacy Post 9/11: A Study of Middle East States of Egypt and Saudi Arabia is an overview of the US public diplomacy efforts in the Middle Eastern region in the wake of anti-American sentiments in the region. The US relationship with the Middle East has been full of challenges particularly due to the changing perceptions with time. American involvement in the Middle Eastern region is rooted in the strategic interests in terms of its hold on oil and natural gas reserves, promotion of democracy, war against terrorism and curtailment of growing anti-Americanism. The Middle East continues to grapple with turmoil and political upheaval unleashed by the internal regional conflicts such as Israel-Palestine conflict, rise of autocratic regimes, proliferation of nuclear weapons, Arab uprising and others. Many Arabs have accused America of the double standards of its foreign policy.

In the backdrop of all these challenges it is pertinent to dwell into the analysis of the efficacy of the US public diplomacy in the Middle East. The first chapter begins with a brief overview of the US-Middle East relations in general and the context of the US public diplomacy in particular. The chapter is inclusive of the initiatives taken by the US government in the deployment of the tools and instruments of public diplomacy in the Middle Eastern Region. The chapter also makes analysis of the US public diplomacy under Bush and Obama administration.

The second chapter takes Egypt as the case study of the post 9/11 US public diplomacy. Majority of Egyptians have been in favor of democracy idealizing American ideals for the same. But the US invasion of Iraq and President Bush's policy on the War on Terror plundered American image in the region in the middle of soaring anti-Americanism. Egypt has a history of autocratic regimes. In the politically turbulent region, the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 unveils new challenges both for Egypt and the US. Hard power has

been the dominant feature of the US-Egypt relations. Egypt's public opinion remains highly critical of not only US military and economic aid in the region but also double standards of US in dealing with polarized politics in Egypt. This chapter makes an analysis of the US-Egypt relations in the context of public diplomacy and looks into the effectiveness of the US public diplomacy in addressing these issues.

The third chapter analyses the role of US public diplomacy in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. This is crucial as fifteen of the nineteen perpetrators of the attacks were ascertained to be young Arab men. Saudi Arabia has a history of cordial relations with US. The US-Saudi partnership is rooted in several decades of close friendship and cooperation that are vital in fostering mutual understanding and sustaining a long term relationship. But the attacks of 9/11 entailed strained relations between both the countries. Anti-Saudi sentiments fueled up in the American media whereas the people of Saudi Arabia also became skeptical of the US foreign policy in the region, hampering the efforts towards restoring favorable diplomatic relations. Saudi Arabia has a history of long standing bilateral relations with US. It's imperative to understand the role and challenges to US public diplomacy in restoring cordial relations between both countries. And the final chapter draws the conclusion of the findings.

The dissertation relies upon qualitative research. The data has been drawn from a number of primary and secondary sources, key speeches, opinion polls, various governmental reports for the explanation and the analysis of the content. All these sources have been extensively used. There is a need to go beyond the traditional hard power approach and focus on people to people relations in influencing relations with other nations.

CHAPTER- 1

Introduction

Background

The political turmoil resulting from the 9/11 attacks in 2001, followed by the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 had serious repercussions for both the US and the Middle East. America's image plundered, especially in the Arab world where anti-American sentiment has been on its peak. An improved and better diplomatic relations between the US and the Middle East therefore, requires a nuanced understanding of both the American and Muslim culture. There is a need for softening the traditional hard power approach of the US as it alone can no longer efficaciously boost the relations between the two.

As an important soft power component, public diplomacy over the years has acquired enormous significance. Public diplomacy is an interactive dimension of diplomacy involving a multitude of actors and networks. Public diplomacy has become pivotal in building a secure global environment. It constitutes the means through which nations endeavor to build trust and foster productive relations. The term public diplomacy was coined by the former US diplomat Edmund Gullion in the 1960's which was developed to give a different dimension to the governmental information activities from the term propaganda. The past few decades have witnessed the broadening of the framework of public diplomacy as the principle tool by which states communicate, inform and influence audiences in other countries for not only promoting the national interest and achieving foreign policy objectives but also in promoting the ideals and values of a particular nation, initiating dialogues, fostering relationships and developing a sense of mutual understanding. It is an indispensable tool in the conduct of international relations and is vital to the formulation of a country's foreign policy as well as national security strategy. Public diplomacy is an important channel of communication between the governments and states. It constitutes one of the principle tools in the diplomatic kit bag. In this sense, public diplomacy includes activities such as educational exchange programs for students and scholars, visitor's programs to develop better understanding, language training, cultural events and exchanges, radio and television broadcasting. These activities aim at shaping and improving a nation's image abroad.

Public diplomacy is a core concept in the soft power approach in international relations. Joseph Nye (1990) defines soft power as "the ability to get what you want through

attraction rather than coercion or payments.” That is to say soft power is the degree to which a nation’s cultural assets, values, ideals and policies inculcate respect and a better understanding on the part of others. Therefore, public diplomacy is a mechanism that seeks to make the maximum utilization of soft power resource. Overtime, the US has indulged in the use of public diplomacy not only in constructing relations but also as a means of explaining American values, objectives and purposes to the world. It has come to mean the US government’s efforts towards informing, engaging and influencing foreign public opinion conducive to the US objectives. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), the State Department (DOS), The White House through the National Security Council and the Department of Defense (DOD) are the primary US agencies for conducting public diplomacy.

The US Public diplomacy tools and programs can be broken down into the following categories, the context of which is dealt in greater detail as the literature proceeds –

- 1) Cultural Exchange Programs- Exchange of artists, writers, art groups, performers, exhibitions overseas sponsored by both the Department of State (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs) and the United States Information Agency (USIA).
- 2) Educational Exchange Programs- Scholarship programs such as Fulbright, Hubert Humphrey scholarship, East West Center, English Language Teaching program, International Visitors program, etc has enabled a lot of students from diverse background to study in the US and cultivate better relations.
- 3) Book Diplomacy- The establishment of American libraries and centers abroad, a huge repository of information, offering a wide variety of books, literature, films DVD’s, presentations, discussions, English lessons.
- 4) Radio and Television Broadcasting- The information section of the US public diplomacy carries out an intensive task of providing up to date information not only about the policies and programs of the United States but also covers the issues and events pertinent for both the host country and the US. The US public diplomacy offers a number of information programs such as the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free (Iraq), Radio Sawa, AL-Hurra, Radio free Asia (RFA) and their translation into the regional languages.

Movies and films constitute the biggest assets embodying culture and values of a nation. Hollywood plays a major role in reaching a huge amount of audience. Movie is a worldwide cultural influence shaping people's thought and life. Hollywood film industry has been influencing the audience worldwide both through the reconstruction of American values and the political messages it contains. For e.g. movies such as Pearl Harbor, Pianist portrays neutral stance of US while a negative image of Germany and Japan or movies such as Zero dark thirty showing the knockdown of the 9/11 mastermind bin Laden (Maisuwong, 2012). All these instruments aim at exporting and promoting American culture, ideas, values and generating a positive image of America. In fact since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, public diplomacy has attracted increased attention from both scholars and policy makers.

Conceptualization of Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

The concept of power has always been central in the governance of relations among one another. Power, like an array of various other concepts in political theory and international relations has been a subject of contestation and interpretation. In other words, with the passage of time the word 'power' has come to denote different meaning to different kind of people in the backdrop of different context. Scholars overtime have attempted to define and articulate the concept of power in various ways. Conceptualizing power in terms of a 'relation' among individuals, Robert A Dahl, explicates the notion of power as "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do". Here A and B are defined as 'actors' who according to Dahl can said to be comprise of various kinds of entities such as "individuals, groups, roles, offices, governments, nation-states and other human aggregates". (Dahl, 1957)

In the simplest terms, power can be understood as the ability of one actor to influence and mould the behavior of the other actor in such a way as to bring the desired outcome. It raises an important question as to what constitutes power, or in what ways, an individual can persuade or influence another individual? The ability to dominate translates into capabilities of an entity be it an individual or a state which enables them to influence

relations with each other. Capabilities as defined by Viotti and Kauppi (2013) are the “material and non-material resources that can serve as the basis of power”. Broadly these capabilities can be looked upon in terms of the military capability wherein an actor by virtue of its superior and well equipped defense systems comprised of arms and armaments, armed, naval and aerial forces, nuclear weapons tries to influence other actors. Millions of dollars goes into a state’s defense systems to invigorate the military capabilities. The military capability or hard power continues to remain the central tenet of the concept of power. Another important element of power is the state’s economic capability. Economic capability can be measured by a nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross national product (GNP). The greater the GDP and GNP of a state, the stronger and self-sufficient is the economy. A boosting economy in turn enables the state to meet both domestic and foreign demands, increases the production capacity juxtaposed with an increased purchasing power and enables the state to compete in the world market. Thirdly, a state also expresses power and dominance in terms of its geographical capabilities. Geographical capabilities relates to a nation’s abundant resources. If the resources are in abundance, it boosts the country’s economic power. Also a country’s geographical location assigns it a geo-political role. For example, Sinai Peninsula makes it one of the world’s major shipping routes for oil and other resources. With the use of all these capabilities a nation becomes in a position to assert itself. (Viotti and Kauppi, 2013)

One of the dominant theories of international relations has been the school of realism. Power has been the central feature of the realist theory. Realism rests on the assumptions that states are the primary and rational actors in the international system wherein there is an absence of government that is the international system is anarchic. States act in a manner to pursue their national interests primarily their national security and survival. The national interests are defined in terms of national power and therefore, states try to achieve their national interests by accumulating and increasing national power. And it is the national power which governs and defines the actions of the states in influencing their relations with other states. Therefore, the pursuance and possession of power by states is an inescapable and an inevitable reality. “The struggle for power is universal in time and space”. The realists have always looked to the military and economic power or in other words the hard power as the dominant source of power for the states to exert themselves.

Hans J Morgenthau acknowledges both tangible and intangible sources of power yet he considers military power of prime importance to achieve the states desired national interests. Similarly E.H. Carr observes, “the supreme importance of military instrument lies in the fact that the *ultima ratio* of power in international relations is war” (Lee, 2018). The underlying assumption is that the military power provides a quick outcome, it is immediate in its effects and it becomes relatively easier to measure a state’s capability in terms of its military power. Therefore for the realists military power is both a means and an end in itself. (Lee, 2018)

While the realists espoused power in terms of military and economic capabilities, thinkers particularly Joseph Nye put forth the concept of soft power. In fact, Joseph Nye coined the term soft power in 1990. Nye opines that the use of coercive methods in influencing other states are not efficacious in achieving the desired objectives and does not entail long lasting and enduring relationships. Soft power on the other hand, makes use of a country’s values, ideals, culture and principles in shaping its global image contrary to the hard power which relies on carrots (inducements) and stick (threat) approach. Often through the use of the soft power approach, a country tries to set an example for others to learn, admire, appreciate and emulate its values, ideals and tradition and promote mutual understanding, peace and prosperity. (Nye, 1990)

Gallarotti Giulio (2011), classifies two sources of soft power: the international sources characterized by a country’s foreign policy and actions and domestic sources which constitutes the country’s domestic policies and actions. The international sources espouse a commitment to and respect for the international norms, laws and institutions. This commitment calls for a multilateral approach to be adopted by the nations to collectively respond to the threats and collectively address the multilateral issues. The nations must also abstain from excessive unilateralism, should have respect for alliance commitment and treaties and adopt a liberal economic foreign policy promoting free trade and open market. He classifies the domestic sources into the categories of political institutions and the power inherent in culture. When it comes to the political institutions, it’s imperative on what principles and values these institutions rely. For instance, if such institutions promote democracy, liberalism, pluralism and constitutionalism, it will definitely

empower the civil society and promote stability. As Joseph Nye, says, “How a nation behaves at home can enhance its image and perceived legitimacy and that in turn can help advance its foreign policy objectives” (Guilio, 2011). With respect to culture, the soft power is fashioned by freedom and opportunities for individuals, social cohesion, tolerance, high quality of life and such lifestyle which becomes a source of admiration and inspiration for others.

Soft power is the ‘success secret’ behind international politics. While a strong country may possess military and economic power, yet it is its ability to create value for its culture, lifestyle and social system that has a greater say. It is an indirect way that does not involve tangible threats, to shape the preferences of others. Soft Power in essence stands for the culture, a large population, territory of a nation etc; the greater that is, the more command, concreteness and legitimacy it possesses, without any element of threat or violence. (Nye, 2004)

Soft power does not border on influence and persuasion alone. Rather, it is the resources of soft power that create attractiveness leading to acquiescence. These resources are: a) Culture, b) Political Values and c) Foreign Policies.

The effect of cultural soft power reflected in the universal value of a country’s culture which is well accepted by people, leads to a greater trust in the policies of the country and a fulfillment of its goal. The legality of the policies of the nation is further enhanced if the nations act in alignment with the values they advocate and the recognition it gains from the people. As far as the foreign policies of a country are concerned, the extent of external security, foreign aid and participation on multilateral platforms is a determinant of the legitimacy of these policies.

These elements of soft power are closely interwoven and play an important role in framing international relations. A countries culture which is advanced and remains abreast of the social trends tends to dominate in International platform. An example being that of America, with increasing forays in every field of communication, making way for growing support and acceptance of its culture (Nye, 2004). Foreign Policy in conveying the sum total of the convictions and ideas of all countries plays a highly important role for a democracy.

An important component of the soft power is Public Diplomacy. The study of public diplomacy has drawn enormous scholarly attention. Public diplomacy is a new domain of practice and has overtime has expanded to include new meaning and significance. Every nation's foreign relations, attitudes towards other countries are informed not only by the history of that country but also by its values, ideals and culture. Public diplomacy is the utilization of the soft power resources enshrined say for instance, in a country's culture, values, principles to be practiced at home and abroad etc. These assets must have the tendency to attract others in such a way as to produce a positive impact among both the governments and people of another country. (Nye, 1990)

Hans Tuch (1990), explains public diplomacy, which amounts to an open communication process, directed on the lines of publicity in the sense making an appeal to the people, in contrast to the traditional diplomacy characterised by secrecy and exclusivity. Gilboa (2008), broadens the spectrum of public diplomacy as activities in the field of education, culture and information with the aim of influencing foreign governments through influencing their citizens.

Public diplomacy is whole paraphernalia of procedures employed to represent our ideas and values to the outside world to garner support in favor of a nation's foreign policy objectives. Public diplomacy can be defined as the attempts by the governments to establish and foster mutually beneficial relationship with the foreign audience. It's the act of engaging with foreign public. It's a concept that links government and people. In other words, public diplomacy is the interaction between the government and people across international frontiers. Traditional diplomacy is state's informing and influencing other states whereas public diplomacy is state's informing and influencing foreign public. Also there has been a shift from the domain of traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy is facilitated by expansion of communication technology and greater public participation in foreign affairs process. Today's interconnected and globalized world has enabled exchange of ideas, views and opinions between nation states, where the conduct of policies and relations finds hard to escape the scrutiny of world opinion (Coombs, 1992). The domain of public diplomacy has expanded to include private players, a multitude of

actors and other networks. There has been a marked shift from the emphasis on foreign governments to foreign public. (Snow, 2008)

Public Diplomacy refers to the exchange of ideas and information between the government of one country and the private groups or the foreign public of another, with a view to influencing or engaging them. In other words, it implies representing a nation to foreign publics with the purpose of eliciting opinion amongst them. It is a potent instrument of foreign policy-making. In the technology-driven and media-saturated world of today, public diplomacy as a tool has come to occupy considerable relevance. It serves as a lubricant for the political, economic and the military constituents of international relations. It is being used by the respective states, to create a niche for them, or to build a higher brand image in the eyes of the world. (Krajnic, 2004)

Public Diplomacy as a concept is not new. In fact, its origin can be traced back to the ancient times, where the ‘prestige-conscious’ kings were concerned with the national image and the pros and cons of public opinion, having a considerable bearing on international relations. It was not just born out of the cold war but had its basics owing to World War I and World War II as well. Moving onto the modern times, be it the Marshall Plan or NATO Expansion or even the recent policy of the US to declare a global War on Terrorism, public opinion has been used in great measure, to influence decisions and policies. Another example can be the Smith-Mundt Act (formally known as “the United States Informational and Educational Exchange Act”) passed by the Congress in 1948, was enacted with the mission of promoting a better understanding of United States in the other states. To add to that, this act stood to be what paved the way for the idea of public diplomacy as it is understood today. (Krajnic, 2004)

It also becomes important to draw a line between diplomacy in its ‘traditional’ sense and Public diplomacy. Public diplomacy stands beyond traditional diplomacy. While traditional diplomacy or diplomacy in its popular sense involves diplomatic representations and the art of negotiation across international borders, in order to impact the policies and actions of other countries, Public diplomacy is different from it in the sense that it does the same but through indirect means i.e. via channels of media and the

varied institutions of religion, trade associations and unions etc. Traditional diplomacy embodies communications between governments, while public diplomacy involves exchange of ideas between government of one country and the masses of the other, in particular the 'non-official' groups. Traditional Diplomacy is characterized by secrecy and exclusivity, Public diplomacy, on the other hand, borders along the lines of openness of the diplomatic activities to the public at large. In this manner, Public Diplomacy aims at creating 'Societal Connections' and 'gaining direct influence' on target countries through the indirect means of media and other relevant channels. (Henrikson, 2006)

History of US Public Diplomacy

Michael Krenn in his book, *The History of the United States Cultural Diplomacy*, makes a brief analysis of the use of the soft power resources of the American culture, values and ideals as a way of promoting the American way of life around the world. Krenn briefly explores the circumstances that necessitated the use of America's cultural assets in shaping its global image. Beginning with Thomas Jefferson's and Benjamin Franklin's services in the 1700's, he maps the history of the US cultural diplomacy till the present days. During the 1700's, after the winning of the American Revolution and subsequently the birth of the United States, America continued to grapple in search of its identity. The birth of the US unleashed a host of challenges both internal and external. Internally, the American economy was deteriorating coupled with inter-state conflicts over fear and security and the prominent issue of slavery. While, externally the United States and its people were perceived as barbaric, uncivilized, brutish and backward both culturally and economically. The word 'Degenerate' came to depict the people of America and America itself, popularized by the scientists of France. It dates back to the work of European naturalist and historian Comte de Buffon who used the term 'degeneracy' to describe the flora and fauna over North America owing to its harsh climatic conditions. There was this presumption that if the flora and fauna of the American continent were feeble and degenerate, it would reap similar results for the natives of the continent. Hence, gradually the word degenerate became symbolic of the American people particularly among the Europeans. Such a portrayal of America highly agitated one of its founding fathers Thomas Jefferson. America's image was put to question. As an American diplomat to

France for the period 1785-1789, Jefferson left no stone unturned to defy Buffon's theory of degeneracy with regard to Americans. To that end he produced his own writings, papers and notes to alter the negative attitude of the French people towards America and simultaneously provide valuable information about his country. Jefferson's information campaign consciously or unconsciously set the stage for the US public diplomacy. (Krenn, 2017)

The nineteenth century on the lines of Thomas Jefferson witnessed an expansion in the travelling of Americans to foreign lands to influence foreign public perception about the United States. The group comprised of Christian missionaries, writers, artists, entertainers, tourists and so on. The point to be noted is that this group of people was not sponsored by the American government and did not act on their behalf unlike Jefferson who was an official government representative. Despite being the unofficial representatives, "all of them took to the international field as Americans, and whether the talk was about slavery or baseball or God each of them addressed those issues from a uniquely American perspective" (Krenn, 2017)). That is to say, a sense of American nationalism instilled their minds and hearts. In all their activities and endeavors, wherever they went, whatever they said, everything reflected and glorified the 'idea of America', its ideals, values, greatness and uniqueness.

Justin Hart in his book, *The Empire of Ideas: the Origins of Public Diplomacy*, gives us an insight on how and why the techniques such as educational exchange, cultural exhibits, American centers overseas became a component of American foreign policy. The United States first active engagement with Public Diplomacy began in Latin America. President Roosevelt as part of its 'Good Neighbor Policy' emphasized on establishing cultural relations with its neighbors particularly Latin America. Contrary to the deployment of the traditional carrot and stick approach in its interventionist policies, the United States under Roosevelt administration sought to broaden the spectrum of American outreach and influence by means of engaging with the foreign public. To that end the Buenos Aires Conference for the maintenance of Peace in Argentina, Latin America held in the year 1936, sponsored an array of educational, cultural and technical exchange programs with the people of Latin America. Therefore, Latin America became

the 'testing ground' of such an approach that would soon be incorporated in the US foreign policy with its subsequent deployment around the globe. Of the various conventions, treaties and protocols adopted during the conference included the Convention for the promotion of Inter-American Cultural relations, Convention concerning Artistic Exhibitions and Convention on Interchange of Publications, thereby laying the framework of the instruments of public diplomacy. Most importantly, the agreement proposed the annual exchange of 'two graduate students per country' to be funded by the government of those countries among the 21 American Republics party to the treaty. Wherein, student exchange programs constitute an important part of the US public diplomacy. To counter the German propaganda in Latin America, the US officials called for the use of radio broadcasting services for the promotion of peace, the exchanges of various artists, writers and simultaneously protecting the intellectual property. Nelson A Rockefeller played a critical role in countering the Nazi propaganda in Latin America. Rockefeller espoused the idea of combining both cultural and educational exchanges with that of an expansion in economic relations towards greater trade and commerce.

As a result, the office of "Latin American Commercial and Cultural Relations" was created by President Roosevelt in 1940, on account of being impressed by Rockefeller's idea. Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) made an extensive use of "radio, motion pictures and print media" and simultaneously providing economic and technical assistance to other nations. Rockefeller followed a novel and an integrated approach, which would be eventually pursued by the State department into a comprehensively intricate public diplomacy strategy in the post war era. The OCIAA worked to engage with the audiences abroad by way of dialogue coupled with promotion of the image of the United States. Rockefeller's use of information campaign entailed the adoption of new and substantive techniques in the public diplomacy apparatus. In other words, "Rockefeller made a significant contribution to conceptualizations of image and the subsequent evolution of public diplomacy through his aggressive use of information policy" (Hart, 2013). The projection of America's image to the rest of the world began acquiring utmost significance. It was imperative to make the use of every possible means to achieve the desired objectives. Here it implies the use of a combination of educational,

cultural exchanges, information campaigns, media and broadcasting and economic and technical assistance to shape America's image.

Major milestones were achieved in the realm of public diplomacy with the launch of the United States broadcasting services the Voice of America (VOA) in February, 1942. The US made its entry into the battlefield of international propaganda when it began broadcasting its VOA services in Europe. To counter the propaganda by the axis powers (in the backdrop of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war on the US by Germany), President Roosevelt created the US Foreign Information Service (FIS) in the middle of 1941. The FIS engaged in the accumulation of information and other materials to be broadcasted in Europe. The driving force behind the FIS was the belief held by the director of FIS, Sherwood of the importance of the 'power of ideas' and the need to propel the American side of the story. It was in Asia in the month of December, 1941 that the FIS had its first international broadcasting. The central idea behind the launch of the VOA was to disseminate information, to report and present the news around the globe and most importantly to communicate the views of the United States. To quote, William Harlan Hale, "The Voice of America speaks. Today, America has been at war for 79 days. Daily at this time we shall speak to you about America and the war-the news may be good or bad-we shall tell you the truth". With the passage of time, the VOA witnessed an increase in its activities and services. There was addition of new language services in the VOA as was necessitated by the circumstances. The creation of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1953 consolidated the US broadcasting services. For example, VOA launched its services in Arabia across the MENA region to counter Soviet propaganda. Similarly, VOA had its services in Mandarin in 1989 to provide reporting's of the pro-democracy movement sweeping across China. The VOA became the principle component of the USIA. The VOA led the world in international broadcasting during 1960s and 1970's. The journey of the VOA has been a roller coaster ride with numerous congressional debates and controversies on its efficacious functioning. At times there were serious reductions in the funding of the broadcasting services. Despite, the VOA has been of considerable success having its services in 52 languages at present. (The Voice of America, a Brief History)

On June 13, 1942 was created a separate agency, The Office of War Information (OWI) by the President's Executive Order 9182. The OWI was entrusted with the responsibility of disseminating all news and information both domestically and globally especially on the government's policies, activities and information on war. The OWI required the airing of information on radio channels, to make use of advertisements in the press and simultaneously motion pictures (Hollywood) to provide and circulate reliable information. Films, advertisements and media were viewed as palpable sources of carrying propaganda. The OWI was the government's principle propaganda tool and strengthened the already created agencies and organizations responsible for the news and information activities. However, the OWI attracted heavy criticisms for its excessive propaganda activities and was eventually disbanded by President Truman in 1945. Apart from defeating the axis powers during the world war II, the Roosevelt administration was eyeing a larger goal towards not only introducing the American values, ideals and the way of life to the world but also to create a new world order with the US as the leader. This was the context behind the creation of the OWI and other information organizations. To quote Marja Roholl, "The short term goals of the OWI's overseas branch included stimulating a bond among allies, counteracting Axis characterizations of America...and the long term strategy consisted in creating a new and robust image of America and to prepare audiences abroad for America's role as the new world leader". (Roholl. 2012)

The American soft power approach gathered momentum during the period of Cold War. The World War II culminated in the rise of the US as a superpower and its rival Soviet Russia. The cold war period was characterized by an intense rivalry and a state of extreme unfriendliness between the two, so much, that the world got divided into two ideological blocks. The US as the flag bearer of the free world perceived communism as the world's biggest threat. Communism was not only a military and diplomatic threat, but also a threat to the American ideals and the American way of life. Besides the race for armaments and military preparedness, America's cultural assets such as music, art, literature, theatre all came to be drafted into the struggle against the Soviet threat of communism. The collapse of the Berlin wall entailed new efforts in the domain of public diplomacy. In the realm of radio broadcasting "Voice of America", particularly jazz

music became the rallying cry, reaching out to the advocates of American ideals as well as Soviet dissidents, to keep alive the spirit of freedom. (Falt, 2013)

With the collapse of the Berlin wall both the US and the Soviet Union began engaging in the promotion of their respective cultures. While the Soviets opened their “House of Culture” in Berlin,” American Houses” were established in response to it. A lot of US literary works, opera, theatre, music were disseminated. Crossing the boundaries, news straight from Washington, films, exhibitions, books and magazines were offered by 76 outposts around the world led by the State Department Office of Information and Cultural Affairs. The year 1948 saw the passage of the Smith-Mundt Act also known as the US Information and Educational Exchange Act. The act provided for the conduct of educational exchanges, information programs, sharing and interchange of knowledge, individuals in the realm of sciences, arts and education and provision of technical and other assistance abroad for the post World War II era. Section 2 of the act underlines the act’s objectives which states that the act aims at enabling “the government of the United States to promote a better understanding of the US in other countries and to increase mutual understanding between the people of the US and the people of other countries” (US Department of State, 1948). Since the passage of the act, it was contended by some officials that the act provided the grounds of authorization to the government of the United States to launch a robust “non-military battle” against the Soviet Union (Nakamura, 2009). The act was the outcome of President Truman’s aggressive campaign against the Soviet Union. President Truman sought to rejuvenate the US war time propaganda programs even after the culmination of the World War II. As a result a new post of the Assistant Secretary for Public and Cultural Relations with William B Benton as the advertising agent was created under the auspices of Truman. Benton endeavored to persuade the Congress and the media about the inevitability of the peace time propaganda beyond the territoriality of the United States. It was in this context that led to the introduction of the Karl-E Mundt bill in the congress. Benton even advised the Congress to abstain from the use of the word propaganda as he believed that the word has a negative connotation in the sense that it rests “on the will to distort, mislead or hide the objective truth” (Ricaud, 2012). Therefore, with the passage of the Karl-E Mundt act, the word “propaganda transformed into information”, information reflective of the American

values and ideals of freedom and democracy and shaping its image abroad (Ricaud, 2012). Following the lines of President Roosevelt, who sought a transition of the war time propaganda to the continued perpetuation of comprehensive information and news about the US, ingrained with the ideals of freedom and democracy, President Truman in consultation with James Brynes discussed to create an overseas information program. The provision of reliable information on the US rather than propaganda activities was supposed to be the chief purpose of the information program. President Truman's goals were reverberated by Brynes when he stated, "We would defeat our objectives in this program if we were to engage in special propagandist pleading. Our purpose is solely to supply the facts on which foreign people can arrive at a rational and accurate judgment". (Cited in Metzgar, 2018)

A major landmark in the US public diplomacy was the creation of an autonomous body, the United States Information Agency (USIA) by the Eisenhower administration in the year 1953. The USIA became the government's principle agency for the implementation and the execution of the US public diplomacy. The USIA worked independent of the state department and was authorized to facilitate and encourage various cultural and educational exchange programs. In fact educational, professional and cultural exchange programs were the primary tools of USIA. The mission for which the USIA was set up clearly states, "The mission of the USIA is to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the US national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and the US institutions and their counterparts abroad" (Office of Liaison, the USIA). Media also played an important role in explaining policies and society and in underlining the importance of liberal world centered on the free flow of markets, ideas and people. The then director of USIA Edward Murrow 1961-1964 is greatly revered for exalting the position of public diplomacy. The CIA also emerged as a key player providing immense support in this regard. The CIA triggered a variety of cultural and other programs in its efforts to curb the spread of communism. Under its auspices was created the Congress for cultural Freedom involved in secret funding of all the exchange programs promoting Americanism (US Advisory Committee Report, 2005).

The USIA which is also known as the United States Information Service abroad (USIS) is empowered to perform the following functions-

- 1) Advocating and explaining the policies of the United States which are comprehensible and meaningful to the foreign audiences.
- 2) Providing information about those policies of the United States which are influenced by the American ideals, values, its citizens and its institutions.
- 3) Facilitating engagement and fostering long term mutual relations with other nations.
- 4) Counseling the President and the policy makers of the United States on the effect of foreign public attitude in shaping the US foreign policy. (Chodkowski, 2012)

The USIA is a humungous agency organized into major departments such as the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Information and the Bureau of Management. Each bureau is entrusted to perform its respective functions.

The USIA's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs provides various scholarship programs such as the "the Fulbright Scholarships, Hubert Humphrey fellowships, English teaching and American studies program, the International Visitors programs, Citizens exchanges and Cultural and Youth Exchange programs". (Chodkowski, 2012)

The Bureau of Information is authorized to publish various articles, journals, printed materials, books in 30 different languages and their overseas transmission. Every year hundreds of speakers from the US are sent to different countries under the Bureaus Speakers Program. The program is organized in the university and college campuses, with the local public or in the press conferences to facilitate exchange of views and opinions on current events and issues. While, the Bureau of Management as the name itself suggests manages all the activities and the work of USIA and its various organizations and bureaus. There were 190 posts of the USIS in 142 nations by 1999. (Nakamura, 2009)

During the Eisenhower administration (1953-1961), a \$200 million program was launched by the Office of Foreign buildings for the establishment of American embassies and consulates abroad. An East West Centre was established in the University of Hawaii

to forge relations between the US and the Asia Pacific, by means of research programs, training and cooperation. These developments were synonymous with the President's staunch belief in the role culture in establishing relations and maintenance of peace. A new position was created during Kennedy administration i.e. the Assistant secretary of state for the educational and cultural affairs. Emphasis was laid on the development of the federal arts program to change the world opinion of the US as "money grubbing materialists". The year 1961 saw the passage of two major acts i.e. The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange act and the Fulbright Hays Act. Named after Senator, J William Fulbright, the program encourages cross-cultural exchanges between the US students, artists and performers, researchers with those of their foreign counterparts in order to create a better understanding with each other. The first Fulbright Act was passed by the Truman administration in 1946 as a consequence of the events unleashed by the World War II. Initially the act had limited partnership confined to Burma, China and Philippines. But with the passage of time the activities sponsored by the act continued to expand in its outreach. The Fulbright Hay's act further expanded the programs activities with increasing support from the government to facilitate greater exchanges between the US and foreign countries. The Fulbright program enjoyed considerable success in that it has its outreach in 155 nations coupled with the participation of 8000 scholars and students annually. (Naik, 2012)

The US International Communication Agency became an autonomous agency, which performed the functions of both the USIA and State Department Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs, reflecting President Carter's commitment to cultural diversity and recognition of the sensitivities of other nations. Reagan administration's declaration of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" entailed an intensive propaganda battle against the Soviets. Charles Z Wick, a close ally of President Reagan was appointed as the director of the United States International Communication Agency (the name was changed to USIA in 1982). Wick focused extensively on the media and information program in the ideological battle against the Soviet Union. To that end, significant cuts were induced in the exchange programs juxtaposed with more emphasis and increased funding for media and propaganda. However, later on the funds for the exchange programs were restored on account of successful protests led by the various students,

artists, teachers and scholars of the United States. The programs flourished and a successful cultural exchange agreement was signed with the Soviet Union in 1985 (Cummings, 2009). Again, to spread the message of freedom, democracy and self government around the globe, an autonomous program the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was created in the year 1983. The various programs undertaken by the NED included “international forums, education and cultural exchanges and information programs with a view to promote reforms in the social, political and economic domain. The NED received immense support from the successive administrations to continue with its work of “integrating other nations and governments into a democratic network consistent with US values and norms” (Cited in Kennedy and Lucas, 2005). The end of the cold war made lucid the centrality of the USIS and consequently the US public diplomacy for the US foreign policy.

The changed circumstances during 1989-1990 as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, a different profile was build up for the USIA directed away from the Cold War, advancing to the other parts of the globe under George H. W. Bush administration. As compared to the golden years of the US public diplomacy during the Reagan administration, the USIA began squandering during the presidency of George H W Bush. However, that is not to deny the USIA’s share of success in its information campaigns during Bush administration. The USIA VOA mandarin services made an extensive coverage of the protests which broke out at Tiananmen Square, Beijing in 1989. Despite the ban instituted by the Chinese government on external information agencies (VOA), it received several requests from the Chinese public to narrate the story around the globe. Similarly, US public diplomacy achieved considerable success in handling the events unleashed during the Gulf crisis. In fact, operation desert field and desert storm witnessed one of the finest application of the USIA services. The White House created the Inter-Agency Working Group on Public Diplomacy in 1990 to condition the US policy in Gulf. The Working Group conducted an in depth research to cover the events during the crisis situation especially to dispel Iraqi disinformation. Materials were generated and collected to assist the Public Affairs Officers (PAO) during their field work. Most importantly, emphasis was laid on gauging the local public opinion to guide US actions in Iraq without Arab backlash. The USIA

also carried out programs in encouraging democratic reforms in Eastern European countries with the culmination of the cold war. Invoking the Marshall Plan, the Bush administration's public diplomacy efforts entailed the creation of the "President's Eastern European Initiative Office" (EEI) and "Support for Eastern European Democracy Program" (SEED) along similar lines. The USIA refurbished American libraries in Poland and Hungary and launched exchange initiatives to woo the young students to expand their knowledge in the sphere of politics, economy and market. The VOA also expanded its broadcasting services in Eastern Europe. The former soviet union alone had VOA led 20 FM stations by 1992. (US Advisory Committee Report, 2005)

It can be argued from the above analysis, that the US public diplomacy played a crucial role during the period of cold war. In fact, it was during the cold war that the USIA enjoyed its pinnacle of success. However, as the war culminated and the Soviet Union disintegrated, it was thought by the Congressmen that the US no longer stands the threat of hostile regimes, regimes averse to the US ideals, values, culture and principles. This view however later proves to be grossly mistaken. In the aftermath of the Republican landslide, 1994 the Congress became awash with debates on the efficacy and the future of the US government foreign affairs agencies. The debates centered on the need to cut unnecessary government expenses. Republican Senator Jesse Helms targeted the USIA and the State Department and demanded reduction in their expenditure. The democrat, James Rubin in keeping up with Senator Jesse's demand proposed the merger of the USIA, the Agency for International Development (AID) and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency into the US Department of State. As a result, in October 1998, the 105th Congress passed the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act which led to the integration of the USIA and other agencies with the Department of State. In 1999 the USIA collapsed as such. The USIA's Voice of America was brought under the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) which had previously provided services such as Radio Liberty, TV Marti, Radio Free Europe and so on. The USIA foreign services became stagnant. The USIA libraries and information centers were no longer being run. Even the regional USIA bureaus were bogged down with matters distinct from public diplomacy (Hughes, 2010). Cynthia P Schneider contends that especially in this interconnected world due to the process of globalization where there are new centers of

power, when actors are in a position to exert themselves, “public opinion matters more and not less”. In fact, “the need to communicate democratic values and ideas with people at all levels of society was greater than ever with the collapse of the Soviet Union”. Unfortunately, it was at this point of time that the US induced dramatic cuts in the funding of various cultural and educational exchange programs and closed the doors of its cultural centers, libraries and offices.

After the threat of Soviet communism, the rise of Islamic terrorism posed a serious threat to the American national security. Judith Kipper and Harold Saunders (1991) address the key objectives and interests in the formulation of the US foreign policy in the Middle East in their well known book, *The Middle Eastern Global Perspective*. As per their observation, the US interests in the Middle East rests on the following grounds, to continue its hold on the unconventional natural resources such as oil and gas in order to keep the world markets flowing, to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to prevent and mitigate the perils of terrorism underpinning anti Americanism. These are the key strategic interests. Whereas, on the grounds of morality, the promotion of freedom, liberty, democracy and human rights in countries such as Saddam’s Iraq, Khomeini’s Iran, Gaddafi’s Libya, Assad’s Syria, Palestine coupled with assuring Israel’s security and existence. These interests haven’t changed much but varied in the intensity of involvement due to the changed circumstances. Long hostility with these countries predominantly due to the failure of constitutional democracy and the rise of autocratic regimes and the US recurring propensity of diabolizing each of these regimes has impeded its influence and conduct in the region.

The outbreak of the 9/11 attacks brought an increased attention to the US public diplomacy. Dumbfounded by the immense animosity that led the terrorists to commit grave acts of terror, the United States sought to engage in soul searching in order to ascertain the question “Why do they hate us?” (Napoli, 2004). Prior to the 9/11 attacks, the importance of the US public diplomacy was downplayed by both the Congress and the US state department especially with the dismantling of the nodal agency of the US public diplomacy the United States Information Agency (USIA) in the year 1999. They felt that the public diplomacy was no longer required with the disintegration of the Soviet

Union. In fact, political and military aspects started gaining more importance than public diplomacy, which was viewed by some US officials as a money bank which could be used for funding other activities of the government. (Epstein, 2006)

Initially, the United States garnered unprecedented support from the international community for the 9/11 attacks. However, the US had to face the stark reality of a sharp decline in its image and a negative foreign public opinion. The US policies with respect to the war in Afghanistan, the war in Iraq and the overall Bush doctrine of the War on Terror entailed reckless anti-American sentiments in the Muslim world. The American image was tarnished not only among the Arabs but also among the US NATO allies (Pew Research Center, 2002). Soon it came to the realization of the US foreign policy makers about the importance of the image of America and the way its policies are perceived abroad. To that end, the post 9/11 US foreign policy dwelled in a series of concerted public diplomacy campaigns and activities especially in the Middle Eastern region awash in bitter anti-Americanism. The next chapter dwells into the discussion of an overview of the US policy towards the Middle East in the context of public diplomacy. The chapter briefly explores the US public diplomacy efforts post 9/11 amidst the soaring anti-Americanism in the region, the causes of negative perception of the US in the Middle East coupled with the policies and efforts of both the Bush and Obama administration to address these issues.

Definition, Rationale and Scope of Study

The study analyses the U.S public diplomacy efforts after the 9/11 period in the Arab world taking the case of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The two states hold considerable power in the region and have long relation with U.S in favorable position. 9/11 remains an important symbol of the terrorism and the prolonged war gains the terror outfits. Efforts of the former presidency of George Bush and Barack Obama placed new efforts on the public diplomacy along with War on Terror. In the emerging unstable environment, where the Egypt saw itself endured the efforts for democratization, the public diplomacy efforts by US played an important component in its foreign policy towards the region. The literature in the current context views the US efforts in the negative light, neglecting the important indications such as youth, entrepreneurship, technology, science and

education efforts which have played an important role in the region. Analyzing the indicators, the study analyses the public diplomacy of US in the Saudi Arabia and Egypt under the Bush and the Obama administration illustrating the development of the U.S policy in the domain of public diplomacy towards the region and understanding of the events in light of it.

Research Questions

- 1) What role does public diplomacy play in the formulation of American foreign policy and national security strategy?
- 2) How has public diplomacy helped in shaping the image of America in the Middle East?
- 3) How has the American public diplomacy addressed growing anti-American sentiments in the post 9/11 Middle East?
- 4) How did American public diplomacy address the issue of global terrorism in Saudi Arabia when the majority of perpetrators of 9/11 attacks were found to be young Saudi men?
- 5) To what extent American public diplomacy has influenced Egyptian public attitude in favor of US? Was there a change in the Egyptians negative perceptions about US?

Hypotheses

- US public diplomacy has partially succeeded in tackling terrorism and anti American sentiments in the state of Saudi Arabia.

- Egypt's public opinion did not respond favorably to the efforts of US public diplomacy.

Research Methodology

An analytical approach forms the basis of the research of the US public diplomacy in the Middle East. The decade following 9/11 terror attacks has been full of challenges to the American national security. This research employs a study of the Middle East States of Egypt, a country which has been hostile to US and Saudi Arabia, the country which has sustained bilateral relations with the US to make an assessment of the US public diplomacy in addressing the anti-Americanism in the region. This approach also contributes in an understanding of the influences and challenges to the American public diplomacy in the wake of the war on terror and other regional conflict in the Middle East.

The study relies upon qualitative research and draws the data from both primary and secondary sources in order to explain and analyze the content as well as to answer research questions and test hypotheses. The primary sources include the information, records and documents specially brought out by the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, US Advisory Committee on Public Diplomacy, 9/11 commission report, Library of Congress. The secondary sources such as books, journal articles, periodicals, media reports and other information available on the internet have been extensively used for evaluation.

CHAPTER- 2

An Overview of the US Policy towards the Middle Eastern Region

This chapter explicates an overview of the US policy towards the Middle East in the context of US public diplomacy. The first section of the chapter constitutes the introductory part tracing an overall history of the US relations with the Middle East, highlighting the key areas of interests, cooperation and conflicts. The first section is pertinent to develop arguments and build up the rest of the chapter. The second section explores the context of the US public diplomacy in the Middle East in a precise manner. It gives an insight into the circumstances invoking the deployment of the soft power approach of public diplomacy, the methods and tools. The third section briefly explores the US public diplomacy efforts post 9/11. Following the dastardly attacks, the entire region was gripped by soaring anti-Americanism. This section attempts to analyze not only the factors that entailed anti-American sentiments but also the various measures undertaken by the US public diplomacy apparatus in addressing these issues. This section will be inclusive of a comparative analysis of the policies of both the Bush and Obama administration.

Introduction

The Middle East is a vast region that comprises many countries inhabited by various ethnic, religious, linguistic and racial groups. The Middle East includes the countries of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Turkey, Palestine, Lebanon, Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Cyprus and the United Arab Emirates and many other countries. World's major Muslim population is concentrated here, thus Islam is the dominant religion in the region. Both the rich Islamic culture and vast reserves of oil and gas in the region makes it attractive to the rest of the world and simultaneously regional conflicts in the region have always caused concerns around the globe. The region's geopolitical significance is marked by vast stretches of the sea washing its shores and making it one of the most important shipping routes of the world. The economy of the Middle East runs mainly on crude oil which makes its history full of wars and conflicts involving regional countries and external interventions. The Middle

East has not been an easy place. The region has been for a long time under the grip of Islamic extremism, political turbulence, vacillating oil revenues and sectarian conflicts. Since Arab spring, most of the countries have been facing instability with the result that many global powers are actively involved in the region to protect their respective interests and try maintaining the balance of power in the region. Overall, the region is crucial for the world economy at large because large volumes of oil and gas flow through it.

The US role in the Middle East has attracted considerable scholarly attention. The US has been involved in the region for more than a century and has tried to influence this region in some or the other ways. The first inroad began in the eighteenth century with the American missionaries who were engaged in the promotion of humanitarian activities and social work such as the opening of schools, construction of hospitals and other developmental programs. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the colonial rule of the British and French, the United States was identified with anti-colonialism by some of these countries and was also seen as “a symbol of new technology and liberal democracy” which would encourage new developments and transformation in the region. During the Second World War, the US mostly sided with the policies of Britain and France and their plans to maintain imperial dominance over the Middle East. However, when the importance of oil was realized, the US perception changed and it became deeply involved in the region to forge new relations. (Hudson, 1996)

Americans helped the Arabs explore oil refineries which eventually led to the establishment of commercial relations with the Middle East particularly with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The visit to Jeddah in 1931 by the American representatives Charles Crane and his companion Karl Twitchell, an engineer by profession, to initiate negotiations with King Ibn Saud on exploration of oil refineries, gold reserves and other mineral resources set the stage for US commercial relations with the Middle East, underpinned by both economic and security concerns. Oil and petroleum discoveries and their subsequent security undertaken by the American companies such as the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC) characterized the US Middle East relations for

much of the middle of the twentieth century, particularly during the World War II. (Blanchard, 2008)

Secured access to oil and petroleum were largely dependent on the need to rebuild the economy of the western European countries under the auspices of the European Recovery Program led by President John Marshall as a result of the destruction caused by the WWII and simultaneously to contain the growing communist influence in the region. The Middle East supplied almost half of the US imports. This move was directed from the point of view of promoting American business interests in the area thereby facilitating trade and capital investment. Along with America's traditional and business interests, economic development of the Middle East also became an important part of post WWII US Middle East policy (Godfried, 1987). They secured an amicable oil relationship with the Arabs for a considerable period of time until the oil revolution of the 1970's discussed later in this section.

A bipolar world order emerged in the 1950's when the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as major powers following the culmination of WWII. The era led to a dawn of an intense rivalry between the two powers which came to be known as the Cold War. The Cold War was not a war in the real sense of direct confrontation, but a state of extreme unfriendliness characterized by a "clash of ideologies". The US symbolized the harbinger of a free world while the Soviet, on the other hand, carried the badge of communism. The Cold War US foreign policy objectives consisted in wiping communism away not only from Europe but also from other parts of the globe including the Middle Eastern region.

Consequently, the US involvement in the Middle East during the 1950's and 1960's was directed from the lens of cold war. In a corollary to the above paragraph, the US interests in the region escalated during the period particularly in the formulation of a strategy to counter the Soviet Union. The major concern of the US was to thwart Soviet expansion and influence in Middle East and to garner support from the regional leaders in the anti-communist drive, either through the formation of military alliances such as the Baghdad Pact (formed in 1955 under the auspices of the US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles with Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Britain and Pakistan), the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization (NATO) as the military base for the US and the NATO forces was provided by Turkey or through the use of soft power policy. The US-Middle East policy objectives during that period were driven by political-economic concern that is ensuring the US hold on the oil and petroleum resources and their smooth supply while denying the same to the Soviet Union. (Hudson, 1996)

Another bone of contention in the US-Middle East relations was the Suez Crisis of 1956 when Israel with the assistance of UK and France waged an attack on Egypt. The relations had already taken a bitter turn when the US support for the creation of a separate state of Israel in 1948 entailed animosity with the Arab world. Fears aroused out of the perils of Soviet Union alignment with the Arabs in the light of the US recognition of Israel. US officials grappled with the problem of securing a balance between supporting the state of Israel and restoring the relationship with other Arab adversaries, thereby leading to a deeper and direct involvement of the US in the Middle Eastern region. Although the US condemned the war and the British and French forces withdrew from the Suez Canal, yet both the US and Israel attracted rivals whereas the Soviet Union, on the other hand, started gaining influence. Israel again emerged victorious in 1967 war when it launched an attack on Jordan, Egypt and Syria. It was then, that the 1970's began the massive militarization of the Gulf owing to increasing domestic instability and intra-regional conflict notably the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Soviet Union started assisting the Arab states averse to Israel with huge military assistance. For example, Egypt's Abdel Nasser turned to the Soviet Union for the supply of arms and ammunition on being denied the military assistance from the US for the Aswan Dam project. The US, on the other hand, continued to aid Israel in the Arab Israeli war of 1973 in competition with Soviet's military assistance to Egypt when Israel was on the losing side. Israel till date continues to be the largest recipient of the US military and economic aid. The continued US support to Israel through the emphasis on the maintenance and restoration of the Arab-Israeli peace process has not only attracted widespread criticism but also contributed to anti-American sentiments among the Arabs (Citino, 2006). One thing was evident to what the Arabs perceived that the United States was a pro-Israeli supporter no matter what.

As a consequence, the oil-producing states of the Middle East under the leadership of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia raised the oil prices and imposed an oil embargo against the US during the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. The oil on which the US relied on the Middle East was turned against the US as a strategic weapon. It came to the realization of the United States to rebalance its foreign policy to shift the focus towards other Arab states rather than solely supporting Israel. Soaring oil prices and the rise of the nationalist revolution in Libya and Iran affected the oil supplies to the region. From then onwards, assuring the protection of the consortium of oil producing countries such as Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) from both internal and external conflicts became one of the major US foreign policy concerns. (Hudson, 1996)

Challenges continued to augment with the unfolding of such events as the Iranian revolution of 1979 (the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and subsequent takeover by theologist Ayatollah AL Khomeini), the Iran hostage crisis and later on the Gulf war. But even during the Reagan administration the US foreign policy was dominated by containment of communism above other concerns, especially when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. A point to be noted here is that the containment policy which was directed against the Soviet Union was simultaneously being pursued against Iran as well, ultimately transforming into 'dual containment'. "The Americans were forced to contemplate a policy of dual containment-an attempt to either keep Iran or Soviet supported Iraq of Saddam Hussein from controlling the Gulf" (Cohen, 2005). Iran's theocracy and Islamic fundamentalism was a perceived threat to the American interests in the Middle East. To most of the Americans, Islam is interpreted as a "hostile culture and a threat to their interests and cultural values" (Gerges, 1999). The Americans also identify Islamic extremism not only with terrorism but also with "the specter of an Islamic nuclear bomb, particularly an Iranian bomb". This is evident in the statement of President Ronald Reagan, "I don't think that you can overstate the importance that the rise of Islamic fundamentalism will have to the rest of the world in the century ahead-especially if it's most fanatical elements get their hands on nuclear and chemical weapons and the means to deliver them against their enemies". (Gerges, 1999)

With the dawn of the early 1990's came the complete collapse of the Soviet Union and consequently the waning of communism. With the end of the cold war, the Middle East witnessed the humungous presence of the US military personnel in the Persian Gulf. Iraq's Saddam Hussein declared war on Kuwait on August 2, 1990. On January 17, 1991, President George H.W. Bush launched a massive offensive on Iraq under the title "Operation Desert Storm". The move followed after intense consultation with the international community (including support from Saudi Arabia) which resulted in the adoption of the UN resolution 660 denouncing Saddam Hussein's move towards Kuwait. However, the crisis situation enabled him to draft the idea of a "new world order" (Renfro, 2006). A world order standing up for the ideals of freedom, liberty, peace, harmony and justice. To quote Reilly and Renfro (2006), "entailing a rejection of aggression and emphasis on multilateralism, this idea matured from clever phraseology into the core of administration's policy vis-à-vis Iraq". In his 1991 State of Union address, President George H W Bush remarked, "it is a big idea: a new world order where diverse nations are drawn together in a common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of the mankind- peace, security, freedom and the rule of law. Saddam Hussein's unprovoked invasion violated everything the community of nations holds dear. The world has answered Saddam's invasion with 12 UN resolutions and backed up by forces of 28 countries of 6 continents. With few exceptions, the world now stands as one". (George Bush Archives, 1991)

The Clinton years witnessed the renewed emphasis on the Arab-Israeli peace process along with the containment of both Iraq and Iran, an extension of the policy pursued by the Sr. Bush administration. The signing of the Oslo Peace Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was achieved during the first tenure of his presidency. However, the treaty suffered a series of setbacks in the late 1990's. Meanwhile, Iraq was suspected of secretly building the weapons of mass destruction. On 16th of December, 1998 President Clinton launched massive air strikes on Iraq on account of Saddam Hussein's incessant refusal to comply with the weapons inspectors sent by the UN in 1997. While relations with Iran took a positive turn with the election of Mohammad Khatami a moderate leader in 1997 when both the countries stepped on to the path of rapprochement though limited in nature. (Freedman, 1999)

By the 1990's terrorism and Islamic radicalism had taken roots in the Middle Eastern soil. The Al Qaeda, the epitome of all terrorist activities launched terrorist attacks against the US or for that matter even in Saudi Arabia when in 1996 an attack was waged against the American troops stationed in Dhahran (Cohen, 2005). The attackers also destroyed the American embassies not only in Tanzania, Kenya, Saudi and Yemen but also in the United States itself, the biggest manifestation of which was the 2001 September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center. (Hahn, 2006)

Context of US Public Diplomacy in Middle East

Considering the background of the Middle Eastern region packed with tumultuous internal chaos and turmoil manifested either in the rise of authoritative regimes juxtaposed with extremist ideologies or other ethnic and religious conflicts, it has not been an easy task to tackle the situation both by external and internal forces. Arab public opinion of the US has changed over time from favorable owing to the constructive deeds of the US missionaries and other policymakers as different from the imperial conquests of the British and French to the increasing hostility and having doubts about the double standards of the American foreign policy particularly the US continued support for the state of Israel. Given the importance of the Middle Eastern region for the US, it is pertinent to mould the Arab public opinion in coherence with the US policies and objectives. The traditional approach of hard power is no longer efficient in bringing the desired outcomes rather it has serious repercussions in generating animosity against one another. Public Diplomacy is such a tool which aims at "winning the hearts and minds" of the people. It establishes a direct communication with the public. For the US it is important not only to convey "America's message abroad" but also to consolidate its position as the world's major power. The US championed public diplomacy during the era of cold war wherein it was of immense success. In fact, it was during the cold war period that the public diplomacy tool was deployed in the Middle East. In a region as diverse as the Middle East both politically, culturally and religiously and in complete contrast to the American culture, an understanding of the nuances of the cultural nitty gritty in general and for the US, in particular, is central to facilitating smoother dialogue and bringing flexibility in relations with the Arab public. The various tools in the public

diplomacy kit which the US has so far employed includes, the opening up of American centers and libraries abroad, providing translation of books in Arabic, facilitating various cultural and student exchange programs inclusive of various scholarships such as the Fulbright and the Humphreys, arranging visits to the United States, media, broadcasting and other information programs.

During the initial years of the Cold War, jazz music became one of the means to drive away communism globally. Jazz diplomacy touched the Middle East soil to curtail the spread of communism and simultaneously to spread the message of freedom. A number of Jazz musicians such as Dave Brubeck, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington took a tour of countries such as Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan and enthralled the audiences with their performances. Jazz diplomacy had a profound impact on the people of the region, so much, that not only the American musicians imbibed the oriental music but also the Middle Eastern artists blended jazz to produce an Arabic version of jazz, thereby facilitating cross culture musical interbreeding. Jazz carried the message of freedom, to show America as the flag bearer of the free world. (Hofstee, 2015)



Fig.(1.1):American Musician Duke Ellington in Iraq

Source: Hofstee, Goos, “How America’s Jazz Diplomacy made an Impact on the Middle Eastern Music”, 1 Sept. 2015 Accessed on Jan. 27, 2018, URL www.yourmiddleeast.com

The International Broadcasting Bureau’s former director, Geoffrey Cowan remarked, “One of our greatest exports during this period was jazz” (Beehner, 2018). The Middle

East became the epicenter of the “propaganda war” by the great powers. Both the Soviet and the US were committed to labeling each other as the expansionist imperialist powers while projecting its own self as the harbinger of peace, stability, safeguarding and securing the autonomy of the newly independent sovereign nations. Not only the Americans but also the Soviet Union public diplomacy officials rigorously engaged in propaganda activities, for instance, Russian radio and information services such as Moscow Radio and the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) started influencing the local public and newspapers with such information and materials propagandizing against the Western powers. (Stiglet, 1987)

Another attempt towards the US public diplomacy was the setting up of the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1942 by the Roosevelt administration which in turn opened up American information centers primarily in Beirut, Baghdad and Cairo. As has been mentioned in the introductory section threat from communism dominated the scene paralleled with the creation of a separate state of Israel and the rise of Arab nationalism thereby drawing President Truman's attention towards the Middle East. Conflict and instability gripped the region. Arab anger against the Western imperialist powers in general and the US, in particular, were the biggest challenges confronting the US policymakers. A complete economic sanction against Israel was imposed by the Arab League founded in 1951. Securing and safeguarding relations with the US friendly Arab states as well as the states in utter hostility with Israel was extremely essential to carry forward the struggle against communism. These developments, however, were in line with an increase in the economic and diplomatic ties between the US and the Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain etc. The OWI also opened Thomas Jefferson library in Alexandria 1947 and a cultural center in Damascus 1948 as a part of the US public diplomacy campaign to provide a better picture of the United States. (Rugh, 2006)

The United States Information Agency (USIA) was created during the Eisenhower era, given the President's advocacy for international public opinion and to disseminate information abroad. It was founded in the year 1953 to function as the vehicle of public diplomacy. The mission for which the USIA was set up clearly states, “The mission of

the USIA is to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the US national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and the US institutions and their counterparts abroad” (Office of Public Liaison, USIA). The USIA facilitates and provides funding for numerous cultural and educational exchange programs. The USIA’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs provides various scholarship programs such as the “the Fulbright Scholarships, Hubert Humphrey fellowships, English teaching and American studies program, the International Visitors programs, Citizens exchanges and Cultural and Youth Exchange programs”. (Office of Public Liaison , USIA)

During the presidency of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, John Badeau was appointed as the US ambassador to Egypt. His visit to Alexandria during the early 1960's opened new vistas for cooperation and exchanges in the realm of education and culture. During the same year, a tour of Egypt was undertaken by the American professors and artists, American ballet dancers, poets and writers. The public diplomacy official’s task increased with the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. Abdel Nasser laid strong criticism of the US and accused Americans of direct involvement in the war. Several other Arab states also condemned the US support to Israel. Attacks were waged on the American centers and libraries in Cairo, Alexandria, Baghdad and Libya. The USIA continued with its public diplomacy work in explaining the American side of the story. The educational and other exchange programs also continued such as the opening of the Yemen American Language Institute (YALI) in 1974. The international visitors Grant Programs were organized by the USIA for the Egyptian and Syrian students which enabled 80 students from Egypt and 17 from Syria to have a tour of the US annually. (Rugh, 2006)

The US public diplomacy apparatus also consists of the tool of media and broadcasting. The US international broadcasting service cast as the Voice of America (VOA), the most prominent tool of the US public diplomacy had its outreach in the Middle East in the Arabic version. The VOA provided a great deal of information in Arabic within the framework of narrating “America’s story to the world”. Having its centers in Beirut and Cairo, the VOA became so assertive in keeping America’s perspectives so much that the broadcasting increased significantly during the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Suez war of

1956. To quote Laurie Kassman (2007), "The VOA has taken a serious note on the Middle East with dedicated staff in Cairo who covers a territory that stretches from Morocco to Iran. Correspondents based in Jerusalem focuses on Israel and the Palestinians. Few correspondents shuttle in and out of Baghdad and a handful of stringers contribute to the daily report file. Assistance is also sought from the correspondents from Washington, Europe or Asia to cover the crisis in the region". (Kassman, 2007)

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the focus of the US public diplomacy shifted from the anti-communist drive to mobilize the international community in its condemnation of Saddam Hussein's 1990s invasion of Kuwait. In a bid to hit back Saddam's propaganda, the public diplomacy officials and the USIA worked immensely to gather every bit of information. To elicit public opinion, the USIA worked for arranging interviews and press conferences. The services of VOA covering the issue were increased to 15.5 hours per day. The passage of several UN resolutions condemning Iraq was also a part of public diplomacy effort. During Clinton years, the efforts moved to secure the Oslo Peace Process, a peace agreement signed between Israel and Palestine in 1995. Following the signing up of the Oslo Peace Process, the US undertook numerous projects in Palestine, for instance, \$1 million funds were granted to the US Palestine Fulbright program, a \$2 million proposal was put forward for the establishment of the journalism centers and \$50 million for the newly launched Israel-Palestinian co-existence program. However, problems continued to persist such as the USIA disintegrated in 1999, an upsurge in the Middle East born terrorist activities against the US, the biggest manifestation of which was the 9/11 attacks. The bitterness in the US-Middle relations was at its peak. Anti-American sentiments fueled up. (Rugh, 2006)

The following section will tend to explore the factors, the circumstances that entailed anti-Americanism and seek an analysis of the questions such as- What were the US public diplomacy efforts in addressing the negative perception of the US among the people of the Middle East? To what extent the US public diplomacy was successful in countering anti-American sentiments in the region? The study will be inclusive of the policies of the Bush and Obama administration.

US Public Diplomacy in Post 9/11 Period

On the morning of September 11, 2001, America woke up to the unfathomable dastardly ambush on the World Trade Center that rocked its soil. The perpetrators of the attacks were young Arab men majorly from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Till then the Middle East got plagued with non-state actors. Various terrorist groups and networks such as the ISIS, Haqqani terror network became operational, averse to the Western ideals and culture. Questions were raised on the US security systems and the concerned officials. The 9/11 world trade center attacks changed everything. "The US had become a world colossus, so prominent in the political, economic, cultural life of the Middle East that it was the unquestioned target of those bent on attacking the West for its perceived offenses against Islam" (Yaqub, 2003). The then President George Walker Bush had to confront the challenge at any cost.

Initially, the election of George W Bush as the 43rd US president was welcomed by the Arabs with the expectation that like his father, George Bush would also indulge in inculcating friendly relations with the Middle East. But 9/11 attacks had shaken the very foundation of the US, who claiming to be the world's superpower could have never envisaged a terror attack of this kind. There were sympathy and a sense of embarrassment among the Arabs as the perpetrators were young Arab men. The attacks had tarnished the image of the Middle East and, the US left no stone unturned in their dealings with the terror attacks. The American anger post 9/11 was at its peak. As a consequence, the US dismantled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in October 2001. Although the Arab public understood the US perspective on the war in Afghanistan yet, they were apprehensive about the mistreatment of Afghans and the loss of innocent lives as a result of the war. Tensions exacerbated when Qatar based television Al Jazeera broadcasted Bin Laden's messages. Doubts began to deepen when President Bush declared a global War on Terrorism to mobilize support for the same. (Rugh, 2006)

In his War on Terror speech made to the Congress on September 20, 2001 President Bush said "We will direct every resource at our command, every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence and every necessary weapon of war to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror

network”. “The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I have directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them” (Peters and Woolley, 2001). This statement affirmed the president’s commitment to fighting terrorism emerging from the Arab world sidelining other US interests. Moreover, his declaration of the state of Iran and Iraq under the “axis of evil” and the addition of Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad to the list of terrorist organization post 9/11 did not go well along the Arab public. The Arabs, on the other hand, felt that the Americans were directly accusing them of harboring terrorists and encouraging terrorism. They noticed that this war was centered only on the Middle Eastern groups which led them to perceive that it was more of a “war against Islam” than the war against terrorism. A senior Egyptian official in Cairo stated, “There is a basic misunderstanding between the West and the Islamic world. Your prejudices are cultural-that we are a backward people. Our prejudices are political-that you are very biased towards Israel” (US Department of State, 2005).

To that end, the war entailed loss of innocent lives and a falsification of the allegations on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by Saddam Hussein together with his links with Al-Qaeda. “The American public is not as enthusiastic about making sacrifices to help the Iraqis as about making sacrifices to protect the United States against terrorism. The temptation to hint at a connection with September 11 that did not exist must have been tremendous” (Moeller, 2004). Bush’s military invasion of Iraq was opposed by nearly 60% of Americans (Goldenberg, 2006). Even though President Bush dismissed any kind of connection between Saddam Hussein and the September 11 attacks, he did not regret US led war in Iraq. Perceiving Saddam's regime as a clear threat to American national security and the possibility of extremism flaring more and more he abstained from withdrawing the US troops from the Iraqi soil. To quote, "Whatever mistakes have been made in Iraq, the worst mistake would be to think that if we pulled out, the terrorists would leave us alone. They will not leave us alone, they will follow us. If we yield Iraq to men like Bin Laden, our enemies will be emboldened...they will gain a new safe haven and they will use Iraq’s resources to fuel their extremist movements”. (George Bush Archives, 2006)

The Arab public opinion declined as a result of President Bush declaration of the War on Terror. The following figure in the Gallup poll 2001-2002 shows a sharp decline in the Muslim countries attitudes towards the United States. In the Middle Eastern countries, the unfavorability ratings were the highest in Saudi Arabia to 64%, Iran 63%, Jordan 62% and Kuwait 42%. (Gallup, 2001-2002)

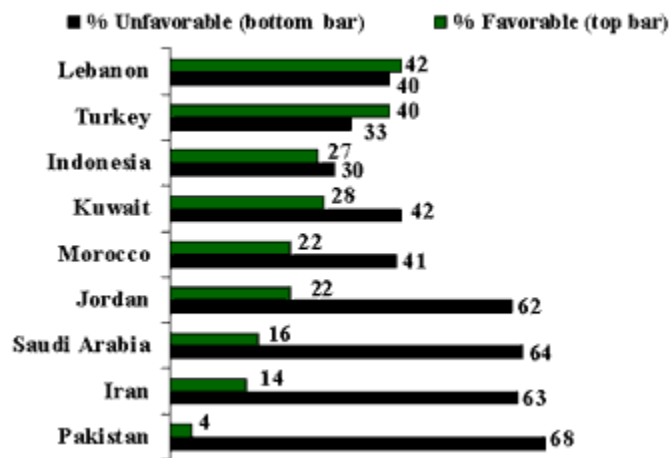


Fig.(1.2): Muslim Countries Attitude towards US

Source: Moore, David, (2002), "Americans More Unfavorable than Favorable toward Muslim Countries", Accessed on 6 Feb. 2018 URL www.news.gallup.com

The Middle Easterners did not consider Iraq as "an immediate danger" than the United States. They were against the idea of a military invasion of Iraq and denied the possibility of the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction by Saddam Hussein. For them, the Arab Palestine conflict was more pressing than the war in Iraq. The idea that the US was so adamant upon waging a war in Iraq in order to topple Saddam's regime perplexed most of the Arabs. As Rugh (2006) says, "The United States thousands of miles away from Iraq was so concerned about an Iraqi threat that those sitting in the same neighborhood did not feel" (Rugh, 2006). Despite the fact that majority of Middle East states did not comply with the US decision to lead a war in Iraq, ultimately on March 19, 2003, a strike was carried out by the US on the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. This US led unilateral move in Iraq infuriated the public, surmounted by a deep mistrust of US involvement in Iraq. The

Arab media widely criticized the US policy and showed the innumerable killings of the Iraqi civilians. Anti-Americanism dominated the scene. As a result, the US public diplomacy officials faced serious repercussions. The Arab anger was at its peak making it hard for the officers to convince them to justify the war. All they could do was to keep the points made by President Bush. (Rugh, 2006)

President Bush's preoccupation with the War on Terror overshadowed the other prominent issue that is the conflict between Israel and Palestine. That is not to say that nothing was done by the Bush administration to focus on the Israel-Palestine conflict. In fact, several attempts were made to restore the peace process. Unlike Clinton's failure, President Bush sought to pursue a "hands off" policy towards the Arab-Israeli peace process. On several occasions US officials were sent to propose a ceasefire, for example the visit of George Tenet Director of CIA in 2001 followed by the visit General Anthony Zinni on Zinni Mission, a call for a for a "two-state solution" to the Israel Palestine conflict again for which Zinni was sent in 2002 even for the publication of a Roadmap in 2003 endorsing the Palestinian state. A number of times, the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was pressurized to withdraw troops from the West Bank despite the continued acts of violence and suicide bombings against Israel by the Palestinians which in the eyes of the Arab public and even to some American officials was driven to garner support from other Middle Eastern states with a showdown with Iraq. (Freedman, 2004) President Bush's appraisal of Sharon as the "man of peace" and refusal to meet Arafat at the UN 2001 affirmed the belief of the Arab public regarding President Bush's covert support to the Israeli president and his indifference to the sufferings of the Palestinians. Arab opinion about the US began to drop because of the double standards of its policies (Rubner, 2006). In 2002, Zogby International conducted an international poll to gauge Arab public opinion on the United States. According to the poll, the US policy towards Palestine was the major determinant of the Arab public opinion. The favorability ratings drastically slipped to 3% in Egypt, 5% in Saudi Arabia, 2% in Kuwait, 6% in Lebanon and 3% in Iran. Overall attitude towards the US policy in the Middle East also recorded an all time low to 4% in Egypt, 8% in Saudi Arabia, 5% in Kuwait, 9% in Lebanon and 1 % in Iran. (Zogby International, 2002)

Also, the treatment meted out to the Muslims and Arabs in America in the aftermath of the attack strained the US-Middle East relations. Stricter visa regulations were imposed on the Muslim countries. Even requests for visa declined and the Arab and Muslim students were subject to long hours of interrogation and detention. Racism and hate crimes began to take place against Arabs and Muslim's making them feel to live in an atmosphere of fear and terror (Halcomb, 2015). In December 2001 itself, more than 100 hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims were reported in Chicago. Majority of Americans pressed for more restrictions on the immigrants from Muslim countries. Arab and other Muslim individuals nearly five thousand who came to the US on nonimmigrant visas were subject to interviews wherein the underlying theme was "to ascertain the subject's knowledge of terrorist activity" (Cainkar, 2005). Violence and terror came to be identified with Islam. Emma Halcomb describes the treatment to Muslims and Arabs as a result of 9/11 attacks in the following words, "Those of Arab ethnicity became targets of suspicion and fear. Some Americans isolated and distanced themselves from those Muslims who resembled the 9/11 terrorists" (Halcomb, 2015). This resulted in hampering the exchanges between the US-Arab students and people. Given the plethora of laws and regulations mainly directed at the Muslim Immigrants, the immigration attorney, Carl Baron commented, "Just on the basis of where a person is coming from, the government is going to subject them to these measures. You are going to see fewer Middle Easterners willing to come to the United States and I wonder if that isn't the real agenda" (Cainkar, 2005). Bush administration barely succeeded to establish effective communication via public diplomacy with the Islamic world.

George W Bush 9/11 policy especially with regard to the war in Afghanistan, War on Terror Doctrine and the Iraq war escalated anti-American sentiments in the entire Middle Eastern region making the task of public diplomacy officials all the more difficult. According to the Zogby poll of 2004, the US favorability ratings continued to decline in the Arab world wherein the US "unfair policy" remains the dominant factor behind the negative Arab opinion. The US favorability ratings reached an all time low to 4% in Saudi Arabia, 15% in Jordan, 20% in Lebanon, 4% in Egypt and 14% in UAE (The Arab American Institute Foundation, 2004). The public diplomacy officials had to justify the US invasion of Afghanistan and the dismantling of Taliban. To brush aside the rumors of

the deliberate loss of lives in the war and the false projection of the policy of War on Terror as war against Islam, the officials carried out extensive information programs and tours. Help was sought from Pakistan and London based information centers to discuss and explicate the American perspective to the Arab media (Rugh, 2006). But the issue of targeting entire Middle East under the global War on Terror, the US State Department's listing out mostly the groups from the region as the major terrorist organizations for 2001, the inability of the administration to not efficaciously respond to the Palestinian grievances and the ill treatment of Arabs and Muslims in America, complicated the efforts of public diplomacy officials to curb the growing resentment and outrage over US policy.

Moreover, after the conclusion of the war, the Bush administration did not find any evidence of the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. George Bush publicly declared that there were no links between Saddam and Al Qaeda. The *9/11 Commission Report (2004)* acknowledged that "we have no credible evidence that Iraq and Al Qaeda cooperated on the attacks against the United States and do not appear to have resulted in a collaborative relationship", which was actually the basis of the justification of war. Having failed to do so, Bush administration immediately shifted the focus of his policy on bringing democracy in Iraq and a political, economic and social reform in the entire Middle East. The sudden change in the Bush rhetoric towards "democratic reforms" from counterterrorism and the threat of WMDs affirmed the dubious nature of US foreign policy and enhanced misgivings about the US among the Arabs which led to further deterioration of the relations.

A poll conducted by Shibley Telhami (2001) in six Middle East countries on the consequences of Iraq war showed largely negative opinions. Among this 95% of Saudi Arabians, 63% of Egyptians and 73% Lebanese believed that the war will entail less democracy. A similar percentage opined that the war will bring less peace and more terrorism. Nearly, 80% respondents believed that US involvement in Iraq was driven to keep a hold on its oil resources and secondly for the support to Israel. (Telhami, 2001)

Will the U.S.- Iraq War Mean More Democracy or Less Democracy in the Middle East ?				
COUNTRY	MORE DEMOCRACY	LESS DEMOCRACY	NEITHER	NOT SURE
UAE	8%	59%	25%	8%
Jordan	7	58	26	9
Lebanon	7	73	16	4
Egypt	6	63	18	13
Saudi Arabia	3	95	2	0
Morocco	2	66	21	11

Fig.(1.3): Impact of US-Iraq War on the Prospects of Democracy in the Middle East

Will the U.S.-Iraq War Mean More Peace or Less Peace in the Middle East?				
COUNTRY	MORE PEACE	LESS PEACE	NEITHER	NOT SURE
Lebanon	9%	79%	10%	3%
Egypt	5	79	13	2
Saudi Arabia	5	91	3	0
Jordan	4	60	30	7
UAE	3	76	19	2
Morocco	1	89	8	2

Fig.(1.4): Impact of US-Iraq War on Peace in the Middle East

Will the U.S.-Iraq War Mean More Terrorism or Less Terrorism in the Middle East?				
COUNTRY	MORE TERRORISM	LESS TERRORISM	NEITHER	NOT SURE
Saudi Arabia	96%	2%	1%	0%
Morocco	87	1	8	4
Lebanon	81	9	7	4
Jordan	78	3	11	8
Egypt	75	7	15	3
UAE	74	7	17	3

Fig.(1.5): Impact of the US-Iraq War on Terrorism in the Middle East.

Fig.(1.3), (1.4), (1.5) Source: Telhami, Shibley, (2001) URL <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/arab-public-opinion-on-the-united-states-and-iraq-postwar-prospects-for-changing-prewar-views>

Similarly, the polls conducted by Dr. Zogby on the US role in Iraq also generated negative opinions by 96% Jordanians, 86% Egyptians and 68% Saudi Arabians. A majority believed that the war would either lead to a civil war or a permanent occupation of Iraq by the US. (The Arab American Institute, 2007)

President Bush's rhetoric of the War on Terror soon shifted to the agenda of democracy promotion in the Middle East. The freedom agenda became the rationale behind the justification for the war in Iraq. The wave of democracy promotion began sweeping the

entire region beginning from Iraq to Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Iran etc. The promotion of democratic governments would help cut the roots of all terrorist activities. However, the administration's approach was incoherent due to lack of proper commitment. The events in Egypt demonstrate it; the flawed elections in Egypt during Hosni Mubarak's rule resulted in his victory only. After his overthrow, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate took to power and finally the reins power went into the hand of the military. Given the continued deteriorating political, economic and social conditions till date, the US democracy promotion in Egypt is a near failure. Iraq also witnessed a similar situation where destruction continued to prevail in the aftermath of war. Radical groups emerged victorious in the elections that took place in Lebanon (anti-US protests led by the militant organization Hezbollah) and Palestine (the victory of Hamas, a terrorist organization according to the US 2006). (Alessandri, 2015)

Bruce Gilley in his article, "Did Bush Democratize the Middle East: The Effects of External-Internal Linkages", makes an analysis of the success and failures of Bush's democracy agenda along material, diplomatic, rhetorical and structural lines. In terms of monetary support to the countries of middle east, the huge spending entailed certain benefits as evident in the endeavors of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in monitoring, training, pushing for electoral reforms and raising awareness among the citizens about the benefits of democracy in both Bahrain and Egypt such as the funding from the US helped revolutionized Egypt's youth against the repressive regime of Mubarak. Similarly, on the diplomatic side, the administration tried exerting pressures for socio-political and economic reforms, for instance in Egypt's parliamentary elections of 2005, Mubarak for the first time opened the contestation to candidates from different parties in a push by Bush and the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, although later on the elections were fraught with violence and corruption. On similar lines, Damascus declaration for Democratic National Change was signed in Syria in 2005. The overall diplomatic assertion, however, failed to bring out the desired changes. Bush's rhetoric of freedom agenda was negatively perceived for its dubious and interventionist nature by the Middle East public. Skepticism about the seriousness of the US democracy promotion was affirmed when public voting against the US scrolled to 65% in 2006 and 2008 respectively. To quote Gilley, "The

freedom agenda rhetoric tended to elicit anger, resentment and distrust across the Middle East. Bush's rhetorical tone tended to raise questions of hypocrisy and inbred skepticism about all politicians" (Gilley, 2013). That is not to deny the fact that President Bush's freedom agenda set the stage for political freedom to quite an extent but not in the direction as would have benefitted the US more in gaining the trusts and favorable opinion of the Middle Eastern public.

Bush Administration and US Public Diplomacy

Ever since the 9/11 attacks, the US became increasingly concerned about the Arab public opinion. It came to the realization of the US policymakers about the importance of the role of the Arab public opinion in influencing the US foreign policy, especially with regard to the increasing anti-Americanism in the region. Historically, only the opinions and views of the national governing elites were given importance by the US policymakers, while those of the non-elites or general masses have been of little concern. "Because of the autocratic nature of many Muslim governments and the lack of democratic institutions, many US policymakers and Middle East strategist have dismissed mass opinion as unimportant". With the 9/11 attacks, the Middle East became the focus of all attention, thereby bringing a shift in the US understanding of the vitality of the Arab public opinion. In fact, renewed emphasis was laid on the US public diplomacy efforts vital to address the increasing hostility of the Arab public opinion, to wane the negative perceptions of the US and to improve its image in the region. Consequently, the Bush administration started dwelling in a series of public diplomacy campaigns. (Zayani, 2008)

The need to pull up the US public diplomacy efforts was also driven by the "Al-Jazeera effect". The Al-Jazeera an Arabic satellite channel is supposed to be the major factor behind the anti-Americanism in the Arab world. Al-Jazeera with its invocation of pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism frequently broadcasted Osama bin Laden's messages and other Taliban regimes representatives, intensive reporting of the US war in Afghanistan

and the civilian casualties thereof and all such events maligning the US were sufficient to create a climate of anti-Americanism in the Middle East. (Nisbet, 2004)

In 2002, the US Congress passed the “Freedom Promotion Act”, the Act granted an annual budget of \$497 million to implement public diplomacy efforts (Zahama, 2003). President Bush appointed Charlotte Beers as the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy. As a marketing expert Beers came up with the novel idea of branding and selling America to the Muslim world through intensive international advertisement campaign. “Charlotte Beers was hired to resuscitate and reinvent brand USA”. (Tideman, 2004) Before the introduction of the concept of branding America, the representatives in the 2001 Congressional Hearing entitled, “*The Message is America: Rethinking Public Diplomacy*”, engaged in the discussion about the need to involve private players in the public diplomacy campaign. In fact, most of the representatives in the hearing were from the private sector having expertise in mass communication, journalism and public relations. To quote, Robert L Wehling, former chairman of the advertising council and retired global marketing officer, Proctor and Gamble, “My experience with both P&G and the Advertising Council proves conclusively that advertising can change attitudes and practices and such advertising and communication programs can also be effective in the Middle East” (House Committee on International Relations, 2001). Similarly, John Romano, producer and writer talked about the role of the entertainment industry in assisting public diplomacy activities. He stated, “We are after all a quintessentially American industry and I am confident in affirming a great willingness in the creative community of actors, writers, directors to serve our country by helping it communicate who we are and what we are as a people to the world at large”. (House Committee on International Relations, 2001)

Beers set out on an extensive public diplomacy campaign. Highlighting terrorism as a global concern, Beers created a pamphlet entitled, “the Network of Terrorism” (Tideman, 2004). Featuring the provocative comments by Al Qaeda and Taliban and the pictures of the 9/11 attacks, the pamphlet having been translated into 36 languages became the most widely distributed document of the US Department of State. Beers also launched a \$12 million project entitled “Shared Values Initiatives” in 2002, a program to reach out to the

Muslims via print media, television, radio, lecture tours, online publications and so on. In order to promote the advertisements, the Council for American Muslims for Understanding (CAMU) and online websites such as opendialogue.com were created by the State Department (Zharna, 2009). The “Muslim Life in America” was another public diplomacy campaign launched by Beers. The campaign demonstrated the lifestyle of the Muslims living in America. The campaign aimed at dispelling the stigma attached to the Muslims particularly in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. The program featured the freedom and liberty among the Muslims to practice their own religion and customs such as the wearing of veils by the Muslim women, to denote that America is a safe place for people of all religion and ethnicity to live in. Beers also stressed on the expansion of the American corners, American libraries and cultural centers all over the globe to create a better understanding of the American culture and values. (Tideman, 2004)

As the cornerstone of Bush's freedom agenda, the US Department of State launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in the year 2002. MEPI was created to operationalize the freedom agenda in the Middle East and the North African region. The chief participants of the MEPI programs are the countries of Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bahrain, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Morocco and Tunisia. MEPI constitutes an important tool of the soft power of the US public diplomacy. MEPI undertakes a number of programs that cater directly to the needs of the people of the MENA region. It focuses on directly engaging with the civil society groups rather than the government to government cooperation. (Otterman, 2005)

MEPI endeavors to bring about reforms in the political, social as well as economic sphere. Political reforms consist in ensuring political freedom that is the promotion of democratic governments, wider participation of the citizens in the governance of the country, greater governmental accountability. In the economic realm, MEPI aims to create ample job opportunities to curb the problem of unemployment, encourage investments, growth and development, provision of better education and so on. MEPI engages with the local NGO's, encourages the empowerment of the civil society in general and women and youth in particular, address human rights abuses. Secretary of State Colin Powell announced the launch of MEPI in her speech at the Heritage

Foundation (2005). He stated, “The US Middle East Partnership Initiative, comprising an innovative set of programs, is a bridge between the US and the Middle East, between our governments and the people, an initiative that expands the hope gap with energy, ideas and funding. Our partnership initiative is a continuation and a deepening of our long standing commitment to working with all the people of the Middle East to improve their daily lives and help them face the future with hopes” (US Department of State, 2002). He also revealed the initial funding for MEPI to a sum of 29 million dollars and promised to turn it into a mega project worth more than 1 billion dollars that normally goes in the annual US ME economic assistance. (US Department of State, 2002)

In the beginning, the funding for MEPI programs increased significantly. With a kickstart of \$29 million in 2002, the funds shot up to % 100 million for the Fiscal Year 2003. However, due to the internal divisions and the lack of bureaucratic consensus on the appropriation of grants the funding for the Fiscal Year 2004 and 2005 declined to \$45 million and \$90 million against the administration’s request for a higher sum. The Fiscal Year 2006 recorded the highest grants summing to \$114 million while the following years experienced a similar pattern of deprivation. (Hassan, 2013)

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Requested</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Cumulative Actual Total</i>
FY2003	n/a	90	119
FY2002	n/a	29	n/a
FY2004	145	89.5	208.8
FY2005	150	74.4	282.9
FY2006	120	114.4	397.3
FY2007	120	50.8	448.1
FY2008	75	49.6	497.7

Fig.(1.6): Requested and Actual MEPI Funding FY2002-FY2009 (US\$ millions)

Source: Hassan, O. (2013), Constructing America’s Freedom Agenda for the Middle East, Routledge.

So far the contribution made by MEPI towards thousands of projects in almost 18 countries of the MENA region has been more than 650 million dollars since its inception. MEPI fundamentally supports the programs aiming at promoting democracy in the region, for example in the first year of its working MEPI prepared the parties for elections in Algeria and Bahrain, MEPI also prepared a team of election monitors to manage the 2005 elections in Egypt and Lebanon respectively. MEPI has also undertaken programs for literacy and empowerment of women in Yemen. MEPI provides the Students Leaders Program that seeks to train and educate both undergraduate and graduate students in developing the leadership qualities and to enable participation in the process of governance. Other programs include the Leaders for Democracy fellowship program, Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship, Middle East Entrepreneur Training Program.

The Arab states of Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen and Morocco hailed the MEPI led programs but skepticism prevailed about the US sponsored programs particularly among Saudi, Egypt and Oman where MEPI has a comparatively smaller presence. As in Al-Safir, a local newspaper in Beirut, the editor commented, "the objective of MEPI was to link the ambitions of some people in the Arab world to the objectives of the United States, not the objectives of the United States to the ambitions of the people in the Arab world".(Sharp, 2005)

In 2003, the United States Advisory Group published a report entitled "*Changing minds, winning peace: A new strategic direction in the US public diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim world*". As the title itself suggests, the report while acknowledging the inconsistencies in the past public diplomacy efforts, recommends a new direction and "a dramatic transformation in public diplomacy in the way the US communicates its values and policies to enhance our national security". The report stated the seriousness of the congress and the executive branch towards a renewed emphasis on public diplomacy to confront the threats posed by the forces of extremism. The report made the following recommendations towards concerted public diplomacy efforts-

- 1) Structural changes, better coordination, new operating process as well as presidential directives on the significance of public diplomacy are required for the agencies related to

public diplomacy. The recommendations are inclusive of the US Department of State (DOS), the White House and the National Security Council (NSC).

- 2) Establishment of a new “culture of measurement” within all structures of public diplomacy, to assess the impact of various public diplomacy efforts and initiatives.
- 3) Significant increment in the funds for public diplomacy activities in the Arab and the Muslim world.
- 4) An Adequate number of professional staff with proficiency in local languages and knowledge required for public diplomacy in Arab societies.
- 5) Increase in the budget for the internet and communication technology for its efficient use in the public diplomacy apparatus.
- 6) An expansion of the programs, such as the English Language Training, American corners, American Knowledge and various other cultural programs abroad. (US Department of State, 2003)

In keeping with the recommendations of the report and in another bid to pump up America’s image abroad, the US Department of State with a funding of \$4.2 million launched the *HI magazine*, an integral constituent of the public diplomacy apparatus in the year 2003 to woo the young Arabs to the American lifestyle, fashion, culture, entertainment, technology following the debacle in Iraq and Afghanistan. Going beyond the implicit news of politics, the magazine seeks to “offer cultural information about the United States not readily available in the Middle East”, commented Richard Creighton, the company president. (BBC News, 2003) Available in Arabic, the magazine has its subscribers in almost 19 Middle East countries. (Labott, 2003) However, the magazine did not do well with the Middle East audiences as many accused it of ‘brainwashing’. The editor of Daily Star, a Beirut newspaper commented “It’s another example of the confusion and I would even say total incompetence of US official organs in dealing with the issue of Arab public opinion. I think they just don’t get it” (National Public Radio, 2003). Failing to get a greater outreach to the readers, the magazine was eventually suspended in 2005.

Another important tool of the US public diplomacy in the Middle East is the role played by the media and the broadcasting networks. In the aftermath of September 11 attacks the US Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) in the direction of rejuvenated public diplomacy efforts launched the Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBN) as the principal channel of communication with the Middle East audiences especially targeting the younger group of population (given the increasing radicalization of the youth, the 9/11 attacks were carried by young Arab men). Norman Pattiz, an American broadcasting entrepreneur who propelled the need for a greater involvement and expansion of the US sponsored broadcasting networks in the Middle East held that “a new approach was needed to respond to the changing demographics of the Middle East and that one way to win the hearts and minds of the Arab youth and turn them into loyal listeners to the station was to play pop hits from both the US and the Arab world”. (Seib, 2009)

Al Hurra (2004) with a tag of highest public diplomacy funding is the television channel that provides services such as news and other information in Arabic to give a tougher competition to the already expanding regional networks such as the Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya and Radio Sawa, launched in 2002 is a popular radio station serves as a toast of both western and Arabic music are the major components of the MBN. Both media resources aim at changing the negative perception of the US foreign policy particular at such a critical juncture when events such as the launch of the War on Terror policy, the US intervention and the military presence in Iraq and the continued emphasis on the Israel Palestine peace process i.e. the US biasness towards Israel in the eyes of the Arab people attracted widespread criticism and anti-American sentiments. (Tomlinson, 2007)

A study conducted by Mohammed-el-Nawawy to review the effectiveness of Al Hurra and Radio Sawa in tackling anti-Americanism in five Arab states revealed largely negative results. For instance, on a scale of 0 to 7 marking the change in the student's perception of the US foreign policy since the broadcasting of Al Hurra and Radio Sawa, the observed mean was only 3.35 (Radio Sawa) and 3.19 (Al Hurra) thereby showing a significant worsening of the attitudes. Majority of the respondents were of the view that “the US administration was trying to manipulate Arab opinion through networks like Sawa and Al Hurra and spread lies and fabricates news via these channels” (Nawawy,

2006). The respondents were utterly disgruntled by the American involvement in Iraq and the continued support to Israel at the cost of Palestinians. Philip Seib, Professor of Journalism and Public Diplomacy, the University of South California also contends that Al Hurra is negatively viewed by the audiences as “American propaganda station”. The data also suggested that the Arab public relied more on the local networks particularly with the launch of Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya in contrast with the networks sponsored by the US. (Nawawy, 2006)

The USC Center for Public Diplomacy carried out an intensive reviewing of the Al Hurra on the basis of content analysis and research group discussions in the cities of Cairo, Beirut and Dubai. The findings claimed that Al Hurra not only lagged behind the regional media networks but also in technical quality, poor content and a greater tilt towards pro-western opinion/outlook and more criticism of the Arab point of view. The news coverage lacked substance and was not convincing enough for the participants. For instance, they opined "that Al Hurra's coverage of Iraq and the Arab Israeli conflict looked more like Hollywood productions than a reflection of events that were actually taking place" (USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 2008). Moreover, the public, in general, were hardly consulted and the information relied mostly on official sources.

The inefficiency of Al Hurra to reach the Arab audiences is primarily due to the expansion and growth of the Arab media channels. The media channels were largely under the control of Arab states having a say in their broadcasting and production and were in a position to influence large Arab audiences because of the pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism approach. Secondly, there have been times when the broadcast by Al-Hurra was inconsistent with current circumstances. For instance, when the entire Arab media were covering the assassination of Sheikh Ahmad Ismail Yassin, the founder of Hamas, at that time Al-Hurra broadcasted an infamous cooking show adding to the public diplomacy blunder. Regional priorities must always be taken into consideration. (Kraidy, 2008)

In a similar manner, compared to the regional networks, Radio Sawa failed to impress the local audience both in content and quality and primarily because of its preoccupation with music. A report by the Inspector General assessing the influence of Radio Sawa stated that “despite gaining huge audiences it is difficult to ascertain Radio Sawa's

impact in countering anti-American views and the biased state run media of the Arab world". In other words, the focus was more on garnering a greater share of listeners rather than evaluating the effectiveness of Radio Sawa in altering public opinion in favor of the US. (Kessler, 2004)

The following figures illustrate the Al Hurra and Radio Sawa's viewing and listening trends for the period 2005 to 2009. The table also depicts the performance of Al Hurra in comparison with the regional networks Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya.

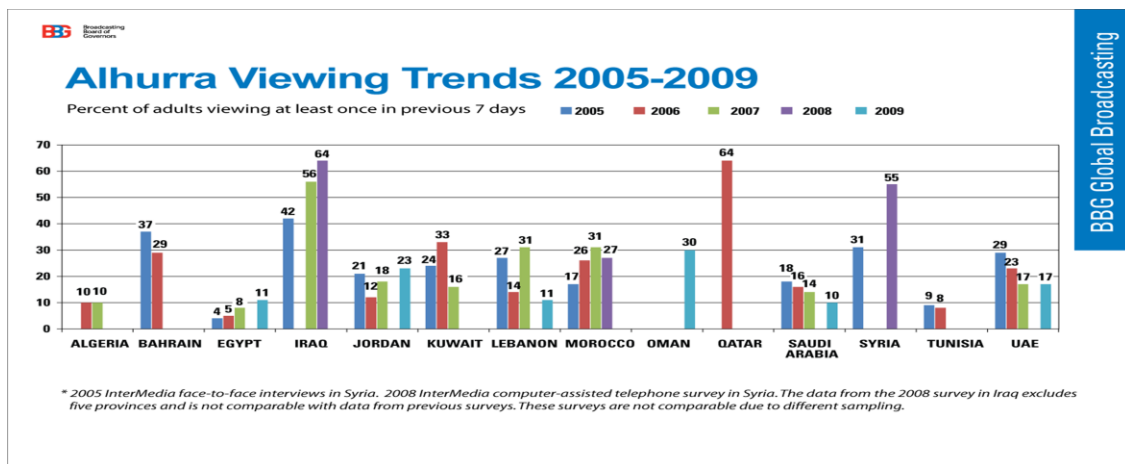


Fig.(1.7): Viewing Trends of Al-Hurra 2005-2009

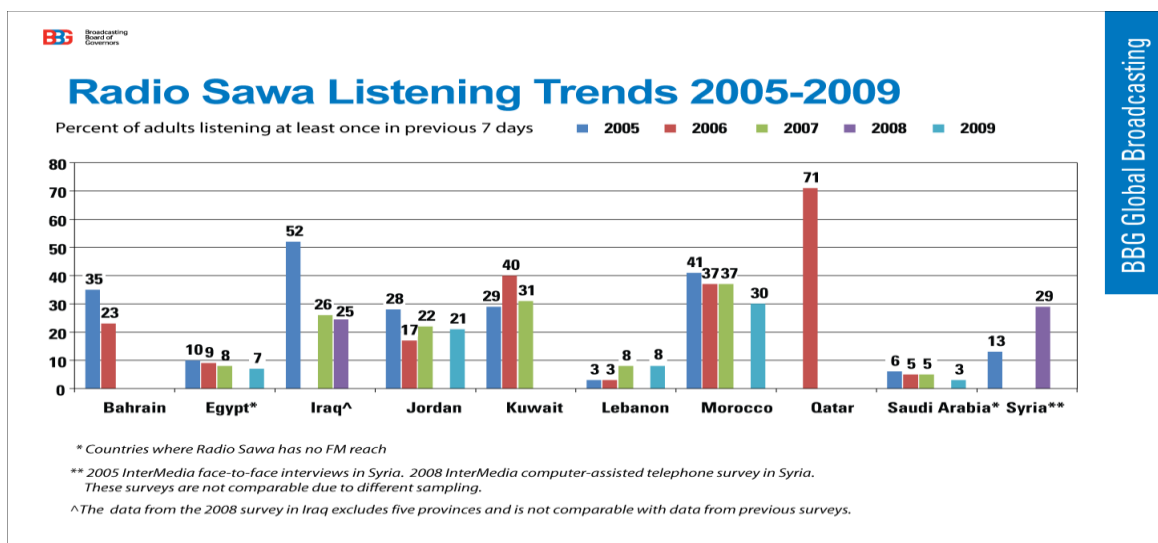


Fig.(1.8): Listening Trends of Radio Sawa 2005-2009

Channel Comparison: Yesterday Viewing

Yesterday viewership of adults 15+ (%)

	Al Jazeera	Al Arabiya	Alhurra	BBC Arabic
Algeria	31.6	20.2	4.4	1.5
Bahrain	40.7	42.8	9.5	1.1
Egypt	35.2	10.3	3	1.5
Iraq	28.9	37.5	31.7	4.7
Jordan	71.7	48.1	7.5	4.1
Kuwait	48.5	35.0	4.2	0.5
Lebanon	26.7	16.5	2.2	1.1
Morocco	50.4	27.6	6.3	3.1
Oman	39.3	26.3	14.9	3.7
Qatar	60.9	42.2	24.4	4.1
Saudi Arabia	39.3	53.5	2.7	1.8
Syria	59.4	49.6	29.4	5.6
UAE	61.5	31.1	2.5	3.7
Tunisia	34.3	17.7	2.0	0.4

Fig.(1.9): Comparison of Al Hurra with Regional Channels

Source: Fig.(1.7), (1.8), (1.9) Radio Sawa and Al Hurra TV: Performance Update, January 2010, Broadcasting board of governors

It can be gauged from the above figures that while Al Hurra recorded an all time low in Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, Radio Sawa, on the other hand, performed poorly again in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria for the period 2005-2009. The regional networks such as the Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya overshadowed Al Hurra in the entire Middle East.

The United States favorability ratings continued to decline despite consistent public diplomacy efforts. The poll conducted in six countries Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Morocco. The unfavorable ratings for the US recorded an all time high of 64% in 2008, which increased from 57% in 2006. As many as 70% of the Arabs expressed no confidence in the US. In their opinion on the question of democracy promotion by the US in the Middle East after the Iraq war, 65% expressed doubt on whether democracy is the real objective of the US. Most importantly, 80% of the Arab public assigned the US foreign policy as the major determinant of Arab attitudes towards the US than its values. Only 12% of the Arab public opinion went for the US values.

Majority of the Arab public believed that the security of Israel and the US hold on oil are the driving force behind the US foreign policy in the Middle East. (Telhami, 2008)

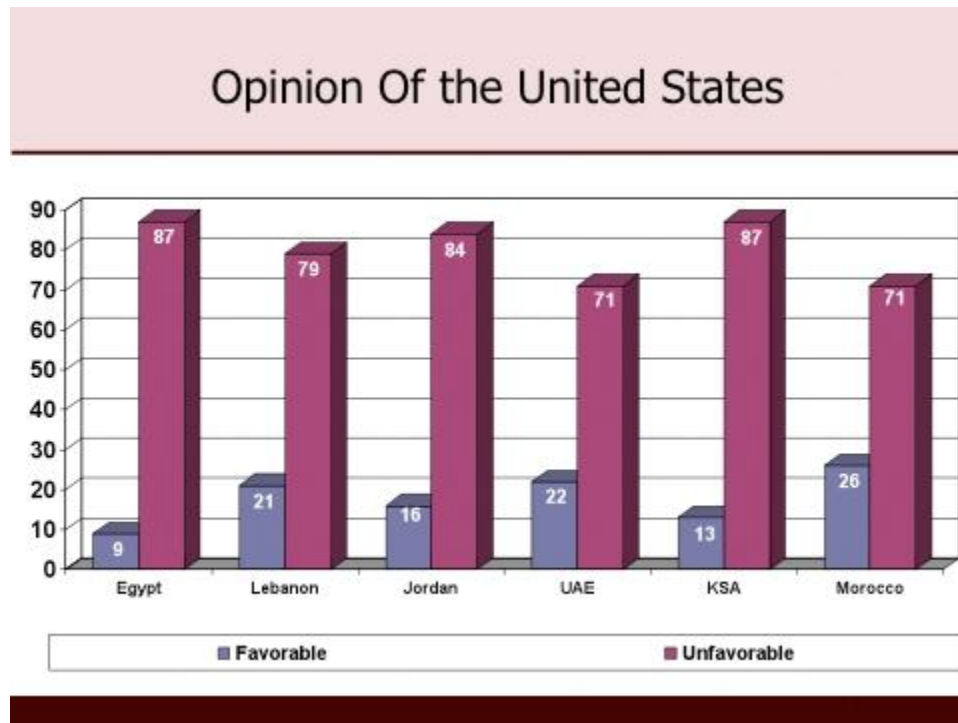


Fig.(1.10): Arab Public Opinion towards the US, 2008

Source: "Arab Public Opinion towards the US, 2008", Arab American Institute, Accessed 29 Feb. 2018
URL <http://www.aaiusa.org/arab-public-opinion-toward-the-us-2008>

It can be concluded from the above analysis that Bush presidency recorded an all time low opinion of the United States predominantly in the Middle East. Anti-Americanism did not remain confined to this region but also became widespread in the Far East Islamic countries as well. The damage done to the image of America was so grave during the Bush administration that led to doubts whether the new government would be in a position to "resurrect and rejuvenate" the already tarnished US-Middle East relations. Despite concerted public diplomacy efforts by the Bush administration, the Arab attitudes towards the US continued to decline. The US was engaged in a 'one way' communication with the Arab world. It was more of an "information battle" wherein the US launched an

information attack on the Arab public rather than establishing an effective communication with them. (Zharna, 2009)

However, optimism prevailed among the Muslims and Arabs from the Obama administration to start the relations afresh. Perhaps, Obama's Islamic background being born to a Muslim Kenyan father, his understanding and experiences of discrepancies in cultures, religion and ethnicity lit a ray of hope towards a more flexible and constructive US policy in the Middle East.

The Renewed Focus of US Public Diplomacy: Obama Administration

Victoria Elliot in the article, "Gauging Obama's influence in the Middle East", underlines the changes and shifts in the Obama administration's policy towards the Middle East. In contrast to the negative impact of the Bush administration, President Obama's calling for a "new beginning" with the Muslim world based on "mutual interest and mutual respect" in a speech at Cairo University Egypt to their relationship with a new vision was hailed with great optimism. He pointed out that "we are meeting at a very crucial time when there is a great tension between the US and the Muslims around the world. The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of cooperation and coexistence but also conflicts and religious wars" (Obama White House Archives, 2009). There must be an effort to "listen" to each other. He also cited quotes from the holy Koran. He praised the richness of the Islamic culture for its significant contribution to the development of society. President Obama's rhetoric on the reconciliation between Islam and the West bloomed from the damage done by Bush's War on Terror which was perceived by the Arab public as the War against Islam. He touched upon all those issues that had created a rift between the US and the Arab world, from commitment to Israel's security, sympathizing with the sufferings of Palestinians, resolving the Israel Palestine conflict through the "two states solution" to Iraq's better future and a world based on mutual respect and harmony for each other. "We seek a world, where extremists no longer threaten our people, where Israelis and Palestinians are secure in their own state, where there is a peaceful use of nuclear energy and where all citizens and their rights are

respected” (Elliot, 2003). He also laid emphasis on how cultures can play an instrumental role in transforming the US Muslim world relationship from a “clash of civilizations to a dialogue of civilizations”. President Obama’s foreign policy was a balance between strategic interests and values. He pointed out that a part of his new job was to convey the message that the United States has a stake in the well being of the Muslim world and the language to be used has to be the language of harmony, friendliness and mutual respect. (Elliot, 2013)

The speech was made at a time when both the worlds needed it at the most, in order to clear the misgivings about the US to counter the belief that the west is averse to the Islamic tradition. In 2009, he ordered the withdrawal of the American troops from major Iraqi cities, giving a call for the peace process. This is evident from the National Security Strategy Report (NSS) 2010 which states, “In Iraq, we are transitioning to full Iraqi sovereignty and responsibility- a process that includes the removal of our troops, the strengthening of our civilian capacity and a long term partnership to the Iraqi government and the people”. The focus of the Obama administration has been more on "listening" to other's side of the story rather than one way communication or "narrating one's own tale". Contrary to Bush's unilateralism and "preemptive strategy", Obama stressed upon effective communication and two way exchange of information which constitutes the essence of public diplomacy. (Gbotokuma, 2011)

This approach is also reflected in the NSS 2010 where it is stated that the US engagement with the Middle East “should extend beyond near-term threats by appealing to people’s aspirations for justice, education and opportunity and by pursuing a positive and sustainable vision of the US partnership with the region”. President Obama further pledged to extend the relations between the US and its Arab neighbors beyond military ties to an increased cooperation in the realm of trade, exchanges and other dimensions of life. Under the section titled a “strategic approach” the NSS laid down the conceptualization of the soft power approach in governing its relations with other nations. The report stated about the sustained efforts of the United States in engaging with not just the governments but also “the people, the civil society and the citizens” around the globe

by means of educational service, public service, increased trade and partnership with the private sector. (National Security Strategy Report, 2010)

President Obama inherited the office of the US president at a time when the Middle East was in utter chaos. Anti-American sentiments were at its peak as a consequence of the actions and policies of the Bush administration particularly in its involvement of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. The top priority of the Obama administration laid in healing the bruised relations with the Arab world. The Obama administration endeavored to deploy the soft power techniques to alter the negative Arab public perception of the US by way of direct interaction to build constructive relations with the Muslims. The first initiative was a “softer rhetoric” (Gardner, 2018). It is argued that the style of leadership, the leader’s way of articulation and communication has a causative effect on perception and implementation of his policies. A harsher tone is enough to generate animosity and hostility in relations with a particular nation. For example, President Bush’s War on Terror declaration and the Axis of Evil caused havoc among the Middle Eastern public escalating their anger for the US to an all time high. President Obama in comparison to President Bush was softer and accommodative in his tone. His Cairo speech exemplified his desire to indulge in the use of soft power in forging better relations with the Muslim world. The second effort was to institute an “interfaith dialogue”. This reflects President Obama’s objective to transform the US-Middle East relations from a clash of civilization to a dialogue of civilizations. The west and the Muslim world are two different cultures. Therefore, promoting a cross-cultural and an interfaith understanding would assist in a broader engagement among the people. As a result in 2010, President Obama appointed a special envoy Rashad Hussain to the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The announcement was made at the US Islamic World Forum held in Doha, Qatar. The special envoy was appointed in keeping up with his Cairo speech to expand ties with the Islamic world (Wilson, 2010). The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is a 57 member states organization with an objective to represent unity and integrity among the Muslim nations and to promote international peace, stability and harmony. In October 2011, the Obama administration also established a Working Group on Religion and Foreign Policy which aims at “bringing together diplomats, foreign service officials, military leaders and

representatives of faith groups to engage communities of faith to advance policy objectives”.[Cited in Marsden, 2012]

The Obama administration also organized the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship in April 2010 with a view to expanding ties with the Muslim majority countries in the realm of business opportunities, employment and skill development and other bilateral cooperation and exchanges. The summit also announced a series of exchange programs such as the "Entrepreneurs for a New Beginning" to facilitate a two way exchange between the entrepreneurs from the US to the Muslim countries and vice-versa, "Science and Technology Education Exchanges" to provide opportunities to 25 teachers from Muslim nations to visit the US and broaden their spectrum of scientific and technical knowledge, "Professional Technical Exchanges for Women" to provide travel opportunities to the women to the US for skill development. Besides, the US Department of State also entered into a partnership with Bahrain, Oman and Tunisia to encourage women entrepreneurs in the MENA region. The USAID was also directed to provide funding and financial assistance in these sectors. The summit laid down a comprehensive plan of action to encourage people to people exchange particularly in Muslim countries with a view to bringing transformation in relations with them. (Obama White House Archives, 2010)

The US State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs launched the ‘Tech Women’ Program in 2011 to empower and encourage the participation of women from the Middle East, Africa and Central and South Asian region. The program provides opportunities to the women in the domain of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to participate and learn in the various seminars, workshops, conferences organized in the United States. The Tech Women held a mentorship program for five weeks in San Francisco and Silicon Valley enabling participation of a number of women from the Middle Eastern countries of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine (Zhaohui, 2015). In 2013, Tech Women matched 75 women from the Middle East and Africa with 150 American counterparts to harness abundant knowledge (US Department of State, 2013).The Tech Women initiative has so far given opportunities to

approximately 500 women from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen, Palestine and other African and Central Asian countries.

With the revolution in information technology and modern means of communication, access to people in any corner of the world has much more become easier. Much of President Obama's election campaign relied on the extensive use of internet technology and social media (Zhaohui, 2015). The public diplomacy apparatus under the Obama administration also embodied the use of digital technology and social media such as the extensive use of social media websites (the DOS page on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr to update latest information on US policies), enabled access of state department and other official websites, mobile phones, for the first time in 2012 Google+ was used by the Department of State to "gather Persian speaking correspondents in Farsi" (Zhaohui, 2015).

Although the Obama administration brought hopes in the eyes of the Arab people, however just a year after his office in 2010 the Arab attitudes towards Obama became negative with an unfavorable rating as high as 62%. Similarly, 63% Arab public was pessimistic about the Obama administration's policy in the Middle East. The US policy which caused the most disappointment was the Israel-Palestine issue (61%). (Telhami, 2010)

U.S. Favorability Rating				
	2009	2010	2011	10-11
	%	%	%	Change
Britain	69	65	61	-4
France	75	73	75	+2
Germany	64	63	62	-1
Spain	58	61	64	+3
Lithuania	--	--	73	--
Poland	67	74	70	-4
Russia	44	57	56	-1
Ukraine	--	--	60	--
Turkey	14	17	10	-7
Egypt	27	17	20	+3
Jordan	25	21	13	-8
Lebanon	55	52	49	-3
Palest. ter.	15	--	18	--
Israel	71	--	72	--
China	47	58	44	-14
India	--	--	41	--
Indonesia	63	59	54	-5
Japan	59	66	85	+19
Pakistan	16	17	12	-5
Brazil	--	62	62	0
Mexico	69	56	52	-4
Kenya	90	94	83	-11
PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q3a.				

Fig.(1.11): Global Attitude towards the US 2009-2011

Source: “Views of the US and American Foreign Policy”, *Pew Research Center (2011)* URL <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/07/13/chapter-2-views-of-the-u-s-and-american-foreign-policy/>

Similarly, it can be seen from the above table that the overall favorability ratings towards the United States remained low for three consecutive years in Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestinian territory. Turkey recorded the lowest ratings for the US dropping to a mere 10%, followed by Jordan to 13%, then Palestine to 18% and Egypt 20%. (Pew Research Center, 2011)

The Arab public also disapproved of the Obama administration's policy with respect to the political changes in the Middle East, Israel-Palestine conflict, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. The following figure illustrates the case. The strongest disapproval came for the Israel-Palestine conflict which seemed to have no resolution, especially with the US intervention. The disapproval ratings reached as high as 85% in Lebanon, 84% in

Palestine territory to 82% in Jordan and Egypt. Similarly, Obama's handling of Afghanistan was disapproved by 87% Jordanians, 81% Palestinians and 76% by Egyptians. Similar ratings were provided for the situation in Iraq and the promises made for bringing change in the Middle East.

Obama's Handling of...				
	<i>Calls for political change in Middle East</i>		<i>Israeli-Palestinian conflict</i>	
	App-rove	Dis-app	App-rove	Dis-app
	%	%	%	%
Turkey	8	65	6	68
Egypt	45	52	15	82
Jordan	31	65	17	82
Lebanon	41	52	12	85
Palest. ter.	33	63	13	84
Indonesia	30	49	26	57
Pakistan	5	40	6	45

	<i>Afghanistan</i>		<i>Iran</i>	
	App-rove	Dis-app	App-rove	Dis-app
	%	%	%	%
Turkey	5	70	5	68
Egypt	18	76	27	68
Jordan	12	87	21	77
Lebanon	23	71	40	55
Palest. ter.	15	81	16	80
Indonesia	28	56	23	56
Pakistan	9	52	10	50

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q79b-e

Fig.(1.12): Opinion of President Obama in Muslim Countries 2011

Source: "Opinion of the US and President Barack Obama", *Pew Research Center* Accessed 5 March 2018
 URL <http://www.pewglobal.org/2011/05/17/chapter-1-opinions-of-the-u-s-and-president-barack-obama/>

Despite the leniency of his policies, the Arabs continue to have doubts about the American involvement in the region. The US has a history of supporting autocratic governments in the region. This policy of the US appears highly hypocritical among the Arab people especially in the backdrop of the rhetoric of the democratization of the Middle East which the Obama administration continued to pursue after Bush. Adding to this perception began the rise of Arab awakening in the entire Middle East. The year

2011 onwards, “a revolutionary wave of protests and demonstrations swept the entire Arab world” (Salih, 2013). The citizens took to streets to protest against the corrupt and repressive regimes. Beginning in Tunisia, the uprising spread to other countries of the Middle East such as Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Jordan and so on. The protests were so intense that they entailed toppling of President Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt who had a three decades long rule and the assassination of Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan dictator. Rising inflation, deteriorating economic conditions, high rate of unemployment, violence, corruption, human rights abuse were some of the factors that were the driving force behind the Arab spring. In its preoccupation with the decision to support the autocratic regimes, the issue of the violation of human rights has often been neglected. In the process, the relationship between the US and most of the states of the Middle East has been negatively affected thereby entailing the alienation of the people. This is exemplified in the next chapter which takes Egypt as the case study of the post 9/11 US public diplomacy. Although the Egyptian revolution was inspired by the Tunisian uprising, an in depth discussion of the uprising in Tunisia is beyond the scope of the study. Thousands of Egyptians ventured out in streets and cities to launch a series of anti-government demonstrations when finally on the 11th of February, 2011 thirty years of the rule of Hosni Mubarak came to an end. A case study of Egypt is pertinent because of the years long US backing of the Mubarak regime and especially because Egypt is the second largest recipient of the US economic and military assistance after Israel. What have been the implications of the Egyptian revolution on the US? Will such political events transform into long term stability and democracy in the region? What role did the US public diplomacy play in tackling the current situation and to what extent it has been successful? These are some of the questions that the next chapter seeks to analyze.

CHAPTER- 3

Role of Public Diplomacy in US Engagement with Egypt

The US Public Diplomacy represents highs and lows in the U.S-Egypt relationship. Important events in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have implications on the relationship, including the public opinion towards the US. Egypt with its stage of development, cultural history, stable regimes, and geopolitical location represents an important partner of the US in the region. This Chapter undertakes Egypt as the case study for the US public diplomacy. The first section of the chapter constitutes the introductory part tracing the history of the US-Egypt relations highlighting the key areas of interest, cooperation, and conflict. The first section is pertinent to develop arguments and build up the rest of the chapter. The second section explores the context of US public diplomacy in Egypt. It gives an insight into the circumstances invoking the deployment of the soft power approach of public diplomacy, the methods and tools. The third section explores the US public diplomacy efforts in post 9/11 period and the events leading to the Egyptian uprising in 2011, and the resultant soaring anti-Americanism. This section attempts to analyze not only the factors that entailed anti-American sentiments but also the various measures undertaken by the US public diplomacy apparatus in addressing these issues. This section will be inclusive of a comparative analysis of the policies of the Bush and Obama administrations.

Introduction

The United States shares a long history of relationship with Egypt. Egypt has not only been an important American ally but also one of the largest recipients of huge military and economic aid from the US. Fraught with tensions, the journey of US relationship with Egypt has not always been smooth especially when Egyptian leaders had anti-American overtones. Egypt bore the brunt of colonial powers from the Ottoman Empire to the French, and the British, followed by corrupt government and political instability. The US-Egypt diplomatic relations date back to 1922 when J Morton Howell, the then American Diplomat in Cairo, recognized Egypt's independence from British colonialism. The US interests in Egypt rest on both strategic and moral grounds ranging from the containment of communism, consolidation of Western influence in the Middle East, Egypt-Israeli peace process to democracy and human rights, peace and stability and counter terrorism.

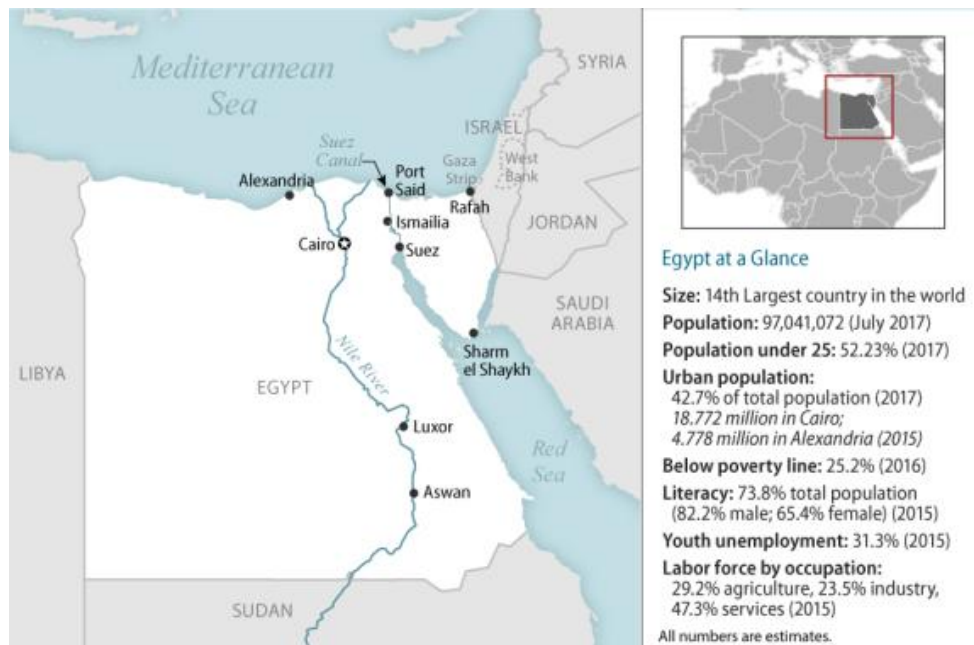


Fig.(2.1): Egypt at a Glance

Source: “Egypt Background and US Relations”, Accessed on 8 March 2018 URL <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33003.html>

With the election of Abdul Nasser, a vociferous leader, as the second Egyptian president, the relations with the US took a turn towards conflict and chaos. Nasser became a staunch advocate of Arab unity. His leadership put an end to the presence of British military in Suez Canal in 1954. The British troops completely withdrew coupled with the abdication of throne by king Farouk as a result of the coup led by the Free Officer’s Corps under Nasser’s leadership. Nasser immediately acceded to the throne to lead Egypt and the entire Arab world to peace, stability and most importantly freedom from Western influence. He also contributed to the launch of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) at a conference held in Bandung in 1955 to follow a policy of neutrality in the ideological warfare between the US and the Soviet Union. Together with Syria, Nasser formed the United Arab Republic (UAR) in 1958 under the umbrella of “pan-Arabism”. The 1950’s and 1960’s set the stage for Arab nationalism. Pan-Arabism or Arab nationalism in the larger context refers to a common identity among the Arab states bounded by common culture, language, religion, shared belief and shared set of values. It was in response to the decade long colonial rule and Western influences that created the Arab consciousness

to remain united. The colonization resulted in the region's fragmentation and political distortion. A sense started to prevail among the Arab states to curtail the further domination by western powers, while at the same time securing the Arab unity and integrity. Nasser emerged as the leading figure who rallied the idea of pan Arabism. Many Middle Eastern states looked forward to him as the flag bearer of Arab Nationalism owing to his immense popularity and influence. States such as Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq recognized and welcomed the UAR. However, the UAR did not last long and collapsed in the year 1961 with the secession of Syria. (Chalala, 1987)

The United States sought to engage with Egypt owing to its strategic geopolitical location and immense influence in the Middle East region. The US sympathized with the Egyptians prerogative of "self-determination" and supported the military coup under the Free Officers Corps. Even though the US assisted in liberating Egypt from the British colonial rule, it was mainly directed from the prism of containment of Soviet influence in the region. To that end, the Truman administration provided \$1.3 billion economic and military aid to the Egyptian military (Buescher, 1989). Egypt received lion's share of funds from the United States for economic and other developmental programs. Despite abundant foreign aid, Nasser seemed adamant to stick on to his anti-western rhetoric and policies, thereby preventing any kind of intervention by the West in both foreign and domestic affairs. Subjecting Egypt's defeat in the 1948 war with Israel due to the lack of proper ammunition and the refusal by both the US and Britain to supply arms, Nasser tilted to the Soviet Union for the purchase of military armaments and agreed with Soviet's offer of an "experimental nuclear reactor" (Bagley, 1956). However, Egypt continued to receive funds from the US for the highly ambitious Aswan High Dam project which was later turned down by the US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on learning that Nasser had not only announced an arms deal with Czechoslovakia in 1955 but also was turning to the Soviet who were offering a cent percent financing without any rate of interest and to be repaid over a span of 60 years (Dickinson, 1965). John Foster Dulles realized Nasser's well played game against the US and immediately called for the withdrawal of the US aid. These events and the refusal to sign the Baghdad Pact became a cause of great worry for the United States.

In July 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal after having denied the American aid for the project which provoked Britain and France in abrogation of the Suez Canal Agreement of 1956 (according to this agreement Britain agreed to a complete withdrawal of troops from the canal but at the same time liable to revert back in case of a threat posed by external aggression). Fearing for the grave consequences of Nasser's move to nationalize the Suez Canal, President Eisenhower tried to negotiate a settlement of the dispute with its British and French counterparts. Failing to do that, Britain and France along with Israel covertly plotted an attack on Egypt to topple Nasser's regime. On 29th October, 1956 the Israeli army invaded the Sinai Peninsula followed by the British and French troops later on. With the US intervention the attack was called off and Britain and France were compelled to agree to a ceasefire. The US apprehensions of the spread of communism to the Middle East were so deep that it condemned the British and French attack on Egypt at the cost of creating tensions in relations with its NATO allies. To quote Michael Thornhill, "The international crisis that followed made him the protagonist of the Middle Eastern politics, as well as the main champions of the Third World nationalism" (Thornhill, 2004). Much to Eisenhower's stern condemnation of the war, the British, French and Israeli troops evacuated the Egyptian territory in March 1957 thereby putting an end to the war. However, the 1967 war renewed the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite efforts by the Eisenhower Administration, the US relationship with Egypt was a roller coaster during the rule of Abdel Nasser given his staunch nationalism and anti-western rhetoric.

Things began to change in the 1970s. It witnessed a buildup of bilateral strategic relations, greater economic and military assistance and a commitment to securing peace and stability in the region. The US reverses in Indo-china and the humiliating defeat of the Arabs and the Egyptians in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli war largely account for such changes. Another reason was, of course, the end of Abdul Nasser's regime after which Anwar Sadat ascended to power with the title of the prime minister. During his reign the US-Egypt relations took a positive turn towards greater cooperative relations contrary to Nasser's anti-US stances. In May 1971, he cultivated friendly relations with the US by putting forth a proposal of friendship to William Rogers, the US Secretary of State during the latter's visit to Egypt, signifying a marked shift from Egypt's policy of

nationalism to internationalism- In fact, “Sadat led Egypt away from the Soviet Union and into the waiting arms of the West. He dismantled many of the socialist features of the Egyptian state and in doing he impressed western leaders with his sincerity, weakened his opponents and enriched his friends” (Alterman, 2016). Sadat debarred the Soviet military officers when they failed to fulfill the promise of delivering arms and ammunition during the 1973 war. Sadat realized the importance of forging diplomatic relations with the West to seek long term objectives. He made a historic visit to the Israeli soil in 1977, something unfathomable in the public eye. He sought to build up relations with the US and seek assistance to bring about not only the transformation and development of Egypt juxtaposed with the security of the Sinai Peninsula but also to enhance Egypt’s influence in the region. The move later culminated into the signing of the Camp David Accords (a framework for securing peace in the Middle East under UNSC resolution 242) in a meeting between Sadat, the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the US President Jimmy Carter on 17 September, 1978. He believed that making peace with Israel would ultimately build up good relations with the US (given the history of immense US support and involvement in promoting the Arab-Israeli peace process. (Alterman, 2016)

Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem and signing of the Camp David Accords to put an end to the “Israel- Palestine deadlock” struck a moment in the history of Middle East in general and the US-Egypt relations in particular. However, sadly after three years of the Accords, he was assassinated on 6th October, 1981.



Fig.(2.2): Egyptian President Sadat, US president Jimmy Carter and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin joining hands after the signing of Camp David Accords

Source: Camp David Accords, Jimmy Carter, www.britannica.com

After the assassination of Anwar Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, the former Vice President held the reins of the Egyptian presidency. Stepping on the lines of former President Sadat, Hosni Mubarak also looked forward to a greater cooperation with the US. As for the Camp David Accords, he prioritized the restoration of Egypt's sovereignty on Sinai and securing relations with the Arab League rather than solely focusing on the Egypt-Israeli peace treaty. Mubarak sought military assistance from the US. Immediately after taking his office, he accepted the proposal for a joint military exercise with the US. Like Sadat, Mubarak believed that cooperation with the US is essential to Egypt's development and influence in the region. He opined that, "the US should not give up its interests in the area" (Tohami, 1981). Mubarak also continued to organize a series of meetings to keep the Israel-Palestine negotiations in process such as the Sharm-Al-Shaykh agreement in 1999, the Camp David Accords in 2000 and other meetings of the Arab League. He also sympathized with the Palestinians and condemned Israeli aggression against them (Mark, 2003).

US-Egypt Relations: Context of Public Diplomacy

US public diplomacy in Egypt stems from the requirement of maintenance of its strategic interests underpinned by the promotion of democracy, safeguarding human rights and most importantly securing Egypt-Israeli peace process. But during the cold war era, the containment of communism was the predominant US national security objective shaping the US public diplomacy thereof.

The United States embarked on its public diplomacy in Egypt by setting up the United States Information Service (USIS) office in Cairo in 1944 as a means of communicating with the Egyptian public. The US recognition of the State of Israel in 1948 antagonized the Arab states particularly Egypt. Stemming from the concern of containing Soviet influence in the Middle East, the US sought to resort to the soft power approach in dealing with the general public in the backdrop of explicating its containment policy and to help acquaint the public with the American society and culture. As a result in the year 1947, the Truman administration established 'Thomas Jefferson' library in Alexandria. The Voice of America (VOA) had also set up its office in Cairo in 1951. (Rugh, 2006)

The Eisenhower years woke up to the rise of Arab nationalism. Egypt's Nasser, a vociferous leader, emerged as the flag bearer of the Arab nationalism coupled with anti-Israeli rhetoric which in turn became a problem for the United States. In opposition to the Voice of America, Nasser started the Voice of Arab service marked immensely by anti-Israel and anti-western propaganda, making the task of public diplomacy officers all the more strenuous. Secretary John Foster Dulles called off the aid program for the Aswan High Dam, the officers had to convince the Arabs for taking such a stand. The Suez Canal crisis brought some respite to Washington on account of its condemnation of the move made by the British, French and Israeli forces. At the time of the crisis there was an increase in the services of VOA to a broadcasting of 14.5 hours per day. Several books were being circulated in Arabic, distribution of pamphlets against the Soviet's influence in the region. While, the USIS cooperation continued on the cultural and educational front. (Rugh, 2006)

In 1963, during the presidency of John F Kennedy, the US ambassador to Egypt, John Badeau arranged for eight US professors Fulbright holders to undertake teaching in the Egyptian universities and colleges. American poet such as Robert Lowell and ballet dancer were also invited to Egypt. The outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war again hampered the US-Egypt relations especially when Nasser explicitly accused Americans of their direct involvement in the war. Mob attacks were waged at the USIS centers in Alexandria and Cairo causing huge damage to the books and other American assets. Public diplomacy also included US economic and military assistance which had a humungous presence due to Sadat's signing of the Camp David Accords in the late 1970s. Camp David Accords bore the fruits of substantive US military assistance amounting to \$ 1.3 billion annually. Taleb makes an important analysis that, no matter what, whether there are differences of opinion on political issues (such as political reform in Egyptian politics should be a domestic affair rather than international intervention), the US military aid and assistance have always been pivotal in relation with Egypt. (Taleb, 2009)

Francis Ricciardone, former American ambassador to Egypt, explicates the perks of US military and economic assistance as follows, "Egyptian strategic partnership played a central role in promoting peace and stability, countering extremism and terrorism, and creating an environment in which political and economic reforms can prosper. A key pillar of the relationship, US security and economic assistance both symbolizes and vastly strengthens our nation's historic cooperation and long term commitment to our partnership" (Cited in Axlerod, 2011). Nevertheless, both the US and Egypt were experiencing a significant improvement in their diplomatic relations proceeding towards a more humane, amicable people to people relations rather than being narrowly centered on securing strategic objectives such as the security of Israel. (Mark, 2003)

The United States Information Service (USIS) centers in Egypt carried out its work smoothly and swiftly from arranging trips for the Egyptian students under the International Visitors programs to organizing various cultural events, community service and other development programs. President George H W Bush had to confront Saddam Hussein's aggression in Kuwait and mobilize support to liberate the people of Kuwait.

Egypt and Syria were the principle Arab states who agreed to send their forces to counter Saddam. Despite the faltering of the Oslo Peace Process and a decline in support for the US military strikes in Iraq during the later years of the Clinton administration, the officials carried out the work of public diplomacy, collaborating with the local NGO's and civil society groups in Egypt. As Rugh says, "the USIS staff had much better knowledge of various groups in Egyptian society than any other part of the embassy, and they had extensive local contacts that enabled them to make projects successful" (Rugh, 2006). In the backdrop of various conflicts in the Middle East such as the gulf wars, Arab Israeli war and other politico military conflicts, the US had a hard time in refashioning its foreign policy in Egypt.

It is to be noted that the US perceives Egypt as essential to safeguard its strategic interests in the Middle Eastern region. As mentioned above the statement stems in the light of both Egypt's significant influence in the region both strategically and militarily and the upcoming events such as the Gulf war. Given the strategic importance of Egypt due to its huge size and population and great military capabilities the US sought its partnership with Egypt to influence the Arab states and the public opinion in congruence with the American foreign policy, for instance, gaining Egypt's support for the war in Iraq and Kuwait's liberation. Egypt actively participated and became one of the leading contributors in the first gulf war in 1991. During Mubarak's regime Egypt continued to receive economic and military assistance from the US, which was in lieu of signing of the peace treaty with Israel and Mubarak's opposition to radical Islamism. The point is clearly explicated by Abdellateef Weshah, "The US did not find Mubarak to be a threat to their interests in the Arab territories especially that the Egyptian president continued to underline that his political attitude would not lead to Egypt-Israeli tensions and Mubarak did not want to endanger relation with the US due to the huge dependency on American aid programs." (Weshah, 2016). This approach was particularly important in light of the September 11, terrorist attacks. Mubarak regime proved to be beneficial for the US along the lines of Israel-Palestine conflict in terms of the restoration of Camp David Accords and further restoration of peace between Israel and Palestine. (Banerji, 1991)

The Post 9/11 Period and US Public Diplomacy in Egypt

Samer Shehata (2004), in his article, "Egypt after 9/11: Perceptions of the United States", gives us an insight into the complexity of the Egyptian public opinion and media on the September 11 attacks. Understanding people's perception is pertinent to the tool of public diplomacy that aims to communicate directly with the public. While the attacks were deeply condemned by President Mubarak and other government officials, the Egyptians had a mixed response. Though majority of the people expressed sorrow at the plight of the victims of the attacks both Americans and other Muslims, however, their opinion turned largely negative on America's war in Afghanistan. Criticism of the Bush Middle East policy also sparked up. The Egyptian daily "Al-Wafd" quoted, "why does America put its nose in every little or big thing? Or threatens Egypt like a child" (Shehta, 2004). Similarly Israel's occupation of the West Bank and other cities of Palestine in 2002 led to a number of anti-Israel and anti-American protests and demonstrations (including the boycott of American goods and services) from streets to University campuses. "Demonstrators voiced their criticism of the Mubarak's regime, its alliance with the US, Egypt's weak policy via Israel and lack of political freedoms in the country" (Shehta, 2004). A lot of medicinal and food aid worth millions of Egyptian pounds were given to the Palestinian, facilitated by none other than President's wife Suzanne Mubarak.

The incidents such as the US led war in Iraq, Afghanistan, biasness towards Israel, Bush's War on Terror policy shaped up anti-Americanism among the Egyptian public. The circumstances also paved way for the rebellion by Egyptian citizens against Mubarak government, calling for his resignation. Mubarak's coerced suppression of such protests and demonstrations escalated public outrage. Despite introduction of certain reforms in the electoral process (such as the parliamentary elections of 2005 where an amendment to the constitution enabled multiple candidates to contest for the elections) fraud and corruption crept in. The reforms then began to be perceived merely as a "sham". An analysis of the current political situation by the intellectuals, prominent journalists and the citizens revealed that, "the fraud may lead to a collapse in the legitimacy of the state and the current regime" (The Washington Post, 2005). However, it was folly on part of Bush administration's press release which stated that "there was no indication that the

Egyptian government is not interested in having peaceful, free and fair elections” which was later on rectified that the US believe that there are “serious concerns about the path of political reforms in Egypt” (The Washington Post, 2005). Yet the seriousness of the bush administration in its dealings with the Egyptian political reforms was much awaited among Egypt’s public. However a substantial number of Egyptian judges responsible for the conduct of elections were averse to the idea of monitoring of elections in Egypt by any foreign authority. The objection came in response to Bush’s statement in Latvia when he stated that, “Egypt’s presidential elections should proceed with international monitors and with rules that allow real campaign”. (The Daily Star, Lebanon, 2005)

The focus of the US foreign policy under Bush administration now shifted to democracy promotion in the Middle East contrary to the traditional diplomacy of supporting autocratic allies in the region. This was in part due to the Freedom Agenda which was launched during his second inaugural address, underlying the belief that fostering democratic governments and enabling political freedom will help eliminate radical tendencies which will eventually curb Islamic terrorism. The bone of contention is how a democratic country as old and as large as US could lend support to authoritarianism, an irony it itself. “The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world” (George Bush Archives, 2006). The rhetoric of democracy also became the justifying ground for the American involvement in Iraq later on. When other reasons failed to ascertain connections between Saddam and Al Qaeda and the necessity to continue thwarting the accumulation of destructive weapons by Iraq, the rationale of democracy swept in. After Iraq, Egypt occupies a central place in the US foreign policy of democratization in the Middle East.

The US public diplomacy efforts were now centered on the promotion of democracy in Egypt. To that end the State Department’s Near East Bureau launched, “The Middle East Partnership Initiative” (MEPI) in the year 2002, the cornerstone of its soft power policy. MEPI aims at promoting democracy, peace, and stability in the region by indulging in all kind of developmental programs such as political, social or economic and directly catering to the needs and empowerment of the citizens amidst the prevailing challenges

and conflicts. MEPI is the direct manifestation of Bush's policy of democracy promotion in the Middle East as it rests on securing the key objectives of "participatory governance, economic reform and advancement in education" so that the government not only has improved relations with the citizens but also the people have a greater say in the participation and governance of the region (US Department of State MEPI). Although MEPI does not have a strong presence in Egypt yet it has been successful to an extent in introducing and facilitating various developmental programs. MEPI provides for the training and skill development of as many as 400 jobless youth under the "Education for Employment Foundation" program. MEPI works with the Egyptian Civil Society Organizations to educate the citizens to create awareness of their rights and duties and a more active participation. Programs such as "Activism 2.0", "Social Action Project-Youth Social Network" help the Egyptian youths and students to make use of cyber technology and cyber space as a platform to exchange views and opinions and to seek a more global outreach. In Egypt's first of its kind election which allowed multiple candidates to contest, MEPI assisted approximately 2000 people authorized to monitor the election (US Department of State, MEPI fact sheet). The American University in Cairo undertakes the Tomorrow's Leaders Program in collaboration with MEPI, to provide scholarships and counsel students to seek the best path of education and careers for themselves. (The American University, Cairo)

On June 20, 2005 in her visit to the American University at Cairo, the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice pushed for political and economic reforms and democracy promotion in Egypt (Public Diplomacy also includes the visits and tours by the country's various authorities, officials, diplomats, ambassadors to the target country). Initially, her trip was cancelled in response to the arrest of Egypt's democracy activist Ayman Nour, but was later on rescheduled with his release. She said, "President Mubarak's decision to amend the country's constitution and hold multi party elections is encouraging. He has unlocked the door for change. Now the Egyptian government must put the faith in its own people and fulfill its promise by giving its citizens the freedom to choose" and called for replacing the Egypt's 26 years old emergency rule with the rule of law. (US Department of State, 2005) Putting up a strong exhortation for democracy in the Middle East she urged, "Throughout the Middle East, the fear of free choices can longer justify the denial

of liberty, it's time to abandon the excuses that are made to avoid the hard work of democracy" (US Department of State, 2005). She also visited President Mubarak in 2006 praising him for his efforts to listen to the governed yet at the same time calling for more transparency in the electoral process. Efforts were also made to mobilize support for the setback of US aid from Palestine due to the victory of Hamas to power which is a militant organization in the dictionary of State Department.

Rice's rhetoric on her subsequent visits to Egypt broadened to put a case for democratization process, human rights, peace building and addressing issues on Israel-Palestine, Iran as well as Iraq and growing extremism. During the same year itself Karen P Hughes the Under Secretary of State for Public diplomacy and Public affairs visited Egypt for the first time. She voiced her concern on Islamic extremism, Iraq's possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and attainment of peace and stability in the entire region. She appraised Sheikh Tantawi, the head of Al-Azhar, a religious institution of learning, the one of its kind to denounce the 9/11 attacks. "I praised Sheikh for his courage, and he said it is not courage but I did the right thing to speak out against terrorism and extremism" (Denver Post, 2005). She met a number of college and school students to listen to their opinions and sought to establish links on common grounds of humanity barring religious extremities and conveyed the admiration of the richness of Egyptian culture and civilization by the Americans. Hughes visit was used "as a showcase for a \$10 million US aid program which has helped restoring an ancient medieval gate and other artifacts and artworks in Cairo". (The New York Times, 2005) But the questions regarding Bush's policy in the Middle East particularly the war in Iraq and the War on Terror continued to pop up. A remark made by a government employee, Mohammad Osman, "Americans are biased against Islam, look what they are doing in Iraq" (Cited in Kessler, 2005). A similar comment was made by a newspaper editor regarding policies of Bush and US backed authoritarian regime both in Egypt and other Middle Eastern states.

The political development in Egypt 2005 onwards as a measure of the US led democratization is the fact, that despite the introduction of reforms in the electoral process, Mubarak once again won the presidential elections in 2006. Elections were

accompanied with the state endorsed violence, repression, corruption, unlawful detention and a crackdown on those who were against the current government. Similarly, Ayman Nour the leading opposition candidate was convicted and arrested on false charges made by a judge who was supposed to be a close ally of Mubarak. These events spurred the public anger both against Mubarak and the US for its backing and support to this regime. The arrests of a large number of members of the Muslim Brotherhood followed in the year 2006 in a bid to curb their outreach. During the same year, the state's emergency rule was reinstituted by the government for two more years. The draconian xenophobic emergency rule curtails civil liberties of the citizens as it authorizes arbitrary arrests without trial by courts and imposes restrictions on the freedom of speech, expression and assembly (Williams, 2006). Further constitutional reforms were introduced in 2007, however, to the utter dismay of the Muslim Brotherhood. A direct attack had been waged on the Muslim Brotherhood as the amendment provides for a ban on religious parties from contesting or any activities on religious lines. Clause 3 of Article 5 clearly states that, "it is not permitted to pursue any political activity or establish any political party within any religious frame of reference or on any religious basis or on grounds of gender or origin". (Brown, 2007)

In fact, the constitutional reforms introduced under the "umbrella of counterterrorism" further entrenched the state machinery's hold on the curtailment of the rights and liberties of the citizens. These developments were contrary to the progress towards democracy rather it was the reinforcement of autocracy. Nathalie Bernard comments, "the amendments strengthened the authoritarian character of the regime by putting the Muslim brothers and the judges outside the political scene and by allowing the adoption of an unconstitutional anti terrorist law". (Bernard, 2008) There was no scope of improvement as violence and corruption continued to prevail in the realm of politics to the extent that the National Democratic Party (NDP) again emerged victorious in the 2010 parliamentary elections. The political chaos coupled with an extreme public indignation against the policies of Mubarak led to the outbreak of massive protests and demonstrations launching the Arab Spring of 2011.

Arab Spring in Egypt: Revolution and Political Change

The political circumstances which resulted from the outbreak of the Egyptian revolution of 2011 unveiled new challenges before the United States. A series of non violent demonstrations and protests led by the Egyptian citizens predominantly the Egyptian youth put an end to three decades of Mubarak's rule. The reasons were both economic and political. Even though Egypt's GDP had shown considerable improvement from 2005 onwards, it benefitted only a limited section of the population. The income gap continued to broaden between the rich and the poor and the rate of unemployment among the younger population base flared up.

On the political front, Mubarak government failed to deliver the electoral and constitutional reforms suitable for democracy. The elections were fraught with violence, corruption and fraud. The policies were designed in such a way so as to perpetuate the regime's rule (via the succession of Mubarak's son Gamal). The parliamentary elections of 2010 followed on the same lines of fraud and corruption which again landed an overwhelming majority votes to the NDP. Violation of human rights manifested in the state led crackdown of the dissenters during the successive elections, the people who were against the ruling government, the merciless killing of Khaled Said¹ by the police, the terrorist attacks on the minorities (the Christian Coptics)² and the inability of the government to address all these issues intensified the popular indignation to its peak. (Brownlee, 2007)

¹ Khaled Said was a young Egyptian who became a victim of police brutality as he tried to expose the links between the drug dealers and the police. Tremendous use of social media was made by the public. A Facebook page titled "WE are all Khaled" was created to mobilize popular support against the government and its brutal policies.

² Christian Coptics are the largest of the Christian minorities in Egypt who have been the victim of hate crimes and sectarian strife since long. In Jan, 2011 one of the church was vandalized by a suicide bomber (allegedly a radical Islamist) that entailed the death of as many as 23 people. Following the attack on the churches, violence against the Christians continued to grow. Clashes erupted between the military and Coptics in October 2011 when a huge number of Copts who were protesting against the attacks on Churches were massacred by the Egyptian military. The government had been inefficient in tackling the sectarian violence, one of the reasons prompting the civil uprising. "Factbox: Attacks on Christians in Egypt", Accessed on 12 Apr. 2018 URL <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-clashes-coptic/factbox-attacks-on-christians-in-egypt-idUSTRE7992W420111010>

Inspired by the civilian uprising in Tunisia in 2010, the people of Egypt ventured out in streets and cities to launch a series of anti-government demonstrations. Cairo's Tahrir Square became the centre of political activity. Thousands and thousands of people assembled at the Tahrir square demanding the resignation of Mubarak and shouting slogans like 'day of rage', 'day of departure', 'down with Mubarak' and so on (AL Jazeera, 2011). Protests became violent due to the outbreak of clashes between the police and the demonstrators. The youth made extensive use of the internet technology and social media which became abuzz with the criticism and condemnation of the corrupt policies of Mubarak regime. For as many as 34 and 93 million Egyptians were active on face book and twitter during January and February 2011 (Bakr, 2012). The public yearned for a change after decades of repression and autocracy. Finally on 11th February 2011, Mubarak resigned from the post of president. The Egyptian uprising of 2011 had serious repercussions for the United States explained in the following paragraphs.



Fig.(2.3): Egyptian Revolution 2011: Protests at Tahrir Square

Source: "Robin Wyatt Vision", Accessed on March 15, 2018 URL <http://www.robinwyatt.org/photography/journal/egypts-ongoing-revolution-images-and-insights-from-tahrir-square/>

Given the increasing popularity of the internet among the Egyptian youth, the US Department of State sought to include the medium of internet as an important public

diplomacy tool. The State Department launched the Alliance of Youth Movement which had its inaugural session in the New York City in November 2008. The movement encouraged robust participation from the youth to make extensive use of the internet technology and the social media platform to not only combat extremism but also to reach out to the global public to unite them in the struggle against extremism, repression and coercion. Activists from all over the world participated in the session. One such group was “April 6” from Egypt (Cartalucci, 2011). The world could not have anticipated that one day this group of technology savvy Egyptians would bring a revolution in internet technology by using the same as a weapon against their own President Hosni Mubarak. “The April 6 movement of Egypt is one of them and their role in the apparent success of the US ousting of Hosni Mubarak is a perfect example of how this new army of prodded youth will be deployed. It is color revolution 2.0 run directly out of the US State Department with the support of corporate America”. (Cited in Cartalucci, 2011)

President Obama praised the revolution in Egypt. He applauded the military for backing the protestors and leading a coup toppling Mubarak. In a White house press conference he remarked, “The people of Egypt have spoken, their voices have been heard, and Egypt will never be the same...the word Tahrir means liberation, that cries out for freedom, it will remind us of the Egyptian people of what they did, the things they stood for and how they changed their country...by stepping down President Mubarak responded to Egyptian people’s hunger for change”. (Obama White House Archives, 2011)

Marc Thissen, former speech writer for President Bush believes that although the civilian uprising for a democratic change in Egypt should have been a feather in a cap for the US policy of democratization, however, the Obama administration’s long standing support for Mubarak till the time he was uprooted from the presidency did not go well among the Egyptian public. According to them there was no strong condemnation of Mubarak’s oppressive rule by the Americans. Slogans such as “Shame on you Obama” were raised during the protests. The public criticism of America’s support for Mubarak also came in response to the opinion held by US Vice-President Biden that “Mubarak is not the dictator” and the US envoy to Cairo Frank Wisner who believed that the democratic transformation should continue with Mubarak’s stay in power (Theissen, 2013). Majority

of the protestors expressed great disapproval for the dubious nature of the US foreign policy. This is evident from the following statements made by some of the demonstrators- “American’s speak about their own interests, not ours”, “We believe America is against us, until now Obama didn’t support the Egyptian people”, “Tell Obama to forget about Mubarak, he is done”. (Fadel, 2011)

In the aftermath of the revolution political chaos continued to dominate the scene. Shortly after the resignation of Mubarak, the Egyptian military’s Security Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) held the reins of power. The SCAF dissolved the parliament and suspended the constitution till a new draft of the constitution was laid out. However, the people of Egypt and the Islamist party demanded the holding of democratic elections as soon as possible rather than framing of a new constitution. To make their demands met the protestors once again gathered at the Tahrir square. However, this time the military instead of backing their demands struck a crackdown by torturing and detaining them in large numbers. Few weeks later the parliamentary elections took place where the Islamist parties emerged victorious on the one hand, the Muslim Brotherhood got a sweeping victory in the Shura council whereas the Salafis lead in the Consultative council. In the presidential elections of 2012, Mohammad Morsi the Islamist candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood is sworn in as the first ever president of Egypt to have been democratically elected.

The election of Morsi wages a rancorous struggle for power between the military and the Islamists. Morsi vested in himself more powers above the jurisdiction of the court, framed the draft of the new constitution and appointed Abdul Fattah El Sisi as his new defense minister. Once again the people of Egypt came out in large numbers to protest against Morsi for what they perceived his misuse of power. The draft of the constitution did not live up to the expectations of the people as the basic rights and liberties of the citizens, women and minorities were left in the cold in the new constitution. Plunging economic conditions juxtaposed with inefficiency of the government to address the issues put the state of Egypt at a risk of a political catastrophe. Violence ignited as the citizens began clashing with the police forces. The protest gathered momentum with

approximately 22 million people signing the Tamarrod petition³ demanding Morsi's removal. Sisi issued a warning to Morsi to respond to the people's demand. He said, "If you have not obeyed the people after 48 hours, it will be our duty...to put forward a road map for the future instead" (Frontline, 2013). Soon after, Morsi is ousted from power. A number of Muslim Brotherhood members are convicted. The military barges into the protestors rallying for Morsi aggravating the confrontation. Thousands of civilian casualties were reported. Condemning the move by the interim government and the military force, president Obama issued a statement, "We deplore violence against the citizens, we oppose the pursuit of martial law which denies the rights to people under the principle that security trumps individual freedom, we extend our condolences to the aggrieved families" (Frontline, 2013). Given the gravity of violation of human rights in Egypt, President Obama ordered cancellation of a "biannual joint military exercise" that was due shortly. Although he called off the joint military exercise, yet no plans to sock away US \$2 billion military aid to Egypt appeared on the radar leaving the future of Egypt to be determined by the its own people. (Frontline, 2013)

In July 2014, Sisi ran for the presidential elections and won by 97% of the votes. Contrary to the optimism that Sisi's rule would entail the desired change embellished with peace, stability and a flourishing economy, Egypt continued to groan under the deteriorating political circumstances (political polarization became sharp between the military on one hand and the Muslim brotherhood on the other hand, crackdown and detention of the Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters continued, as many as 29,000 supporters of the MB were detained by 2015, trial of President Morsi resulted in his death sentence in 2015, soaring unemployment, plummeting economic conditions as Egypt's tourism industry suffered a setback due to the prevailing conditions, increased inflation and a new emerging threat from ISIS terrorism. (Stork, 2015)

With Sisi's election as the new president, Egypt resumed its trajectory towards autocracy, lessening the prospects of a democratic bloom. The current political scenario and the

³ The word Tamarrod which signifies "rebellion" in Arabic was a popular movement at the grassroots level led by the members of Kefayat movement as a rebel against Morsi by way of a signature drive. By 30th of June, the movement garnered signatures of more than 20 million citizens demanding Morsi's removal from power.

internal politics blurred the US objective of a democratic change in Egypt. Although the Obama administration hailed the new government by looking forward to a greater cooperation, yet certain impediments persisted in achieving the desired outcome. The tussle between the military, on the one hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood on the other seems to be a never ending phenomena, the Muslim Brotherhood had been banned from the political discourse. Since the ousting of Morsi the conflict had only worsened. Both the groups were averse to each other leaving no room for reconciliation. Secondly, the groups worked on authoritarian lines as exemplified by Morsi when he assumed himself more power above the reach of court. Sisi's rule demonstrated the same. Thirdly, the negative perception about the US continued to prevail among the Egyptian people.

The US based democracy international described the election of 2014 as an election characterized by “suppression of dissent and lack of respect for basic freedoms such as those of freedom of speech and association constituted the political environment at this time making a genuinely democratic presidential election impossible”. Similarly International Crisis Group Director, Issandr Amrani stated, “there has been a definite reassertion of authoritarianism in the last nine months, but its been a crackdown that has been against non violent political dissenters whether Islamists or non Islamists”. (Fadel, 2014)

The White House press release on December 18, 2014 stated in a talk with Sisi, “President Obama sympathized with the assault on the people , unwarranted arrests of the protestors and journalists yet the focus was more on continuing cooperation on terrorism and security issues and towards greater military and intelligence cooperation” (Obama White House Archives, 2014). The hypocrisy of the Obama administration is evident from the fact that the military aid which was temporarily suspended as a mark of discontentment over Morsi's overthrow and the violence unleashed on his followers was released later on; according to the White House statement; “from the fiscal year 2018, the US will channel security assistance for Egypt to four categories- counter terrorism, border security, Sinai security and Maritime security and for weapons system Egypt already posses” (Calamur, 2015) The statement was released following John Kerry, the

US Secretary of State visit to Cairo in a meeting with Sisi. Kerry even described Sisi's coup as an effort towards "restoring democracy". (Calamur, 2015)

A recent poll (October, 2016) conducted by Baseera, the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion, showed a decline in ratings for President Sisi since two years and four months of his office services, falling from 82% to 68%. Rising inflation, countries poor economic conditions, lack of employment constituted the primary reasons for his disapproval. (Baseera Poll, 2016)

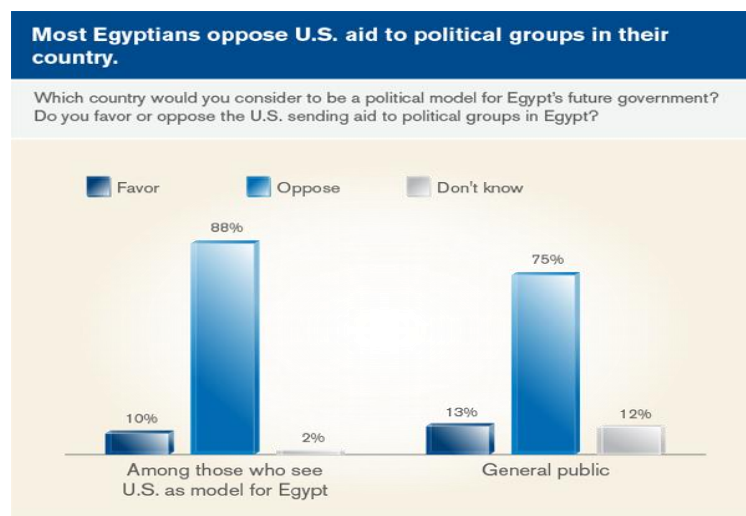


Fig.(2.4): Egypt's Public Opinion on US Aid.

Source: "Egypt from Tahrir to Transition", Accessed on 17 March, 2018 URL <https://news.gallup.com/poll/157046/egypt-tahrir-transition.aspx>

The US aid to Egypt which has been the backbone of the US-Egypt relations fails to have a favorability rating among the Egyptian people. Figure (2.4) clearly explicates the fact that 88% people starkly opposes the US (the flag bearer of democracy) as a model for its future transition to a democratic government and 75% of the public rejects the billion dollars US aid to Egypt. The response is in effect of the mistrust of the US foreign policy and the intervention of any foreign power in its internal politics. The idea of "self-

determination” is more pronounced among the people rather than assistance from any external sources.

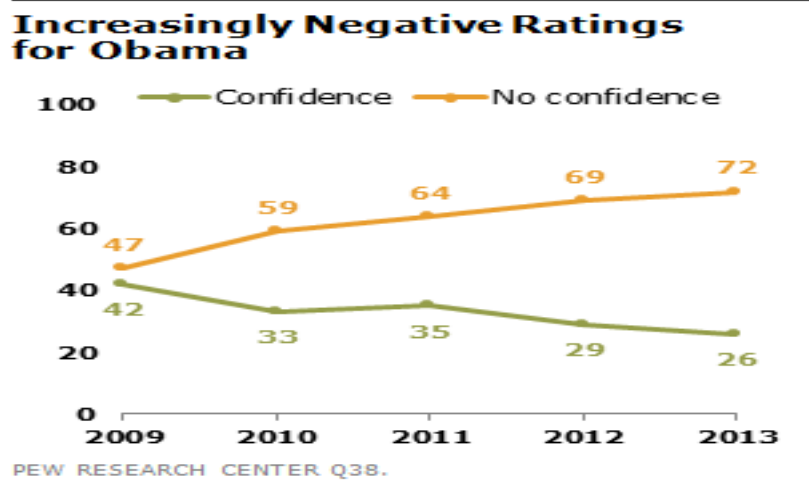


Fig.(2.5): Egyptian Public Opinion on President Obama

Source: “Egyptians Increasingly Glum”, Pew Research Center, Accessed on 18 March, 2018 URL <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/05/16/egyptians-increasingly-glum/>

The favorable opinion for President Obama continued slashing even though he vowed towards a “new beginning” in its relations with Egypt in the Cairo University speech. In 2009, there was considerable hope from the Obama administration as 42% Egyptians expressed confidence in him even though the no confidence poll was slightly higher. However, the year 2013 experienced a significant decline in the favorability ratings as merely 26% Egyptians showed confidence in the Obama administration that would bring in the desired changes contrary to the majority (which constituted 72% of the public opinion) bound by pessimism about his leadership. (Pew Research Center, 2013)

Despite the tensions in the US-Egypt relations efforts continued in the realm of US Public Diplomacy. The section of Public Affairs in the US embassy at Cairo in collaboration with Egypt’s Society for Culture and Development established the American Corner at the Maadi Public Library in March 2009. Established as an information outpost, the American Corner seeks to cultivate better relations between the US and Egypt, to provide information about the American values, society and culture and to build up a cultural

environment to endure long lasting partnership. The Corner besides being the store house of American books, journals, magazines, provides an array of programs and sponsor events such as organizing various cultural activities and training programs, film showcase, lecture series by the government officials, researchers and scholars, storytelling and so on. (Egypt's Society for Culture and Development)

In the realm of media and broadcasting, Al Hurra and Radio Sawa was the principle channel of communication in the Middle East led by the US Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). Al Hurra led an extensive coverage of the 2011 uprising landing the people's choice award in the category of international Broadcasting. The referendum and the presidential elections in 2012 were also widely covered by these two channels. A significant increase in the viewing trends of Al Hurra was observed during the revolution to "7.7 million as against the 3.9 million viewers in 2010. (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2013)

Both the radio stations also covered the impact of and people's perceptions of the revolution, in the light of which programs such as Street Pulse, Rayheen ala Feen were launched (2012). These two shows enabled the Egyptians to voice their opinions directly by means of face to face communication, marking a significant departure from telling one's own story to listening to the other side of the story. To quote the director of the program, "the Program, the first of its kind in Egypt, provides a unique perspective to how Egyptians have been directly affected by the Jan 25 revolution". (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2013)

A show titled "Egypt Talks" was launched by Al Hurra in 2016, directly targeting the Egyptian audiences to provide a platform to express their opinions, concerns about all such events and occurrences concerning them. Based on a diverse range of topics, the show focuses on all aspects of the lives of the people. Most importantly, "the program will seek voices that are not usually heard on other networks, and offer balanced and relevant contents that resonate with Egyptian people" (Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2016). "According to a poll conducted in the cities of Cairo and Alexandria, Al Hurra TV reached a large audience during the Arab spring protests, with 25% of respondents saying

that they had used the stations to follow the events far more than either BBC or CNN”.(Broadcasting Board of Governors, 2013)

Cooperation also continued on the economic front. In November 2014, a business delegation was led in Egypt by the US Chamber of Commerce, the US-Egypt Business Council in collaboration with the American Chambers Egypt and Egypt-US Business Council to increase business ties between both the countries and to avail economic opportunities in the region. So far the group has been the largest business delegation with more than 150 participants from approximately 70 nations. The Conference encouraged robust participation by the American companies and business to make investments in various sectors such as energy, health care, food security, infrastructural development, tourism, manufacturing sector, transportation and so with the purpose to boost Egypt’s economy. (US Chamber of Commerce, 2015)

Similarly, a dollar 250 million US-Egypt Higher Education Initiative was launched in Egypt in 2015 to facilitate educational and cultural exchanges for the Egyptian students, women and professionals and scholarships to students from various educational backgrounds (Alterman, 2016).

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) continued to provide funds for skill development among the youths. It opened the Career Development Centers which aim at training students to develop the marketing skills “to bridge the gap between education and employment needs”. Recently (2015) it collaborated with the Ain Shams University to a successful training of thousands of students. Approximately 40,000 people and 20,000 laborers have sought employment since 2012 as a result of the program sponsored by the USAID. Stephen Beecroft, the American ambassador to Egypt, 352 students from Egypt became entitled to English Access Scholarship program to enhance expertise in the English Language. A \$ 10.9 million Trade Facilitation Project was started by the USAID Egypt in June 2011 to bring improvement in the country’s trade policies. On 29th October, 2015 \$45 million were granted for the New Entrepreneurship and Employment program. (US Embassy in Egypt, 2015)

The US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural preservation(AFCP), established by the Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs undertakes the maintenance, preservation of sites of cultural importance established for the purpose of acknowledging cultures and tradition of other countries. The objective of the AFCP is as follows, “cultural preservation offers an opportunity to show a different American face to other countries, one that is non-commercial, non-political and non-military, we show our respect for other cultures by protecting their traditions”. (US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs)

Working since 2003 in Egypt, AFCP continued with the restoration program. AFCP undertook the maintenance of chief historical sites such as those of Greco Roman civilization in Fayoun and Mausoleum of Imam at Shafil in Cairo. On the economic front, the US-Egypt Business Council led by the US Chamber of Commerce organized the largest chamber led delegation to establish business relations with the nation and opened new vistas for business opportunities given the regions tumbling economy with financial crisis looming large. The bilateral economic and military assistance continued when \$250 million and \$1.3 billion were granted for the fiscal year 2014. (Norman, 2015)

However, the stark violation of Human Rights continued in Egypt, especially during 2016. The myriad violations entailed imposition of ban on public criticism, protests, non-governmental organization and indefinite torture of detainees. There have been multiple instances of security force abuses. The national security officers have tortured and forcibly disappeared suspects on a routine basis. Not just that, these victims have been accused of being associated with Muslim fraternity and are subjected to immense beating and force-feeding. Matters of restrictions on the religious freedoms have been on the rise ever since. In fact, in August, the Egyptian parliament passed a law on church building, imposing restrictions over the construction and renovation of churches and discriminated against the country’s Christian minority. Discrimination against women is still looming under the domestic laws of Egypt, with women being denied access to divorce, child-custody and inheritance. However, certain measures to curb female rights violations have been passed such as the amendment to a law prohibiting female genital mutilation

(FGM), increasing the penalties. That being it, still a lot needs to be done. (Human Rights Watch, 2017)

Issues pertaining to asylum-seekers and refugees leave room for immediate attention. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported 212,500 registered refugees and 38,171 asylum seekers in Egypt in 2016. Apart from the issues cited above, there are restrictions on freedom of expression, where those who criticize the government actions and policies, have been put behind bars. In May, police arrested four members of the Street Children satire troupe who had posted videos on YouTube mocking Al-Sisi and government policies. (Human Rights Watch, 2017)

Expressing serious concerns over the US-Egypt security relations, the working group wrote a letter to President Obama highlighting the actual needs underpinning the US-Egypt relations. Given the gravity of turbulence experienced by the country after the revolution pointing towards the recourse to authoritarianism, failure of democratic reforms, deteriorating economic conditions, violation of human rights, outbreak of terrorism, the focus should be lesser on the security interest (characterized by the bulk of US-Egypt military aid) and more on the soft power approach manifested in the empowerment and well being of the citizens. The continuity of US military aid has raised brows as a mark of providing continued support to the autocracy. Therefore, the US should look beyond the military relations with Egypt. (Bjornlund et al. 2014)

CHAPTER 4

US Public Diplomacy Post 9/11: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Among all the Arab states, it is only the kingdom of Saudi Arabia which has been the friendliest ally of the United States. Time and tested, the US relations with Saudi Arabia have been shaped by political, economic and diplomatic considerations. One generally assumes that the economic asset i.e. the Middle East oil, is the bedrock of the relations between the US and Saudi Arabia. However, flipping through the pages of history, it can be realized that the relationship is intricately woven into a complex pattern of engagements and disengagements. Today, the partnership has evolved into maintaining regional stability, strategic cooperation and counter terrorism operations.

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is known for its rich Islamic history and culture. Vast reserves of oil and petroleum gives it an economic, strategic and geopolitical edge. The birth place of Islamic religion and the host to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the Kingdom was founded by King Abdulaziz Al Saud in the year 1932. Initially, the Arabian Peninsula was under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. Somewhere in the middle of the eighteenth century, the royal family of Al Saud, the ruler of Diriyah, together with the religious preacher and reformer Muhammad Ibn Abdal Wahhab sought to revive the Islamic faith as preached by Prophet Muhammad and thereby laying the foundation of a state along religious lines i.e. Wahhabi Islam. In other words, "This alliance became the foundation for the emergence of Arabia as a united state under the House of Saud".(Bowen 2008) The alliance gained political control over the influential states of Najd, Hijaz and Mecca by 1765 and 1803 respectively. A considerable portion of the Arabian Peninsula came under their rule. However, the political power of the Al Saud and Wahhabi's crumbled as result of both external aggression by the Ottomans and Egyptian forces and internal family strife. By 1930's, King Abdul Al Aziz, the son of King Muhammad Ibn Saud in a series of conquests coupled with moderate assistance from the British steadily expanded his reign thereby recapturing most of the cities of the peninsula and formally establishing the Kingdom with an absolute monarchy in 1932. (Library of Congress, 2006)

The US-Saudi relations commenced with the exploration of oil resources in the early 1900's. The American interests in the Kingdom developed to ensure a steady flow of petroleum resources due to the outbreak of the World War I. The visit to Jeddah by the

American representatives Charles Crane and his accompaniment Karl Twitchell, an engineer by profession in 1931 to initiate negotiations with King Ibn Saud on the exploration of oil refineries, gold reserves and other mineral resources set the stage for the U- Saudi commercial relations underpinned by both economic and security concerns. On the other hand Saudi Arabia sought an alliance with the US on account of ensuring autonomy from the imperialist powers as well as on being pleased by the humanitarian services offered by the American missionaries. The Saudis as a result were convinced about the generosity of the Americans in contrast to the imperialist British. Although the British were the major powers in the Middle East after the Ottomans and despite the fact that they did not strive to annex the whole of the territory, the Kingdom abstained from “becoming another protectorate” in the hands of the British (Bowen, 2008). Oil and petroleum discoveries and their subsequent security undertaken by the American companies such as the California Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC) characterized the US-Saudi relations for much of the middle of the twentieth century particularly during the World War II. (Blanchard, 2008)

It was not until 1945 that the first US diplomatic relations laying the trajectory for the future course of relations were established with Saudi Arabia, particularly with the visit of the US President Franklin D Roosevelt on February 14th, 1945 in a close-knitted meeting with King Ibn Saud on the USS Quincy, the US warship. “The meeting permanently linked the Middle Eastern oil with American national security, in which the Saudi’s would supply cheap oil to global markets in exchange for American protection” (Jones, 2012). The meeting culminated into the establishment of military relations as the King Saud gave a green flag for the construction of American military airbase in Dhahran and other bilateral military assistance and cooperation entailing enhanced American influence in the region contrary to the waning British influence. The relations now affirmatively came to embrace both security and political dimensions. The political relations commenced as the meeting also involved discussions on the rift between the Arabs and the Jews. Though the issue seemed to be unresolved, yet President Roosevelt in a promise made to the King pledged to seek his consultation on the US policy towards the question of Jews and Arabs and secondly, not to take any step that might be averse to the Arab interests. However, the recognition of a separate state of Israel in 1948 by

President Truman did not go well with King Aziz who perceived it as a “direct betrayal of Roosevelt’s pledge”. (Jones, 2012)

The US-Saudi Arabia Partnership in the Cold War Years

The US-Saudi Arabia cold war partnership is based on the alignment between the US containment of communism and Saudi Arabia’s concern for the assurance of their national security. Keeping this view in mind, the relations have experienced a series of complexities throughout the cold war period. Although, Saudi Arabia sided with the American policy of containment of communism as they equate communism with ‘atheism’ counter to the very essence of the foundation of their kingdom on purely religious lines, the relations suffered a setback whenever the Saudi national security has been put to question. As has been mentioned above, King Aziz consented to America’s military presence in Dhahran seeking in return the security of the Kingdom’s borders from both external aggression and internal foes. Similarly, in 1951 Saudi conducted a mutual defense assistance pact with the US on the grounds of security particularly from its regional foes Jordan and Iraq and their proximity with the British(Pollack 2002). The relations got strained when president Eisenhower in the light of containing Soviet Union build an alliance which came to be known as the Baghdad Pact with the Kingdom’s rival countries such as Iraq, Iran and Britain. Baffled by Eisenhower administration’s move the King in an attempt to answer back not only rejected Point 4 American Aid mission but also aligned with Egypt’s revolutionary leader Abdel Nasser in signing a defense agreement with him on 16th October 1955. Nasser rose to prominence in the Middle Eastern region as a vociferous leader with intense anti-western and anti-American overtones. At the same time, he aligned with the Soviet Union which of course was a great cause of worry for the United States. The formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) with Syria in 1958 once again enhanced Egyptian influence in the region compelling other states including Saudi Arabia to break off contacts with the United States. Saudi Arabia refused to renew the American airfield base in Dhahran. However, the military relations were restored when the Saudi’s sought American assistance on account of the 1962 Egyptian air strikes on the Kingdom’s bases situated in Yemen. As a

result, in 1963 chunk of US military troops were sent by President Kennedy to defend the Kingdom from the Egyptian onslaught. (Metz, 1992)

Nasser's widespread criticism of 'Al Saud' both on the grounds of corruption and cooperation with the US compelled the King to perceive Arab nationalists as a grave threat to the monarchies in the Middle Eastern region. Nasser's involvement in the toppling of monarchical governments in Yemen (1962), Libya (1969) and Iraq (1958) affirmed the Kingdom's perception. (Metz, 1992) During the Yemini civil war, the Kingdom supported the Royalists contrary to the Egyptians who were in favor of the Republican government. The US also sided with the Kingdom. However, in the aftermath of the withdrawal of both Saudi Arabia and Egypt from the Yemini proxy war, the locus of Saudi Arabia's acrimony shifted to Israel which was earlier centered against Egypt. Reclamation of East Jerusalem and support for Palestine became the Kingdom's primary concern. The reorientation of Saudi Arabia's regional policy had serious repercussions for the US. In response to the US support to Israel during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war Saudi Arabia seconded a proposal put forth by Iraq to reduce oil supplies to the western powers including the US. Although, allusive in nature, this move by Saudi Arabia set the stage for the more impactful and capitalizing Arab oil embargo of 1973. The king became more vocal in his support of the PLO and Yemeni leader Yasser Arafat. King Faisal also advocated Pan-Islamism manifested in Morocco where the first Islamic Summit was convened as a mark of resentment against Israel. The summit was soon followed by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) committed to the funding, restoration, promotion and protection of the world wide Islamic institutions (Reidel, 2017). The step towards Pan-Islamism was driven by internal factors as well. It was essential to seek backing from certain religious establishments to ensure the security and sustainability of King Faisal's throne which he had abdicated from his incompetent brother King Saud.

The relations suffered a series of setbacks during the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. America's backing for Israel in the form of massive military aid (President Nixon sanctioned \$ 2.2 billion military aid to Israel) during the time of war had serious repercussions on the already established commercial and political dimensions of the US-Saudi relationship. In October, 1973, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) under the

leadership of Saudi Arabia dramatically raised oil prices and imposed an oil embargo on the US in the wake of Yom Kippur war. The oil embargo sent shock waves to the US. The US economy was severely crippled by rising inflation, stooping oil supplies, declining consumption and other concerns to meet up the energy crisis (Blanchard, 2008). President Nixon expressed serious concerns about the consequences of the energy crisis in his November 7th, 1973 address to the nation. The president remarked, “We are heading toward the most acute shortages of energy since World War II. The immediate shortage will affect the lives of each and every one of us. In our factories, our cars, our homes, our offices, we have to use less fuel than we are accustomed to using. The fuel crisis need not mean genuine suffering for any American but it will require some sacrifice by all Americans”. (Office of the Federal Registrar, 1973)

Another bone of contention in the US-Saudi relationship was the proximity between Henry Kissinger and the Shah of Iran. Iran was the only OPEC country to refuse to use the potential ‘oil weapon’ against the US and assured the constant supply of oil to the US and other western countries. Kissinger was conspiring to intervene militarily to seize Saudi oil fields in case of a Saudi-Iranian confrontation. Had it not been for the oil fields, Kissinger would not have cared a jot for Saudi Arabia. In a letter to William Simon, the treasury secretary by James Akin, the US ambassador to Saudi Arabia confirms Saudi’s skepticism, “Zaki Yamani has told me he is convinced we are now working closely with the Shah that in the next Middle East war the Shah will be sent across the Gulf to occupy the Arab oilfields” (Cited in Mirzadegan) thereby further deteriorating the relations.

The US lost Iran as an important ally during the Islamic revolution in 1979 when Islamic theocratic Khomeini acrimonious to the US took to power. The US suffered second oil crisis when Iran under Khomeini raised the oil prices coupled with a reduction in supply. At the same time, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan. These circumstances propelled President Carter to fully ensure the security of the Persian Gulf to maintain the steady flow of oil. This eventually transformed into what came to be known as the ‘Carter Doctrine’. The objective of the doctrine is lucidly expressed as follows, “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States, and such an assault will be repelled by any

means necessary, including military force” (Cited in Ignatus, 2007). Carter doctrine was the precursor to the increased US military presence in the Middle Eastern region including Saudi Arabia.

In corollary to the above paragraph the 1980’s witnessed a redefining of the relationship with an enhanced military cooperation between the two countries. Saudi Arabia started feeling threatened because of the regional chaos such as the Iranian revolution, Soviet Union’s invasion in Afghanistan, alliance between the Soviet Union, Syria and Egypt and most importantly the 1980 war between Iran and Iraq. These events anchored the US-Saudi diplomatic relations. The relations became more enduring and touched the zenith of cooperation when both the US and Saudi Arabia supported the ‘Islamists insurgents’ in collaboration with Pakistan to retaliate against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Bokhari, 2017). Because of Saudi Arabia’s support to Iraq and rift with Iran it felt threatened during the war. Saudi Arabia pleaded to the US to seek assistance regarding the replenishment of already declining Iraqi oil assets as a result of war. Saudi Arabia also put forth a demand for an upgraded military weapons system to meet its defense needs. President Reagan, in order to avoid another instance of revolution like that of Iran seconded an expansion in arms sale to Saudi Arabia which was later approved by the congress in October 1981. Saudi’s aggregate arms purchase from the US amounted to 8.5 billion dollars (Marshall, 1988). Despite maintaining neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war, the US did endeavor towards a reconciliation of relations with Iraq. The cooperation increased during the first Gulf war when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Although the cold war came to an end but a new security threat began to emerge from Iraq. Iraq’s Saddam Hussein’s expansionist tendencies became a grave source of concern both for Saudi Arabia as well as the US. The US, this time, instead of remaining neutral, militarily intervened in the war under the Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm much to the surprise of the Saudi monarch’s winding away their skepticism about the US as a reliable partner (Balkin, 2014). In fact, the Kingdom played a prominent role in assisting the US to build coalition against the Iraqi aggression in Kuwait. The US in order to provide protection to the Kingdom’s oil wells and counter Iraqi forces landed 5,00,000 of its military troops in Saudi Arabia, the highest ever in the course of their bilateral military cooperation.

Now the question that arises is the impact of such a huge US military presence on the US-Saudi relations. Debates started pouring over whether the US military presence should continue or should be withdrawn. The Kingdom was skeptical about the US military presence in Dhahran during the initial years of the relations as a perceived threat to their sovereignty. However, 5000 US troops in a bid to counter further aggression by Saddam, still remained despite President George Bush's promise to Saudi King about the withdrawal of troops once the war gets over. The US in its preoccupation with the containment of communism and the subsequently the gulf war, became oblivious of the highly conservative regime of the Kingdom embedded in its deeply ingrained 'Salafist' ideology⁴. This resulted in serious implications for the US. The US military presence not only in Saudi Arabia but all over the Persian Gulf antagonized the religious groups who were averse to the presence of a foreign power in their land. This aversion and resentment amounted to the rise of Islamic radicalism which began manifesting itself in a series of terrorist onslaughts, the biggest manifestation in the 9/11 ambush. Attacks began on the American servicemen when a car bomb detonated in Riyadh in 1995 and a year later followed by another explosion at the US military residence in Dhahran resulting in a number of casualties including 19 American servicemen. "One of the chief grievances of Saudi born Al Qaeda Chief Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the terrorist attacks was that infidel troops from the United States were present in Saudi Arabia, which contains Islam's two holiest sites, Mecca and Medina". (Cited in Otterman, 2005)

The spectrum of the partnership which had its inception on economic grounds broadened to include both political and national security concerns over the due course of time. Oil continues to be the dominant aspect of the relationship both for the Saudi Arabia to maintain its economic stability and for the US to assure free supply of oil to meet its economic demands. Both the countries found a common enemy in the Soviet Union both on ideological and security grounds. Arab nationalism underpinned by anti-imperialist, anti-western, anti-monarchial overtones also provided a common ground of alignment for both the US and Saudi Arabia.

⁴ The Kingdom's Salafism had as its offshoot radical jihadism that led to the 9/11 attacks. Salafism is an ultraconservative branch of Sunni Islam that promotes a return to the traditions of the earliest generations of the Muslims as that of the Wahhabi Islam.

The US-Saudi Relations in Post 9/11 Period

The 9/11 attacks entailed friction in the US-Saudi relationship, especially when 15 out of 19 perpetrators were ascertained to be young Saudi men, a country with which the United States have had a long standing bilateral relationship. The cleavages between the two countries started becoming more and more pronounced with the passing of numerous legislations in the US Congress much to the dismay of the citizens of Saudi Arabia. The passing of the United States Patriot Act (2001) was the most pressing of all legislations affecting Saudi Arabia. The Act aims as “Uniting and Strengthening America by providing appropriate tools required to intercept and Obstruct Terrorism”.(US Department of Justice Archives) The Act provided undue powers to the federal government to arrest, detain and conduct searches and interviews of the non citizens with the minimal use of the provisions of judicial review and the due process of law. As a result immigration was seriously affected and the detainees particularly from the Middle Eastern region were subjected to long hours of detention and prolonged interrogation. The move was also followed by denial of visas to the students and citizens, which in turn hampered the exchange programs between the two countries.

Immigration Attorney, Malea Kiblan an Arab American recounts the experience in the following sentence, “I have been retained by the embassy of Saudi Arabia to secure legal assistance for their nationals who have been detained. Probably, more than 2500 people have been detained since September 11; their families and friends have reported them missing.” Critiquing the undemocratic and arbitrary nature of the act, she further expressed her concern, “I am not sure whether we know all their names, as the government will not confirm the identities of those in custody even to their attorneys. That is clearly interference with the individual’s right to counsel”. (US Commission on Civil Rights, 2001) Other allegations leveled by the US officials against the Kingdom were their role in directly harboring and funding the terrorist organization and clumsiness on part of Saudi Arabia’s cooperation with the US on counter-terrorism operations. Apparently, no direct links were ascertained between the Kingdom and the terrorist network. (Davis, 2016)

The financing of the terrorist organizations has been one of the most serious criticisms leveled against Saudi Arabia. Islam requires its followers to donate a part of their incomes, the religious donations or the 'zakat' to charitable causes. However, unfortunately, in the name of Islam the zakat has been misused by these terrorist organizations for self-funding to meet their desired ends. A report prepared by the Council of Foreign Relations in 2002 on Terrorist Financing stated, " Since Saudi Arabia possess greatest concentration of wealth in the region, Saudi nationals and charities were the most important sources of funds for the mujahideen; Saudi nationals have always constituted a disproportionate percentage of Al-Qaeda's own membership; and Al-Qaeda's political message has long focused on issues of particular interest to Saudi national's, especially those who are disenchanted with their own government" (Terrorist Financing Report, 2002). To that end President Bush issued Executive Order 13224 which authorized the US government to curb the funding and financing of the various terrorist groups and networks "by blocking the assets of individuals and entities that provide support, services or assistance or otherwise associate with terrorists and terrorist organization designated under the order". (US Department of State, 2001)

A Saudi charitable organization and a Saudi businessman have been included among the list of 150 individuals and organizations whose assets have been blocked under the executive order. Although Saudi authorities and officials denied any such link between is citizens and the Al-Qaeda, yet the US officials were far from being convinced (Pardos 2001) . The raids conducted by the NATO forces and the US officials on Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia and the Benevolence International (a Saudi based organization for charity) in 2002 respectively, showed such contents that affirmed suspicion in the minds of the US officials. There were "photographs of the World Trade Center both before and after the attack, US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, maps of government buildings in Washington, materials for forging US State Department badges, anti-Semitic and anti-American materials and other videos and literature glorifying martyrdom". (Levitt, 2004)

In fact, one of Al-Qaeda's chief, Omar Farouq revealed that Al-Haramain, a Saudi based Islamic organization funded the Al-Qaeda activities in the region. Although a worldwide

phenomenon, the problem of charitable funding is potentially acute in Saudi Arabia. Levitt owes the lack of coherence in the Saudi strategy on Terrorist Financing to the difference of opinions among the ruling elites. While some are interested in introducing reforms in the society in terms of liberal education system and creating awareness about radicalization and the misuse of charitable donations along radical tendencies. But on the other hand such efforts are equally subverted by other sections of the elites. As power is concentrated in the hands of few, it is unlikely that these differences of views would be accommodated. (Levitt, 2004)

Bahgat (2003) clearly explicates the arguments for the creation of a fertile ground for 'militant Islam' in Saudi Arabia and a lack of clear response to the War on Terror. As has been mentioned earlier, the foundation of the kingdom rests on religious grounds, that is, Wahhabi Islam, and the central tenet of Wahhabism is to keep out of all 'innovations'. The religious foundation contributed to the highly conservative nature of the monarchy. As a result, the Kingdom has been slow to the process of modernization. The Kingdom also lags behind in terms of the socio, political and economic reforms. There is a lack of freedom among the citizens particularly the women to voice their opinions. There has also been a lack of growth in the Kingdom's economy as much of the economy runs on oil. The youth occupies the lowest rungs of Saudi's population pyramid. With the result that there is a scarcity of jobs among the innumerable young job seekers, given the Kingdom's inability to meet the demands for employment due to slow economic growth. It is evident that under such conditions it is likely to resort to unscrupulous means to express resentment against those who hold powers. The Kingdom's action resonated between the domestic issues on the one hand; and the need to secure long standing relations with the United States on the other hand. (Bahgat, 2003)

Although the US and Saudi Arabia in a joint operation in 2002 designated the Bosnian and Somali branches of AL-Haramain, yet the efforts seem to have limited the efficacy as the authorities in Bosnia renewed Al-Haramain's license and bank accounts that were frozen by the concerted efforts of US-Saudi joint operation. Besides, some reports suggested that the organization has expanded its outreach well beyond Bosnia and Somalia to new centers in Sarajevo and Indonesia. Rensselaer Lee makes an important

observation in this regard. He is also critical of the lack of an effective strategy on part of the US to deal with Islamic terrorism. To quote an American analyst, “And it is becoming increasingly clear that the reason for this failure is Washington’s unwillingness to risk a rupture with Saudi Arabia” (Lee, 2002). And in case of Saudi Arabia it is the “domestic political context” which hampers its efforts in combating terrorism. Analysis made by the CRS report on Terrorist Financing also suffix the argument which also states that because of serious political risks associated with its present system of ruling, there is an incoherence on part of Saudi authorities to effectively tackle Islamic fundamentalism. As those very disruptive elements in the region whose suppression is being sought by the US could easily topple the current regime and concentrate the power in their own hands. (Greenberg, 2002)

Saudi Arabia’s Response to 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

Saudi Arabia severed its ties with Taliban in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Although Saudi Arabia was one of the countries to provide assistance and to recognize Taliban as Afghanistan’s ruling regime after Soviets withdrawal from the region. Saudi’s backing of Taliban during the 1990’s stems from three considerations as explained by Bahgat. The first consideration stems from the ideological similarities between the Taliban movement and Wahhabist ideology of Saudi Arabia, adhering to the principle tenets of Islam. Second, consideration was the commitment from the movement to bring stability in the region by bringing the civil war to an end. And finally, the Kingdom anticipated Afghanistan’s transformation into a Sunni state as against its Shiite rival Iran. However, the relations between the Kingdom and Taliban started deteriorating as soon as it came to the realization of the monarchy that Osama Bin Laden also posed a threat to the its rule particularly for its alliance with the United States. (Bahgat, 2003)

Initially, the US war in Iraq in 2003 entailed strain in the US-Saudi relations. The Kingdom has been apprehensive of the fact that the Bush administration’s military action in Iraq would deepen the sectarian conflict and therefore, initially expressed disapproval at the US invasion of Iraq. In an interview with a news channel, Prince Abdullah

remarked, “I do not believe it is in the United States interests, or the interest of the region, or the world’s interest; to do so. And I don’t believe that it will achieve the desired result” (Gordon, 2002). However, the terrorist attacks on the Kingdom’s soil from 2003 onwards compelled it to cooperate with the US in abating cross border terrorism. The Kingdom also cooperated to bring about stability in Iraq. The Stability, peace and order are the key words to describe Saudi’s policy towards Iraq. Saudi’s apprehensions of a tumultuous Iraq stem from the fact that in the state of anarchy and subsequently Iraq’s porous borders would lead to an infiltration of terrorists on both sides, posing a grave threat to the monarchical rule. Joseph McMillan compiles the Saudi’s anxiousness in the following words, “The Saudi governments biggest fear is that disorder will spill over its own borders in the form of experienced, battle trained fighters who can easily infiltrate into the Kingdom, bringing with them newly honed skills in bomb-making and other aspects of insurgent warfare and joining with Al-Qaeda elements already active in Saudi Arabia”, which is true in the sense that Saudi Arabia shares its longest borders with Iraq. (Gordon, 2002)

Crown Prince Abdullah visited President Bush in 2005. The meeting involved discussions towards continued cooperation on issues of terrorism, resolution of the political turbulence in Iraq, the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the betterment of future relations. However, concerns largely loomed large on the post war Iraq, especially about the increasing influence of the Shiite Muslims in the region. The US-Saudi Arabia’s joint statement on Iraq stated, “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States commit to actively help the Iraqi people to realize their aspirations to build a secure, sovereign and prosperous nation. Both nations call the international community to support Iraq’s political and economic development and both nations urge the neighboring states not to interfere in Iraq’s internal political affair.” (US Department of State, 2005) Statements from other Saudi officials showed similar concerns. Prince Saud-al-Faisal, foreign minister of Saudi Arabia expressed apprehensions about a disintegrating Iraq in view of the current political trends: “Unless something is done to bring the people of Iraq together, a constitution alone or an election do it”. (Pardos, 2006)

Saudi Arabia at its best tried denying the allegations leveled against it. The Saudi embassy listed various actions undertaken by the government in countering terrorism and combating money laundering. Contrary to the traditional security measures, the Saudi government deployed a soft counterterrorism approach under the framework of the 'War of Ideas'. Under the war of ideas, the Kingdom attempted to rectify the beguiled individuals by a proper understanding of the religious doctrines. Even the fight against terrorism should be centered within the ambit of Islamic principles as the "central goal of the Kingdom's efforts has been to solidify the legitimacy of the ruling order and to eliminate violent opposition to the state by reinforcing the traditional Saudi interpretation of Islam, which stresses obedience and loyalty to the state and its leadership" (Cited in Boucek, 2008)

1) More than 600 individuals having links with terrorism have been interrogated and detained by Saudi Arabia, especially the death of Al Zaidan Alshihri, the leading suspect.

2) Creation of Saudi-United States joint force in 2003 on closer cooperation on War on Terrorism.

3) Implementation of new guidelines (a greater regulation and monitoring of the bank accounts particularly of the charitable institutions) to all Saudi banks and financial institutions on anti-money laundering and combating terrorist financing by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency.

4) The Saudi Arabian Interior Ministry started the Counseling Program (Al-Munasahah) for religious re-education of the disillusioned radicalized individuals or the sympathizers of the extremists. The program conducts the counseling of such individuals both sociologically and psychologically to remedy the misinterpretation of their religious principles. So far of the 3200 such individuals 50 percent of them have given up their radicalized views.

5) The Internet technology and social media became the most preferred site for the recruitment and radicalization of the individuals. The Saudi government launched a project called the 'Tranquility Campaign' as an initiative to lead extensive campaign to curtail the online radicalization of individuals. The project undertakes the monitoring of

all such websites, online materials and other internet platforms circulating objectionable contents. The project declared that achieved success in de-radicalizing some 690 individuals from Saudi and overall 877 individuals in 2007 and 2008 respectively.

6) The government has also undertaken various other measures such as the religious authority campaign, media campaign, national solidarity campaign, development of public education, monitoring of religious preaching, national dialogue conventions, increased international cooperation to combat jihadi terrorism, some of which have been of considerable success. (Boucek, 2008)

Issues on Arab-Israeli Conflict Post 9/11

The United States and Saudi Arabia have always contested on the issue of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The clashes between the two territories have only increased despite Sharon's visit to Haram Al-Sharif in September 2002. Arab-Israeli conflict has been a long standing conflict in the Middle East. And the US policies rather perceived biasness towards Israel has been enough to propel strong anti-American sentiments across the region. The early years of Bush administration witnessed a slack in the administration's approach to the conflict as the war in Iraq and the War on Terror policy occupied the agenda. But a re-engagement with the conflict began given the orchestrating Palestinian uprisings. Both the US and Saudi Arabia have views contrary to each other on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Given the frequency of meetings between President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon, Saudi Arabia suspected both the American and Israeli involvement in the violence against the Palestinians. Crown Prince Abdullah has been an ardent advocate of the resolution of the conflict. To that end, Prince Abdullah in 2002 put forth a set of proposals towards the reconciliation of relations between Israel and other Arab states. He called for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories coupled with the creation of an independent Palestine nation, in restoration of Arab-Israeli relations. Similarly, in June 2003, a roadmap for the Israel-Palestine peace process was laid down in a meeting of Prince Abdullah, President Bush and other dignitaries from the Arab world at Sharam Al-Shaykh, Egypt. (Pardos, 2006)

Saudi officials sympathize with the Palestinian cause, firstly because it constitutes third of the holiest sites after Mecca and Medina and secondly, their support to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) emerges from the belief that PLO represents the struggle of the Palestinian people in reclaiming their occupied lands, which from the Kingdom's point of view is the people's prerogative to resist suppression. Saudi Arabia has also provided millions of dollars in aid to the victims and their aggrieved families as a result of the violence and uprisings. It is because of the Saudi leaders support to the PLO and Hamas, there have been persistent strains in the US-Saudi relations, particularly because these organizations (Hamas, Hezbollah) have been listed under the terrorist organizations by the US State Department. (Bahgat, 2004)

Saudi Arabia on Arab Spring: Issues with US

Saudi Arabia has immense influence in the Arabian Peninsula. During the outbreak of the popular anti-government protest across the Arab world, ensuring not only the Kingdom's own legitimacy but also the stability of the neighboring monarchies occupied the top priority of the Kingdom's both domestic and foreign policy. Saudi Arabia became increasingly anxious after the revolutionary protests in Tunisia and Egypt. The kingdom's fears escalated when the wave of protests started sweeping the nearby Gulf States such as Bahrain and Oman. To that end, the Kingdom sprung into action by adopting a series of programs both social and economic for the welfare of its citizens under the policy of 'co-optation'. Co-optation can be defined as the propensity to include actors or group of actors who are strategically pertinent to entail stability by satisfaction of their demands, especially in an undemocratic set up with a lack of political inclusiveness. Most importantly, "it allows the regime to balance actors against each other". (Ertl, 2005)

Large sums of money were pooled in to provide income, housing and monetary benefits to its citizens, an estimated \$93 billion for the FY 2013. Funding also increased for the country's religious institutions, particularly the 'Ulama' or the Wahhabi clerics from which the monarchy family derives its legitimacy to rule. In lieu of introducing mild political change, the government announced the holding of municipal elections in 2011 that had been pending since 2009. These developments were soon followed by the

provisions of women's right to vote⁵, shortening of gender gap, opening of universities to both men and women juxtaposed with King Abdullah's proclamation of the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission in March 2011. All these provisions were made to keep the Kingdom from falling victim to the anti-government popular protests marked by public dissatisfaction and outrage over corrupt government, lack of political freedom, poor economic conditions, all such factors which fueled the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt (Reiger, 2014).

The Saudi women also started a campaign to demand the lift of ban on their driving rights. The campaign managed to garner considerable international attention. In a complete support of the Saudi women, Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton stated, "We have made clear our views, that women everywhere, including women in the Kingdom, have the right to make decisions about their lives and their futures" (The Guardian, 2011). But in an effort to not antagonize the Kingdom's government, as the American's rely heavily on the Kingdom's support to sustain their strategic interest in the region, Clinton gingerly exclaimed, "What these women are doing is brave and what they are seeking is right but the efforts belong to them. I am moved by it and I support them, but I want to underscore the fact that this not coming from outside of their country. This is the women themselves seeking to be recognized." (The Guardian, 2011)

Nevertheless, the wave of protests touched the Kingdom's Eastern Province dominated largely by the Shiites minority. Saudi Arabia's Eastern province is strategically important as vast reserves of oil are concentrated here. The Saudi government faces a tussle with the Shiite community owing to the community's dissatisfaction with the government due to the discrimination in the social, economic and political sphere, thereby broadening the prospects of an outbreak of revolution. The Shiites dissatisfaction culminated in the outbreak of the protests against the royal family in 2011. The protesters demanded the release of the local political prisoners. These protests were also inspired by the neighboring Shiites protests in Bahrain against the ruling regime. The protests gathered momentum when in a sheer Sunni-Shiite conflict Saudi Arabia landed its troops in Bahrain in support of the Al-Kharifa government. Violence erupted over the crackdown

⁵ However, the doors of voting rights to Saudi women would operationalise from 2015.

led by the Saudi forces. Soon, the Saudi's 'counter-revolutionary' response to the Arab Spring started taking the shape of containing Iranian influence in the region. The Kingdom created the propaganda of Shia conspiracy backed by Iran, to suppress the dissenting voices. (Ertl, 2005)

Differences on Iran

The United States and Saudi Arabia found a common rival in Iran, since the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979. To that end, the US-Saudi alliance was shaped by the containment of Iranian influence both from the regional as well as international sphere of influence. For the US, the fuss over the takeover of power by religious fundamentalist Al-Khomeini with strong anti-American and anti-Western overtones, the hostage crisis in Iran and simultaneously the development of covert nuclear program was the source of tussle between the US and Iran. While on the other hand, the intense Shiites-Sunni conflict characterized much of Saudi Arabia's relations with Iran. In the initial years of the Bush administration, the US and Iran experienced constructive relations, characterized by intense dialogues and cooperation especially during Operation Desert Storm and towards a stable government in Afghanistan; "perhaps the most constructive period of the US-Iranian diplomacy since the fall of Shah" (Maloney, 2011). However, in 2003, George Bush's inclusion of Iran under the 'axis of evil' along with Iraq and North Korea embittered the relations between the two countries. Further, the revelations of Iran's nuclear development program irked the Bush administration, which was followed by an array of unilateral economic sanctions on Iran.

The Obama administration sought a reversal of his precursor's strategy. Contrary to President Bush's policy of unilateralism, President Obama laid emphasis on a greater engagement and intense consultation with its adversaries including Iran. In his Cairo speech, President Obama expressed his policy towards the Iranian nuclear program, "Rather than remain trapped in the past, I have made it clear to Iran's leaders and people that my country is prepared to move forward. The question now is not what Iran is against, but rather what future it wants to build...It is about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East and any nation including Iran should have the right to access a

peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT)”. (Adams, 2015)

Saudi Arabia was already anxious of the growing Iranian influence in the region, on the regime in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, especially due to the change in the balance of power in the region in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. However, President Obama’s re-engagement with Iran added salt to the wounds in its relations with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been critical of Iran’s nuclear ambitions as a perceived threat to region’s stability. The signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in the November of 2003 at Geneva, marked radical shift in Americas foreign policy towards Iran (Baxter, 2015). This nuclear deal with Iran perplexed the Saudi officials, thereby becoming a source of major irritant in their relations. The Obama administration’s approach towards the Iran nuclear deal differed fundamentally from that of the Kingdom. The Obama administration saw it as “the first step” in its approach to the Iranian nuclear program (Vishwanathan, 2014). While, on the other hand, Saudi Arabia viewed it as another step towards the perceived threat of growing Iranian influence in the region at the cost of the interest of the Kingdom. The Kingdom’s apprehensions stem from the fear of being abandoned by the United States juxtaposed with new dynamics centered towards a greater cooperation in the bilateral relations with Iran; “the Saudi’s anxiety is not just that the United States will leave them more exposed to Iran, but that it will reach a reconciliation and ultimately anoint Iran as the central American ally in the region”. (Worth, 2013)

US Public Diplomacy Post 9/11: Bush and Obama Administration

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the Saudi public opinion towards the United States declined dramatically as the unfavorable ratings accounted for 87% (2002). The unfavorable ratings further increased to 95% especially with regard to the US led war in Iraq.(Rugh 2006). Similarly, in a poll conducted by Zogby International on Impressions of America 2004, the Saudi public opinion recorded an all time low on various dimensions of US foreign policy. The following table illustrates Saudi Arabia’s response to the United States and its policies.

<i>Saudi public opinion</i>	<i>Favorable</i>	<i>Unfavorable</i>
	2002/2004	2002/2004
Attitude towards US	12/4	87/94
<i>Aspects of America</i>		
*Science & technology	71/48	26/51
*Freedom/Democracy	52/39	44/60
*Movies/TV	54/35	42/60
*Policy towards Palestinians	5/3	90/95
*Policy towards Terrorism	30/2	57/96
*Policy towards Arabs	8/4	88/85
*People	43/28	51/64

Fig.(3.1): Saudi Public Attitude Towards US

Source: “Impressions of America, 2004”, Accessed on 19 April, 2018 URL https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/aai/pages/9731/attachments/original/1438878368/Impressions_of_America_2004.pdf?143887

It can be gauged from Fig.(3.1) that since 2002, an overall decline in the Arab attitude towards other aspects of America can be observed. While, the Saudi Arabians have the greatest regard for the US science and technology and to some extent the movies and TV series, however, a majority of them despise the American policy towards Palestinians, on the issue of terrorism and in general attitudes towards the Arabs. Similarly in answers to the questions such as, “What is the first thought when you hear America?” the response of majority of Saudi respondents were the United States ‘unfair foreign policy’. 55.5% of the respondents replied ‘nothing’ on being asked about the best thing in America. And the worst thing about America was ‘all about oil’ as answered by 30% of the respondents. Most of the Saudi respondents suggest that America should change its biasness towards Israel and withdraw from Iraq in order to improve its image in the Arab world. (The Arab American Institute Foundation, 2004)

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks that embittered relations between the US and Saudi Arabia, a humungous scholarship program was launched by the cooperative efforts of both President Bush and King Abdullah in the year 2005. The King Abdullah Scholarship program was launched in an effort to change the negative perception of the US, to foster greater cooperation in countering terrorism and to create a better understanding of its relations with each other. The scholarship programs provide a two exchange both for the students of Saudi Arabia and the United States. The program achieved considerable success owing to the increasing popularity among the Saudis to study in the United States. Approximately, 6000 Saudi students were studying in the US since the inception of the program. Over the years the number significantly increased to 71,000 Saudi students in US. (LeBaron and Hausheer, 2013)

Studying in the US bore fruit to some extent in changing the Saudi citizen's views about the US. The argument is exemplified by Alhomoudi, a professor at Al Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University. Alhomoudi, a full bright scholar at Philadelphia's Temple University sought to establish a centre for Western studies, particularly that of the United States, in the highly conservative Saud Islamic University in Riyadh. His efforts bore fruit when he opened the Western Studies Institute in 2011. Alhomoudi stated, "We are trying to spread awareness of the importance of understanding each other and strengthen the friendship that got interrupted by circumstances that created hatred". The mission aims to, "bridge Saudi Arabia and the Arab world with the United States and Western world in areas of mutual interests", (Murphy, 2012). The institute has collaborated with the American universities, such as the Temple University of Philadelphia, George Washington's University College of Professional Studies and Ohio State University.

The Bush administration in an effort to expand human capital in Saudi Arabia under the auspices of US Agency for International Development provided a grant worth million dollar to the newly established college for Saudi women in Jeddah. The grants aim at making the college equipped with technical and professional degree courses along with the provision of employment training skills to the students. The expansion and development of human capital would help in thwarting inclination towards radical tendencies. (Bronson, 2005)

The Radio Sawa and AL-Hurra had its broadcasts in Saudi Arabia as well. Craig Hayden in his visit to the Kingdom under the Saudi American exchange program got an opportunity to interact with the Saudi audience to assess the impact of US public diplomacy efforts. While, the Saudi counterparts enjoyed listening to the music segment of the Radio Sawa, they on the other hand, equally despised the news and information content of the Radio channel. The comments of the students explicated sparse attention to the news content the Radio station. They seldom paid heed to it: “I don’t know anyone who takes that seriously”, exclaimed one of the students. One of them went to the extent of describing it as “brainwashing”. Similar conclusions were drawn from the student responses to Al-Hurra chiefly as an attempt of government propaganda. The author subjects these responses to the fact that the Saudi audiences have an exposure to the multitude of media sources and information. In a media frenzy Saudi audience, the US led media channels are merely trivial in the sense that nobody takes it seriously. The evaluation stems from the fact, that much of what is shown by the US led broadcasting is unregulated and beyond the control of the government of United States. There is a lack of self-criticism approach. It is therefore, important to bear in mind to what is being showed and how it is being perceived by the audience. The cultural sensitivities of the people should be taken into consideration. Simply assuming the people as mere consumers of information in a spoon fed way; “not only runs the risk of missing the ways in which stories are interpreted, but could also quite possibly fuel existing suspicions of Western consumerist culture”. (Hayden, 2015)

The US broadcasting networks such as the Al-Hurra and Radio Sawa did not do well among the Saudi public as they perceived these stations as mere tools of US propaganda. However, a cable leaked by the WikiLeaks revealed that American TV series are immensely popular among the Saudi youth and are doing more to dissuade them from joining jihad. The American TV shows such as “Desperate Housewives”, “Friends”, “World News with Daine Sawyer” and “Late Show with David Letterman” are much more influential among the Saudi’s than the so called US propaganda channels Al-Hurra and Radio Sawa having million dollar investment. Given the state’s excessive control over media and digital communication, wherein mostly, the Saudi media are privately owned by the members of the family and the media abuzz with excessive criticism of the

United States, the cable revealed that of late, there have been new deals with the US in the domain of media and broadcasting especially in keeping up with the increasing popularity of American TV shows among the Saudi citizens. The Saudi media executives in a covert discussion with the US officials stated that the American Programming on the Middle East Broadcasting Groups (MBC) channel 4 and 5 have been immensely successful in catching the attention of the Saudi youth. Channel 4 features the above mentioned US TV series and Channel 5 broadcasts Hollywood films. The Saudi media executives said “that this programming is also very popular in remote, conservative corners of the country where you no longer see Bedouins, but kids in Western dress” (The Guardian, 2010) who are showing interests in the outside world. The executives also pointed out at the willingness and the cooperation of the Saudi government to bring a change by preventing the youths from radical extremism and the fascination of American culture among them. “The government is pushing this new openness as a means of countering the extremists. It’s still all about the war of ideas here and the American programming on the MBC and Rotana is winning over the ordinary Saudis in a way that Al-Hurra and other US propaganda never could. Saudis are now very interested in the outside world and everyone wants to study in the US if they can. They are fascinated by the US culture in a way they never were before”. (The Guardian, 2010)

The US State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs launched the Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES) in October 2002. The program was specifically designed for the Muslim countries in order to foster better relations and an improved understanding between the youth and citizens of these countries with the United States. Scholarships are provided to the students of the high school to avail the opportunity of learning and studying in the US. In Saudi Arabia, the official launching of the program took place in the year 2005 and since its inception, the YES program has been completed by a total of 175 students from Saudi Arabia. The students then get the opportunity to represent the youth’s voice in major international forums. For instance, Razan Alaqil, a citizen of Saudi Arabia, a YES program alumni and the Youth’s face represented Saudi Arabia in the United Nations. She also participated in the Youth of the Arab Capitals Forum on the issue of ‘Fighting Terrorism and Radical Thought’ in October 2017. She was the first ever female participant from Saudi Arabia to

have participated in the forum and plans to continue working to represent the Saudi government in various such forums. (Youth Exchange and Study, 2017)

The governments of both the countries might be at odds with each other on the Arab-Israeli issue, US-Iran nuclear deal and other regional conflicts but this has not hampered the cross-cultural exchange between both the American citizens and most importantly the citizens of Saudi Arabia. As per the statics revealed by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, at present approximately a hundred thousand Saudi Arabian youths are studying in various American schools and colleges (Hausheer, 2014). This number is expected to increase in the coming years. The greater the number of Saudi citizens studying abroad, the greater are the prospects of transformation in the highly conservative Kingdom. James Smith, the American ambassador to Saudi Arabia expressed his optimism regarding the perks of the cross-cultural exchange as follows, “They have received a world class education, As they now come home they will have the opportunity to shape the future development of the Kingdom and the future of the Saudi-American friendship” (Youth Exchange and Study, 2017). However, still a lot remains to be done in the soft power domain to foster long term relations with the fellow counterparts.

The US and Saudi Arabia have also collaborated in the realm of science and technology. In 2008 both the US and Saudi Arabia signed the US-Saudi Science and Technological Agreement, in the hope that science and technological cooperation will help to foster long term partnership and encourage better understanding and strengthen people to people bonding. Article II of the Agreement provides for scientific and technical information exchanges, visits and exchange of scientists and technical experts, organization of meetings and seminars and conduct of research projects and other technological and scientific cooperation (US Department of State, 2010). The King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology (KACST) has collaborated with NASA and various American universities. Currently, the KACST is working on such projects as “Aerosol Robotic Network (AERONET), Space Geodesy and Geodynamics research”. (Obama White House Archives, 2014)

Cooperation was also entailed in the realm of entrepreneurship between US and Saudi Arabia. The United States has its policy of spurring and boosting both the small and

medium sized business ventures which constitutes a significant percentage (90% along with employment of 80% of the workforce) of business in Saudi Arabia. In his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2008, President Bush other than discussing major level talks with King Abdullah on geo-political issues, he also had a meeting with young and aspiring Saudi professionals to boost up the development of the business. To that end, the US has also collaborated with Riyadh to offer degree courses on entrepreneurship skill and development, such as the link between Ohio's Kent State University and that of the King Saud University. (Pfiester, 2010) In an effort of the US State Department, the Babson and the Wellesley College collaborated with Dar Al Hekma College, Jeddah to sponsor "The US-Saudi Women's Forum on Social Entrepreneurship" at Boston College in July 2009. The program directly caters to the needs of Saudi women by offering them an exchange program to study in Babson College to help them develop the requisite skills for setting up of future business ventures. (Women Entrepreneurs Grow Global, 2009)

The US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in her address at the Townhall of Dar Al Hekma college hailed the ongoing partnership between the US and Saudi Arabia towards a new era of cooperation especially, between the people of both sides. She acknowledged in her address, the bitterness in the US-Saudi relations in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, especially with regard to the predicament faced by the Saudi students (a dramatic fall in their numbers in US) due to the denial of visas and other such actions taken by the US authorities. "Well, I am very pleased we are back to the levels that we had before 9/11. But I am not satisfied. I would like to see more exchanges and more of them being two way exchanges", stated Clinton. Speaking about the US-Saudi Women's Forum, the US Secretary of State expressed, "The result of this partnership is a program that has given 100 young Saudi women in training in business and leadership and the tools to begin your enterprises in your community". (US Department of State, 2010) She credited the partnership as the step towards the fulfillment of the 'New Beginning' speech of President Obama with the Muslim world.

The US embassy in Riyadh undertakes a variety of cultural and educational exchange programs to promote a cross cultural understanding between the Saudi citizens and the Americans. In 2014, the US State Department provided for the Saudi-American

Educational and Cultural Initiative Grants. The grants program seeks to broaden the US-Saudi partnership and encourages cooperation between the youth, women, Universities, non-governmental organizations and various other organizations from both the countries. The program provides a variety of projects such as exhibitions, cultural performances, workshops for professional development and training, seminars, conferences, lecture series by scholars and professionals and other exchange programs (US Embassy, Saudi Arabia). The program also supported the New York Film Academy College of Visual and Performing Arts (NYFA) to host a series of workshops in film making and cinematography in 2016. The NYFA would also conduct a workshop named “Cultural Identity: Through a Lens” in collaboration with the King Saud University, Riyadh. The workshop provides an opportunity to the aspiring Saudi filmmakers to create short films portraying certain aspects of the culture of Saudi Arabia. Awards will also be presented to the students with the best film. The driving force behind the workshop is the increasing popularity among the Saudi students in the sphere of film making and visual arts. To quote Michael Young, the president of NYFA, “The New York Film Academy has been the academic institution of choice to numerous students from Saudi Arabia, many of who have returned to their country and are deeply attached to the Kingdom’s blossoming creative community. We are honored to partner with the US Embassy to develop the exceptional talent emerging from Saudi Arabia today” (New York Film Academy News, 2016). The various other scholarship programs includes The Local Student Intern Program- it provides an opportunity to the local Saudi students to work with the US Mission in Saudi Arabia in order to gain experience in educational, cultural and global affairs, the English Language Learning Programs and so on.

In September, 2015 the Saudi Aramco, threw a delightful reception as part of King Salman’s visit to the US. The reception was hosted to forge closer relations between both the nations. To compliment the long history of friendship between the US and Saudi Arabia, “Nation to Nation, People to People: The Human Connection” was kept as the theme of the event (Saudi Aramco, 2015). The very theme captures the essence of public diplomacy. The event witnessed the presence of a number of the US and Saudi dignitaries, officials, the retirees of Aramco, business officials, academicians and so on. The evening was not only to commemorate the US-Saudi business and commercial ties

but also to eulogize the bonds of friendship developed by both the Saudi's and Americans overtime. Adel Al-Jubeir, the Saudi minister of foreign affairs, praised the US-Saudi relations in the following sentence, "Ultimately it's not only about oil and trade and investment and the common interests that we have, it's also about the people to people link that we have that very few people appreciate who are outside this relationship". (Saudi Aramco, 2015)

Popularity of American Brands: The Saudi citizens may have animosity with respect to the US foreign policy in the Middle East but when it comes to consumerism culture of the American products and American brands then they are immensely popular among the Saudi's. Saudi markets are flooded with American products ranging from food, apparels, make up products, cars, gadgets, technology and so on and so forth. When it comes to American technology, then Apple and Microsoft are held in high esteem among the Saudi citizens. They prefer Apple more than its South Korean competitor Samsung. According to 2017 YouGov Brand Index global ranking, the I Phone X ranked 3rd and its manufacturer Apple ranked 4th in Saudi Arabia.

Rank	Brand	2017 Score
1	Almarai	45.1
2	WhatsApp	38.8
3	iPhone	38.5
4	Apple	38.5
5	Al Baik	38.1
6	Samsung	37.6
7	YouTube	36.3
8	Google	33.4
9	Samsung Galaxy	33.2
10	Dettol	32.7

Fig.(3.2): American Products Ranking Index in Saudi Arabia

Source: "YouGov Brand Index", Accessed on 19 April, 2018 URL <http://www.brandindex.com/ranking/saudi-arabia/2017-buzz/top-buzz-rankings>

Among automobiles, American companies such as Ford, GMC and Jeep are the most desirable among the Saudi citizens. Similarly, clothing and cosmetics brands Nike, Calvin Klein, Michael Kors, Gap, American Eagle, Maybelline and Mac have swayed both the Saudi men and women. The reason as cited by Nada AL Shehri, a Saudi national in the US, for the increasing influence of American brands and products is that American brands keep up with the current trends in fashion and lifestyle and have the propensity to capture the world. Whatever products Americans produce starts flourishing and becomes the latest fashion. Most importantly, American brands are an expression of the US. They reflect the American dream. “American brand represents the US in terms of diversity, independence and affordability. Those brands advocate the American dream, which is still a widely accepted theme of the 21st century”. (Fareed, 2017)

During the Bush administration the trajectory of the US-Saudi relations can be characterized from “conflict to cooperation”. Both sides witnessed immense political pressure in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and subsequently the war in Iraq and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Simultaneously there have been both criticisms and praises for the Saudi government by the United States on issues of counter-terrorism. As can be seen in the above section, that initially the Saudi governments response to the terrorist attacks were slow, yet the administration did not abstain from taking significant measures in a greater collaboration with the US to combat terrorism especially in the wake of the terrorist ambush in the Kingdom’s soil. The US public diplomacy during the Bush administration was also centered on counter-terrorism in Saudi Arabia.

However, even during the Obama administration, several irritants continued to persist in the US-Saudi relations. One of the several contested issues between the US-Saudi relations has been the Arab Spring. Saudi Arabia was one of the countries in the Middle Eastern region to have remained unaffected by the Arab uprisings of 2010. Yet the fears loomed large in the minds of the ruling monarchy on contemplating its own status quo and domestic stability. It is pertinent to understand Saudi’s response to Arab Spring in order to further understand the contestation with the US on the same issue.

Overall, the US-Saudi Arabia relationship during the Obama administration suffered a series of blow. The rift began when President Obama rallied against the Egyptian leader

Hosni Mubarak, who had Saudi's support, during the Egyptian revolution. In 2013, the differences became more prominent when President Obama refused to launch military strike against Assad's regime, who the Kingdom considered its regional rival. The Saudi expectation from the US turned to dismay, despite the fact that Assad over-stepped Obama's 'red line' involving the use of chemical weapons. Finally, the signing of nuclear deal with Iran further entailed the deterioration of the relationship with Saudi Arabia. Despite these differences, President Obama in order to maintain the historic alliance with Saudi Arabia paid a visit to the newly crowned King Salman in the year 2015. He also signed a \$ 1.5 billion weapons deal. However, the decades old US policy towards Riyadh apparently reversed as a result of Obama's comments on the Atlantic magazine irking Saudi leaders. Obama stated, "The competition between the Saudis and Iranians which has helped to feed proxy wars and chaos in Syria, Iraq and Yemen- requires us to stay to our friends as well as to the Iranians that they need to find an effective way to share the neighborhood and institute some sort of cold peace" (Toosi, 2016). President Obama's statement attracted severe criticism from the Saudi leaders. Prince Turki Al-Faisal criticized the President by saying that, "Obama had thrown us a curve ball". Obama also appeared to be snubbed by Saudi Arabia, when on his arrival to Riyadh in 2016 he was received by an official of a lower designation coupled with a lack of coverage of the arrival of the American president in the state's news. Unlike the treatment meted out to president Obama in Saudi Arabia, King Salman was, on the other hand, warmly hosted by President Obama when he arrived in Washington the same year. Their meet was accompanied by talks on the future US-Saudi relations, and an assurance of the US led security to Saudi Arabia in case of an Iranian aggression. However, it leaves room for a lot of questions to be answered for the next Presidential administration.

CHAPTER- 5

Conclusion

The concept of public diplomacy has come to acquire immense significance particularly with the need of softening the traditional hard power approach when it alone can no longer forge mutually beneficial and long lasting relations among nations. Public diplomacy is an important component of the soft power approach which relies on the ability to persuade and attract other nations rather than the use of coercion in influencing relations with other nations. Public diplomacy is a set of procedure which mirrors a nation's values, ideas, culture, and belief system in order to shape up its image in the global world. Every nation's foreign relations and attitudes towards other countries are informed not only by the history of that country but also by its values, ideals and culture. In other words, a country's image is also shaped up by the perceptions of the foreign audience.

The attitudes and opinion of the people do condition to certain extent a nation's foreign policy making. For instance, if people's perception of a particular country is essentially positive, it is very likely to entail the achievement of its desired foreign policy objectives and goals and vice versa. Therefore, public diplomacy can also be defined as the process of engagement with the foreign public. It implies representing a nation to the foreign public with the purpose of influencing or shaping opinion amongst them. In contrast to the traditional diplomacy, which is an act of government to government communication, public diplomacy embodies the communication between the government of one country and the people of another country. While traditional diplomacy is official, exclusive and covert, public diplomacy, on the other hand, is inclusive, works with the civil society groups and act along the lines of openness. In the technology driven and the globalized world of today, the exchange of ideas, opinions, and information occurs at a much faster pace among various nations, such that the conduct of policies and relations finds hard to escape the scrutiny of world opinion.

The United States has also indulged in the use of public diplomacy not only to inform, engage, and influence foreign public opinion in coherence with the US foreign policy objectives but also to explain American values, objectives and purpose to the world. The world looks forward to the US not only as a superpower manifested in its military might, prosperous economy, but also the influence it creates by its charismatic leadership, the

Hollywood movies, Jazz music, American lifestyle, fashion etc. America's cultural riches play an equally important role as its military power in shaping America's leadership in the international system. The US embarked on its journey to public diplomacy during the World War I, to curtail the spread of Nazism in Latin America in the 1930s. Nazi cultural offensive in Latin America was well organized activities aimed at weakening US relationship with the Latin American countries, and demeaning US motives and purposes in that area. In an effort to thwart Nazism in Latin America, a convention for the promotion of Inter-American Cultural relations was called under the Buenos Aires Peace conference in the year 1936. The decision was supported unanimously. The policy makers were adamant in their goals in the establishment of a robust public diplomacy apparatus, thereby encouraging various cultural activities and exchange programs between the US and other nations. The following year witnessed the creation of the Office of the Information, Office of the Strategic Services, the Office of Latin American Commercial and Cultural Relations, the Office of War Information (OWI), the use of the broadcasting services such as the Voice of America (VOA), thereby laying the foundation of the US public diplomacy.

The US public diplomacy gathered momentum during the Cold War years. The US perceived communism as the world's biggest threat, not only a military and diplomatic threat but also a threat to the American values, ideals and the American way of life. The US pursued an active public diplomacy approach against the Soviet Union. The US cultural assets such as the music, art, literature, theatre all came to be drafted into the struggle against the Soviets threat of communism. The US Department of State's Office of Information and Cultural Affairs established 76 US outposts around the globe to carry out extensive dissemination of information. The Truman administration supported the passage of the Smith Mundt Act in the US Congress in the year 1948 to facilitate educational exchanges, information programs, sharing and interchange of knowledge etc. A major landmark was the creation of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1953. The USIA, organized into major departments such as the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Information and the Bureau of Management, became the government's nodal agency authorized for the conduct of all activities under the US public diplomacy particularly the educational and cultural exchange programs. By 1999,

the USIA had 190 posts in 142 countries. Similarly, the Eisenhower administration backed the passage of two major acts i.e. The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act and the Fulbright Hays Act (1961) to facilitate greater exchanges between the US and other nations. The National Endowment for Democracy Program of 1983 (NED) was created during Carter administration to spread the message of freedom, liberty, democracy around the globe. The US public diplomacy enjoyed considerable success during the Cold War, given the plethora of activities and programs undertaken by the US government in reaching out to the foreign public in its struggle against the threat of communism and simultaneously to shape its image abroad.

However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was believed that the US no longer stands the ideological or any such threats to the US objectives, values, culture and national security. There was reduced emphasis on public diplomacy as an autonomous discipline. In the mid 1990's, the Congress became awash with debates to reduce unnecessary expenditures and funding for the activities centered on public diplomacy. As a result, in 1999 the USIA was dismantled as an independent agency and was merged with the US Department of State. The USIA information centers and libraries were no longer run coupled with the dramatic cuts in the funding of various cultural and educational activities.

US Public Diplomacy Post 9/11

After the threat of communism, the biggest national security challenge to the US came from Islamic terrorism. The 9/11 world trade attacks had shaken the very foundation of the United States, an attack which the US could have never envisaged. The perpetrators of the attacks were ascertained to be the young Arab men, thereby having serious implications for the US relations with the Middle East. Soon the US began probing into the question as to "why do they hate us"? As has been mentioned above, the US public diplomacy suffered a series of setback particularly with the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the USIA. However, the 9/11 attacks brought renewed emphasis towards concerted public diplomacy efforts. Post 9/11 attacks, the US had to confront an increasingly negative public opinion in the entire Middle Eastern region. Anti-American sentiment was at its peak. The main factors that led to the reckless anti-Americanism in

the region were the US policies with respect to the war in Afghanistan, the Bush Doctrine of the War on Terror and primarily the war in Iraq. For instance, the Gallup poll for the period 2001-2002, showed a sharp decline in the image of the US immediately after President Bush's declaration of War on Terror and the persistent Israel-Palestine conflict turning periodically violent. The US unfavorability ratings were as high as 64% in Saudi Arabia, 63% in Iran, 62% in Jordan and so on. Similarly a poll conducted by the Zogby international also showed a decline in the ratings of the US. The favorability ratings drastically slipped to 3% in Egypt, 5% in Saudi Arabia, 2% Kuwait, 6% in Lebanon and 3% in Iran. Overall attitude towards the US policy in Middle East also recorded an all time low to 4% in Egypt, 8% in Saudi Arabia, 5% in Kuwait, 9% in Lebanon and 1 % in Iran. The poll also claimed that one of the major determinants of the Arab public opinion was the US policy towards Palestine. (Zogby Poll, 2002)

According to the Zogby poll 2004, the US favorability ratings continued to decline in the Arab world wherein the US "unfair policy" remains the dominant factor behind the negative Arab public opinion. The US favorability ratings reached an all time low to 4% in Saudi Arabia, 15% in Jordan, 20% in Lebanon, 4% in Egypt and 14% in UAE (Zogby Poll, 2004). The war in Iraq entailed immense anti-Americanism especially when the 9/11 commission report acknowledged that no links were found between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda; "we have no credible evidence that Iraq and Al Qaeda cooperated on the attacks against the United States and do not appear to have resulted in a collaborative relationship"(9/11 Commission Report, 2001). The US policymakers soon realized the importance of the foreign public opinion in shaping the image of America and the way its policies are perceived abroad. As a consequence, the Bush administration dwelled in a series of public diplomacy efforts to pacify the increasingly hostile attitude of the Arab public. The renewed emphasis was met with the passage of the Freedom Promotion Act in 2002 which called for an increased funding for the US public diplomacy to an annual budget of \$497 million. President Bush appointed Charlotte Beers as the Undersecretary of State of Public Diplomacy. Beers brought the concept of branding and selling America through the use of intensive advertisement campaigns. Beers also launched a series of campaigns such as the Shared Values Initiative, The Muslim Life in America to reach out to the Muslim audiences to dispel the misgivings. In

2002, the Bush administration launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to entail democracy promotion in the Middle East and the North African region. MEPI works to bring about social, political and economic reforms, create employment opportunities, and to encourage learning among students and women.

The United States Advisory Group recommended a series of measures to improve the US public diplomacy in a report entitled, “Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction in the US Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim world” (2003). The report recommended structural changes in the public diplomacy agencies, an increase in funding, more staff with technical and linguistic expertise and an overall expansion in the public diplomacy activities. Another initiative was the launch of the *Hi* magazine to introduce the American lifestyle, entertainment, fashion, culture to the young Arabs. In some countries, the magazine generated significant response. However, in many other countries the magazine was accused of brainwashing the youth and an imposition of the American culture. In the broadcasting realm, the Bush administration launched the television channel Al-Hurra and the radio station Radio Sawa to provide news and other information to the Middle Eastern public. However, these two channels did not perform well in comparison to the regional networks such as the Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya with their pan-Arabic and pan-Islamic approach. The United States favorability ratings continued to decline even after consistent public diplomacy efforts. The poll conducted in six countries Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Morocco. The unfavorable ratings for the US recorded an all time high of 64% in 2008, which increased from 57% in 2006 (Telhami, 2008). As many as 70% of the Arab public expressed a no confidence in the US. To their opinion on the question of democracy promotion by the US in the Middle East after the Iraq war, 65% expressed doubt on whether democracy is the real objective of the US. Most importantly, 80% of the Arab public assigned the US foreign policy as the major determinant of Arab attitudes towards the US than its values. Only 12% of the Arab public opinion went for the US values. Majority of the Arab public believed that the security of Israel and the US hold on oil are the driving force behind the US foreign policy in the Middle East. (Pew Global Research, 2011)

President Barack Obama called for a new beginning with the Muslim world in his speech at Cairo University, Egypt. He emphasized on listening to each other rather than telling one's own story and built a world based on peace, harmony, coexistence and cooperation and particularly a transformation of the US-Muslim world relationship from a clash of civilizations to a dialogue of civilizations. President Obama also stressed to go beyond the military relations towards a greater cooperation in other aspects of life. The National Security Strategy Report (NSS 2010) called for a soft power approach in communicating with the Muslim World. The Obama administration's public diplomacy included such programs and efforts as the Entrepreneurs for a New Beginning, Science and Technology Education Exchanges, Professional Technical Exchanges for Women, the Tech Women Program and so on. Despite President Obama's efforts towards the betterment of relations with the Muslim World, the US favorability ratings remained low. According to the Pew Global Project, the overall favorability ratings towards the United States remained low for three consecutive years from 2009 to 2011 in Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestinian territory. Turkey recorded the lowest ratings for the US dropping to mere 10%, followed by Jordan to 13%, then Palestine to 18% and Egypt 20%. The Arab public also disapproved of the Obama administration's policy with respect to the political changes in the Middle East, Israel-Palestine conflict, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. The strongest disapproval came for the Israel-Palestine conflict which seemed to have no resolution especially with the US intervention. The disapproval ratings reached as high as 85% in Lebanon, 84% in Palestine territory to 82% in Jordan and Egypt. Similarly Obama's handling of Afghanistan was disapproved by 87% Jordanians, 81% Palestinians and 76% by Egyptians. Similar ratings were provided for the situation in Iraq and the promises made for bringing change in the Middle East. Therefore, it can be concluded that the US public diplomacy has succeeded to a limited extent in tackling terrorism and anti-American sentiments in the Middle East (*Emphasis added*).

US Public Diplomacy in Egypt

The United States and Egypt share a long history of relationship. Egypt's prominence in the Middle Eastern region both in terms of its rich heritage and natural resources and the voice of secular Arab nationalism made it the pivot of diplomatic relations with the US. .

Egypt also played an important role in condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in early 1990's and in Israel-Palestine peace negotiations later on. Majority of Egyptians have been in favor of democracy idealizing American ideals for the same. But US invasion of Iraq and President Bush's policy on the war on terror plundered American image in the region including image where anti-Americanism and Islamic fundamentalism has been on the rise. Even though Egypt constitutes one of the major recipients of US economic and military aid in the world yet Egyptians have expressed disapproval towards US foreign policy in terms of hard power. In the year 2011 nearly 70% of the Egyptians were critical of the US economic and military aid. America's indirect and long support for Morsi Mubarak's corrupt regime led to resentment among them. Despite Bush administration's public diplomacy efforts towards democratization in Egypt and a push for political and economic reforms, the elections for the period 2005-2010 were fraught with violence and corruption. The political and electoral reforms introduced by Mubarak were of no avail. Every time the elections were conducted, it resulted in the victory of none other but Mubarak himself. The elections were also accompanied with repression, unlawful detention and a crackdown on those who tried to oppose the ruling regime. A large number of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood were also arrested. The political turmoil ultimately led to the outbreak of the Tahrir Square revolution (2011). The revolution led to the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak from power. The Egyptians raised both anti-Mubarak and anti-Obama slogans. However, similar circumstances prevailed even during the rule of the successor governments that of the Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammad Morsi (2012) and President Abdul El Sisi (2014). Morsi vested in himself undue powers which ultimately led to his ousting from power as a result of massive protests by the Egyptians. These protests were also accompanied by violence, repression and a bitter clash between the citizens and the police. President Obama condemned the state-led repression on the public and ordered the cancellation of the upcoming US-Egypt joint military exercise together with the suspension of the military aid. Egypt once again resumed its autocratic tendency under Sisi's rule. The political cleavages became more pronounced. The Muslim Brotherhood had been completely banned from the political discourse. Despite continuous public diplomacy effort by the Obama administration, Egypt continued to groan under the burden of political turmoil, human rights violations,

deteriorating socio-economic conditions, security force abuses and other state led repression. The US military aid which was temporarily suspended by President Obama due to the violence unleashed under Morsi rule was released and to be renewed from 2018. Unfortunately, most of the Egyptians opine that US hard power as evident in bulk of military assistance to Egypt has overshadowed and hindered US soft power. Egypt's public opinion does matter despite all contradictions. Public diplomacy should not be an instant solution to the problems rather it should be a long term goal especially towards the polarized Egyptian politics. (*Lynch, 2013*)

The Case for Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the Middle East to have maintained longstanding bilateral relationship with the US. The US-Saudi Arabia diplomatic relations date back to 1940's. Saudi Arabia's strategic location, the reservoir of world's largest oil and natural gas resources and its importance in the Arab world came to be drafted in cordial relations between the two. Both the US and Saudi Arabia have shared interests in the preservation of stability, security, prosperity of the Gulf region and address a wide range of regional and global issues. Saudi Arabia is a strong partner of the US and works closely towards the attainment of regional security, counter terrorism activities and other dimensions of military, diplomatic and financial cooperation. It also works towards safeguarding both countries' national security interests. Saudi Arabia is one of the largest trading partners of the US in the Middle East and the second leading source of oil imports for the US. Besides, strong defense, trade and investment ties with each other, bilateral cooperation in the cultural, educational and institutional domain is of considerable significance. The US-Saudi partnership is rooted in several decades of close friendship and cooperation enriched by the exchange opportunities that are vital in fostering mutual understanding and sustaining a long term relationship. The US attempts to provide promising Saudi youth and leaders one of the best experiences of the United States through International Visitor Leadership and various other educational exchange programs. In its Vision 2030 program, the United States assures to enhance the capabilities of the Saudi public through a wide variety of assistance in areas of education, trade, counter terrorism, good governance and so on. (*Blanchard, 2009*)

The attacks of September 11, 2001 left Saudi Arabia bewildered and embarrassed as the perpetrator were found to be young Saudi men. This led to a lot of damage to the image and reputation of the kingdom propelling a wave of anti-Saudi sentiments in the United States affecting the relations between both the countries. American media accused Saudi Arabia of harboring and funding terrorists, allowing anti-American sentiments to prevail left the Saudi leaders puzzled and dismal for not recognizing their earlier role in fighting terrorism. Many Arab students were affected because of stricter visa regulations, long hours of interrogation and detention in the US due to Bush's War on Terror policy. As a consequence, various students and cultural exchange programs were hampered. The US public diplomacy officials in Saudi Arabia tried hard to explain the American perspective that much of the criticisms were coming from private Americans and not public officials. Despite the efforts the Saudi-US tussle escalated in the newspapers and on TV in both countries. Saudi public opinion for the unfavorable US policy on terror flared up to 88 % according to Arab opinion poll of the US in 2002 (*Arab Human Development Report 2002*). In the wake of decline in public diplomacy activities such as the students exchange programs, the State Department officials realized the importance of influencing Arab youth attitudes in favor of US. As a result, several programs such as Partnerships for Learning, Youth Exchange and Study program were sponsored by the State Department in many Arab countries including Saudi Arabia.

However, what's important here are the concerted efforts taken by Saudi Arabia to compensate for the damage. It was crucial for the kingdom to retain its close ties with Washington. Following the attacks, Sultan Abdul Aziz, the Saudi Ambassador to the US set out on a tour of the top US media channels such as CNN and BBC to condemn terrorism and defend his country (*Shapiro, 2009*). Extensive use of the print and broadcast media to the television advertisements were made not only to project the kingdom as the US ally in its fight against terrorism but also to restore diplomatic and cultural affinity with US. As per the State Department report, 2015 "Saudi Arabia maintains a robust counter terrorism relation with the United States." The US-Saudi relations under Bush administration witnessed an increased cooperation not only in the national security, military and counterterrorism operations but also enhanced public diplomacy activities manifested in a number of cultural and educational exchange

programs between both the countries. The public diplomacy efforts also continued during the Obama administration such as the launch of the US-Saudi Women's Forum on Social Entrepreneurship (2009), Saudi-American Educational and Cultural Initiative Grants (2014), the workshop organized by the New York Film Academy (NYFA) in Riyadh in 2016 and various other collaborations. However, several irritants persisted in the US-Saudi diplomatic relationship especially with respect to the Arab-Israeli issue, Egyptian revolution and more prominently the signing of the US-Iran nuclear deal (2015). Conclusively, the US-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations can be characterized as that of both conflict and cooperation. However at the same time, the reliance of both the countries on each other is essential for securing peace, stability, security and prosperity. Though the people of Saudi Arabia might have discontentment over the US foreign policy, yet they have a great admiration for the people of America, American values, customs and lifestyle. There is an increasing popularity for the American products and American brands such as all Apple products, automobiles such as Ford, GMC, clothing, make up accessories, American food chains such as Mc Donald's, KFC and so on. Keeping in the immense popularity of the American values, lifestyle and products, the US should continue to expand a greater people to people connect. The US should also work on its foreign policy in the region so as to win the hearts and minds of the Middle Eastern public. The US public diplomacy in Saudi Arabia has indeed succeeded in tackling terrorism and anti-Americanism but to a limited extent.

The US public diplomacy has been an important component of the US foreign policy. However, the US has indulged in the use of the soft power of public diplomacy only in response to the international threats be it ideological, political, military etc. Public diplomacy does play an important role in the formulation of a country's foreign policy and securing the objectives of national security, yet these two objectives should not be the only concern for the operationalization of public diplomacy. Fitzpatrick contends that lessons learnt from the past experiences could help facilitate a better understanding among the next generation of policymakers, scholars and other government officials towards a more nuanced understanding of the concept, purpose and the objectives of public diplomacy. For instance, public diplomacy was successful during the cold war. However, with the end of the threat of communism, the public diplomacy apparatus

suffered from the lack of a proper structure, strong leadership and a proper strategic direction, especially with the disintegration of the USIA- the nodal and the only autonomous US public diplomacy agency. The 9/11 attacks brought renewed emphasis on the US public diplomacy with several recommendations from the various departments, agencies, public officials of the US government (Fitzpatrick, 2009). There have been instances, when many a times the US foreign policy has overridden the US public diplomacy, US diplomatic and official relations were more pronounced than the non-official and people to people relations. Although, the US public diplomacy played an active role in the post 9/11 Middle East, yet the US still needs to evolve a sound public diplomacy strategy and apparatus to be used at all times and place.

It can be concluded from the above findings that the hypotheses Egypt's public opinion did not respond favorably to the US public diplomacy stands proven. Egypt continues to groan under the burden of political chaos and turmoil with serious human rights violations, deteriorating economic conditions, state led violence and repression. Hard power still remains a dominant feature in the US relations with Egypt. The case study of Saudi Arabia also proves the hypotheses that US public diplomacy has partially succeeded in tackling terrorism and anti-American sentiments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Both the US and Saudi Arabia collaborated in a robust counterterrorism operation in the post 9/11 period. The reliance of both the countries on each other is underpinned by both economic and security concerns. While, there might be several irritants at the diplomatic level of the US Saudi relations, yet the people of Saudi Arabia have a high regard for the American people, their lifestyle, values technology and American products and brands.

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