

Political Campaign finance and the United States Foreign Policy Decisions: A cursory Look at the Jewish Lobby Group and the United States Middle East foreign policy.

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ABSTRACT

The act of providing fund for political candidate by wealthy private individual and group has become a recurrent phenomenon in the United State electoral system. It is a pervasive campaign practice that cannot be isolated from the US politics. Individual and group donate huge sum of money to support political candidate or political parties of their choices. Of greater concern is the ease with which interest group adopts the strategy of campaign finance to influence state apparatus to achieve interest based policy concession. The Jewish lobby group is a loosed coalition of interest group whose primary objective is the advancement of the US- Israel relation for favourable foreign policy toward Israel. It is a prominent interest group with members who are often the richest and highest campaign donor in any election circle in the United States. The group over the years capitalised on the strategy of campaign financing to stronghold the United States Congress and the executive in order to shape the country Middle East foreign policy in favour of Israel. The study seeks to examine the dynamic role of interest group, the link between campaign financing and interest group using the Powerful Jewish lobby group as the basis of analysis. The theoretical foundation for the work is the elite theory postulated by Gaetano Mosca and the Italian school of elitism. Secondary source of data collection was adopted to extrapolate fact that are relevant to the study. The article find out that campaign fiancé is an integral part of the United States politics and cannot be divorced. Interest group such as the Jewish lobby group adopts the instrumentality of campaign financing to advance private interest

Keywords: Campaign Finance, Politics, Middle East, Foreign policy, Lobby, Interest group.

INTRODUCTION

Political campaign finance has become a critical factor and a recurrent decimal in the United States domestic and international politics, Electioneering campaign circle is often serenated with razzmatazz, scintillating side attractions, well-crafted speeches, alliance formation and public declaration of support for preferred candidates and political parties. A unique feature of this period is open and discrete donation of funds by wealthy individual, families and interest group in support of candidate of their choices. Some interest group establishes Political Action Committee(PAC) with the primary objectives of mobilising and donating money to support the electioneering campaign of their preferred candidate or support opponent of candidate with antagonistic view of the cause such interest group represented.

Political Campaign financing occurs when wealthy individual or coalition of individual donate money

massively in support of the electioneering campaign of prefer candidate or political Parties. .”It refers to the funds raised by individual or group to promote candidates or political parties. Political parties, charitable organizations, and political action committees in the United States are vehicles used for fundraising for political purposes. Political campaigns involve considerable cost, including travel costs of candidates and staff, accommodation, consultancy, advertising and other logistics. Campaign spending may depends on regions for instance, in the United States, television advertising time must be purchased by the campaigns, and some campaign rally venue must be paid for. It has been argued by some scholars that the need to raise money to maintain expensive political campaigns have negative impact on representative democracy because of the influence those who donate large sum of money have on political candidate and politicians generally. The overall objective of campaign fiancé is to support preferred candidate or political parties to win election. Candidate vying for political office solicit for fund from individual and group outside the monetary provision made by the political Parties and government. On the other hand, individual and group are also willing to support political candidate with funds and other logistics to help achieve electoral victory with a view to achieve policy concession subsequently. It is comparable to a barter system of give and take, one provide money to execute electioneering campaign for electoral victory , the other upon winning election support policies to protect the other interest. Such interest could be domestic in nature or borders on international concern

Succinctly put, reasons why campaign finance has become a recurrent phenomenon in the United States politics are not far fetch. Vying for political office especially elective position involve huge cost, the cost include mostly campaign logistics such as transportation, advertising, payment for rally venue and equipment etc. These cost elements has heavy tolls on politician thus the need to solicit for support from private donors. It should be noted that political campaign finance is not peculiar to the United States, it is a general practice all over the world. In Nigeria for instance, during the electioneering campaign circle in 2015, some group of individuals established a go- fund- me account soliciting for the general public to raise fund for the presidential candidacy of General Mahamadu Buhari, other group paid for his nomination form while some provide private jet to ease his campaign trail to the thirty six states of the country.

Political campaign finance is inferably analogues to the patronage or spoils system in politics. Spoil systems is a practice in which a political party after winning elections gives government jobs to supporters, friends and cronies as a reward for working together toward victory and as incentive to keep working for the party. Similarly, patronage on the other hand is the support, encouragement, privilege or financial aid that an organisation or individual bestows on its members. Political campaign finance is not in any way different from the spoil or patronage systems, individual or group provide fund to support a candidate or political party to ensure victory in election, in return the victorious candidate or political party reciprocate with policy output that favour the individual or group donor. In this regards, actions taken by both parties are motivated by interest. In other word, both the Donor and the Donee have ulterior motive, the Donee want to win election the Donor want to advance private interest by way of policy concession.

In the United States, there are proliferations of interest groups all seeking to influence government policy to advance their interest. There are indeed thousands of interest group in the US political data base each represent specific interest ranging from Abortion & Reproductive, Agriculture & Food Processing, Animals and Wildlife Arts, Entertainment, Businesses and consumers, Campaign Finance and Elections, Civil Liberty, Employment, Affirmative Actions, and Civil Rights, Conservative, Crime, Defence, Drug, Economic and fiscal, Education, Energy, Oil and Natural Resources, Finance and Banking, Foreign Affairs & Foreign Aid, Guns, Housing and Property, Health and Health Care to Immigration to mention just few.

Each categorization of interest group share common interest and they seeks to influence the United States government to protect the shared interest. For instance The National Raffle Association goal is to promote and encourage Raffle shooting on scientific basis and also protection of the interest of members. The

American Foreign Service Association protect the professional interests of its members, to ensure the maintenance of high professional standards for both career diplomats and political appointees. J Street is the political home for pro-Israel and pro-peace Americans advocating vigorously for U.S. leadership to achieve a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to broaden debate around Israel and the Middle East in national politics. The Arab American Institute (AAI) is a non-profit organization committed to the civic and political empowerment of Americans of Arab descent. The primary instruments for the achievement of this interest is political campaigns financing.

We have endless list of Interest group in the United States seeking to influence government policy to achieve the cause represented and to protect the interest of members. One potent strategy adopted by these interest groups is the act of funding electioneering campaign of candidate and political parties with favourable disposition toward their interest. As stated earlier, the underlying objective of funding political campaign is protection and advancement of self-interest. Significantly, the Jewish lobby group plays critical role in this regard. Members of the group are the wealthiest and most influential in the United States. The Jewish lobby group is a loosed coalition of individual and group who naturally are of Jewish descent but live in the United States. The Jewish lobby group is also regarded as a one issue based organisation and this issue is the advancement of the US- Israel relations and the promotion of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state of Israel regarded as the Jewish ancestral home. The lobby group is primarily concern with the sustenance of the pro-Israel United States Middle East foreign policy. Although, the Jews represent about two percent of the United States population, they are the highest donor to any electioneering political campaign in the country. This provides opportunity to influence US Middle East foreign policy making it entirely pro- Israel.

To the two well-known Jewish writers, Lipset and Raab, (1995), the influence of Jews in America is disproportionate to the size of the community. They argued that despite the numeric disadvantage of the Jews compare to the larger American population, they occupied key strategic positions and constitute higher percentage in term of numbers in key sector of US economy. This gave them access to huge financial resources to make highest campaign donations in election and to influence political processes. The duo gave a statistic analysis of Jewish demographic representation in the United States as follows:

During the last three decades, Jews in the United States have made up 50 percent of the top two hundred intellectuals ... 20 percent of professors at the leading Universities ... 40 percent of partners in the leading law firms in New York and Washington ... 59 percent of the Directors, writers, and producers of the 50 top-grossing motion pictures from 1965 to 1982, and 58 percent of Directors, Writers, and Producers in two or more primetime television series.” The influence of American Jewry in Washington is far disproportionate to the size of the community, Jewish leaders and U.S. official acknowledge. But so is the amount of money they contribute to election campaigns. One member of the influential Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations alone had contributed 50 percent of the funds for President Bill Clinton’s 1996 re-election campaign (Lipset and Raab 1995)

Furthermore, Goldberg (1996), an editor of the influential Jewish Community weekly “forward” magazine argued that the dominant power of the Jewish in the film industry and the media gave them undue advantage to influence the United States foreign Policy in favour of Israel. They are major sponsors of the United States presidential and congressional candidates, therefore, they dictate and shape the direction of the United States policy in the Middle East

The preponderance of campaign finance in the United States politics do not raise any concern, after all it is a general practice in every democratic political system. However, the fundamental concern is the way the phenomenon has become a strategy to manipulate the US government for interest based policy output especially in favour of group such as the Jewish lobby with the highest potential for campaign finance. This

concern triggered the need to intellectually interrogate the phenomenon.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Elite Theory

There are avalanche of theories that provides explanation for the subject matter of this article. However, the theory that best provide theoretical foundation for the preponderance of campaign finance in the United States politics and also establish a link with the Jewish Lobby group is the Elite theory. Elite theory is a theory of state that seeks to describe and explain power relation in contemporary societies. The theory posits that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy-planning networks, holds the most power and that this power is independent of democratic elections. Elite theory is deeply rooted in the works of Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Robert Michel (1878-1936), Max Weber (1864-1941). These scholars are regarded as Italian School of Elitism. Mosca emphasized the way in which tiny minorities out organize and outwit large majority adding that political class usually have a certain material, intellectual and even moral superiority over majority.

Pareto on his own postulated that in a society with truly unrestricted social mobility, elite would consist of the most talented and deserving, but in actual society, elite are those most adept at using the two political modes of political rule, force and persuasion and who usually enjoy important advantages such as inherited wealth and family connection. Max weber on the other hand held that political action is always determine by the principles of small numbers, this implies that the superior political manoeuvrability of a small leading group. Elite theory generally provided scientific explanation to the fact that in every society, the majority of the existential resources, economic, intellectual and cultural are concentrated in the hand of small group of individual who use them to exercise dominion over the rest of the population.

The relevance of the theory lies in the fact that, those few individual or group that provide funds in support of electioneering campaign of political candidate or parties are the elite, they are wealthy individual or group who naturally do this to obtain policy concession. In other word, the elites in every political system are the wealthy class with large connection and huge financial resources from which they finance electioneering campaign of political candidates. Members of the public or interested mass based group can donate fund to support candidate of their choice, however when campaign funding are calibrated, figures from the elites top the chat and often draw the attention of the political candidate who naturally would want to reciprocate with policy concession in favour of the elite class who are the highest donor.

The Jews in the United States although few in numbers constitute a loose coalition with strong hold and significant influence on the US foreign policy decisions especially as it affect the Middle East. They can be arguably described as group of elite with strong financial muscle, adequate connection and potential reliable donor in campaign financing. As enunciated by Ginsberg (1993), “though less than 2% of the US population but half of the country’s billionaires are Jews. They wield considerable influence on the US economy, cultural, intellectual and political life. The group exercise dominant presence as Directors of large scale business organizations, have huge numbers in the academia, Law, religion, Medias and in motion pictures such as Hollywood etc”. The import of this argument is that, the Jews even though relatively small in numbers compare to the larger US population, leveraged their huge financial advantage, network and positions to exert considerable influence on the US foreign policy direction in the Middle East making it entirely pro-Israel. One significant strategy used by the Jewish lobby group to advance their interest is campaign financing. The lobby group leverage their huge financial advantage to become the highest donor to political candidate and parties. Humongous funds are channel through Political Action Committee (PAC) in support of preferred candidate or opponent of discredited candidate to defeat them at the poll. The

primary criteria for determining individual candidate and party to channel support fund is disposition toward Israel. It is therefore in line with the perspective of the elite theory that the study is viewed.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURES

Political campaign finance is significantly an integral part of the United States political system. Electioneering campaign is financed with donations from private individual, families and group. A unique feature of election circle is the competition from wealthy individual and group to not only support with campaign funds but be the highest donor to candidate or political party. This is more so because the highest donor often attract the attention of political candidate and mostly secure positive disposition from them after winning election. According to Wikipedia, the finance of electoral campaign in the US happen at the federal, State and local government level by contribution from individual, corporate and Political Action Committee and sometimes the government. Campaign finance gained wider acceptance because campaign spendings have risen steadily over the years, for instance, the average spending for the election into the house of representative cost about \$407, 600 as at 1990, this figure have risen astronomically due to inflation and other factors affecting monetary values (Wikipedia).

According to Bjouvkman (2020), “campaign finance in US are legally defined by the federal electoral act as fund used for the purpose and connection with the campaign to conduct the federal election. Candidate for political office raised money to fund their campaign and to demonstrate the breathe of their support while campaign finance law determine who can contribute to a campaign and how much as well as how those contributions are to be reported and utilized.” The implication of the above is that political campaign finance is legal in the United States, it is recognised and regulated by the US Law. The law went as far as specifying who can donate fund and how much individual and group can donate as well as how the donation is to be reported to the public. In addition, mechanism for the utilisation of the fund donated is well spelt out by the federal electoral act. In other word, unutilised campaign donations cannot be used by the political candidate for private matters but for charities and other social wellbeing projects as spelt out in the law governing the process. The essence is to guide against corruption and gross abuse.

D’Souze (2023), deep dived into the reasons for the alarming increase in the phenomena of campaign finance in the United States politics, she averred that running for political office in the United States cost money that is why candidate collect millions of dollars in contributions and so too the Political Action Committees (PAC) established in their names. Quoting a report from the Centre for Responsible politics, D’souze avers further that “presidential candidate in the 2020 election circle draw almost \$4 billion in donation, more than \$1billion was raised by President Joe Biden and additional \$580 million came from outside money. Donald Trump also raised about \$774 million in donation and another \$314 million in donation from outside money”.

Analysing the significant of campaign finance in the US politics, Milyo (2020), opined that “conventional wisdom hold that money plays a central role in American politics”. He views campaign finance as a functional equivalent of bribe and political market place, he thus suggested the need to strengthen the regulation guiding the phenomenon to checkmate abuses. In the same vein, Macintyre, Pon and Broberg (2020), avers that” money influence on politics has been a subject of debate, some scholars argued that higher spending can signal higher quality candidate and enable broader dissemination of information for voters decision making”. Some belief higher spending gave candidate with access to more resources an unfair advantage leading them to win election even though less qualifies. Scholar associated with the later school of thought recommend public funding of election campaign to provide a level playing ground for all candidates.

A significant features of US politics is that the electoral law limit the campaign spending of candidate in

election, however, the law permit candidate the option of complying with the spending limit and be reimbursed for expenses up to a certain amount or not to comply and forgone the public fund. In other word, government structured amount of money that can be spent by political candidate for electoral campaign to ensure they do not exceed certain limit. If they comply with this limit, such candidate will be refunded up to certain percentage of the amount spent, however, the candidate can as well forgone the public funding option and go for private donation to enjoy unlimited capacity to spend. It is on record that most popular candidate in the US election often foregone the public funding to enable them spend unlimited sum. In 2008 for instance, Barack Obama was said to be the first presidential candidate to opt out of the public funding in order to spend unlimited sum. Since them, all Republican presidential nominees have followed suite. The resultant effect is the astronomical increase in campaign funding in US. According to Hillstrom, (2021), “political campaign spending in the 2020 election total 14billion more than double the record breaking 2016 Presidential election circle. The money mostly comes from PAC and unprecedented number of small donors, and wealthy individual, family and corporations.

Adducing further reason for the rising cost of campaign in the United States, ACE encyclopaedia asserted that this is due largely to rising cost of logistics. According to the Editor, “competing in an election cost money and election campaign are becoming more and more expensive, funds are needed to establish campaign office, hire staff, and do polling, get the campaign message out and for the candidate to travel and meet the voters.” One significant factor identifies for the rising cost of campaign in the United States is the increasing reliance on the use of expensive mass media advertisement. What this implies is that dishing out campaign information via social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tiktok cost lots of money. These channels unarguably are the most potent channel to reach large number of voters not only in the US but globally. However, accessing these channels cost whopping amount of money. Politician desirous of using the mediums sourced for fund outside personal saving to do so.

In other word, with the rising cost of campaign, politicians have no choice than to source for alternative funds to execute campaign plans, thus, reach out to private donors for support and assistance. The fundamental issue here is that private donor especially wealthy individual or group that donates money to support the electioneering campaign of candidates do not do this for charity. Albeit, some Donors do so merely to support preferred candidate, but most interest group do this with ulterior motive. Group interest or policy concession is an important consideration in campaign finance in the United States. Candidates after winning election are expected to consider the interest of those Donors that support with funds. This factor essentially account for the rising increase in campaign funding especially from wealthy individual and interest group in the United States. The common practice is to establish Political Action Committee (PAC) in candidate name, interest group thus direct members to donate to the candidate through the PAC. Once the supported candidate or the political party win election, the interest group swing to action to lobby for interest based policy concession

The Jews Lobby Group and Campaign Finance in US Politics

It is imperative at this juncture to provide brief exposition on who is naturally a Jew and the ethno-religious group calls the Jews lobby in the United States. This becomes very necessary in view of the fact that the primary focus of the study is on the Jew lobby group a major campaign donor in the US. Such brief description will ultimately engender better understanding of the subject matter and direction of the study. As stated in the Old Testament Bible, the Jews or Jewish people whichever way we look at it are ethno-religious group or nationalities who are said to have originated from Israel and Judah of the biblical period. Tulea and krausz, (1997), defined a Jew as one who practices the Jewish religion of Judaism. They include both converts and those who have been members of the Jewish religion from birth. Thus, “a Jew is one, who is a descendant of the ancient Israelite group and therefore is a member of the Jewish race”. From the above, it is clear that one can be a Jew in three distinct ways: through practicing Judaism, a religion historically

identified with the Jewish race, one can also be a Jew through convert to the fold of Judaism and one regardless of current religious identity is directly a descendant of Jewish ancestor traditionally applies to patrilineal and matrilineal descent, one whose father or mother are born as Jew. According to Mcgongle and Herman (2017), traditional Israel law of return stipulates that a Jew is someone with a Jewish mother or someone who has converted to Judaism and is not a member of other religions. This implies that one whose mother is a Jew or who through religious conversion is automatically a Jew. The encyclopaedia Britannica give further description of who is a Jew. “A Jew in a broader sense of the term is any person belonging to the world-wide group that constitutes through descent or conversion a continuation of the ancient Jewish people, who were themselves descendant of the Hebrew of the Old Testament bible.

The Jews in the United States are referred to as American Jews. They are American citizen who are of Jewish descent either by birth, religious inclination, ethnicity, culture or nationality. Even though they are full-fledged United States Citizen born and bred in the country or become United States citizen by other method of acquiring citizenship such as by registration or naturalization, they do not totally extricate themselves from Israel which they consider as their ancestral home land. Identification with the state of Israel closely forms part of Jewish identity, social- cultural life and value systems. As stated earlier, the Jews before migrating to the United States were disintegrated and scattered all over Europe in such countries as Eastern Europe, Spain, Germany and Portugal, Russian, Poland where they live peacefully until compelled to emigrate by development in their host countries. According to Stevenson (2018) “impelled by economic hardship, persecution and the great social and political upheavals of the 9th century industrialization, over population and urbanizations, millions of Europe Jews left their town and villages and embarked on the arduous journey to the golden land of America” Similarly, on Jewish emigration to US Zollman (2002), opined that the Jews from Germany emigrated to United States as a result of persecution and oppressive government policies borne out of hostile political environments. He argued further that “the Jews especially those from Germany, because of persecution, restrictive laws, economic hardship and the failure of movement widely supported by the German Jews advocating for reform there”. In other word, the Jewish emigration to US from Europe was as a result persecution, discrimination and racial discrimination meted to the Jews in Europe. This ugly experience triggered the need to seek for greener pastures outside Europe. They desire conducive environment where their security and safety could be guaranteed, United States was thus considered preferable.

Succinctly put, when we talk about Jews in America, we refer to individual or group domicile in United States but share connection through matrilineal or patrilineal descent with Israel which they regarded as their ancestral home and those who practice Judaism as a religion and do not belong to any other religion group. Judaism is a religion identified with the Jewish people this commonly manifests in their mode of dressings and other social cultural life.

The Emergence of the Jewish Lobby Group in the United States.

As stated earlier, the Jew as a unique ethnos -religious group possess identifiable identities. The identities manifests in physical appearance, religious practice, cultural belief and entrepreneurial engagements etc. A major distinctive characteristic common with the Jews all over the world is their intricate attraction to the state of Israel which they considered as their ancestral origin. With this in mine, even with full citizenship of the host country, they still do not divorce strong attachment to the state of Israel thus the ultimate goal of an average Jew is to protect and defend their ancestral home land.

According to Nehme (2000), “like their Christian and Muslim counterpart, the Jews are conservative and sometimes militant. Their zealotary and willingness to sacrifice for a cause provide them with an inordinate amount of power especially when it comes to matter affecting religion and Israel”. In other word, by their nature the Jews have strong emotional attachment to matter of religion and Israel and are ready to defend this cause using every available means at their disposal. Through religion and other collaborative

engagement especially philanthropic activities, they project and protect the interest of what and where they believe is their ancestral home. This no doubt plays significant role in awakening the Jews consciousness. The Jewish consciousness is aggravated by the complexities of United States political, social and economic environment which appears to be immune to individual effort but rather penetrable easily to social cultural groups. The above assertion provides a foundational background and insight to the emergence of the powerful Jewish lobby in the United States.

The Jews in diaspora, that is those Jews that domicile in Germany, Spain, Russian, and other part of Eastern Europe before the holocaust, on arrival in US do not waste time in settling down in local communities where they engaged in basic economic activities that provide income to support their much-cherished ethnic identities and assimilation into the American culture. In other word, having realize on arrival the complexities of the American society especially against the backdrop of the understanding that individual effort yields less result but collective action, the Jews began to come together to form loosed organizations and other interest grouping to agitate for furthering and protection of their interest. The Jewish lobby group is a one issue based organisation and that issue is Israel

As a corollary to the above, Arnold (2018), averred that the Jews have been bred and raised to be entrepreneurial for thousands of years. For instance, earlier in some part of Europe, they were barred from owning land, from trade guilds, and from certain white collar professions, all they could do was engaged in menial jobs such as money lending, and peddling and petty trading”. Arnold argued further that Jewish tradition always emphasized the importance of “the book”, study and learning, and getting a good education. So, there was a bit of evolution whereby Jews ended up having a disproportionate number of their people good at businesses. Also, “since they were the last to be hired and the first to be fired due to inherent discrimination toward the Jewish race in Europe, they leaned towards being independent that means owning their own businesses. In another corroborative argument, Arnold went further to assert that the discrimination and the pogrom against the Jews in Europe make them stronger and ever ready to take greater risk for self-survival. In other word, they are mostly immune to fear of failure and ready to pay supreme price in business decisions. They have seen it all and are not intimidated by any extenuating circumstances. From general economic analysis, risk taken is an acclaimed panacea to business successes.

The foregoing revealed in clear terms the fundamental reason underlying the Jews success in businesses and subsequent emergence as billionaires in the United States. Succinctly put, the business acumen coupled with the Jewish traditions that encourage education and learning contributed immensely to the rise to affluence of Jews in the United States. With huge financial muscles it is natural for Jewish to influence decisions and exercise dominance on the political space using the strategy of campaign financing

In summary, having escaped from the peril of the holocaust and other harsh social political conditions in Europe to the United States, the Jews immediately engaged in profitable economic ventures such as trading, manufacturing and banking where necessary as means of livelihood. They also does not waste time in taking advantage of the open educational system in US to enrol in schools and veer into profession such as Law, Engineering, Medicine and Information and Communication Technology. In addition, the open and free social policies in the United States created conducive atmosphere for them to engage in commerce and other profitable economic activities without inhibitions. The ugly experience of the past also ignited some level of consciousness which underlies the belief that coming together to form interest group to fight for their interest and common share values is paramount thus, the need for strong and virile lobby organizations.

Consequently, from small scale trading to manufacturing concern, banking to large scale corporate businesses, the Jews were elevated to position of affluence producing billionaire businessmen with huge financial resources to manipulate legislations and public opinions. The Jews subsequently rose to position of authority in the United States playing major role in critical foreign policies decisions especially as it affect the Middle East. We can asserts from the above that the entrepreneurial skill of the Jews which they

exhibited from the onset on arrival in the United States play critical role in their elevation to position of influence and affluence in the United States

The Power of the Jewish Lobby Group in the United States

There is no doubt that the Jews Lobby organization exercise considerable power over the United States Middle East foreign policy and other domestic affairs. The power can be aptly described as ‘soft power’ because it does not involve application of force but high wired politics, manoeuvring, collective bargaining and use of financial inducement through campaign financing. To a large extend, the Jewish Lobby organization have succeeded more than any other interest groups in the United States in using this power to achieve desire objective which primarily is the advancement of the US- Israel relations.

The Jews today constitute considerable percentage of the Billionaires in the United States. The Forbes magazine edition of America wealthiest individual in 2018 as reported in the Times of Israel (2020) revealed that five individuals of Jewish descent make the list of the ten wealthiest people in the United States, below table buttressed this assertion.

Five Richest Jews in the United States and their Business Organization

S/N	Name	Net worth	Business Organization
1	Mark Zuckerberg	\$46.1billion	Founder of Facebook
2	Larry Ellison	\$58.4 Billion	Founder of Oracle
3	Larry Page	\$53.8 Billion	Co-founder of Google
4	Sergery Brin	\$52.4 Billion	Co-founder of Google
5	Michael Bloomberg	\$51.8 Billion	Founder CEO of Bloomberg LP

Source: Times of Israel: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/5-jews-make-forbes-list-of-top-10-wealthiest-americans> retrieved June 2022

The basic deduction from the above table is that 50% of the United States Billionaires are Jews, from this we can draw a more general inference that the Jews are one of the richest races universally. It is clear from our previous analysis that Jews in the United States share common values these values are ethno-religious identity and strong affiliation with the states of Israel which they consider as their ancestral origin and desire to protect the security and territorial integrity of the country. It therefore not disputable that collective group where above named individuals and others in the same bourgeois class are affiliated will pull huge financial resources to achieve desire interest at the expense of others. What this implies is that the Jew lobby as an interest group exercise considerable non-state actor power because of the huge financial resources at the disposal of its members. This is a natural tendency because even in Nigeria or any other African societies, community with greater number of millionaires are more powerful and highly respected and often exercise dominion over others. This factor undoubtedly explains the successes and unprecedented power and achievement of the powerful Jewish lobby group in the United States. The economic advantages thus place them in a position of being the highest donor in any campaign financing.

JEWISH LOBBY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

There are numerous Jewish organizations in the United States each representing different interest but are unanimous in primary objective which ultimately is the protection and advancement of the state of Israel and that of Jewish people in the United States. Primarily, a significant goal of these organizations is to ensure US uninterrupted financial Aids and support to Israel especially in fighting perceived adversaries, the neighbouring Arab countries. The Jewish organizations also sprang up to advance the interest of the Jews in

the United States against the backdrop of the previous ugly experience in Europe. The devastating experience in Europe engenders close affinity among the Jews triggering spirit of oneness and belief in common share values. Also, the realization that their interest needs to be adequately protected to avoid repeat of the past ignite the desire to come together and speak with one voice through strong and virile interest group. The most popular and most active Jewish lobby organisations are the Conference of President of Major Jewish Organizations. This body represents the mouthpiece of the Jewish Union, it articulates the position of the lobby group and presents it to the executive arm of the United States Government for considerations and policy concession.

Again, the America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is the most virile of the lobby group, AIPAC lobby the US Congress by positioning themselves at the corridor of the Congress building to monitor the disposition of the congressmen on matters that concerns Israel. The focus is essentially the Senators that benefited from the largesse of the Jewish lobby. In other word Senators who have received monetary donation and other support from the lobby group are often under the eagle eyes of the lobby group. The evangelical organization like Christian United for Israel (CUFI) under the leadership of Pastor John Hagee also play active role in advancing the Jewish interest. The organisation adopts popular Christian eschatology to convince millions of Christians in the United States including the decision make to be sympathetic to Israel.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE JEWISH LOBBY GROUP ON THE UNITED STATES MIDDLE EAST FOREIGN POLICY

Earlier in this article, we ascertained the fact that the Jewish Lobby group plays significant role in shaping the United States Middle East foreign policy in favour of Israel. One of the reasons for this success is the strategy of financing electioneering campaign of political candidate or parties. We demonstrated the lobby group effectiveness by bringing to fore some favors successfully accrued to Israel by the group. Such favour includes among others, strengthened the US- Israel relations, procuring annual \$3billion financial aid to Israel, Military and technological assistance and most critically the diplomatic coverage of Israel at the United Nations. This enables Israel unlike other countries ignore United Nations Security Council resolution 242 relating to evacuation from occupied Palestinian's territory of Gaza and other territories acquired in 1967 during the six days war such as the Golan height and south Lebanon without any consequences. The Jewish lobby group often strongholds the United States government on critical issues that impacts on the US Middle East strategic national interest, they lobbied to ensure serious economic sanctions on Iran for their nuclear program, restrict sales of Arm by the United States to the Arab countries, they have also pushed United States to war with Iraq and other perceived Israel's adversaries, they also constantly pressure United State to recognize Jerusalem as Jewish capital. It should be noted that there are several lobby groups in the United States lobbying for one interest or the others. For instance, there are Arab lobby, Indian lobby, Mexican lobby, Black Caucus, Chinese lobby, all strive to advance the interest of their members cum home countries. However, the Jewish lobby group demonstrated higher level of efficiency unrivalled by any other interest group in the US.

Political Campaign Finance as Instrument for Policy Concession

Political Campaign finance or campaign donation is a veritable tool used by the Jewish lobby Group to secure commitment and loyalty of members of congress and the executive. The strategy is to provide campaign funds for candidate with favorable disposition towards Israel seeking political office to enable them win and also provide fund for opponent of candidate with critical view of Israel in order to defeat such candidate at the poll. According to Bard (2007), "political campaign contributions are also considered an important means of influence on government

To Ivan and, Tuvana (2013), "although the political science literatures indicates that most contributors give to support parties or candidates with whom they are already in agreement, there is wide public perception

which of course is the reality that donors expect government favors in return, such as specific legislation being enacted or defeated, so some scholars have come to view campaign finance with political corruption and bribery because funds are given to candidate in anticipation of support, loyalty and commitment.”

Some countries rely heavily on private donors to finance political campaigns; these kinds of donations can come from private individuals, as well as groups such as trade unions and others. In the United States, tactics for raising money includes direct mail solicitation, attempts to encourage supporters to contribute via the internet, direct solicitation from the candidate, and social events specifically for the purpose of fundraising, or other activities.

Some countries prefer to use government funding to run campaigns. Funding campaigns from the government budget is common in countries like South America and Europe. The mechanisms for this can be quite varied, ranging from direct subsidy of political parties, exemption from fees of government services such as tax relief and many others. Supporters of government financing generally believe that the system reduce bribery and corruption and provide level playing ground for candidates. In addition, many protagonists argued that government financing promotes other values, such as civic participation or greater faith in the political process. However, government subsidies to campaign may take the form of money, some systems require campaign materials often air time on television to be provided at very low rates to the candidates.

In the United States, AIPAC is at the vanguard of formal Jewish lobby in the Congress, it is the channel through which campaign donation are deliver to the preferred candidate. However, AIPAC in the real sense does not give donations directly to candidates, but those who donate to AIPAC are often important political contributors. In addition, AIPAC only helps to link donors with candidates, especially to the network of pro-Israel Political Action Committees (PAC). AIPAC President Howard Friedman said in April 2020, that “AIPAC meets with every candidate running for Congress, these candidates receive in-depth briefings to help them completely understand the complexities of Israel’s predicament and that of the Middle East as a whole. They often ask each candidate to write a ‘position paper’ on their views of the US-Israel relationship so it can be cleared where they stand on the subject.” The process of political contribution has become more structure and stringent than before, the Jewish Lobby group provide campaign donation to support candidate with soft disposition toward Israel and also starve and oppose candidate with critical outlook on Israel. In other word, campaign donations are given out conditionally, one of the conditions is favorable disposition toward Israel. As a candidate, you must be ready to defend Israel cause to access the fund. Those candidates with favorable disposition toward Israel not only on paper but by conduct are handsomely rewarded.

According to Bard (2009), “politicians considered too critical of Israel who AIPAC has helped to defeat via campaign finance include the following amongst several others: Cynthia McKinney, Paul Findley, Earl F. Hilliard, Pete McCloskey, Senators William Fulbright and Roger Jepsen, and Adlai Stevenson III when he contested for the governor of Illinois in 1982. Bard went on to say that “the defeat of Charles H. Percy, Senator for Illinois until 1985, has been attributed to AIPAC-coordinated donations to his opponent after he supported the sale of AWACS military planes to Saudi Arabia. The Donations included \$1.1 million released for anti-Percy advertising by Michael Goland, who was also a major contributor to AIPAC and a staunch member of the Jewish lobby group.

On the complicated issues of defeat of disloyal politicians especially the celebrated Charles Percy, Stephen (2003) quoting the former Executive Director of AIPAC, Tom Dine asserted that, all the Jews in America, from coast to coast, gathered to oust Senator Charles Percy and the American politicians who hold public positions now, and those who aspire got the message” The expression “got the message” here is significant, the significance lies in the fact that the politicians are fully aware of the implication of taken a critical view of Israel and AIPAC capability to remove them at will. This fundamentally explains why most politicians court AIPAC and avoid expressing view portraying anti-Israel stand. The above demonstrated the

significant of campaign finance in the United State politics and how the Jewish lobby group use it to further their interest

Campaign financin strategy is not in any way peculiar to United States political milieu, it revealed generally the significant of the role of patronage function in politics. The patronage function emphasizes reward system for supports and loyalty. Candidates supported with campaign funds to win election are mostly likely to reward their benefactors with legislative or policy concessions. The Jewish lobby groups leverage these principles and take advantage of it to achieve desire results when the opportunity presented itself.

According to Ben-Zion (2012) “big-dollar donors can have big influence. They are often invited to state dinners at the White House and other events with the President. They also may be asked to weigh in on public policy, especially if it affects their financial interests, the ranks of ambassadors, advisory panels, and other government jobs traditionally are filled with those who have been generous during the campaign”

Amri (2013), also emphasized the importance of campaign donation as major strategy adopted by the Jewish lobby group to influence US foreign policy decisions when he said, “the Jewish lobby group adopted various strategies to gain the congress support. These strategies range from organizing coalition, lobbying, grassroots techniques and the campaign donation”. He argued further that among these techniques, campaign finance is one of the techniques that could directly explain the special relationship between the lobby group and the US congress and the executive arm of the government.

Bruce (1999), stressed this fact further when he said, “American foreign policy is formulated by the office of the President in concert with his advisors at the State Department, National Security Council, the Pentagon, CIA and other contributing organizations. When spending or legislation is involved, Congress is involved since it appropriates all funds and is responsible for passing laws. When therefore, elected officials are ultimately responsible for decisions, those decisions are subject to the whims of the American political processes. He argued further that, “Politicians want to stay in office and to do so they try to please those who vote and those who donate money to them this have never changed”.

The Washington lobby (1987) described the role of campaign donation to the effectiveness of the Jewish lobby activities. They averred that campaign contribution to members of congress serve two important functions to lobbying organizations. Political support not only can indulge a congressional man to back the group legislative interest but also can help to ensure that members friendly to the group goal remain in Office. This perspective was also shared by Mearsheimer and Walt (2007), when they aver as follows:

American Israel Public Affair Committee (AIPAC)’s success in pushing through its agenda is due largely to its ability to reward legislators and congressional candidates who support its agenda, and to punish decisively those who challenge it. Money is critical to U.S election and AIPAC makes sure that its friends get strong financial support from the myriad of pro-Israel Political Action Committees (PAC). Those seen as hostile to Israel, on the other hand, can be sure that AIPAC will direct campaign contributions to their political opponents. AIPAC also organizes letter-writing campaigns and encourages newspaper editors to endorse pro-Israel candidates. There is no doubt about the potency of these tactics. To take but one example, in 1984 AIPAC helped defeat Senator Charles Percy from Illinois, who, according to one prominent Jewish Lobby figure, had “displayed insensitivity and even hostility to our concern (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007)

Speaking about pro-Israel lobby group in America and their tactics Arke (2009), avers that J Streets Political Action Committee and AIPAC plays significant role as the highest donor to political candidate and congressional members in 2018. According to him, “one of the most powerful international issue lobbies is that of the pro-Israel crowd. Well-financed and politically powerful, the pro-Israel lobby is a major force on American foreign affairs that looks to continue America’s military and fiscal support of the Jewish nation-

state. Arke argued further that the Jewish lobby has had recent policy success with the trump administration moving the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a move long advocated by some in the pro-Israel lobby. Rossinow (2010), provided statistics of the highest donor in the 2018 presidential election. He opined that, the largest group which contributed the highest was JSreets PAC which gave more than \$4 million to candidates in 2018... Rossinow stated that, the robust lobbying force was led by the face of the pro-Israel movement, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC To Rossinow, AIPAC spent more than \$3.5 million on lobbying in 2018, making up the vast majority of the entire lobby spent. As Stated earlier, AIPAC is not a political action committee and does not donate directly to political candidates, but do direct its members to donate to the campaigns of certain members of Congress in order to receive exclusive membership benefits. Since the late 1970s, AIPAC has informally and discretely directed substantial campaign contributions toward prefer candidates for Congress.”

As a corollary to the above, Ben-Zion (2012), also revealed that, in the 2012 United States presidential election, the biggest donor to Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign, and the two biggest donors to Barack Obama’s re-election bid are all Jewish. He posited further that “the largest declared donor overall is the casino mogul, Sheldon Adelson, who is worth an estimated \$25 billion. He donated \$34.2 million so far to aid Romney and organizations supporting the Republican challenger to Obama re-election bid. In the same vein, President Obama’s top two donors are Jeffrey Katzenberg who donated \$2.566 million and Irwin Jacobs who donated \$2.122 million respectively” This without any doubt explain the power and the success of the Jewish lobby as an interest group in the United States

Pro-Israel Group Top 20 Contributors to Federal Candidates and Parties in the 2017-2018 US Election Circle. Released by the Federal Election Commission (FEC)

Total contributions: **\$15,355,733 T**

	Contributor	Total Contr.	Total	Dem%	Rep%
1	JStreet PAC	\$4,238,393	\$4,238,393	97.80%	0%
2	Nor PAC	\$1,189,679	\$1,189,679	65.50%	34.50%
3	Republican Jewish Coalition	\$560,366	\$560,366	1.00%	99.00%
4	Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs	\$312,429	\$312,329	98.10%	1.90%
5	Florida Congressional Committee	\$278,700	\$278,700	12.60%	87.40%
6	National Action Committee	\$196,000	\$196,000	62.80%	35.50%
7	Citizens Organized PAC	\$173,500	\$173,500	44.70%	55.30%
8	Desert Caucus	\$135,000	\$135,000	48.10%	51.90%
9	Bi-County PAC	\$126,000	\$126,000	72.20%	27.80%
10	American Principles	\$117,500	\$117,500	0%	100.00%
11	Friends of Israel	\$115,400	\$115,400	76.30%	23.70%
12	Maryland Assn for Concerned Citizens	\$88,600	\$88,600	72.30%	27.70%
13	SunPAC	\$84,200	\$84,200	67.90%	32.10%
14	To Protect Our Heritage PAC	\$76,400	\$76,400	32.10%	67.90%
15	Heartland PAC	\$65,000	\$65,000	65.40%	34.60%
16	Washington PAC	\$64,500	\$64,500	59.70%	40.30%
17	Americans United in Support of Democracy	\$59,500	\$59,500	60.00%	40.00%
18	National PAC	\$54,200	\$54,200	24.90%	65.90%

19	Grand Canyon State Caucus	\$53,000	\$53,000	34.00%	66.00%
20	J Street	\$52,959	\$52,959	99.00%	0%

Source: Open Secret Following the Money in Politics.
<https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?ind=Q05&cycle=2018>

Top 20 Recipients of Pro Israel Political Campaign Finance in the 2017-2018 Election Circle

Rank	Candidate/Party /Constituent	Office	Amount
1	Menendez, Robert (D-NJ)	Senate	\$576,922
2	Cruz, Ted (R-TX)	Senate	\$363,794
3	Kohl, Dan (D-WI)	Senate	\$272,248
4	Mandel, Josh (R-OH)	Senate	\$270,433
5	Brown, Sherrod (D-OH)	Senate	\$231,766
6	Baldwin, Tammy (D-WI)	Senate	\$230,764
7	O'Rourke, Beto (D-TX)	House	\$223,447
8	Riggleman, Denver (R-VA)	House	\$199,280
9	Heitkamp, Heidi (D-ND)	Senate	\$182,256
10	Schneider, Brad (D-IL)	House	\$180,015
11	Casey, Bob (D-PA)	Senate	\$174,086
12	Roskam, Peter (R-IL)	House	\$173,874
13	Zeldin, Lee (R-NY)	House	\$170,957
14	Cardin, Ben (D-MD)	Senate	\$170,300
15	Kaine, Tim (D-VA)	Senate	\$165,773
16	Nelson, Bill (D-FL)	Senate	\$165,634
17	Curbelo, Carlos (R-FL)	House	\$159,712
18	Manchin, Joe (D-WV)	Senate	\$154,900
19	McSally, Martha (R-AZ)	Senate	\$154,478
20	McCaskill, Claire (D-MO)	Senate	\$152,081

Source: Open Secret. Following the money in Politics.
<https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php=2018/>. Retrieved July 2023

All donations took place during the 2017-2018 election cycle and were released by the Federal Election Commission (FEC) on Monday, June 10, 2019

The implication of the above is that the campaign donation to congressional candidate by the Jewish lobby group play significant role in their capability to secure obedience, loyalty and support of congress members when policy decisions such as that relating to the Middle East are to be taken. The strategies of mobilizing campaign fund to support preferred candidate in order to secure their loyalty, commitment and also provide donation to opponent of opposed candidate in order to defeat them at the poll is a major tool employ not only by the Jewish lobby group but other interest group in the United States fighting for favourable US Foreign policy disposition toward their ancestral homeland. As stated earlier, of all the interest group in the United States, the Jewish lobby group recorded unprecedented capacity and success in influencing the US foreign policy in pro-Israel direction. To Blackwill (2020), this is fundamentally because the Jewish lobby possesses enormous resources, and they make available these resources to congressional and other

political aspirants to support campaign spending.

Finally, the above analysis provided in details the relationship between campaign finance and effective lobbying in the United States. The Jewish lobby groups mostly apply this strategy to gain influence both on the Congress and the Executive branch of the United States government. As stated earlier, it is a reciprocal gesture where the beneficiary of campaign finance in turn recognizes the benefactor by way of loyalty, commitment, advancement of those interest represented by the benefactors. We can therefore simply infer that the Jewish lobby unprecedented achievement in influencing the United States Middle East foreign policy both at the congressional and the executive arm level is due largely to the campaign finance strategy.

CONCLUSION

Political Campaign finance is an integral part of the United States politics and can no longer be isolated. It has continued to gain wider acceptance due high cost of campaign logistics, rising cost of electioneering campaign drastically dwindled the efficiency of government funding thus political candidates sourced for private funding to execute their electioneering campaign.

Wealthy individual and group provides fund to support prefer candidate and also to defeat opposed candidate at the poll. There are proliferation of interest group in the United States, each group strive to influence government to advance private interest. The strategy of campaign financing provides a veritable tool to influence government for policy concession and to advance such group interest.

Political Campaign funding is shrouded in a reciprocal relationship, donor donate money in anticipation of special consideration by the Donee for benefits ranging from group welfare, policy concession and advancement of the group interest. Private or group interest represents a major factor in Political campaign financing

The Jewish lobby group is a loosed coalition of individual and group whose primary motive is the advancement of the US- Israel relation and pro-Israel Middle East foreign policy. The lobby group leverage their dominance in the strategic sectors of the US economy to influence the US Middle East foreign policy in favour of Israel. The group members are rated at top ten of fifty billionaires in the United stated. With Huge financial power, the Jewish lobby group member are often the highest donor to political candidate and parties in the United States. They provide huge financial support to member of the Congress and the executive arm to lobby them for concession in relation to the Middle East foreign policy and other domestic affairs.

We can thus infer that the significant influence of the Jewish lobby group on the US Middle East foreign policy making it entirely pro- Israel is mostly situated within the context of political campaign Finance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing, the following are recommended:

The regulatory frame work on campaign financing should be strengthened. United States government should be more involved in campaign spending to provide level playing ground for candidate with less resources and financial capability but appropriate leadership quality.

Legal requirements on political campaign should be minimised to reduce cost. Criteria of visiting voters in all the fifty states of the United States by political candidates (President) should be reviewed. Reducing this to 50% of the states will reduce considerably the campaign cost.

The political system in the United States should be re-engineered to reduce considerably the attendant cost of electioneering campaign. This will reduce the profound impact of campaign donation which to a large extent will extricates the political candidates from the grips of interest group such as the Jewish lobby group donor to enable them take objective position on issues of critical national importance.

The current experience is such that the Jewish lobby intimidate political candidate with threat of withdrawing support by way of either not attracting donor to them or supporting opposition candidate for their defeat in election. Political candidate, congressmen and executive members are scare of making public statements that are critical of Israel in other not to lose their seat. Government funding should be made available to political candidates to reduce over dependent on private donors such as the Jewish Lobby Group for campaign funding.

United States social economic and political system should be redesigned to accommodate individual opinion and also recognize such opinion as part of the input parameters for policy decisions. This will reduce the proliferation of interest group, inter interest group wrangling and the current experience in which interest group such as the Jewish lobby group cornered the government on various policies and program bordering on their interest. This process will enable government takes independent decisions in line with strategic national interest.

Finally, there is need for the United States government to regulate the activities of interest group, deploys policy frame work beyond which the interest group cannot operate. This measure will reduce the growing power of Jewish lobby organization such as AIPAC and other Evangelical Christian organization that most cases hold the government by the Jugular. In some specific occasion US President have lamented publicly over the Jewish lobby group intimidating pressure while other citizen aggrieved by the Jewish lobby group activities also lamented but are handicapped.

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