

## **Why So Special? The Israel Lobby, Human Rights, and United States Foreign Aid**

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Considered as Israel's strongest ally, the United States has long maintained a special relationship with Israel. The alliance has remained strong even through challenges such as war, terrorism, and global opinions against Israel. Throughout the lengthy Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United States has made Israel the top annual recipient of its foreign aid. In addition, the United States defends Israel from accusations regarding the legality of its actions toward Palestine and the Palestinian people. In this paper, I argue that U.S. aid to Israel is predicated on domestic political and special interest concerns. Specifically, I argue that increases in aid to Israel are the result of the increases in the influence of the pro-Israel lobby. Furthermore, despite previous research contending that U.S. support of Israel does not change in light of alleged human right violations in Israel, I also argue that more Israeli violations of human rights actually lead to greater amounts of U.S. aid to Israel. Though many scholars have completed a comprehensive analysis of these issues, none has yet completed a quantitative analysis of the relationship between U.S. aid, human rights violations, and the pro-Israeli lobby. This exploratory study of U.S. aid provision to Israel addresses that gap.

### *Information about the Author:*

Stephanie Volz is a senior from Huntsville, Alabama, majoring in mathematics and political science. The topic of the relationship between Israel and the United States was the focus of various research projects during the course of her senior year. This specific paper was written for her political science senior seminar. After graduation in May, she hopes to find a job with a firm dealing with statistics and analysis.

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