

## Chapter 4

# American Jews and the International Arena (April 2016 – April 2017): US–Israel Relations and Obama’s Mixed Legacy Followed by the Uncertainty of Trump

Mitchell Bard

The year 2016 was dominated by the presidential campaign and the surprising emergence of Donald Trump as the Republican frontrunner, nominee, and ultimate victor in the election. Against this backdrop, however, the incumbent president continued to govern the country and, like many of his predecessors, hoped to create a legacy by facilitating a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. While his secretary of state gamely pursued this goal, President Obama signed a 10-year, \$38 billion military aid deal with Israel even as he continued to publicly criticize Israel’s “occupation” of “Palestinian land” and expansion of settlements. Israeli anger over the US-Iran nuclear deal lingered, with the Israelis still looking for ways to weaken it and strengthen non-nuclear sanctions against Iran. The bitterness also led Israeli officials and American Jews to worry that Obama might take some last-minute steps, most likely at the United Nations, to endorse Palestinian demands opposed by Israel and limit the negotiating options of his successor. Although he did not go as far as some feared, Obama did end his presidency with an abstention on an anti-settlement provision at the United Nations Security Council, thus allowing the anti-Israel resolution to pass.

### 4.1 Disagreements Over the Iran Deal Persist

While Obama continued to trumpet the nuclear deal with Iran as a success, many Israelis and their supporters maintained a steady drumbeat of criticism. Israel pointed to indications from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Iran was not fulfilling its obligations under the deal and harped on the provision (some would say loophole) that allowed Iran to maintain a large number of

---

M. Bard (✉)

American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Jewish Virtual Library, Chevy Chase, MD, USA  
e-mail: [mitchellbard@gmail.com](mailto:mitchellbard@gmail.com)

© Springer International Publishing AG 2018

A. Dashefsky, I. M. Sheskin (eds.), *American Jewish Year Book 2017*, American Jewish Year Book 117, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70663-4\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70663-4_4)

155