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INTRODUCTIONThere has been American and Western interests in the Middle East involvingmilitary, political and economic issues for at least 100 years from The UnitedStates, Great Britain and France. It was 95 years ago when United States Congresspassed a bill called “ The Mineral leasing act of 1920.” The bill was designed tocoerce Great Britain to let American companies into the Middle Eastern oil fieldswith them when the initial drilling and excavation of the region’s oil reservesbegan.

Today’s posited US interests in the Middle East can be broken down into fiveareas: ensuring the free flow of oil; preventing nuclear proliferation; fightingterrorism; maintaining the security of Israel; and promoting democratization. LITERATURE REVIEWIn 1928, American interest in stabilizing the region came when Standard OilCompany’s CEO, Walter Teagle, signed the negotiation for American interest in oilexcavation in the Middle East. The deal that was negotiated by a Turkish citizennamed Gulbenkien, who gave 23. 75 percent to Great Britain, Denmark, France andAmerica that desired the oil assets of the Near East Development Company(American oil interests), and the key negotiator of the deal was to receive fivepercent. There were no profits left for the people who actually live on the land andhave lived there for many generations. This sort of agreement with the Indigenouspeople should only be possible when a nation has been defeated by war, such as, when the British and French took control of the Ottoman Empire and at the end ofWW1 the Central Powers had been defeated. The defeated Ottoman Empire was broken up and separated into many countries bythe newly formed League of Nations; most of the responsibility fell on GreatBritain, being the greatest power in the world at the time. The British had actually used the war with the Ottoman Empire to invade and seize the oil rich land.

Theywere so sure of the potential that Great Britain risked by alienating France throughcapturing Mosel from French control in order to seize the land for potential oilfields. This was the beginning of what would be three decades of exploitation ofthe oil fields of the Middle East. ORIGIN AND NATUREThe American interests in the Middle East took a blow in the 60’s and 70’s in Iraq; when through the progression of steps, Saddam Hussein nationalized the oilindustry of Iraq.

The nationalization of the oil industry encompassed all of theassets that were in Iraq; that is, the entire infrastructure that was for oil explorationand transportation of oil were lost. Israel is another central U. S. interest, often linked to a desire to promote peacebetween Israel and the Palestinians. The Palestinian-Israel conflict originated afterWorld War I as a result of the promise of independence to Middle-East after thewar which later turned into Palestine and other territories becoming “ mandates”.

The peace process, moreover, is dead for now. Palestinians and Israelis seem moreskeptical than ever—a skepticism shared by U. S. officials. Thus, for theforeseeable future, high-level diplomacy to bring peace seems unlikely.

The first official involvement of the European Community (EC) in the PalestinianIsraeliconflict dates back to the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the resulting global oilcrisis. One month after the war, the EC issued a declaration recognizing the” legitimate rights” of the Palestinians and calling for an Israeli withdrawal from allterritories occupied during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Simultaneously, the ECinitiated the “ Euro-Arab Dialogue” to foster better understanding with the Arabworld. These actions marked a historic change in European attitudes toward Israel, with unflinching support being much less likely after 1973. At the 1977 London summit, EC member states declared that a solution to thePalestinian-Israeli conflict could not be achieved without recognition of thenational identity of the Palestinian people and their right to “ a homeland”. Issuedin the wake of the US-sponsored Camp David Accords, the Venice Declarationproclaimed that “ traditional ties and common interests” with the Middle Eastobliged EC member states to play “ a special role” in the pursuit of a peacesettlement.

In a radical diversion from the US position, the EC also called for theparticipation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in peacenegotiations and branded Israeli settlements as “ illegal” under international law. While the 1970s therefore witnessed the emergence of a more consolidatedEuropean position on the Palestinian problem, the EC’s influence on the conflictthroughout the following decades remained minimal. Indeed, it was only with theonset of the 1993 Oslo Peace Process – aimed at preparing the ground for a finalsettlement – that Europe started to assume a greater role in regional affairs. Cedingthe high-diplomacy of the peace process to the United States, Europe sought toback a final settlement through the provision of greater economic aid and bybankrolling the emerging Palestinian Authority (PA).

The launching of the 1995Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was supposed to provide Europe withanother tool to influence regional developments. The government of the United States was at the time run by President JimmyCarter; his plan was to begin national oil independence, thus freeing the U. S. fromthe grip of Middle Eastern control over the flow of oil. Some laws were passed topush companies to build more fuel-efficient cars, and some government regulationswere created, like the 55 mph speed limit. The problem was that in the next fewyears many of the conservation measures were abandoned with the return of cheapoil, the Arab countries of Organizations of the Petroleum Exporting Countries(OPEC) realized that they could lose their largest customer so they cut the U.

S. some slack, allowing foreign countries to continue to obtain their oil at a reducedrate. This chain of events that took place in the seventies was all that some politiciansneeded to connect the security of our nation to the stability of the Middle East. Theimportation of oil suddenly took on national importance when politicians thoughtabout the potential for disaster with the country’s economy to be so dependent onthe importation of cheap oil from the Middle East. The statement now is that thenation’s security is not dependent on stability in the Middle East. CURRENT SCENARIOThe interests of the American oil industry have been protected by governmentthrough the use of force and the loss of American servicemen and women, and thisis reprehensible.

The fact is, if the United States as a nation had spent as mucheffort and money on finding energy alternatives, they would not be worried aboutIraq, Iran, Syria or ISIS. The American interests in the Middle East are a directresult of the country’s policies, not the other way around, and these policies are adirect result of supporting the oil company’s exploitation of the natural resourcesof the Middle East. In recent years, the European Union has sought a larger role in the Middle Eastpeace process through developing a unique set of instruments and policies. The EUhas at its disposal several distinctive diplomatic instruments that it can draw on inits search for multilateral solutions and crisis management, most notably: theEuroMediterranean Partnership (EMP), the EU Special Envoy (EUSR), and theEU’s participation in the Quartet. To these has recently been added the newEuropean Neighborhood Policy (ENP).

The EC has channeled humanitarian aid tothe Palestinian territories since 1971 through the UN Relief Works Agency(UNRWA). Subsequently, this was complemented by direct assistance toPalestinian civil society and the financing of large infrastructure projects within theframework of the Oslo Process. Indeed, EU aid has been instrumental inestablishing public services in the occupied territories and has bankrolled someprestigious projects, such as the Gaza air and sea ports.

Preferential trade access has been granted to some Palestinian products since 1986. Israel has enjoyedlimited preferential trade access with the EC since 1964, which has been broadenedover the years. An EC-Israel Association Agreement entered into force in 2000. This agreement includes provision for free trade in industrial products, a gradualliberalization in agricultural products, political dialogue, free movement of capital, freedom of establishment, and many more.

Although Europe has been able to develop an increasingly united stance on thepeace process, the real extent of its internal cohesion remains questionable. Indeedthere are several countries, including Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, which have been prone to veto any European attempt to criticize Israel’s behavioror sanction its actions. The Middle East peace process has been a priority of the European Union since1973 and its solution remains one of Europe’s prime foreign policy goals. Whileover the last forty years Europe has been successful in carving out a moreinfluential role for itself, the limits of its influence are a good representation of theproblems haunting Europe’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Contrary to popular opinion, the EU has at its disposal a unique set of instrumentsthat it could potentially use to play a more assertive role in the peace process. It hasimportant political and economic ties with the two conflicting parties, and in manyways has followed a more even-handed approach toward the conflict than Americahas. REFERENCEhttp://europe. unc. edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Brief6-0803-palestinian-israeliconflict. pdf