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**Name of the Scholar: Afroz Khan**

**Name of the Supervisor: Prof. Sujata Ashwarya**

**Name of the Centre: Centre for West Asian Studies, JMI, New Delhi**

**Topic of Research: The American Jewish Diaspora and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in the Post-Oslo Period**

### Findings

The Arab-Israeli conflict, later evolving into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is one of the most complex and enduring disputes of modern times. At its heart lies a clash of national identities, with both Palestinians and Israeli Jews claiming rights to the same land. While regional players have dominated the conflict, the American Jewish diaspora has played a pivotal, evolving role in shaping its course.

Jewish migration to the U.S. began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, driven by persecution and economic opportunity. Initially, many American Jews distanced themselves from the Zionist movement, which emerged in Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a nationalist response to antisemitism. The Holocaust, however, shifted this stance. Support for a Jewish homeland grew out of a moral imperative tied to Jewish survival, leading many American Jews to embrace the establishment of Israel in 1948. Throughout Israel's early wars, including the 1948 and 1967 conflicts, American Jews provided strong support, motivated by solidarity and post-Holocaust guilt. Israel's military victories reinforced its role in Jewish identity. However, as Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories deepened and as civilian casualties mounted, many American Jews began to question its actions.

The rise of Israel's right-wing politics, especially under leaders like Benjamin Netanyahu, strained these ties further. Policies rooted in the concept of *Eretz Israel* and the denial of Palestinian rights challenged democratic ideals and sparked criticism from progressive Jewish Americans. The once-unified diaspora began to fracture, with major groups like AIPAC facing pushback from newer organisations such as J Street, Jewish Voice for Peace, and IfNotNow, which advocate for human rights and a rethinking of U.S.-Israel relations. This internal diaspora debate has been compounded by Netanyahu's alignment with the American far-right, including Donald Trump, which alienated liberal and younger Jews. Meanwhile, Orthodox communities largely maintained support, reflecting growing ideological divides.

Despite these tensions, the American Jewish diaspora remains a vital, albeit divided, actor in the conflict. Its evolution from a passive supporter to a critical participant mirrors broader changes in Jewish identity, politics, and values. While it's uncertain whether this engagement will contribute to peace, the diaspora's influence on the future of Israeli-Palestinian relations is undeniably significant.