

Biden's First Year

By [James J. Zogby](#)

Global Research, November 30, 2021

[The Jordan Times](#) 29 November 2021

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the “Translate Website” drop down menu on the top banner of our home page (Desktop version).

To receive Global Research’s Daily Newsletter (selected articles), [click here](#).

Visit and follow us on Instagram at [@crg_globalresearch](#).

*It has been 300 days since **Joseph Biden** was inaugurated president. There’s no question that he’s had a rough go of it. He’s had to contend with a united Republican Party committed to blocking his every move and a handful of Democratic senators and members of Congress wanting to chip away at key components of his signature domestic legislation. Biden has also had to deal with the chaos left behind by his predecessor. Despite these obstacles, he has had some successes.*

Between now and his first anniversary in office, interest groups of all sorts will evaluate the extent to which the Biden administration has been able to fulfill the commitments he made during his campaign. During the next few months, I will, on occasion, take a look at a number of the pledges candidate Biden made to the Arab American community in 2020. Because developments in Israel/Palestine are on my mind, this is where I will begin.

During the 2020 campaign season, I was involved in the negotiations with the Biden team over the language that would shape its platform on Middle East-related issues. When it came to Israel/Palestine, I was pleased that they were willing to insert some language we had failed to have included in earlier years. This platform does, for example, speak about the equal worth and value of Israelis and Palestinians. It also condemns Israeli settlements, language we were unable to have inserted into the Obama or Clinton platforms.

Where we focused our pressure in 2020 was on our insistence that the Biden campaign accept the principle of conditionality, tying US political and economic assistance to Israel on their policies in the occupied territories. We failed to have any language of this sort inserted in the platform, and it is the absence of conditionality that, as we shall see, is the reason why the Biden administration has been unable to deliver on its other campaign pledges in this area.

In both the 2020 Biden platform and his campaign’s “Plan for Partnership” with the Arab American community, Biden addressed the Palestinian-Israeli conflict thusly.

“Joe Biden believes in the worth and value of every Palestinian and every Israeli. He will work to ensure that Palestinians and Israelis enjoy equal measures of freedom, security,

prosperity, and democracy.”

“His policies will be grounded in a commitment to a two-state solution, where Israel and the future viable state of Palestine will live together in peace, security, and mutual recognition.”

“Biden opposes any unilateral steps by either side that undermine a two-state solution. He opposes annexation and settlement expansion and will continue to oppose both as President.”

“As President, Biden will take immediate steps to restore economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, consistent with US law, including assistance to refugees, work to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza...”

“... reopen the US consulate in East Jerusalem...”

“... and work to reopen the PLO mission in Washington”.

Even a cursory glance at the list makes it clear that with the exception of item #4, the Biden administration has failed to deliver on, or even make progress towards, any of the other pledges they made in addressing Israel/Palestine.

The lives and worth of Palestinians have repeatedly been subordinated to those of Israelis. Israel has continued to take unilateral measures that make a two-state solution impossible to even imagine. And it appears that the Biden administration has surrendered to Israel and pro-Israel “hawks” in Congress on reopening both the Jerusalem Consulate (which is actually in West, not East, Jerusalem) and the PLO office in Washington.

During the past ten months, the situation confronting Palestinians in the occupied territories has appreciably worsened. The Gaza war, which was precipitated by provocative Israeli actions that threaten to change the status quo at the Haram Al Sharif and efforts to evict Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem and by Hamas’ foolish and costly use of rockets, resulted in the deaths of more than 200 Palestinians and a dozen Israelis, devastation to Gaza’s infrastructure, and the destruction of the homes of tens of thousands. Dozens of Palestinian demonstrators in the West Bank also lost their lives to Israeli fire.

The Biden administration had only a timid response to both Israel’s actions in Jerusalem and its disproportionate use of force in Gaza and the West Bank. And the aid the US has offered Palestinians, while welcomed, was \$360 million, a paltry sum when compared to Israel’s \$3.8 billion annual aid supplemented by an additional \$1 billion to replenish its “Iron Dome” defence system.

Israel’s new government has announced plans to significantly increase the number of settlement housing units in the occupied lands and has “legalised” a number of previously “unauthorised” settlements, this growth is strategically planned to further consolidate Israeli control over the territories and make impossible the establishment of an independent viable Palestinian state. At the same time, Israel has continued to demolish Palestinian homes and do nothing to curb the spike in organised settler violence and harassment directed at Palestinians living near illegal Israeli settlements. To make matters worse, the Israelis have declared leading Palestinian human rights monitoring and advocacy groups to be terrorist-affiliated.

In the face of these Israeli actions, the Biden administration has done little more than express “deep concern”, which the Israelis dismiss out of hand. Doing nothing more concrete to cause Israel to change their policies of settlement growth, creeping annexation, and increasing the pressure on captive Palestinians contradicts all of the goals set by the Biden team.

In an effort to defend the administration’s inaction, some apologists express concern that a more combative stance against the new Israeli government would threaten its stability and risk bringing Netanyahu back into office. They also suggest that challenges to Israel will cause blowback from both Republicans and some Democrats in Congress. While this may be true, subordinating Palestinian rights to concerns for Israeli or domestic politics certainly calls into question the Biden administration’s stated commitment to the “equal worth and value of both Israelis and Palestinians”. It renders their pledges to Palestinians hollow and more performative than real. President Biden still has time to course correct and demonstrate desperately needed leadership in making good on his platform promises. It’s what he should do.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share buttons above or below. Follow us on Instagram, @crg_globalresearch. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

James J. Zogby is president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute.

Featured image is from OffGuardian

The original source of this article is [The Jordan Times](#)
Copyright © [James J. Zogby](#), [The Jordan Times](#), 2021

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [James J. Zogby](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca