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Washington Post Believes U.S. & Israel “Can Get Back on the Same Page”



Photograph Source: The White House – Public Domain

In a bizarre, even obtuse, lead editorial on March 31, the *Washington Post* outlined a scheme for the United States and Israel to “get back on the same page.” The *Post* editorial suffers from the conventional misperception that ignores today’s fundamentalist and separatist Israel, which is so different from Israel’s long ago standing as a secular and social democratic society that replicated many West European countries. The *Post* ignores the fact that Ashkenazi Jews from Europe are no longer in control, and the political and social influence of Orthodox Jewry, the Haredim, who play a central role in the government of Benjamin Netanyahu. These misperceptions are apparent throughout the mainstream media.

The key blunder of the Biden administration is to believe that kowtowing to the Netanyahu government and his fundamentalist coalition allows the United States to maintain influence in Israel. There is no better example of the contradictory nature of U.S. policy than the so-

called “red line” that Biden has drawn against any Israeli “scorched earth invasion” of Rafah and the recent delivery of weapons that should never be used in an urban environment. This delivery includes 1,800-lb MK84 bombs and 500 500-lb MK82 bombs that are capable of leveling entire city blocks and leaving 40-ft deep craters in Gaza. MK84 bombs were used in October against the Jabalya refugee camp where more than 100 Palestinian civilians were killed in a mission designed to kill one Hamas official. There was no warning whatsoever. Israel’s use of these bombs is a war crime, and the United States is complicit as Israel’s only supplier of such lethal weapons of war.

The U.S. delivery also included 25 F-35 jet fighters that are valued at \$2.5 billion, and will certainly be involved in future mass casualty events in Gaza. Once upon a time, the United States and Israel were linked by their commitments to human rights and humanitarian values. Now, the United States and Israel are linked by Netanyahu’s horrific war, the use of bunker-buster bombs, and a military campaign that is killing and traumatizing the entire Palestinian population in Gaza, particularly the children. Continued U.S. military aid signals unequivocally that the Biden administration is willing to underwrite Netanyahu’s violent war in Gaza; the settler violence on the West Bank; and the permanent occupation of both.

President Biden seems to believe that the recent U.S. abstention on the cease-fire resolution at the United Nations Security Council and the feckless warnings about avoiding a humanitarian nightmare in southern Gaza allow his administration to pose as an “honest broker” between Israelis and Palestinians. The United States has never been a genuine “honest broker.” In fact, its key negotiators have served primarily as Israel’s lawyers in various negotiations. Obvious examples of such “Israeli lawyers” have been Dan Kurtzer, Dennis Ross, Aaron Miller, and Martin Indyck, who have been ambassadors in the region or assistant secretaries of state for the Middle East.

Several Democratic Senators have criticized the American weapons that are responsible for the soaring death toll in Israel’s occupation of Gaza. Senators Chris Van Hollen (MD) and Jeff Merkley (OR) have been leading the way; Independent Senator Bernie Sanders (VT) has correctly labeled the recent transfer as “obscene.” When White House and National Security Council spokesmen have been asked about these weapons deliveries, the stock response has been “We have continued to support Israel’s right to defend itself. Conditioning aid has not been our policy.” Meanwhile, Palestinian fatalities and casualties have passed the 100,000 mark, some from malnutrition as the famine has begun.

The fact that the United States is coming to the aid of Benjamin Netanyahu makes our complicity even worse. Netanyahu has been creating problems for Democratic and

Republican administrations for the past three decades. Secretary of State James Baker made Netanyahu *persona non grata* at the Department of State in the early 1990s following Netanyahu's accusation that the Bush administration was "building policy in the Middle East on a foundation of lies and distortions." George H.W. Bush was one of the rare U.S. presidents willing to stand up to Israel and its illegal settlements on the West Bank.

Netanyahu has always been a problem for the United States. He boasted to his key advisors that the "United States is a thing you can move very easily." Netanyahu displayed his arrogance in discussions with Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. In 1996, after an acrimonious meeting with Netanyahu, Clinton said "Who the f--- does he think he is" and, following a lecture from Netanyahu, Clinton remarked "Who's the f----- superpower here?" Obama was fed up with Netanyahu as early as his first year in the White House, but rewarded him with a record-setting military aid package in the last year of his administration. Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and National Security Council advisor Jake Sullivan constantly refer to the importance of a "rules-based order" in U.S. foreign and national security policy, but our military support for Israel's immoral war puts the lie to our rhetoric. Asked about differences between the United States and Israel, a State Department spokesman said "we don't view our job as trying to calm Israel down...our job is not to stop them, our job is to work together toward our common objective" and to "align our policies as much as possible."

Many of the nonaligned countries in the Global South have not responded to our calls for support for Ukraine in its valiant stand against Russian aggression because of the hypocrisy of U.S. support for Netanyahu's immoral campaign and war crimes in Gaza. At the same time, there has been increased settler violence against Palestinians on the West Bank that is ignored by Israeli Defense Forces as well as by the Biden administration. The IDF is making Gaza uninhabitable, and the Biden administration has remained on the sidelines. Donald Trump gave Israel a free pass; Joe Biden's policies are essentially not very different.

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