**Human Rights, Syrian War & Biden Administration**

[Changezi Sandhu](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/changezi-sandhu/)

February 22, 2021

More than two decades ago, the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright termed American presence and role in regional and global scenarios as “Indispensable”. However, the global community is prone to use the term “Incompetent” instead of “Indispensable” after the steps which had been taken up during the Trump reign under the aegis of his “American First” policy regarding foreign policy, global warming, human rights, COVID-19, continuous participation in wars and conflicts in other regions and many more that collectively tarnished the repute and image of America. So, the Biden presidency is the hope for a revival of the American role in regional and global affairs. Biden also intended to halt American support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

Pro-democratic protests posed a grave threat to the sitting government of Syria in March 2011 that was being led by President Bashar al-Assad. Protestors called for the end of an authoritarian regime. Ultimately, violence erupted as the result of the usage of police, military, and paramilitary forces against civilians. Protestors demanded the end of the Assad regime as well as authoritarian practices. Bashar al-Assad extensively relied on the usage of force to counter the violent mobs that infuriated protestors. Later on, it led to the deadliest war and humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Currently, there are a number of factions that are being backed up by Saudi Arabia, the UK, and France, Iran, Russia, and America to extract regional interests. The U.S. was an important supporter of the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen during the Trump era. In the reign of former U.S. President Trump, the USA designated the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization that fueled the fire by infuriating Houthis. The global community was looking to revive American policies toward the gross violation of human rights by Saudi-led military campaigns as over 100,000 people have been killed in the pro-longed Yemen conflict. UNO and other human rights organizations also deprecated the U.S. support to Saudi Arabia because of the abuse of children’s and women’s rights, especially.

It is time to make America “Indispensable” rather than “Incompetent” in dealing with global issues

However, there is a dramatic shift in American stance after the Trump era who supported the Saudi-led coalition, especially bombing campaign in Yemen. With the rise of Biden’s presidency, Mr. Biden has vowed many times to end the American support to Saudi Arabia in the civil war of Yemen. “The war in Yemen must end,” President Joe Biden opined while addressing his first speech on Foreign Policy.

Now, the most important question arises, what could possible changes be regarding Yemen during the Biden administration? In fact, the American support of the Saudi-led group against Houthi aggravated the situation in the region. In the results of the announcement of the US President, America will not support offensive operations even by including the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is important to mention here that the Biden administration already put a temporary hold on arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Even, the country is on the brink of starvation, and blatant violations of human rights can be seen. The American support to Saudi Arabia in the civil war tarnished the American image not only at the regional but also at the global level. So, Mr. Biden intended to deal with the Yemen crisis with a new shift in American foreign policy by halting her support to Saudi Arabia.

As a result of Thursday’s announcement, the US will stop supporting offensive operations, including the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

According to the United Nations, the Yemen crisis has been declared as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis with 80% of the population that is in the dire need of aid or protection. UNO called multiple times to end the crisis to maintain peace in the region because of the severe violation of human rights in the conflict. Not only Americans and human rights organizations, but also the global community welcomed the policy statement of Mr. Biden. It is being assumed that American tilt in her foreign policy toward Yemen will help to address the issue that disrupted the peace of the region.

Congressmen who were calling for stopping U.S. support to Saudi-led group in Yemen also expressed positive remarks on the recent shift in American policy toward Yemen. According to Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif. who is among the staunch advocates to halt American support for bombing campaign of Saudi Arabia, “One of the reasons there’s moral urgency in the Biden administration to end this war is, I think there is a guilt.”

Khanna further opined, “We need to make clear to the Saudis that their relationship on the Hill has been badly damaged, and if they have any hope of repairing it, they need to lift the blockade … and make a peace deal,” he said, referring to a Saudi-coalition blockade obstructing the delivery of food and medicine to Yemen”.

Apropos to the news piece with the title, “Biden to Announce End to U.S. Support for Offensive Military Operations in Yemen” contributed by Dave Boyer in Washington Times on February 4, 2021. So, finally, President Biden decided to halt U.S. support for the Saudi-led military campaign. This decision of the Biden administration is being admired by Americans and the global community because the decision would secure American interests by changing public opinion out of America about her tarnished image. UNO, America, and the global community should also play a role to stop the violation of human rights in Yemen. It is time to make America “Indispensable” rather than “Incompetent” in dealing with global issues.

*The writer is lawyer, human rights activist & member of American Bar Association*