[Stanley L Cohen](https://www.thenews.com.pk/writer/stanley-l-cohen)

November 14, 2020

**A memo on Palestine**

It’s not difficult to discern Joe Biden’s myopic cheer for Israel over the course of almost half a century of his legislative applause. Anything but nuanced, or disguised, time and time again he voted aye for all pro-Israeli resolutions and nay for any that might begin to temper the systemic corrupt imbalance between the occupier and the occupied. To Biden and his generation of legislative pander, votes which might suggest, let alone facilitate, any modicum of equity or justice between Palestine and Israel were viewed as political surrender… if not suicide.

Yet, in the United States, political drive of legislative prerogative is far less indicative of one’s theological thirst than what they pursue when they wield the executive gavel of largely unfettered, unitary power. Here, eight years as vice president speaks volumes of Joe Biden’s heretofore zeal to protect Israel at all cost and to deny Palestine any safeguard of consequence whatsoever.

In the often uncomfortable world of reality, executive political power must be measured not by the echo of appealing words but, rather, the pound of deeds. Who better to measure the reach of Joe Biden when he reigned as the second most powerful man in the United States than Barack Obama. According to Obama, for eight years Biden was the last to leave the room of tough decisions and among the most active in shaping what they were to be and just where they were to go. And what were those decisions regarding Palestine?

With, by then, settled norm, Obama/Biden refused to accept the Israeli drive to annex land seized from the West Bank of Palestine. Likewise, the Zionist remake of al Quds into the recognized capital of a European implant went no further than their long standing holiday wish list… as did the transplant of the US Embassy to there from Tel Aviv. There was nothing remarkable about this political ‘intransigence’, nor did it slow the rapacious Zionist appetite to steal more and more occupied land in rank violation of settled international law. Indeed, in the half century since the on-set of Israel’s second wave of land snatch begun in 1967, American presidents have followed a fairly rote policy of ‘freeze’ and wait while Israel, imbued with blanket US legislative cover and a limitless checkbook, found little reason to pause in increasing its “settler’’ population in the occupied territories from the 10,000 of 1967 to more than 600,000 by 2016.

What, then, deciphers the political rhetoric of Obama/Biden to display the true nature of their largely unbounded support of a European colonial project committed to the eradication of an age-old indigenous population… whether by siege, violence, or categorical expulsion? During the eight years of Obama/Biden, that translate was not at all hard to find. There was, after-all, nothing subtle about Israel’s drive to punish Palestinians, for little more than their mere existence, during the time that Joe Biden readied himself to move from front row seat to oval office desk. Just several weeks before taking power in 2008, the future President got a primer on Israeli brutality through the lens of ‘Operation Cast Lead’.

With an opening salvo of war crimes on December 27, 2008, the first day of the operation, Israel bombed the main police headquarters in Gaza City, killing 42 police cadets standing in formation without weapons. Later that day, it bombed some 18 other police stations throughout the Gaza Strip. In total, 248 police officers were killed that day having not fired a single round at Israeli forces. Over the twenty one days of the Israeli onslaught that followed, it deliberately targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure and made widespread use of prohibited weapons, such a white phosphorous, in highly populated areas in clear violation of international law. During the attack Israeli fire targeted 23 UN buildings and/or compounds killing numerous civilians who had taken shelter there. In the most deadly case, 43 Palestinian civilians were killed by an Israeli shelling in one such compound.

Palestinian schools were also targeted. On January 5, an aerial strike killed three men who had sought shelter at the Asma Elementary Co-Ed A School. On January 17, a military ordinance struck the Beit Lahia Elementary School while it was being used as an emergency shelter… killing two young boys and injuring 13 others. Human Rights Watch documented at least seven instances where Israeli soldiers shot and killed civilians… including five women and four children who were in groups waving white flags to convey their civilian status. In one such incident, Israeli soldiers shot and killed several members of the al-Najar family in Khuza’a village, east of Khan Yunis. Following orders from soldiers to leave their neighborhood, and while waving white flags, Rawiya al-Najjar and her family were gunned down.

When the carnage ended, some 1440 Palestinians were killed and more than 5,000 injured… most of them civilians. According to the Israeli Human Right s group B’Tselem, 252 minors under age 16 (boys and girls) who did not take part in any fighting were killed along with 111 women and girls over 16. Nine Israeli soldiers were killed and 340 wounded.

Excerpted: ‘Hey Joe: a Memo to Biden on Palestine’

Counterpunch.org