**Biden’s Gaza Policy**

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Joe Biden frequently refers to himself as an “Inveterate optimist.” However, he has rarely demonstrated this trait in his approach to foreign affairs; instead, he practices staunch Realism. At the onset of his tenure, Biden’s policy agenda prioritised revitalising US strategic alliances and containment of China. Instead of being a mediator between Russia and Ukraine, the Biden administration opted to provide military assistance to Zelensky in the war against Russia. Nevertheless, the recent Gaza conflict compelled the White House to refocus its attention on the Middle East.
In the Wake of Gaza conflict, an emergency meeting was convened by the Security Council on Friday, 8th December, in response to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres using Article 99, an uncommon action taken to compel a vote on the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where two million individuals have been displaced, and about 17,000 individuals have lost their lives. United States exercised its veto power to reject a resolution proposed by the United Arab Emirates and supported by over 90 Member States. The resolution aimed to establish a ceasefire. Of the 13 council members who voted, the U.S. was the only one to veto. The United Kingdom refrained from voting. Previously, Israel and the U.S. frequently stood alone or were part of a small minority in voting “against” during numerous United Nations General Assembly resolutions urging for cease-fires. United States has consistently provided unwavering support to Israel in terms of politics, finances, and military assistance, which has always been a fundamental aspect of American foreign policy in the Middle East. Israel currently receives over $3.1 billion per year in military aid from the United States, making it the top beneficiary of American foreign assistance globally. With the rise of current Gaza conflict, this assistance is unconditional and constantly on the rise.
This massive number of Palestinian casualties in Gaza as a result of Israeli airstrikes and ground assault operations incited resentment toward Israel and Biden throughout the world, especially in the Global South. The people of the Middle East, who have long been aware of the United States’ backing of Israel, are now faced with the challenge of reconciling their previous beliefs about the United States as a supreme advocate for international norms, human rights, and humanitarian laws with the Biden administration’s steadfast support of Israel during its invasion of Gaza, without imposing any limitations or restrictions. This resentment towards US is bringing the Arab states closer to each other, and they are showing strong solidarity towards Palestinians, and their “normalisation” deals with Israel are already on halt. Nabil Fahmy, a former Egyptian foreign affairs minister, expressed that the United States is experiencing a significant decline in its reputation and trustworthiness among the Arab nation.
Globally, a multitude of politicians and human rights organisations have also criticised the United States for its ongoing endorsement of Israel. Biden and other officials in his government, such as Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, have expressed that a significant number of Palestinians have lost their lives and that the right to self-defense of Israel is important. Although they have facilitated negotiations for the exchange of hostages and prisoners during a delicate week-long ceasefire and advocated for the increased entry of humanitarian assistance into Gaza, they maintain the stance that Israel “has the legitimate right to protect itself,” a perspective that many perceive as granting Israel unrestricted freedom in its military endeavors.
It is being observed that this situation is also a domestic predicament for Biden. In the United States, Biden faces a challenging situation where he cannot win. The majority of Democrats are increasingly supporting the Palestinian position, while Republicans criticise him for being too lenient towards Israel. Democratic lawmakers express dissatisfaction with Biden’s recent decision to circumvent Congress and authorise the direct sale of tank shells to Israel. They criticised the State Department’s approval of selling approximately 14,000 tank shells, valued at over $106 million, from the U.S. Army’s inventory. An emergency declaration is issued in accordance with the Arms Export Control Act, bypassing the usual process of congressional review. Democrats argue that the administration should provide greater clarity regarding the armaments being supplied to Israel. Historical precedent has demonstrated that significant political advancements can arise from crises of this magnitude. The 1973 Arab War resulted in peace between Egypt and Israel. The first intifada, subsequent to the first Gulf War, resulted in the convening of the Madrid peace conference. However, the current circumstances are distinct as the international community is witnessing an extremely radical Israeli government that holds rigidity in its policies, and Biden administration is primarily focused on the upcoming presidential elections.
The situation right now in Gaza isn’t favourable for a political initiative, and it requires the genuine commitment of all parties to actively participate, along with the guidance of US government that has thus far shown a lack of interest in a peaceful solution. This conflict cannot be resolved by force, and it is well acknowledged that the persistent refusal to address the underlying cause of the problem - the illegal occupation - will inevitably lead to catastrophic consequences. In order to avoid global isolation, Biden administration must thoroughly examine its role in upholding a stable global system founded on the principles of legal governance; it is imperative to insist that all parties, regardless of their relationship, adhere to international law.