**Democratic alternative**

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Wednesday, Nov 01, 2023

When Joe Biden won the presidential election in the United States three years ago, there were some hopes within the pro-Palestinian movement that there would be a positive change in US policy on Palestine.

Biden’s predecessor, Donald Trump, had headed a fascist administration that had fully adopted the programme and vision of Israel’s far right. It was believed to be the worst American government for Palestinians … until now.

Today, Biden has fully embraced Israel’s genocidal aggression on Gaza, approving of the complete blockade that has cut off electricity, water, food, and medicine, and justifying the daily slaughter of hundreds of Palestinian civilians.

He has covered up Israel’s war crimes and parroted Israeli propaganda, including the claim that its army did not target al-Ahli Arab Hospital, where more than 470 Palestinians were killed. He even questioned the death toll in Gaza, atrociously implying that Palestinians are lying.

Biden has truly surpassed Trump in the fascist dehumanisation of Palestinians.

But let us be realistic here: The US has never been an honest broker in what it calls “the Palestinian-Israeli conflict”. On the contrary, it has always maintained pro-Israel policies and completely disregarded the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.

Washington has never tried to exercise its leverage to make any substantial progress towards achieving peace based on justice. Meanwhile, it has showered Israel with military aid to help its army strengthen its grip on occupied Palestine. Even the administration of US President Barack Obama, thought to be the most “progressive” American government headed by a person of colour, gave Israel a $38bn in military assistance package, the largest in US history.

Unconditional support for Israel has been a steady feature on both sides of the political divide in the US. During every presidential election season, there has always been a vicious competition between candidates to prove their “pro-Israel” credentials.

Even when US administrations have attempted to appear to attend to Palestinian demands and needs, they have never done so in the Palestinian interest. The Biden administration, for example, reversed its predecessor’s decision to deny funds to the Palestinian Authority, close the Palestinian mission in Washington and defund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). But it did that with the aim of sustaining a multitiered system of oppression created by the Oslo Accords to relieve Israel of its responsibility under international law to provide for the Palestinian population it occupies.

That the life and wellbeing of Palestinians is none of its concern was also made clear by the Biden administration’s decision to get directly involved in the unfolding genocide by financing it, arming apartheid Israel, vetoing any UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire, and even sending aircraft carriers to the region.

The US position vis-a-vis the Palestinians is, unsurprisingly, reminiscent of the attitude of its first European settlers towards the Native Americans.

How so? Let me elaborate.

The US does not care about the Palestinians. They are not seen as relevant to US foreign policy. Disturbing a core US alliance with the only nuclear power in the Middle East is not in the cards, certainly not over some “sordid little human rights issue”. The US does not imagine that Palestinians will ever get justice on their own terms.

The US does not care about the Palestinian people. They are only acknowledged as ‘troublemakers’. Hence, the US has never aimed to ‘solve’ the ‘Palestinian problem’, but to get it out of the way.

So, while the US does realise that the ‘Palestinian problem’ is destabilising the region, this is, in the view of its political elite, only because the Palestinians just won’t shut up and go away – in much the same way that Native Americans, Aboriginals, and other native nations were seen as a “problem” by European settler colonialists.

The US view is that Palestinians are fundamentally a pesky little native population that will not accept ‘reality’ (colonisation) quietly so that the US-Israeli alliance can proceed undisturbed. That is why support for the genocide of the Palestinians is an acceptable policy in Washington. After all, the American nation was itself founded on the genocide of a native population.

Undeniably, the US is entirely pragmatic about its foreign policy interests and pursuits. It does not think it needs the Palestinians who are, after all, poor, weak and geographically microscopic. Until the US is forced to see the situation differently, it will continue to disregard the Palestinian rights to life, justice and freedom.

Shifting the US policy towards Palestine requires two things: changing the international environment that shapes and steers US foreign policy options and prerogatives; and bringing pressure on the US government from within by strategically mobilising those pressure groups that have real leverage over the two main political parties.

As for us, the Palestinians, like any other people suffering from colonialism, occupation and apartheid, we should send a strong message to the colonialists, headed by the US, that the rules of the game have changed, and that we will return to the negotiating table only after apartheid Israel abides by international law.

First, Israel must withdraw its troops from the lands it occupied in 1967; second, it must revoke all laws discriminating against the native Palestinian population, including the Nation-State Law; and third, it must implement United Nations Resolution 194 allowing for the return of Palestinian refugees.

Israel is not expected to respond positively, as it has never done to these lawful demands. But neither did the apartheid regime of South Africa until the international community intervened and imposed sanctions against it and boycotted it.

After this is done, we should proceed to dismantle the racist two-state solution and pave the way for the only democratic alternative: a secular democratic state on the historic land of Palestine that gives equality to all its citizens, regardless of religion, ethnicity, and gender.

The article was originally published as: ‘In dehumanising the Palestinians, Biden has surpassed Trump’.

Courtesy: Aljazeera.com