

Assessment of President Joe Biden Administration's Foreign Policy & Diplomacy

Toward the Middle East After One Year in Office

Ahmed Y. Zohny, LL.M., Ph.D. Coppin State University, Baltimore, Maryland

In its first year in office, the Biden administration has shown a clear wish to limit direct American engagement in the Middle East in favor of a focus on higher foreign policy & diplomacy priorities such as Asia and Europe and the global challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though it has made some high-profile moves such as starting talks to revive the Iran nuclear deal; renewing diplomacy to end the fighting in Yemen; and extending cross-border humanitarian access to Syria for another year, in general, the Biden team has embraced an approach that seeks to limit the costs of U.S. engagement. In so doing, however, it risks placing the United States in a volatile strategic position, beholden to events instead of seeking to proactively shape trends through diplomacy and other forms of engagement.

The Biden administration's inclination toward a hands-off approach may end up placing the United States in a crisis management style similar to the one that overtook the Obama administration from 2014 to 2016 in reaction to the rise of the Islamic State group. If the Iran nuclear deal cannot be revitalized – which seems more likely now than one year ago – tensions between Tehran and Washington will remain high. On a more fundamental level, though, the region's basic human security problems will not go away, particularly those likely resulting from climate change. As a result, even the more modest and realistic goals the Biden team has set out for itself in the Middle East will require strategic reengagement in a region that's been largely on the back burner during the administration's first twelve months in office.

This research will assess President Biden's Administration foreign policy and diplomacy toward the Middle East during his first year in office. It will investigate the following issues; the Biden administration's actions in the Middle East and North Africa in its first 12 months on five key facades; First, human security, Second, conflict resolution, Third, Iran, Fourth, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Fifth, the overall U.S. military position and engagement in the region. Drawing from both Arabic and English languages primary and secondary sources, the researcher will provides calculation of where the administration has had success thus far and where it's tumbled short. In addition, this research will predicts ahead to the challenges the region will present moving forward.

Prior to his current position as an Associate Professor of Political Science, Law and International Affairs at Coppin State University, Baltimore, Maryland ,he advised the Department of State/ US-AID project of technical assistance to the government of Egypt

(2005-2007) on policy reforms across several political, economic, and social development sectors. Dr. Zohny Also, advised the World Bank's Institute on a wide variety of issues including: quality of graduate and professional academic programs; and continuing education worldwide. Also, he served as an Advisor and leadership trainer on issues of Governance, and Human Capital Management and Development for Senior Government Managers from the Middle East at the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank. He travelled extensively to Egypt and the Arab countries on assignments for the World Bank, the U.S. State Department/ AID, and the International Institute of the U.S.D.A. Graduate School. He is fluent in the Arabic and English languages.