

Biden's 'Got Israel's Back'? Many Appointments Belie That Claim

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Robert Malley

Joe Biden likes to assure the Israelis, and their supporters in the U.S., of just how solidly pro-Israel he has always been. He would never do anything to harm Israel, he's got Israel's back, he's been to Israel many times, he knew Golda Meir, he "loves Bibi," yada-yada. But he's only been in office for 15 weeks, and it is not unfair to judge him by the appointments he has made. He hasn't hesitated to appoint people with long records of being anti-Israel.

In the key post of Special Envoy To Iran, Biden named Robert Malley, well known for his pro-Iran and anti-Israel sentiments. Columnist Peter Beinart, who does not believe in the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, Bernie

Sanders, who believes Israel is “illegally occupying Palestinian land,” Ariel Gold of the radical left-wing group Code Pink, and J Street, a left-wing Jewish group which would like Israel to be squeezed back into the 1949 armistice lines, and Ben Rhodes, an Iran deal cheerleader, were all ecstatic. Malley is the son of Simon Malley, an Egyptian Jewish journalist who championed “Third World” causes and was an ardent supporter of the Palestinians. Malley himself had to be let go – he would later be rehired – by the Obama campaign because it was revealed that he had been meeting privately with Hamas officials. Supporters of Israel tried to prevent Malley’s appointment, but Biden was adamant. His nomination was approved. Israelis remain deeply disturbed by his appointment.

Other appointments Biden has made include Reema Dodin, who now serves as one of two deputy directors of his legislative affairs team. During the Second Intifada, in 2002, Dodin spoke about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with residents of Lodi, California, saying that “suicide bombers were the last resort of a desperate people,” according to the Lodi News-Sentinel.

In 2001, Dodin took part in a demonstration at UC Berkeley calling for the university to divest from Israel, according to the Berkeley Daily Planet, a local news publication. The demonstrators compared Israel to apartheid South Africa.

What shall we say about this appalling choice? Yes, I know, she wasn’t being made Secretary of State or National Security Adviser, but as one of two deputy directors of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs, she is now in a position to keep track of proposed or impending or about-to-be-voted on legislation about Israel, Palestinian Authority, Hamas, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the whole Middle Eastern works. She will know which Congressmen are “on our [Palestinian] side,” who can be persuaded to move toward the Palestinian position, who supports Israel and cannot be moved; she’s in the perfect place to inform or warn her allies in the

pro-Palestinian camp of what's to come, and how best to promote or stop it. She'll know what's going on in each office in Congress: who's in, who's out, and where are the snows of yesteryear. Halie Soifer, a former Hill aide who now serves as executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, referred to Dodin as "a fixture of the Senate, who knows what's happening in the Senate before most senators do." Think about that last remark for a minute.

Other Biden appointees include Maher Bitar, who has been an anti-Israel BDS activist, and a member of the Executive Board of Students for Justice in Palestine. He is now the senior director of intelligence programs at the National Security Council. In that position, Maher Bitar is ideally situated to learn, for example, details about American collaboration with Israel on moves to stop Iran's nuclear program. Why should we assume he would not try to limit that collaboration, or to alert Iran about these moves, or to try to influence policy by focusing on international criticism of Israel's "settlement building," in an attempt to manufacture an unnecessary crisis between the allies, and making that crisis into a reason for America to threaten to cut back on military aid to Israel unless it were to stop enlarging or building settlements?

And then there is Uzra Zeya, who has a long record of denouncing the "Israel lobby" and the "secret money" it supposedly uses to control American politicians. As a staffer at the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Uzra Zeya compiled research for a book that argues that "the Israel lobby has subverted the American political process to take control of U.S. Middle East policy" by establishing a secret network of "dirty money" PACs that bribe and extort congressional candidates into taking pro-Israel positions. Zeya, a former U.S. diplomat who is now Biden's undersecretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, worked for the Washington Report and its publishing group, the American Educational Trust, in 1989 and 1990. The

news outlet is staunchly anti-Israel and has published articles questioning the national loyalty of American Jews and opposing taxpayer funding to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Biden nominated Uzra Zeya to become undersecretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, and that's the position she now holds. That's the very worst place to put her. As to "civilian security," doesn't that include security from terrorists – including Islamic terrorists? Uzra Zeya doesn't seem too interested even in the "civilian security" of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. She appears not to care that Hamas and the PLO (which is part of the PA), endanger their own civilians by placing weapons in schools, hospitals, mosques, and apartment buildings. Nor does her support of the despotic and corrupt regimes, of Hamas in Gaza, and the PA in the West Bank, suggest she should be in charge of defending "democracy" anywhere else. Finally, she is entrusted with defending "human rights" around the world – but human rights are trampled on in Gaza and the PA-held territories. She has never spoken out about the absence of "civilian security, democracy, and human rights" in the Palestinian territories. No matter. Biden, that "steadfast friend of Israel," wanted Uzra Zeya in that post, and there she will remain.

To the names of Robert Malley, Reema Dodin, Maher Bitar, and Uzra Zeya, we must add the name of Colin Kahl. He's just been nominated to be undersecretary of defense for policy. A report on Kahl's views is here: "Biden's pick for undersecretary of defense should worry Israel," by Ariel Kahana, [Jihad Watch](#).