



The Sabra Report

US In Diplomatic Dash to Contain Conflict

Barbara Plett Usher, BBC, October 17th 2023

Recap:

President Joe Biden's decision to visit Israel caps a week of intense US diplomacy to prevent Israel's war with Hamas from spreading to the region.

The Context:

- ✦ On October 7th, 2,500 Hamas terrorists burst through Israel's security barrier via land, sea, and air killing over 1,400 people and seizing 200-250 hostages of all ages. Entire families were executed in their homes, and over 260 were slaughtered at an outdoor festival, in what US President Joe Biden has called "the worst massacre of the Jewish people since the Holocaust [1]." 3,500 Palestinians have been killed as a result of Israel's retaliatory aerial bombing of Gaza or by failed Palestinian rocket launches [2].
- ✦ Biden pledged to give Israel "whatever it needed" in its battle against Hamas and warned Israel's enemies against regionalizing the war. The US plans to continue to preserve "Israel's qualitative military edge" and keep "Iron Dome fully supplied so it can continue standing sentinel over Israeli skies [3]." The Pentagon has sent two aircraft carriers to the Mediterranean as a warning to Iran and Hezbollah not to open a second front [4].
- ✦ Only two Arab governments - Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates - denounced Hamas' actions. Others may have done so privately because most are hostile to Hamas in varying degrees but in public, however, they've focused their narrative squarely on the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza [5]. The US and Israel have agreed to find ways to facilitate humanitarian aid into Gaza and set up safe zones for civilians.
- ✦ Just 48% of Gen Z/ Millennials said the US should publicly voice support for Israel as compared to 63% of Gen X and 83% of baby boomers [6]. Many Jewish students have voiced fears on college campuses, perceiving some of their classmates to be supporting Hamas' attack on Israelis by rallying around the Palestinian cause [7].
- ✦ Biden's promise of solidarity continues the special US-Israeli relationship that dates back to 1948, when President Harry Truman became the first world leader to recognize the Jewish state moments after its creation. A commitment to the US-Israeli relationship, though at times rocky, has been a policy pillar for both nations, with America seeing Israel as an ally with shared values in a tumultuous region and Israel looking to the US as its only dependable ally in world affairs.

Conversation Points:

- ✦ What message will be sent to America's geopolitical rivals, namely China and Russia, if American does not stand by Israel?
- ✦ How will an extended Israeli ground operation destabilize countries with populations supporting the Palestinian cause?
- ✦ What effects will the current conflict have on diplomatic efforts to bring more Arab nations into the fold with Israel?
- ✦ Why is support for Israel fading amongst younger Americans?

Notes:

1. [US privately pushing Israel not to initiate war with Hezbollah – officials](#), JACOB MAGID, Times of Israel, October 19th, 2023.
2. [Biden to Israel: 'You are not alone' Biden pledged](#), TOVAH LAZAROFF, Jerusalem Post, OCTOBER 18th, 2023.
3. Ibid.
4. [US privately pushing Israel not to initiate war with Hezbollah – officials](#), JACOB MAGID, Times of Israel, October 19th, 2023.
5. Ibid.
6. [Americans strongly support Israel, but there are generational and racial divides](#), NPR, October 13th, 2023.
7. [Fearful and grieving, Gen Z Americans clash over Israel conflict](#), Gabriella Borter and Joseph Ax, Reuters, October 18th, 2023.
8. [75 years of US support for Israel, briefly explained](#), Zachary B. Wolf, CNN, October 11th, 2023.

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