



[Trump Envoy Makes a Strategic Pitch to Arab-Americans Who Feel Disillusioned with Biden](#)

In Michigan earlier this week, Richard Grenell – an envoy of former President Donald Trump who served as Acting Director of National Intelligence in the Trump administration and as U.S. Ambassador to Germany from 2018 to 2020 – met with a group of around 40 Arab-American and Muslim-American leaders. The gathering was a strategic pitch by the Trump envoy aimed at appealing to those who feel disillusioned over President Joe Biden’s handling of the Gaza War. Many of those in attendance described it as light on the policy details and specific changes that they were hoping to hear about, although the outreach was appreciated and gave participants an opportunity to hear directly from Trump surrogates. The meeting made clear and was an acknowledgement that Arab-American and Muslim-American votes cannot be taken for granted, especially because of several key battleground states including Michigan that will likely determine the outcome of the upcoming presidential election. Throughout the course of the presidential primary season, the significance of the ‘uncommitted’ protest vote movement in various states across the country has demonstrated this.

One of the main takeaways from the meeting was how the issue of Gaza and Palestine is a matter of utmost importance to many members of the Arab-American and Muslim-American community. Dissatisfaction and anger regarding the Biden administration’s handling of the Gaza War, particularly in light of glaring Israeli war crimes and human rights abuses, has been widespread and has even extended beyond the community at-large as evidenced by the array of anti-war protests on college campuses all over the United States. While meeting attendees sought to hear what specific policy changes President Trump would have, should he be elected for another term in November, the Trump envoy mostly danced around the topic of Gaza and failed to address it adequately. The issue of former President Trump’s travel ban on Muslim-majority countries was brought up, which Grenell denied was ever implemented and said was pushed to improve the vetting process and avoid certain “bad actors” from trying to enter the country.

During the course of the gathering, Grenell was also asked about controversial remarks made by Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and Middle East adviser during his administration. Kushner had recently expressed that Israel should consider removing Palestinians from areas in Gaza that could be developed as “valuable waterfront property.” According to one attendee, the Trump envoy appeared to double down on the comments. Additionally, some of the meeting participants relayed conditions that they had for supporting Trump, such as him backing an immediate ceasefire, initiating funding for the vital humanitarian work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and passing the Leahy Laws that prohibit the U.S. from arming foreign military forces that violate human rights laws. However, unsurprisingly, Grenell was not able to commit to those conditions on behalf of former President Trump.

What the Trump envoy did try to argue was that the Arab-American and Muslim-American community had the opportunity to showcase its impactful political power by supporting Trump instead of Biden. Grenell contended that doing so would prove to both Republicans and Democrats alike that they could not be ignored or dismissed. The hundreds of thousands of citizens who have cast ‘uncommitted’ presidential primary ballots in states throughout the country have in fact already illustrated this. They have demonstrated that even a seemingly slight shift in support between Biden and Trump, deciding to vote for a third-party candidate, or sitting out the election

altogether, may be extremely consequential. Thus, the Trump envoy's outreach effort this week offers a recognition regarding the significance of Arab-American and Muslim-American votes this electoral cycle, and an understanding of the critical role that they could play in helping to determine the outcome of the upcoming presidential election in November.