

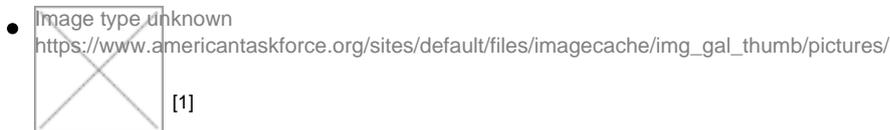


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Q: Does ATFP sacrifice everything for access in Washington, but without enjoying any influence?

Image Gallery



A: No. First it must be clearly understood that there could be access without influence, but there certainly cannot be any influence without access. ATFP has earned its unprecedented degree of access, and has demonstrated, on numerous occasions that it also has acquired a measure of influence. This influence is limited but is positively disproportionate to ATFP's small size and limited resources. ATFP has been able to leverage its access into influence mainly by contributing value added in the form of ideas and contacts, enhancing the dialogue among the parties and contributing specific, principled and pragmatic policy ideas to promote a two-state solution and improve conditions on the ground for the Palestinian people. Policy work, perhaps uniquely, places its practitioners in a particularly awkward position, insofar as if they do have an impact on policy, they cannot announce or claim such a success. To do so publicly would be the surest means to limit such access and thereby guarantee future ineffectiveness.

Yet there is no doubt that ATFP has had significant influence at crucial moments, affecting, for example, the level of US aid to the Palestinian Authority, which, at its peak, reached almost \$1 billion [2] a year. ATFP was also instrumental in changing the way much of Washington viewed the PA institution-building program, which was at first misrecognized as essentially an economic or development project. ATFP took the lead in convincing key institutions and officials in Washington that the policy was a political and strategic intervention and needed to be regarded and funded as such. For several years this helped to secure strong American support for the program.

Since its founding, ATFP's core positions have not changed at all but have remained steadfastly consistent and unwavering. It has therefore sacrificed nothing at all for its accomplishments, either with regard to the policy-making realm or with the Palestinian-American and Arab-American communities. Its work has been executed professionally and with a consistent focus on institutional integrity. No kind or amount of criticism, no matter how

unfair, unfounded or unscrupulous, has diminished our commitment to our mission. That ATFP has not changed our fundamental goals or approach in 10 years of intense activity and achieved so much speaks for itself, and demonstrates clearly that we have not "sacrificed" anything for either the obvious access or the real influence that we have been able to accumulate.

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