

US attacks Iranian “proxies” in Syria, as Israel intensifies assault on Gaza

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Hours before Israel initiated a communications blackout of Gaza and intensified its massive assault on Palestinians, the United States dropped dozens of bombs on what it called Iranian “proxy” forces in Syria as part of its escalating standoff with Tehran.

The coordinated military escalations make clear that the military conflict is rapidly spreading into a war throughout the Middle East.

“Today, at President Biden’s direction, US military forces conducted self-defense strikes on two facilities in eastern Syria used by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and affiliated groups,” said US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in a statement late Thursday night.

He continued, “Iran wants to hide its hand and deny its role in these attacks against our forces. We will not let them. If attacks by Iran’s proxies against US forces continue, we will not hesitate to take further necessary measures to protect our people.”

Two US Air Force F-16 fighters and Reaper drones dropped more than 30 bombs on what US officials said was a weapons storage facility and an ammunition storage facility near Abu Kamal, Syria.

Austin absurdly claimed that the strikes against pro-Iranian forces are “separate and distinct from the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas.” This is a bald-faced lie. The United States clearly sees Israel’s assault on Gaza as one component of a massive military operation now underway throughout the Middle East.

US officials have made clear that they would support Israel’s actions no matter what atrocities it is carrying out. “We’re not drawing red lines for Israel,” said White House National Security spokesperson John Kirby.

“The US sent a message tonight,” Mick Mulroy, a former defense official, told the *New York Times*. “We

will directly respond against Iran, and specifically the IRGC, if they continue to attack our military positions and personnel in Iraq and Syria.”

On Thursday, the White House sent Congress a war powers notice regarding the strikes. “On the night of October 26, 2023, United States forces conducted targeted strikes against facilities in eastern Syria,” Biden wrote. “The precision strikes targeted facilities used by the IRGC and IRGC-affiliated groups for command and control, munitions storage, and other purposes.”

Biden continued, “The United States stands ready to take further action, as necessary and appropriate, to address further threats or attacks.”

Thursday night’s strikes followed Biden’s threat to Iran on Wednesday “that if they continue to move against those troops, we will respond.”

In response to Thursday night’s bombing, sections of the US political establishment demanded an even more aggressive escalation. “At least President Biden finally responded after more than a dozen provocations, but the Administration still isn’t grappling with the root cause of the region’s violence: Iran,” wrote the *Wall Street Journal* in an editorial.

“Pinprick bombing of weapons and ammo lockers aren’t proportionate to the enemy attacks,” the *Journal* continued. “Iran’s proxies have lobbed rockets or drones at U.S. positions at least 19 times since Oct. 17.”

The *Journal* wrote, “But a better example for restoring deterrence is former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis in Syria in 2018 when Russia’s Wagner Group and Bashar al-Assad fighters attacked a U.S. military position. As Gen. Mattis told Congress, he directed the attacking force ‘to be annihilated.’ And it was.”

The US is surging ships, troops and aircraft to the

Middle East. The US has dispatched the USS Gerald R. Ford, its most advanced aircraft carrier, to the Mediterranean Sea, with its complement of 75 aircraft and up to five supporting warships. The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and its carrier battle group are on their way to the eastern Mediterranean, amid reports they will ultimately make their way to the Persian Gulf.

American imperialism has 30,000 military personnel stationed in the Middle East, which are being supplemented by 2,000 Marines aboard the vessels steaming toward the Middle East. In addition, the Pentagon said Thursday that 900 troops have either deployed or are getting ready to leave for the Middle East.

The US has also sent dozens of aircraft and has flown nearly 100 heavy-lift aircraft missions to the region.

Commenting on the situation, *The Economist* wrote, “It is fairly easy ... to envision scenarios in which American offensive action goes further to respond to attacks on allies rather than on Americans.”

It commented, “It is a measure of Joe Biden’s concern for how quickly things could spiral out of control that the White House has demanded a ‘contingency’ plan for evacuating up to 600,000 American citizens living in Israel and Lebanon. ... It turns out there may yet be another chapter in the forever wars.”

The United Nations General Assembly voted Friday in favor of an “immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities” in Gaza. The motion, which passed by a vote of 120 to 14, took place over the “no” vote of Israel and the United States. An amendment introduced by Canada that would have directly condemned Hamas’s incursion into Israel did not receive a two-thirds majority and failed.

The US escalation throughout the Middle East takes place as Israel intensifies its genocide in Gaza. On Thursday, Gaza’s Health Ministry published the names of more than 6,747 people who had been killed by Israeli bombings. The report noted that between October 7 and 26, 7,028 Palestinians were killed, and that 281 bodies had not yet been identified.

The publication follows a statement by Biden that he has “no confidence” in the death toll published by Palestinian authorities.

UN officials likewise substantiated the death toll

cited by Palestinian authorities. “We continue to include their data in our reporting, and it is clearly sourced,” the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) told Reuters in a statement.

Dr. Mike Ryan, Executive Director World Health Organization’s Health Emergencies Programme, said the numbers are “generally consistent or within logic for the scale of killings one would expect, given the intensity of bombardment in such a densely populated area.”

In his remarks Wednesday stating that Palestinian authorities were inflating the US death toll, Biden asserted that the deaths of civilians is the “price of war.”



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