

As Gaza genocide continues, US prepares major escalation of war throughout Middle East

Andre Damon
17 December 2023

As Israel continues to massacre hundreds of Gazans each day and starve the entire population of 2.2 million, a series of US officials are traveling to Israel to coordinate US support for the genocide and prepare a military escalation throughout the Middle East.

Last week, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan traveled to Israel to hold high-level meetings with Israeli officials. During the trip, Sullivan reiterated the United States' open-ended support for Israel's onslaught against the population of Gaza.

"We are going to continue to support Israel in its campaign against Hamas," Sullivan declared, "because we see Hamas as an ongoing threat to the State of Israel, and Israel has not just a right but a duty to go after it, and the United States will support Israel with that."

During his visit, Sullivan asserted, "there will be a transition to another phase of this war, one that is focused in more precise ways of targeting the leadership and on intelligence-driven operations." The *New York Times* reported that "four US officials said Mr. Biden wants Israel to switch to more precise tactics in about three weeks."

Similar statements abounded in the run-up to Israel's onslaught on southern Gaza, which the United States insisted would see Israel reduce the number of civilians it kills. But the assault on southern Gaza has been even more brutal, if that is even possible, than the massacres in the north.

In the 71 days since the start of the genocide, 18,787 Gazans have been killed, or 265 per day—70 percent of them women and children. At that rate, 5,500 more people, including 3,800 women and children, will be massacred before Israel moves to what the *Times* speculates could be a "lower intensity" conflict.

Over the weekend, Israeli forces gunned down three

hostages previously held by Hamas as they were making their way toward Israeli troops waving a white flag. The killing demonstrates a basic reality of Israel's "war" in Gaza: Israeli forces have a deliberate policy of shooting everyone they see, without any effort to distinguish between Hamas fighters and civilians, or in this case, released hostages.

Moreover, Israel has already destroyed or damaged 60 percent of Gaza's housing and destroyed most civilian infrastructure capable of supporting human life, from hospitals to schools, bakeries and power distribution centers. By the time of Sullivan's "transition," in other words, almost the entirety of Gaza will lie in ruins.

As Sullivan was in Israel, the IDF on Thursday shut down all telecommunications in Gaza, in the most prolonged such shutdown to date. On Saturday, Israel attacked Kamal Adwan hospital in Gaza. During the attack, Israeli bulldozers ran over the tents of refugees, burying people alive in the wreckage, killing at least nine.

An Israeli strike Sunday on the Jabaliya refugee camp killed 90 Palestinians, Gaza's Ministry of Health reported. And Israel continued its daily targeted assassination of journalists in Gaza, with 64 members of the media killed so far. On Friday the IDF killed Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abudaqa and wounded Al Jazeera Gaza bureau chief Wael Dahdouh.

Israeli officials are increasing their use of openly genocidal rhetoric. In a radio interview, David Azoulai, head of Israel's regional Metula Council, called for displacing the population to Lebanon and said that Gaza should be made to look like "Auschwitz."

Tell everyone in Gaza to go to the beaches. Navy ships should load the terrorists onto the

shores of Lebanon. The entire Gaza Strip should be emptied and levelled flat, just like in Auschwitz.

Israel continues to launch attacks throughout the Middle East. Late Sunday, its warplanes carried out a strike in the outskirts of Damascus, Syria, together with long-range strikes into Lebanon.

In his remarks over the weekend, Sullivan explained that the United States is preparing for a much broader conflict, within which Israel's genocide is just one component, targeting both the Houthi rebels in Yemen and, even more centrally, Iran.

Sullivan declared, "What the Houthis are doing is a threat not just to Israel, but to the entire international community; it is a threat to freedom of navigation, it's a threat to commercial shipping; it is a threat at a critical chokepoint, a critical artery in global commerce. And so the United States is building a coalition of countries to help protect freedom of navigation."

He added, "We're talking about the Houthis. But who's behind the Houthis? Who's arming, equipping, and enabling them? It's Iran."

Over the weekend, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Charles Q. Brown Jr. left for a multi-day visit to Israel and other US allies in the Middle East.

On Sunday, the *Guardian* reported that the United States will announce a new military operation, tentatively titled Operation Prosperity Guardian, targeting Houthi rebels in Yemen aligned with Iran.

On Friday, the Associated Press reported that Austin has ordered the USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier to remain in the Mediterranean Sea, after it was originally scheduled to return to the US for the holidays.

The US will maintain two aircraft carriers in the region, as part of an armada of 19 ships deployed throughout the Middle East. There are seven US warships in the Mediterranean Sea and a dozen more throughout the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

A shooting war has already begun in the waters off the coast of Yemen. US Central Command reported in a Twitter/X post that on December 16 the US Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Carney engaged over a dozen drones launched from Yemen.

The US media is, meanwhile, agitating for the Biden administration to target both Yemen and Iran. In an editorial, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote, "The press is

reporting that the Biden Administration is contemplating the use of military force in response to continuing attacks on commercial shipping by the Houthi militia in Yemen. It's about time. The Houthi missile attacks pose the most significant threat to global shipping in decades, and they will continue unless a global coalition unites to stop them."

The *Journal* continued, "The question is whether the U.S. and other Western navies are merely going to play defense and catch missiles as the Houthis set the terms of battle. Sooner or later a Houthi missile may get past U.S. naval defenses and kill American sailors. Then the White House will have little choice other than to strike back."

The *Journal* demands that the US escalate against Iran, declaring, "Eventually Iran's rulers have to know that their assets—military and nuclear—are at risk if they continue to foment disorder, attack U.S. allies, and target American bases or ships."

These statements make clear that dominant factions of the US political establishment see US support for the genocide in Gaza as a critical component of its decades-long effort to dominate the Middle East through military violence, with Iran as a central target.

And this conflict is just one arena of what the Biden administration sees as a global war for world domination, targeting Russia in Europe and China in the Pacific, that will see mass death eclipsing even the bloodbath in Gaza.

Millions of workers and young people have marched in every continent against Israel's genocide in Gaza. But this movement confronts imperialist governments that are committed to a global expansion of war and militarism.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact