

US draws up plan to attack mainland Yemen as Middle East spirals into war

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The US military has “prepared options” for attacking Yemen, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, amid a major escalation of war throughout the Middle East.

The *Journal* reported that “potential targets could include launchers for antiship missiles and drones, targeting infrastructure such as coastal radar installations, and storage facilities for munitions.”

In a threat to Yemen, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Wednesday the US will not “shrink from the task of defending ourselves, our interests, our partners, and the free flow of international commerce.”

He added, “To accomplish these goals we have established and will continue to maintain a significant force presence in the Middle East. This includes an aircraft carrier strike group centered around the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, with its embarked air wing of some 80 aircraft, as well as an amphibious ready group with its embarked 26 Marine Expeditionary Unit.”

These ships, Kirby said, contain “more than 4,000 sailors and more than 50 aircraft.” He added, “These ships and their Marines are augmented by three additional squadrons of fighter and attack aircraft that are based ashore and additional highly capable warships at sea.” These ships, Kirby said, represent “offensive ... military power.”

The belligerent statements cap two days of major escalations of tensions throughout the Middle East. On Tuesday, Israel carried out a strike in Beirut, Lebanon, killing Saleh al-Arouri, the deputy head of Hamas’s political committee. While Israel denied its responsibility for the strike, US officials later confirmed to Al Jazeera that the attack was conducted by Israel.

The US effectively endorsed the murder of al-Arouri, with White House spokesman Kirby declaring that

Israel “has a right and responsibility to go after the threat that Hamas poses, which means they have a right and a responsibility to go after the leadership of Hamas.” He added, “I would just tell you that al-Arouri was a noted ‘designated global terrorist.’ And if he is, in fact, dead, nobody should be shedding a tear over his loss.”

Then, on Wednesday, over 100 people were killed at a memorial ceremony for Maj. Gen. Qassemi Soleimani, the Iranian general murdered by US President Donald Trump while on a diplomatic mission in Iraq four years ago. While Israel has for years carried out a string of bombings throughout Iran, in this case both the United States and Israel denied responsibility.

Mojataba Zolnouri, Iran’s deputy Parliament head, said that it was “clear from the style of the attacks that it is the Zionist regime” which is responsible for the bombing. But White House spokesman Kirby declared, “We have no indication that Israel was in any way involved in this.”

Last week, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant claimed that Israel is at “war” with multiple countries. “We are in a multi-front war. We are being attacked from seven fronts—Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), Iraq, Yemen and Iran,” he said. “We have already responded and acted on six of those fronts,” in a clear threat to Iran.

The US media continues to incite direct war against Iran. On the day in which 100 people were killed in a terror attack on Iran, the *Wall Street Journal* published an editorial calling Iran “the fulcrum of Mideast violence,” and declaring, “Sooner or later the US and its allies will have to reestablish deterrence if they want a more stable Middle East, and that means dealing with Iran.”

This week, Israel announced that thousands of troops

would be withdrawn from Gaza, raising the prospect that they will be used in an attack on Lebanon. Israel has evacuated 70,000 residents from its northern border with Lebanon and has amassed troops and tanks there. Israeli forces have launched daily bombardments across the Lebanese border since October 7.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will depart Thursday to the Middle East, including a trip to Israel. The death toll in Israel's genocide is quickly nearing 30,000, with Gaza's Government Media Office declaring that 29,313 people in Gaza are either killed or missing since October 7.

Against the backdrop of escalating war throughout the region, the US has been thrown into crisis by the Israeli regime's openly genocidal rhetoric. In a statement on Tuesday, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield declared, "There should be no mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, and we reject the recent inflammatory statements from Israeli Ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben Gvir."

In a separate statement, the US State Department declared, "The United States rejects recent statements from Israeli Ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben Gvir advocating for the resettlement of Palestinians outside of Gaza. This rhetoric is inflammatory and irresponsible. We have been told repeatedly and consistently by the Government of Israel, including by the Prime Minister, that such statements do not reflect the policy of the Israeli government. They should stop immediately."

Regardless of what the United States claims it was told in private, Netanyahu has categorically endorsed the ethnic cleansing of Gaza in public, telling a meeting of his parliamentary faction, "Regarding voluntary immigration... This is the direction we are going in."

Of course, these statements do in fact represent the policies of the Israeli government, which is engaged in a conscious genocide and ethnic cleansing campaign against Gaza. The United States, which declares it has no "red lines" on what Israel is allowed to do, is fully complicit in this genocide.

On Thursday, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) announced that it will hold public hearings January 11 and 12 on South Africa's accusation that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza. The United States, however, continues to deny that Israel is committing

genocide and that the US is an accomplice to it. "We have not at this point seen acts that constitute genocide," said State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller.

Asked to comment on the filing by South Africa with the ICJ, White House spokesman Kirby called the submission "meritless, counterproductive and completely without any basis in fact whatsoever."

(Unlike the International Criminal Court [ICC], which hears charges against individuals, the International Court of Justice hears charges by UN member states against other states. The US government does not recognize the ICC but does recognize the ICJ, and its current chair, Joan Donoghue, is an American.)

Public denunciations of Israel's genocide by human rights experts are mounting. In a statement on Twitter, Balakrishnan Rajagopal, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to housing, declared, "Forcible transfer of Gazan population is an act of genocide especially given the high number of children."

On Wednesday, the Euro-Med Human Rights monitor declared in a statement that "Israel is determined to carry out the forcible displacement of civilians in the Gaza Strip, beyond the bounds of international law."



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