

US and UK threaten war against Yemen

Andre Damon
11 January 2024

US and UK officials made their most direct statements to date Wednesday threatening to attack Yemen, from which Houthi rebels have targeted shipping through the Red Sea and US warships facilitating the genocide in Gaza.

“We’ve made clear, and many other countries have made clear, that there will be consequences for the Houthis’ actions,” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at a press briefing in Manama, Bahrain during his trip through the Middle East.

Behind the aggressive statements against the Houthis in Yemen is the escalating campaign against Iran. US imperialism’s backing of Israel’s genocide is connected to the broader war drive in the entire Middle East, with Iran the principal target.

“We’ve also repeatedly tried to make clear to Iran,” Blinken said, “as other countries have as well, that the support that they’re providing to the Houthis, including for these actions, needs to stop.”

In a separate statement, UK Defense Secretary Grant Shapps declared, “This cannot continue and cannot be allowed to continue... If this doesn’t stop, then action will be taken. So I’m afraid that the simplest thing is to say, ‘Watch this space.’”

At a briefing Wednesday, US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby threatened that the Houthi rebels would “bear the responsibility for consequences should they continue to threaten lives.”

Kirby noted that the US has built an international naval coalition of more than 20 countries as part of the militarization of the Red Sea region.

On January 3, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the US military has “prepared options” for attacking mainland Yemen.

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

Politico carried an article Friday reporting Biden administration officials admit that “the war in Gaza has officially escalated far beyond the strip’s borders.”

Politico reported, “Biden administration officials are drawing up plans” for “scenarios that could potentially draw the US into another Middle East war.”

The plan “includes striking Houthi targets in Yemen, according to one of the officials, an option the military has previously presented.” The US is also seeking to “anticipate and fend off possible attacks on the US by Iranian-backed forces in Iraq and Syria, according to one of the officials.”

US and UK officials said Wednesday that the Houthi rebels had carried out their largest attack on shipping in the Red Sea to date. US Central Command said that the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower and four other warships intercepted more than 20 drones and missiles over the previous 24 hours.

Yahya Sarea, a spokesperson for the Houthi rebels, said Wednesday that they had launched “a large number” of weapons to target a US warship “that was offering support to the Zionist entity.”

The US has concentrated a massive armada in the Middle East in support of Israel’s genocide in Gaza. Over the past three months, the US has provided Israel with 10,000 tons of military equipment, including armored vehicles, armaments and ammunition. The US and the UK have carried out drone surveillance flights over Gaza.

On Wednesday, the UN Security Council passed a resolution condemning attacks by the Houthis, with Russia and China abstaining. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the UN, said the actions of the Houthis will merit a “global response.” She also threatened Iran, which she declared was the “root of the problem.” She concluded, “Iran has long encouraged the Houthis’ destabilizing actions.”

These statements come on the eve of a hearing in the International Court of Justice on charges of genocide brought by South Africa against Israel. The hearing is scheduled to take place on Thursday and Friday.

Despite claims by Israel that the war against Gaza has entered a “new phase,” there has been little let-up in the systematic bombardment and starvation of the civilian population of Gaza.

In a briefing Wednesday, the World Health Organization (WHO) said it was forced to cancel a planned medical mission to Gaza due to the ongoing bombing.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement, “Intense bombardment, restrictions on movement, fuel shortage, and interrupted communications make it impossible for WHO and our partners to reach those in need.”

Sean Casey, the WHO’s emergency medical team coordinator in Gaza, said, “I’ve been in Gaza for five weeks... I have not seen a lowering of the intensity of the conflict.”

In its update on the genocide, the United Nations reported, “Intense Israeli bombardments from air, land, and sea continued across much of the Gaza Strip on 9 January, resulting in further civilian casualties and destruction.”

Gaza’s Government Media Office said Wednesday that another three journalists were killed by Israel in Gaza, bringing the total to date to 115. The GMO said the names of the slain journalists were Ahmed Badir, Sherif Okasha and Heba Al-Abadla.

Asked whether the growing international opposition to Israel’s actions in Gaza had led to tensions between the US and Israel, Kirby, the White House national security spokesman, declared, “[B]elieve me, the connective tissue between the United States and Israel. Very, very tight, very strong.”



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)