

# US seizes upon deaths of troops in Jordan to justify escalation against Iran

Andre Damon  
30 January 2024

The deaths of three US Army reserve soldiers in Jordan Sunday have been used to launch a campaign within the US political and media establishment for military escalation targeting Iran.

The Biden administration claimed the attacks were carried out by Kataib Hezbollah, a militia group the US asserts is backed by Iran. Iran has denied any link to the attacks.

More than 45,000 US troops are deployed in the Middle East, associated with decades of US wars throughout the region that have collectively killed over one million people. The attack on US troops deployed on the other side of the world is being used to justify long-planned military escalations.

Blaming the attack on “radical Iran-backed militant groups,” President Joe Biden declared, “We will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner of our choosing.”

Over the past two months, US imperialism has provoked a regional war in the Middle East, launching multiple strikes on Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Now the US military is threatening to directly attack Iran, which would engulf the entire region in a bloodbath.

The Biden administration is playing with fire, creating the conditions for a catastrophe.

It has systematically provided funding, logistical support and political cover for Israel’s genocide in Gaza, knowing full well that this would provoke retaliation against US forces deployed throughout the region, whose deaths would be used as a pretext for further military escalation.

In response to all criticism of its provocative actions, the Biden administration has responded by declaring that it has no intention of waging war against the countries it is militarily encircling.

Asked repeatedly at Monday’s White House press

briefing whether the US government is “actively considering potential attacks inside Iran,” White House National Security spokesman John Kirby repeatedly replied, “We are not looking for a war with Iran.”

Notably, on January 12, Kirby used the exact same language with regard to Yemen, declaring, “We’re not interested in a war with Yemen.” And yet, the United States has carried out dozens of missile strikes inside Yemen over the past three weeks, on over half a dozen separate days.

It seems that the best predictor of what country the US military will illegally bomb next is the one the US government declares it has absolutely no intention to wage war against.

The most ridiculous version of this argument was presented in a White House briefing on January 16. A reporter noted repeated US statements that “we’re not looking to expand this conflict,” and asked, “How do you square that” with US attacks on Yemen that had just been carried out.

To this, Kirby made the following response:

It’s a very simple equation: By removing military capability from the Houthis, we are making it harder for them to conduct these attacks. ... So, the very act of taking these strikes, knocking out their capability—in some cases before they could use it—that is, by definition, taking the tensions down.

In this Orwellian language, any US attack on the military forces of any country is an act of “de-escalation.” And if the United States military were to attempt to destroy China’s and Russia’s military

capacity by attacking all of their bases with nuclear weapons, that would be the most de-escalatory act of all.

These absurd verbal gymnastics are an attempt to conceal the White House's far-reaching plans for military escalation from the American population, which overwhelmingly opposes further US military intervention in the Middle East.

Asked on Monday why the White House has not informed the American people about its war plans or sought consent from Congress, Kirby bristled at the suggestion, declaring, "The commander-in-chief is not looking at polling or considering the electoral calendar."

The United States seized upon Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel to immediately surge troops, warships and aircraft into the Middle East, in what the US Navy's news publication called "the largest mass of US ships in the region in decades." This massive military buildup was intended to be used in exactly the way it has been: to carry out a widening series of military attacks throughout the region aimed at reorganizing the Middle East under US domination.

Less than 10 days after the October 7 attack, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned:

The dispatch of an armada of over a dozen warships to the Middle East is not simply to threaten Hamas, which has no navy. The United States is preparing for a much broader conflict in the Middle East, including war with Iran.

Since then, the United States has bombed Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

The US sees the conflict that has now erupted in the Middle East as a critical component of an existential struggle with Russia and China. Significantly, the United States, in the words of a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, "has taken note of China's expanding relationship with Middle Eastern states," in particular, Beijing's efforts to broker a rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

On Monday, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, in a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, obliterated any dividing line between

NATO's war against Russia and the US conflict with Iran and China, declaring, "A Russian victory would embolden Iran, North Korea and China. That matters for Europe's security. And it matters for America's security."

The global war that has now been provoked by US imperialism and its allies in London, Berlin and Paris is part of a global counter-revolution in which the imperialist powers are seeking to reestablish direct control over their former colonies.

At the same time, US imperialism, beset by massive internal social contradictions, is attempting to channel these internal tensions outward, toward an external enemy. These wars also create the framework for continuous attacks on democratic rights and an effort to delegitimize domestic political opposition.

The intensifying US preparations for a potential war with Iran follow last week's ruling by the International Court of Justice calling on Israel to cease killing civilians in Gaza and restricting the supply of food and humanitarian aid. At the same time, the ICJ refused to call for a ceasefire in Israel's war in Gaza, as requested by South Africa in its submission to the court. In response to this ruling, Israel has only increased its bombings of civilians in Gaza, while the United States and other imperialist powers have suspended funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, threatening even further starvation in Gaza.

Any belief that the United Nations or the institutions of "international law" are capable of restraining the eruption of imperialist barbarism has been refuted by these developments. Halting imperialist barbarism requires the mobilization of the working class, uniting the struggle against genocide and war with the fight against inequality, poverty, unemployment and the capitalist system.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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