

Imperialism's "final solution" to the Palestinian question

Statement of the WSWS Editorial Board
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Monday's announcement by the White House that Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has agreed to send a "team of officials" to Washington to discuss the impending onslaught on Rafah proves yet again that US imperialism is a direct participant in the genocide against the Palestinians. The Associated Press reported that the meeting would take place in the coming days and include "military, intelligence, and humanitarian experts," an unmistakable sign that what is under discussion is how best to carry out a bloody onslaught on the 1.5 million Palestinians crammed into Rafah.

News of the meeting came a day after Netanyahu vowed at an Israeli war cabinet meeting that no amount of international pressure would halt his fascistic government from assaulting the last remaining refuge for Palestinians in Gaza. "We will operate in Rafah," Netanyahu said. "This will take several weeks, and it will happen." In response, President Joe Biden spoke with Netanyahu Monday to reaffirm his administration's support for Israel.

Underscoring Netanyahu's savage intentions, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) conducted a brutal raid Monday on the Al-Shifa Hospital, which was until the launching of the genocide the largest medical facility in the Gaza Strip. The storming of the building resulted in dozens of deaths and at least 200 arrests.

The imperialist war criminals in Washington will sit down with their fascist Israeli allies to discuss the destruction of Rafah amid the emergence of a catastrophic famine across wide swaths of the enclave. An Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report produced by a dozen UN agencies and aid organisations released Monday found that 70 percent of all remaining residents in northern Gaza face "catastrophic" hunger and that a famine is "imminent." Famine could break out any time between now and May in the north, the report warned, and an attack on Rafah would bring famine to the south.

"This is the largest number of people facing famine in the world today," the report declared. Famine is defined as 20 percent of the population experiencing an extreme lack of food, 30 percent of children experiencing acute malnourishment, and two in 10,000 adults dying each day due to hunger.

The imperialist powers are not merely indifferent to this humanitarian calamity; they have made it possible. The systematic razing of Gaza's infrastructure and forced displacement of 80 percent of its population have been carried out with weapons supplied by the United States and its European allies, over and above the more than \$3 billion in annual aid that has flown from Washington to Tel Aviv for decades. The deliberate blocking of food, medical supplies, electricity, water and fuel has been rigorously enforced by Israel and Egypt, the two regimes with the closest ties to imperialism in the region. Just on Sunday, the European Union concluded a €7 billion agreement to strengthen border security and expand economic investment with Egyptian dictator Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the butcher of the Egyptian revolution and accomplice in the starvation of Gaza's Palestinians.

The mass slaughter of defenceless men, women and children has been an openly declared policy by Israel since the outset. In the early days of the onslaught, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant described the Palestinians as "human animals" and added menacingly that Israel would act accordingly. Numerous senior government officials, including Netanyahu himself, have stated that the ultimate goal is the depopulation of Gaza either through the killing or forced expulsion of its residents. In November, a call for the use of starvation and disease as weapons of war was published by Giora Eiland, the former head of Israel's National Security Council. "The international community warns us of a humanitarian disaster in Gaza and of severe epidemics. We must not shy away from this, as difficult as that may be. After all,

severe epidemics in the south of the Gaza Strip will bring victory closer and reduce casualties among IDF soldiers,” he wrote.

Those who think that American imperialism can act to check such unrestrained savagery are fooling themselves. The massacring of civilians through indiscriminate bombardments and their starvation by withholding the most basic necessities for human life are not only the products of the Zionist regime’s bankruptcy and its decades-long illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. Such crimes against humanity arise out of more than three decades of uninterrupted US imperialist-led wars of aggression, in which Washington laid waste to entire societies as it sought to offset its precipitous economic decline through the ruthless deployment of military force.

The barbaric crimes committed by American imperialism over the past three-and-a-half decades are too numerous to document. From the bloodbath of Iraqi civilians and poorly armed conscript soldiers during the first Gulf War, to NATO’s savage air war on Yugoslavia in 1999, the neocolonial occupation of Afghanistan from 2001, the illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003, NATO’s destruction of Libya in 2011, and the bloody intervention in Syria in 2014, American imperialism has an unmatched record for brutalising impoverished and oppressed peoples throughout the world. President Biden, who played a prominent role in many of these operations, will oversee the discussions on the Rafah onslaught.

This barbarism has now reached a new stage with the developing third world war between the great powers, which are engaging in a redivision of the world. The US and European imperialists are waging war on Russia in Ukraine, where they have willingly sacrificed upwards of half a million Ukrainians in order to secure their dominance over Russia’s raw materials and the Eurasian landmass. They are escalating the war with Russia and preparing for war with China even at the risk of triggering a nuclear conflagration that would spell the end of human civilisation on the planet. Washington has also seized on Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians to set the stage for a regional escalation of the conflict throughout the Middle East to confront Iran, which the US ruling class views as an obstacle to its regional dominance.

These seemingly insane policies are rooted in the contradictions of crisis-ridden capitalism, to which the imperialists have no answer but the programme of world war. Just as German imperialism under the Nazi regime in the 20th century saw the extermination of European Jewry as necessary to advance its economic and geostrategic

ambitions, so American and European imperialism have concluded in the 21st that a “final solution” to the Palestinian question is required.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained in its New Year’s statement:

The Gaza genocide is not a unique episode, best understood as a product of exceptional circumstances related to the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the inherently reactionary character of the Zionist project and its racist and xenophobic-nationalist ideology. The latter elements play, of course, a significant role in the actions of the Israeli regime. But the unrestrained ferocity of the present war, carried out with the full support of its imperialist paymasters and weapons suppliers, can be understood and explained only in the context of the breakdown of the world imperialist and nation-state system.

The same crisis that produces imperialist brutality also creates the conditions for its overthrow. Mass protests against the Gaza genocide have swept across the globe as struggles by workers against austerity policies and attacks on their living standards intensify in all the major imperialist centres.

The urgent task before the working class is to recognise that the struggle against the Gaza genocide is the struggle against imperialist war. The resort by the ruling class to savagery and lawlessness not seen since the first four decades of the 20th century can only be answered on the basis of a socialist and internationalist perspective. The millions of workers and young people who have protested against the genocide around the world in recent months must counterpose to capitalist barbarism the programme of world socialist revolution. This is the only way to halt the already unfolding human calamity in Gaza.



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