

# Israel bombs Iran's embassy in Damascus: The Middle East on the brink of region-wide war

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2 April 2024

Israel's bombing of the Iranian embassy in Damascus on Monday, which killed three senior leaders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and three others, is an act of war against Iran for which Washington and its NATO allies bear political responsibility.

The bombing marks a major new stage in the Israeli war on Iran, because its target is Iranian territory, according to international law. The Israeli regime has long conducted a lawless foreign policy of targeted murder, repeatedly bombing Iranian and Syrian officials—particularly after the US murder of IRGC General Qassem Soleimani in 2020 in Iraq. Its latest action, however, threatens to provoke a direct war between Iran and Israel, as well as Israel's NATO imperialist backers.

Yesterday, Iranian officials vowed retaliation. "We will make [Israel] regret this crime and others it has committed," Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said. The Russian, Chinese and Saudi foreign ministries also issued statements condemning the strike.

The Biden administration reportedly contacted Iranian officials just after the strike, denying responsibility and claiming Israeli officials had only notified it of the strike minutes before it took place. However, the fact that Israel felt it could take such action, whether or not it notified Biden, is because Washington and its NATO imperialist allies have given it a blank check throughout six months of genocide against Gaza.

The United States, Britain and France all refused to denounce the Israeli strike last night in a UN Security Council meeting. Effectively endorsing Israel's

rationale for the strike, US Ambassador to the UN Robert Wood said he was "concerned by reports that terrorist leaders and elements were allegedly present at this facility and condemn Iran's continued coordination, training and arming of terrorists and other violent extremists."

This week, US officials brazenly defended the Israeli army's massacre of 400 people at the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre baldly declared, " Hamas should not be operating out of hospitals."

US State Department spokesman Mike Matthews indicated he would endorse an Israeli assault on Rafah, where 1.5 million Palestinian refugees are living in tent cities, stating that a scenario where "Israel does nothing about the Hamas fighters that continue to exist in Rafah" is "not acceptable."

Washington and its NATO allies green-light the Israeli genocide, which has killed 32,000 Palestinians, because they are preparing similar crimes across the Middle East. At the outset of the Gaza genocide, Washington sent carrier battle groups and nuclear missile submarines to the region for the explicit purpose of targeting Iran. Today, as Israeli officials discuss invading Lebanon to attack the Hezbollah militia, plans are well advanced for the NATO imperialist powers to use Israel as a proxy in new neo-colonial wars against Lebanon, Syria and beyond.

For a decade, Russian, Iranian and Hezbollah forces have fought in Syria alongside government forces against NATO-backed "rebel" Islamist or Kurdish nationalist militias. The 13 years of the NATO war for regime-change in Syria have devastated the country, leaving a half million dead and over 10 million

refugees.

Israel decapitated the Iranian military command in Syria and Lebanon Monday amid a global war the imperialist powers are waging for domination of Eurasia. While Washington and its NATO allies fight Russia in Europe, arming the far-right Ukrainian regime in Kiev, they are also attacking Russia and its allies in the Middle East. Covering fighting between US and Iranian IRGC forces in Syria, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman recently wrote:

Americans may not know they're at war with Iran, but Iran's Revolutionary Guards know for sure they are in a shadow war with America through their proxies. And if one of these Iranian proxies gets "lucky" and creates a mass casualty event by striking a US warship or the barracks of one of the US bases in Jordan or Syria ... [it would] become a direct shooting war in the region the world most depends on for its oil. Just thought I'd let you know.

Workers across America and the world must be alerted to the imminent danger of catastrophic military escalation. The war Friedman is discussing would have devastating consequences even beyond the global economic collapse caused by the blocking of Persian Gulf oil trade. Amid the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine and after the signing of a \$400 billion Chinese-Iranian trade and military treaty in 2017, it would risk drawing all the major nuclear powers into a global conflict.

Indeed, US officials increasingly do not hide the fact that the confrontation with China is now their central concern. Last month, US Central Command head General Michael Kurilla denounced the unstable defensive alliance emerging against NATO between the Iranian, Chinese and Russian regimes.

"Collectively, Iran, Russia and China are strengthening their relationships and fostering a chaotic landscape favorable to their exploitation," Kurilla said. "The ramifications of this partnership will have global implications." Referring to Iranian drone exports to Russia for the Ukraine war and Russian and Iranian oil exports to China, he complained: "Iran sells 90 percent of its oil, all US-sanctioned, to China."

The imperialist powers' support for the genocide in Gaza emerges from their drive to subjugate the globe through war targeting Russia, China and Iran. This was starkly revealed in the recent outburst of US Congressman Tim Walberg, who called for dropping nuclear bombs on Gaza "like Nagasaki and Hiroshima" and for "the same in Ukraine" to "wipe out Russian forces." Unable to resolve conflicts created by decades of war and plunder, imperialist politicians increasingly see no way out besides the mass murder of those standing in the way.

Opposition to the Gaza genocide must be developed as an international movement in the working class against the US-NATO imperialist war and the capitalist system. In its New Year's statement, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned:

Taken as a whole, the normalization of different forms of social barbarism signifies that the capitalist class has arrived at a dead end. A class whose policies consist of different forms of sociocide has clearly exhausted its historical, economic, social and political legitimacy.

The decisive question is arming the growing opposition among workers and youth to the Gaza genocide, revealed in mass protests in Israel and across the Middle East as well as in the NATO countries, with a socialist perspective. This requires building a Trotskyist leadership in the working class, sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International, in every country. This is the basic and urgent task posed by the escalation of war in the Middle East.



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