

Biden declares “ironclad” commitment to Israel as death toll mounts in Gaza

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US President Joe Biden declared his “ironclad” support for Israel Wednesday, as Israeli bombing of Gaza intensifies and the mass starvation of the trapped Palestinian population worsens, threatening to kill more people in Gaza than the bombs and missiles.

Biden was speaking at a press conference at the White House, alongside visiting Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. In his brief opening statement, he went out of his way to make reference to the Middle East, rather than the US conflicts with China, which were no doubt the primary subject of the closed-door talks with the Japanese leader.

He cited what he claimed were new Iranian threats to strike Israel’s territory directly, presenting Israel and the United States as standing united against Iran. He declared in his brief opening statement, “As I told Prime Minister Netanyahu, our commitment to Israel’s security against these threats from Iran and its proxies is ironclad, ironclad.”

Biden said nothing about the unprecedented Israeli attack April 1 on the Iranian embassy in the Syrian capital, Damascus, in which a missile strike against a consular building killed at least seven people, including two top officials of the Quds Force, the overseas unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

In a speech Wednesday to mark Eid al-Fitr, Iran’s “supreme leader,” Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said that attacking an Iranian embassy “means that they have attacked our soil.” According to the state news agency IRNA, Khamenei warned, “The evil regime made a mistake and it should be punished and will be punished.”

Israeli foreign minister Israel Katz made a deliberately provocative response, writing on Twitter/X in Farsi (the majority language of Iran), “If Iran attacks from its territory, Israel will react and attack in Iran.”

US imperialism regards the Israeli onslaught on Gaza not as an isolated event, but as part of its build-up to a

third world war, which would link the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, a war against Iran and its allied forces in the Middle East, and a looming conflict with China in the Asia-Pacific region.

Biden’s differences with the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are provoked, not by any genuine care about the mass killing of the Palestinians, but out of concern that the genocide in Gaza has aroused so much popular opposition worldwide that it threatens the broader imperialist campaign against Russia, Iran and China.

The US president provoked considerable press commentary with his interview with Univision television, where he made a number of criticisms of Netanyahu and called his current approach to the slaughter on Gaza a “mistake.”

That interview was broadcast Tuesday night, but it was recorded almost a week earlier, the previous Wednesday, before Biden’s half-hour telephone conversation with Netanyahu, which has been portrayed in the US media as contentious and even hostile.

At his press conference with his Japanese visitor Wednesday, Biden ignored a follow-up question from one reporter, asking whether his comments about Netanyahu meant that he was prepared to impose any conditions of military aid to Israel. The US accounts for 69 percent of all Israeli arms imports—nearly all paid for by the US government. Germany provides 30 percent of arms imports, while all other countries combined account for barely 1 percent.

According to numerous media accounts, Israel has stepped up bomb and missile strikes across the central portion of the Gaza Strip, north and east of the besieged town of Rafah in the south, where the majority of the Palestinian population, an estimated 1.5 million, are now sheltering.

There was incessant bombing Tuesday night and

Wednesday of the eastern portions of Khan Younis, once the most populous part of southern Gaza, but now largely abandoned. Israel announced earlier this week that its troops were pulling out of Khan Younis to make room for refugees now in Rafah, who will be displaced by the promised Israeli ground attack on the only portion of Gaza not under its direct military control.

There were also numerous airstrikes in northern Gaza, where virtually every building has been hit, and most have been turned into rubble.

Both Israeli and Palestinian sources confirmed publicly that three sons of Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, had been killed in a missile strike Wednesday, along with four of Haniyeh's grandchildren, in northern Gaza.

The three men, Hazem, Amir and Mohammad Haniyeh, and the children, three girls and a boy, were reportedly visiting relatives in the Shati refugee camp, outside Gaza City. Such visits are traditional for Muslims with the end of Ramadan and the beginning of the celebratory Eid al-Fitr holiday.

Haniyeh, who now lives in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, issued a statement calling his sons "martyrs," and saying that his family had only suffered what thousands of families in Gaza had already experienced.

Meanwhile, there were reports that Israel has done little or nothing to fulfill commitments supposedly made by Netanyahu in the course of his 30-minute conversation with Biden, about reopening the Erez crossing from Israel into northern Gaza to facilitate the movement of aid trucks.

The *New York Times* reported: "Facing international condemnation after an Israeli airstrike killed seven workers for an international aid group, Israel said it would reopen the Erez crossing between Israel and northern Gaza for aid delivery. But satellite imagery taken on Tuesday shows that the road leading to Erez on the Gaza side remains blocked by rubble from a destroyed building, a crater and other damage."



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