

In threat to Iran, US sends warships to Middle East

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The Biden administration has escalated the threat of a region-wide war in the Middle East by moving warships to the Eastern Mediterranean as tensions mounted following Israel's assassinations of Hezbollah and Hamas leaders in Lebanon and Iran late last month.

In a Sunday phone call, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant that he had ordered the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group, which is equipped with F-35C jet fighters, to accelerate its transit to the Middle East. It would add to the capabilities of the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group that is already in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility.

Austin also ordered the USS Georgia (SSGN 729) guided missile submarine to the CENTCOM region, a 4 million square mile area in the Middle East populated by more than 560 million people and which is between the European, African and Indo-Pacific Commands of the US military.

In a Pentagon readout released after the phone call, Austin, "reiterated the United States' commitment to take every possible step to defend Israel and noted the strengthening of US military force posture and capabilities throughout the Middle East in light of escalating regional tensions."

Revealing the geostrategic aims behind the escalation with Iran, the Lincoln strike group is currently near the South China Sea and it will take approximately two weeks to reach the Middle East, according to Pentagon officials. The Lincoln and the Roosevelt aircraft carriers are nuclear-powered and can carry dozens of fighter jets. According to the Navy, the guided-missile submarine USS Georgia can carry more than 150 Tomahawk missiles.

An unnamed Pentagon official told the *Washington Post* on Monday that the destroyer USS Laboon arrived

in the area after making its way from the Red Sea through the Suez Canal. The destroyer, which has a battery of surface-to-air and Tomahawk cruise missiles and anti-submarine rockets, will join a fleet of ships with sailors and Marines in a task force trained for evacuation operations.

On Monday, National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby told reporters that President Biden had been on the phone with his counterparts from the UK, Germany, France and Italy to discuss the situation.

The imperialist powers issued a hypocritical joint statement after the call that said, "We called on Iran to stand down its ongoing threats of a military attack against Israel and discussed the serious consequences for regional security should such an attack take place."

During the press briefing, Kirby spelled out Israel's role as the imperialists' attack dog in the region, saying, "The Israelis think there is an increasing probability that Iran and its proxies will attack in the coming days. We share this concern and therefore we are coordinating with Israel and other partners in the region." Kirby added that US intelligence thinks an attack could happen this week.

Unnamed US officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that intelligence shows shifting Iranian force postures. However, the official added that "identifying the moving of military assets doesn't provide enough information to determine the timing of a potential attack," according to the *Journal* report.

Meanwhile, the leading daily *Times of Israel* had previously reported that the Benjamin Netanyahu-led government could carry out a preemptive strike on Iran to prevent an attack on Israel. The report said, "Israel's leading intelligence agencies Mossad and Shin Bet and their respective heads David Barnea and Ronen Bar, were part of a meeting called by Netanyahu that was

also attended by Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi.”

The Israeli government carried out two major assassinations aimed at provoking a conflict with Iran. On July 30, the Israeli regime carried out the murder of top Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukur in an airstrike in Beirut. The next day, Israel killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran with a remote-controlled bomb. The murder of Haniyeh, the Hamas leader involved in the cease-fire negotiations over the Gaza genocide, demonstrates that Israel has no intention of ending its ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the enclave.

After a phone call with German Chancellor Olaf Sholz on Monday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country has “the right to respond” to any aggression and “Iran will never give in to pressure, to sanctions and to bullying and considers it has the right to respond to aggressors in accordance with international norms.”

In a speech last week, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said his group was certain to retaliate but in its own time. He said, “Their [Israel’s] government, their army, their society, their settlements and their occupiers are all waiting,” and the wait is “part of the punishment.”

Israel put its military on high alert saying that its intelligence service observed preparations by Iran and Hezbollah toward carrying out attacks. Yoav Gallant, Israel’s defense minister, said, “We are in the days of vigilance and readiness.”

On Monday, the commander of Israel’s Air Force, Major General Tomer Bar, issued an order barring service-members from traveling abroad. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the directive applies to career officers and non-commissioned officers but not conscripts.

The Gaza genocide in which 186,000 people, the majority of whom are women and children, have been killed in 10 months, is a foreshadowing of the type of barbarism that the Israeli regime will carry out in a war with Iran and/or Lebanon with US weapons and military technology. In fact, Israel has used the regional tensions to take its mass murder of Palestinians to new heights of criminality with its three air strikes on Tabeen School in Gaza City on Saturday, where 6,000 displaced people were sheltering.

The response of the Biden and Netanyahu governments to immediately escalate military presence and readiness means that they are both seeking a wider war. The leaders of US imperialism—Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris—have worked to coordinate the genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza with Israel from the outset and it is a key component of their preparations for a region-wide war targeting Iran.

Behind the insanity of provoking war with Iran, a country of 89 million people with substantial military power including 1 million troops, is the deep economic, social and political crisis of the US government. As it has done for the past three decades, the US is seeking to offset its precipitous decline as the world’s preeminent capitalist power through the methods of imperialist military force. This drive for global hegemony is also behind the US proxy war in Ukraine against Russia.



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