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Biden demands \$100 billion for wars in Ukraine, Israel and planned conflict with Iran and China

US President Joe Biden's speech Thursday night on national television was a demand for vast new military spending to expand the ongoing US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and pour billions more into Israel's aggression against Gaza and suppression of the Palestinian people.



President Joe Biden speaks from the Oval Office of the White House Thursday, October 19, 2023, in Washington, about the war in Israel and Ukraine. [AP Photo/Jonathan Ernst]

Biden's speech was not a serious attempt to convince anyone or rationally explain US foreign policy. It consisted of a series of non sequiturs strung one after the other, with no coherent argument binding them together. Biden drew a parallel between Hamas and Russian President Vladimir Putin that, objectively, did not make the slightest sense.

But as he spoke, it became clear that the main aim of the speech was to utilize the war in Gaza to procure a massive spending bill for the war in Ukraine to prop up the Zelensky government following the failure of its summer offensive.

Indeed, the *New York Times* has reported that \$60 billion of the \$100 billion spending bill Biden proposed in the speech will go to fight the war in Ukraine against Russia. This figure is more than twice Biden's initial request of \$24 billion in August. Some \$14 billion will go to Israel.

Despite its rambling and incoherent nature, the main import of the speech is clear: America is hurtling towards global war, and the president of the United States, the so-called "commander-in-chief," is demanding \$100 billion in additional funds, on top of the \$1 trillion already proposed for all military spending, to finance this explosion of military aggression.

Unmentioned in the speech, but widely reported in advance of Friday's formal request to Congress, is the fact that Biden will also seek billions more in US military aid to Taiwan—an effort to provoke further conflict with China—and to militarize the US-Mexico border and intensify US intervention throughout Latin America.

Aware of the deepening opposition to the US war in Ukraine, now ending its 18th month, and apparently mired in an endless, costly and bloody stalemate, Biden sought to bootstrap the conflict in Israel to justify further spending in Ukraine, which will get the lion's share of whatever military aid bill ultimately emerges from Congress.

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While Biden declared that the world was at an inflection point, this is not because war is something new for the United States. On the contrary, America has been at war for more than 30 years, and the countries it has invaded, occupied or bombed amount to a significant portion of the world's population—Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Pakistan, most of North Africa, Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Sudan.

What is new is the transformation of these wars into a more general conflict, or, as Leon Trotsky described it on the eve of World War II, when "separate clashes and bloody local disturbances ... must inevitably coalesce into a conflagration of world dimensions."

The contours of this new world war can be inferred from Biden's \$100 billion bill. It is aimed at expanding the war against Russia, using the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians to trigger a new war against Iran, and preparing for an imminent war against

China. The US administration is shaping the battlefield of what amounts to one continuous front in a global conflict whose goal is US dominance of the Eurasian land mass, from Eastern Europe, through the Middle East, Central Asia and ultimately China.

This is combined with efforts to safeguard its Western Hemisphere “backyard” by militarizing the US-Mexico border and disposing of political inconveniences and potential obstacles like Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba.

If this appears to be a megalomaniacal program for global conquest, it articulates the outlook of the megalomaniacs on Wall Street and in the Pentagon for whom Biden speaks when he delivers his paeans to the ability of America to do “anything” as long as it mobilizes its full resources.

Biden even used the language of Wall Street in making his argument for the next enormous payout to the Pentagon and the US arms industry, declaring, “It’s a smart investment that’s going to pay dividends for American security for generations.” American workers will pay with their living standards and social benefits, and the lives of their sons and daughters. But war will certainly pay for Raytheon, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, and for the big banks and hedge funds that control them.

A debased and discredited media will undoubtedly hail Biden’s speech as a political masterstroke, as it already has his rabid pro-Israel speech last week and his fulsome embrace of Netanyahu and the fascistic Israeli government during his visit Wednesday to Tel Aviv. But no matter how they seek to glorify this semi-senile representative of a senile and criminal imperialism, the United States is not able to conquer the world, only to destroy it with its arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Biden has already made himself the co-author of war crimes in Gaza, through his visit to Tel Aviv and embrace of Netanyahu. At least 4,000 Palestinians have already been killed, but the death toll is likely to rise to five or even six figures in the course of a ground invasion.

In one revealing reference toward the end of his speech, Biden invoked the late Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who described the United States as “the indispensable nation.” He did not cite Albright’s most notorious declaration, when she was interviewed by “60 Minutes” in 1996. She was asked about the catastrophic effect of US sanctions on Iraq, which caused the death of half a million Iraqi children for lack of medicine and key nutrients. “I think that is a very hard choice,” Albright answered, “but the price, we think, the price is worth it.”

There is a more recent example of the catastrophe that awaits the people of Gaza from an Israeli invasion. In 2016, when Biden was vice president in the Obama administration, the US military launched an operation against ISIS, which had captured the city of Mosul in Iraq, home to 2.5 million people—about equivalent to the Gaza Strip today. Mosul was a dense urban environment with a network of tunnels dug to protect against US bombardment. As US forces surrounded the city and closed in, they destroyed the water system and other infrastructure and nearly a million people fled for their lives. The Pentagon called this “the most precise air war in history.”

Biden’s speech will not convince the millions of young people and workers, in America and around the world, who have already engaged in mass protests against Israeli genocide in Gaza. It will only further anger them.

These protests have erupted, not just out of sympathy with two million Palestinians, cut off from food, water and electricity in the siege of Gaza. The world’s population is coming to recognize Biden’s demand for even more billions for war as a deadly threat to themselves.

The massive worldwide opposition is further inflamed by new crimes of the Israeli government, such as the bombing of Al-Ahli hospital, in which as many as 500 Palestinians were killed, and most recently the bombing of a church in Gaza, one of the oldest Christian structures in the world, killing many more people.

Biden has endorsed the grotesque lie that the Al-Ahli hospital was destroyed by a Palestinian rocket, not an Israeli weapon. But his backing of Netanyahu only intensifies the opposition to the war. As he was giving his address on national television, the White House was surrounded by demonstrators, including many Jewish Americans, chanting their opposition to US-Israeli atrocities.

A mass movement is already underway all over the world against Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians. This movement must fight to mobilize the mass opposition among youth and workers on a global scale to demand an end to the Israeli blockade, prevent the impending invasion and reoccupation of Gaza, and halt the supply of weapons, ammunition and other equipment by the imperialist powers, above all the United States, to the Zionist regime. It must take up the struggle against not only the US war in the Middle East, but against the war with Russia and the war drive against China as well.

But the central task in the struggle against war is the intervention of the working class as a conscious political force. The international strike movement that is now underway must be unified with the movement against war, on the basis of a socialist political program.

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