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Both Biden and Bibi Could be Victims of the Israeli War Against Hamas



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“Yes, there are too many civilian casualties in Gaza. And yes, we continue to urge the Israelis to be as careful and cautious as possible. But Israel is not trying to wipe the Palestinian people off the map. Israel’s not trying to wipe Gaza off the map. Israel is trying to defend itself against a genocidal terrorist threat. If we’re going to start using the word—fine. Let’s use it appropriately.”

– John Kirby, National Security Council spokesman.

“More Palestinian children have been killed in the past several weeks than the 3,000 children killed in all the world’s major conflicts—involving two dozen countries—during the year 2022.”

– *The New York Times*, November 30, 2023.

Rear Admiral John Kirby seems to have no trouble sympathizing with the Ukrainian civilians killed in the Russian invasion. But he is downplaying the Palestinians killed in Israel's invasion. Kirby has criticized the claims for a Palestine from "the river to the sea," but ignores the fact that the 1977 Likud Party platform called for Jews to have sovereignty "between the sea and the Jordan." Kirby ignores Israel's "quite explicit, open and unashamed" genocidal assault in Gaza, according to several Israeli scholars, as well as Israel's creation of conditions in Gaza that will lead to its physical destruction. Is Kirby aware that the former head of the Israeli National Security Council, General Gior Eiland, has stated that "Gaza will become a place where no human being can exist."

The Biden administration has been supportive of—indeed, complicit in—Israel's genocidal campaign against Gaza's Palestinian community since the start of the war on October 7th. Soon after the war began, President Biden flew to Israel and embraced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, attended a meeting of Netanyahu's war cabinet, and returned to Washington to announce billions of dollars in weaponry to "sharpen Israel's qualitative military edge." Is there any question regarding Israel's "qualitative military edge" in the Middle East?

For the past two months, the United States has been rushing military assistance to Israel, often bypassing the congressional review process that is supposed to accompany arms deliveries to foreign countries. This week the Department of State approved the transfer of 13,000 rounds of tank ammunition to Israel as Secretary of State Antony Blinken proclaimed that "an emergency exists that requires the immediate sale." The combination of the U.S. veto of a cease-fire resolution at the United Nations and the expedited shipment of lethal weaponry calls into question the Biden administration's so-called warnings to Israel to minimize civilian casualties. [It's ironic that three university presidents are being vilified for making notional comments regarding genocide while actual genocidal acts are taking place with no one being forced to step aside.]

Netanyahu remains committed to the goal of destroying Hamas without any idea of what comes next; Biden appears committed to his goal of supporting Netanyahu. Neither leader appears capable of changing the direction of a military policy that is strengthening—and not weakening—the ideological goals of Hamas. Meanwhile, the instability in the Middle East worsens with U.S. policies and military forces unable to deter settler violence against Palestinians on the West Bank; Houthi use of drones and rockets against Israel and even U.S. naval forces; increased violence on Israel's northern border with Lebanon; and the greater instability in Jordan where Palestinians are the majority of the population. Israel is

becoming increasingly isolated, and the United States is increasingly isolated in its support of Israel.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu becomes an increasingly unlikely ally of the United States. Biden supports a two-state solution; Netanyahu rejects a two-state solution. Biden supports negotiations with the Palestinian Authority; Netanyahu rejects negotiations of any kind. Two things are increasingly clear: Biden appears increasingly unsure of himself in his public discussion of the war; Netanyahu appears increasingly nervous and distracted in his public appearances.

The notion that there is an Israeli military solution to the Palestinian problem and the occupied territories is simply wrong. Hamas is waging an ideological battle that is winning the Arab street; it can't be defeated militarily. Biden believes that as long as the United States stands by Israel and provides endless rounds of military assistance, then Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders will have the confidence to negotiate with the Palestinians and to seek compromise. Instead, Israeli leaders, particularly Netanyahu, have pocketed U.S. military weaponry and have remained committed to the military defeat of the Palestinian opposition and the humiliation of the Palestinian people.

Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin have issued the appropriate warnings regarding Israel's misuse of force, but widespread hunger, lack of uncontaminated water, and spread of infectious diseases have not affected the U.S. delivery of weapons or even the use of that lethal weaponry against the Gaza population. The 75 years of displaced Palestinians; 56 years of illegal occupation, and 16 years of blockade that have turned Gaza into an outdoor prison demand a change of course. There has never been a time when an Israeli government has seriously discussed any alternatives to a policy of militancy that has produced one war after another. As *The Nation* argues, there needs to be an end to "Israel's regime of apartheid, occupation, and siege" or the predictable violence will continue.

Thirty years ago, the world was moving in the direction of democracy and decency. The Berlin Wall came down; the Warsaw Pact dissolved; the Soviet Union disappeared; apartheid ended in South Africa; and the Oslo Accords promised some compromise between Israelis and Palestinians. Now we live in an age of violence and disarray with mindless wars between Russians and Ukrainians as well as between Israelis and Palestinians; a new round of a strategic arms race; the growth of far-right movements in Europe; and the return of dynasties in Southeast Asia. Netanyahu will not survive the

military and intelligence failure that marked October 7th, but it is quite possible that a centrist and decent leader, Joe Biden will face a similar fate.

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