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## US Continues to Blindly Back Israeli Attacks on Gaza

By John Glaser

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The United States continues to blindly support Israel even as it bombards Gaza's virtually defenseless population and falsely claims it is acting in self-defense.

Ben Rhodes, White House deputy national security adviser, told reporters on Saturday the United States "wants the same thing as the Israelis want," which is an end to rocket attacks on Israel by Palestinian militants in Gaza.

Rhodes disputed that a precipitating factor in this violent escalation was the Israeli air strike that killed Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari.

"Just to be clear on the precipitating factor: These rockets had been fired into Israeli civilian areas and territory for some time now. So Israelis have endured far too much of a threat from these rocket for far too long and that is what led the Israelis to take the action that they did in Gaza," Rhodes said, ignoring the fact that several Israeli acts of violence, plus an incursion into Gaza territory by Israeli tanks, were the precipitating factors.

When asked about Israel's targeting of government buildings and infrastructure in Gaza, Rhodes again blindly defended Israel's irresponsible militarism: "We wouldn't comment on specific targeting choices by the Israelis other than to say that we of course always underscore the importance of avoiding civilian casualties. But the Israelis again will make judgments about their military operations."

The White House has explicitly ignored the chronology of events so as to conform to Israel's false claims to be acting in self-defense. Rhodes again reiterated the Obama administration's belief that "Israel has the right to defend itself."

Of course, no mention was made of whether or not Gazans have a right to protect themselves, not just from Israeli bombardments but near daily artillery fire into Gaza and and imposition of a harsh, brutal economic blockade that has been impoverishing Palestinians in a cruel form of collective punishment.

Former CIA analyst Paul Pillar lamented the US's one-sided response to the Israel-Gaza conflict: "The closest the [White House's] statement comes to even a pretense of recognition of the – substantially greater – pain and destruction being inflicted in the other direction is to 'regret the death and injury of innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians' and to 'encourage Israel to continue [*sic*] to take every effort to avoid civilian casualties,'" but only after hailing Israel as righteous.

"This posture is especially discouraging as one of the administration's first official statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since President Obama's re-election," Pillar added.