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By Amy Goodman - Denis Moynihan

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In order not to escalate the war, ceasefire in Gaza now!



Sources: Democracy Now!

The United States, as Israel's main arms supplier, could stop the bombings with a simple phone call. If not, the wider-reaching war Biden hopes to avoid seems increasingly plausible

U.S. President Joe Biden spoke to reporters Tuesday before boarding the presidential helicopter, saying, "I don't think we need to expand the war in the Middle East. That's not what I'm looking for." But a more protracted war is precisely what Biden is exacerbating by unreservedly endorsing the brutal offensive Israel is waging against Gaza and the 2.3 million Palestinians trapped there. Calls for an immediate ceasefire are on the rise, and while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed that the war will be protracted, the United States, as Israel's main arms supplier, could stop the bombings with

a simple phone call. If not, the wider-reaching war Biden hopes to avoid seems increasingly plausible.

A potential escalation of the conflict was triggered by the recent killing of three U.S. Army reservists stationed at the so-called "Tower 22," a military base located in the Jordanian desert near the borders with Syria and Iraq. The base is home to approximately 350 members of the U.S. Army and Air Force. Along with another U.S. military garrison called al-Tanf, located about 20 kilometers to the north in Syria, these detachments are part of the U.S. military presence aimed at countering the Islamic State.

In the early hours of Sunday, January 28, a drone was able to break through the air defenses of Tower 22 and attack the soldiers who were sleeping in their rest areas. The three soldiers killed — Sgt. William Rivers, 46; specialist Kennedy Sanders, 24; and specialist Breonna Moffett, 23, were African-American, originally from the state of Georgia.

An estimated 40 other people were injured in the blast. In the United States, calls for swift retaliation are mounting, including urging President Biden to attack Iran. Some media commentators are quick to point out that the United States is in an election year and therefore Biden cannot allow himself to be perceived as a weak military leader.

Texas Republican Sen. John Cornyn said on social media: "Target Tehran." Similarly, his Republican colleague Lindsey Graham said, "The only thing the Iranian regime understands is force." He added: "Hit Iran now and do it decisively."

But not everyone demands revenge. Perhaps the most powerful and poignant appeal is that of the parents of one of the deceased soldiers. The Associated Press reported, "Moffett's parents said they hope there won't be an escalation of violence that would result in the deaths of more U.S. soldiers." Francine Moffett, Breonna Moffett's mother, told the Associated Press on Monday, "I just hope and pray that no other family has to go through this. [...] It breaks your heart and soul."

In addition to the intense offensive against Gaza that began after Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, military actions have taken place in several areas of the Middle East. Israel and the Hezbollah group have exchanged artillery fire along the border between Lebanon and Israel, with fatalities on both sides. Yemen's Houthi rebels have attacked cargo ships in the Gulf of Aden that were bound for or in any way connected to Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom and have hijacked at least one of the ships. These actions have destabilized international shipping through the vital Suez Canal.

In response, the U.S. has launched multiple missile and artillery attacks on Yemen. For its part, Iran has struck targets in Iraq, Pakistan and Syria. Adding to volatility in the region, Turkey has been intensifying its offensive against U.S.-allied Kurdish forces in Syria and Iraq. Trita Parsi, an Iranian-American citizen who is an expert on Iran-related issues and executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft think tank, told Democracy Now!: "During the first two and a half years of Biden's presidency there were about 60 attacks by these Iraqi militias against military personnel and bases American. However, since October 7 [...] there have been more than 160 attacks in the last 100 days alone. At some point, one of those attacks was going to end up killing American people. And basically, the president has accepted that risk [...], instead of asking about this whole strategy and why we're exposing the U.S. military to allow Israel to continue to indiscriminately bomb, kill, and massacre the people of Gaza."

Spencer Ackerman, a foreign policy columnist for *The Nation magazine*, shares Parsi's concerns. Speaking to Democracy Now!, Ackerman said, "Even though the United States says it's trying to contain the conflict, it's caught up in the logic of escalation. [...] This is the result of the accumulation of decisions that Biden and his team have taken to engage the United States more deeply in this escalation of the conflict. All of this could be stopped if the U.S. used its immense influence over Israel."

Polls show that a majority of the U.S. population supports a ceasefire in Gaza. Dozens of U.S. cities have passed resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities in the Palestinian enclave. The most recent of these was approved by the Chicago City Council. However, with the constant supply of weapons to Israel, the Biden administration appears determined to back Israeli attacks on Gaza, despite the International Court of Justice recently concluding in a provisional ruling that Israel may be committing genocide. The provision of weapons and diplomatic armor will not resolve the conflict. An immediate ceasefire and diplomatic talks leading to an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine is the only possible solution.

© 2024 Amy Goodman Spanish translation of the [original column in English](#). Edition: Democracy Now!, spanish@democracynow.org Amy Goodman is the host of [Democracy Now!](#), an international newscast that airs daily on more than 800 English-language and Spanish-language radio and television stations. She is co-author of the book "Those Who Fight the System: Ordinary Heroes in Extraordinary Times in the United States", published by Le Monde Diplomatique Southern Cone.

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