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## ***Biden gives Israel “ironclad” backing against Iranian retaliatory strike***

US President Joe Biden warned yesterday that Iranian retaliation in response to Israel’s highly provocative April 1 attack on Iran’s consulate in the Syrian capital of Damascus was expected “sooner than later.”



In this picture released by the official website of the Iranian Army on Jan. 19, 2024, a missile is launched during a military drill in southern Iran. [AP Photo/Iranian Army]

While not criticizing, let alone condemning Israel’s attack on the embassy, Biden was quick to declare his administration’s total support for Israel. “Our commitment to Israel’s security against these threats from Iran and its proxies is ironclad,” he declared. “Let me say it again: ironclad.”

The Israeli airstrike on the consular section of Iran’s embassy in Syria killing three senior Iranian generals and other officials was a flagrant act of war that could only further inflame tensions in the Middle East and lead to a wider war. It was not only another breach of Syria’s

national sovereignty, but a direct attack on Iranian territory—as embassies in a foreign country are designated as such by international convention.

Biden’s remarks amount to a blank cheque to the Israeli regime to carry out illegal acts of aggression anywhere in the Middle East, including against Iran. Just as it has backed Israel’s barbaric war in Gaza to the hilt on the basis of its “right to defend itself,” so the US gives its “ironclad” backing for setting the region aflame.

Asked by reporters what his message to Iran was, Biden simply declared: “Don’t.” He provided no evidence that an Iranian strike was imminent, but again stressed: “We are devoted to the defence of Israel. We will support Israel. We will help defend Israel and Iran will not succeed.”

The *Wall Street Journal* reported yesterday that the US Navy is strengthening its already substantial fleet in the Middle East with two more destroyers to the region, one of which is equipped with an Aegis anti-missile system.

General Erik Kurilla, the head of US Central Command, held what could only be described as a war council with Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant yesterday along with top Israeli military and defence ministry officials. “We are prepared to defend ourselves on the ground and in the air, in close cooperation with our partners, and we will know how to respond,” Gallant declared after the meeting.

Having deliberately provoked a confrontation with Iran, the Israeli regime is preparing to widen its genocidal war in Gaza throughout the Middle East. “Whoever harms us, we will harm them,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Thursday as he visited troops at an Israeli military airbase. “We are prepared ... both defensively and offensively.”

Israel with Washington’s backing is already engaged in an escalating conflict with Iranian-linked Hezbollah militia in southern Lebanon while carrying out airstrikes deep into Lebanon and Syria targeting senior figures in both Hamas and Hezbollah. At the same time, the US and allied forces continue to carry out attacks against Houthi militia in Yemen.

The Biden administration has sought to distance itself from the April 1 Israeli attack on the Iranian consulate. The *Washington Post* reported on Thursday that US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin had contacted Gallant on April 3 to complain that the US had not been given advance notice “because of the strike’s implications for US troops and interests in the region.”

As with previous Israeli strikes on Iranian officials in Syria, neither Austin nor any other administration official has made even a hint of condemnation of Israel’s action, even though

the potential for a broader Middle East war is evident. In December, an Israeli airstrike in a Damascus suburb killed Iran's top Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp Seyed Razi Mousavi. Far from marshaling diplomatic pressure to prevent further Israeli acts of aggression, the US has contacted countries around the world, including China, calling for them to urge Iran not to take retaliatory action on Israel for its April 1 attack.

UK foreign secretary Lord David Cameron said he had made clear to the Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahian that "Iran must not draw the Middle East into a wider conflict". "I am deeply concerned about the potential for miscalculation leading to further violence."

Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned on Wednesday that the attack on its consulate was equivalent to an attack on Iranian territory. "When they attack our consulate, it means they have attacked our territory," he said. "The Zionist regime made a mistake and must be punished and will be punished."

Iran's Tasnim news agency commented that Iran's "punishment" for Israel was inevitable and would be "heavy". But it dismissed US claims that an attack was imminent, saying that suggestions that Tehran would respond in the next few days or was planning a missile and drone strike were simply speculation.

While the region braces for an escalating war, the Israel military is continuing its barbaric operations in Gaza that have inflamed tensions throughout the Middle East and provoked mass protests around the world. With the death toll now over 33,000, five more people were killed and 30 more injured today in an Israeli attack in Gaza City.

Armed Israeli settlers have also carried out multiple attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, killing one person and injuring dozens in the town of al-Mughayir, as well as setting homes and vehicles alight.

In the wake of international outrage over the Israeli murder of seven World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza this month, Israel claims to have nearly doubled the number of aid trucks entering Gaza—still far short of what is required to avert starvation and famine.

"We've been asking for this for months," Jamie McGoldrick, the UN's humanitarian coordinator in Jerusalem, told CNN. "We've been calling out the fact that there's a real humanitarian crisis in the north, where famine is imminent...it's only now that we start to see the announcements."

"There has been no significant change in the volume of humanitarian supplies entering Gaza or improved access to the north," UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian Affairs, said on

Tuesday. “Since the beginning of April, an average of 177 aid trucks have crossed into Gaza per day via the Karem Abu Salem and Rafah land crossings.”

In other words, the Israeli blockade continues. The use of starvation as a weapon of war in Israel’s ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Gaza underscores its utter contempt for international law and basic human rights.

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