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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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16.08.2024

To Avert Wider War in the Middle East, Biden Should

Resign

Photograph Source: United States Senate – Public Domain

Joe Biden did the right thing by ending his bid for a second term. Now, he needs to go a step further.

“May I ask you, Mr. President, for one more brave and bold action?” [writes](#) filmmaker Michael Moore.

“Kamala Harris will be in a much stronger position to win if she can run as the President of the United States. As the *incumbent* President. This will give the country a chance to see her in action — as the most powerful person in the world. She will have three and a half months (as they say, ‘an eternity in politics’) to show the American people her smarts, her strengths, her heart.”

Moore’s political instincts are famously good. He defied pundits and pollsters in 2016, yelling at the top of his lungs that Hillary Clinton was in danger of losing his home state of Michigan – and the election – to Donald Trump. And now, to prevent Trump’s return, Moore is calling on Biden to resign.

That’s a call I echo, albeit for a different reason.

Netanyahu’s Wars

As I write these words, the Middle East is terrifyingly close to erupting into a wider war primarily because of Israel’s belligerence. Yet Biden is unable to rein Israel in, even though doing so requires little more than conditioning US weapons transfers to our satellite. No ceasefire in Gaza? No US weapons for Israel.

Sure, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talks a big game about carrying on with or without US support. But beneath the bluster he knows that Israel is toast without the US. Even with Biden's full backing over the past ten months, Israel has been unable to destroy Hamas, a penned-in militant group completely under Israel's thumb.

Now Netanyahu is clamoring for war with Hezbollah, a [far superior fighting force](#) than Hamas. For Israel, a country already coming [apart at the seams](#), a mano-a-mano war against Hezbollah in Lebanon may well [prove its undoing](#). That's why Netanyahu is desperate to bring the US directly into the mix. And the surest way to do this is by provoking an attack from Hezbollah's sponsor, Iran.

Even in the face of Israel's extraordinary provocations, however, Iran has demonstrated remarkable restraint. So Netanyahu keeps upping the ante, never more so than on July 31. Rather than kill Hamas' political leader Ismail Haniyeh at his home in Qatar, Israel chose to [assassinate him in Iran](#), just hours after that country swore in a moderate as president. By publicly humiliating Iran – Haniyeh was a diplomatic guest staying at a secure site in Iran's capital city when he was killed – Netanyahu is goading Iran into retaliating.

“[Israel] appears to have decided to pursue a strategy of escaping forward, if you will,” analyst Mouin Rabbani [told](#) *Drop Site News*. “Faced with failure in the Gaza Strip, it has decided to expand its war regionally. And it seems particularly keen to draw Iran directly into this conflict.”

As Netanyahu sows chaos in order to keep himself in power (and [out of jail](#)), Biden merely mutters diplomatic niceties, while occasionally indicating he's [oh-so upset](#) with his longtime friend. But Biden's words matter less than his actions, and he keeps greenlighting Netanyahu's warring by providing him with billions in weapons.

Biden does this even though a wider war will endanger thousands of US troops at bases scattered throughout the Middle East. They're “sitting ducks for local militias,” [said](#) Erik Sperling of Just Foreign Policy.

Some of these troops have already become casualties. Since October – when Israel launched its assault on Gaza in response to Hamas' October 7 terrorist attack – at least 145 US military personnel in the region have been wounded or killed in attacks by Iranian proxy forces, Nick Turse [reported](#) for *The Intercept*.

This comes as a wave of anti-American sentiment sweeps the region thanks to US support for Israel's leveling of Gaza. That's according to US State Department officials, who [warn](#) that Israel's war has been a boon for terrorist groups' recruitment.

Despite the increasing threat to US troops, Biden is placing more of them in harm's way as he sends [warships](#), [fighter jets](#) and [a submarine](#) to the region to assist Israel in the event that war breaks out. With each passing day, the chances that things spiral out of control only seem to grow.

Lenin famously said something to [the effect of](#), “There are decades where nothing happens, and weeks where decades happen.” Right now feels like the latter. And with the Middle East on a knife's edge, it's terrifying to think of Biden — in cognitive free fall — remaining in office for another five months, stubbornly clinging to Israel.

President Harris

When it comes to Israel, President Kamala Harris is [unlikely](#) to blaze a very different path. At the same time, if only for her own political self-interest, Harris is likely to be less obsequious to Netanyahu. And hopefully that approach would buy enough time and goodwill to lower the temperature in the region and avert a wider war.

If Harris can follow that up by brokering a ceasefire in Gaza, she's likely to steamroll Trump in November. On the other hand, “if Israel pulls the U.S. into a war in the Middle East,” former State Department official Annelle Sheline [wrote](#) in *The New Republic*, “the Democrats are almost certain to lose the election.”

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AUGUST 15, 2024