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US, Israeli officials demand major attack on Tehran after Iranian missile strike

US and Israeli officials openly endorsed a large-scale attack on Iran Tuesday, following a strike by Tehran on Israel with 185 ballistic missiles the same day.



Projectiles fly through the sky over Jerusalem as a siren sounds a warning of incoming missiles fired from Iran towards Israel, in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024 [AP Photo/Mahmoud Illean]

Former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett called for strikes on Iran’s nuclear program, a move that has been planned by Israel and the US for decades.

“We must act *now* to destroy Iran’s nuclear program, its central energy facilities, and to fatally cripple this terrorist regime,” Bennett declared, demanding that Israel must “strike the head of the octopus of terror.”

He was joined by Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, who said, “I would urge the Biden administration to coordinate an overwhelming response with Israel, starting with Iran’s ability to refine oil,” implying a damaging US attack on Iran’s energy infrastructure.

He was joined by Republican Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, who declared, “I urge the reimposition of a maximum pressure campaign against Iran and fully support Israel’s right to respond disproportionately to stop this threat.”

The warmongering comments were bipartisan. Democratic Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania said in a statement, “My voice and vote follow Israel to ensure they have whatever resources they need—whether that’s military, financial, or intelligence—to prevail over terror.”

Nearly one year after the October 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas, which were facilitated by a deliberate stand-down of the Israeli military and intelligence services and the beginning of the genocide in Gaza, it has become clear that the United States and Israel have seized upon the events of that day as a pretext to carry out a long-planned regional war throughout the Middle East, with Iran as the central target.

Iran’s missile strike on Israel took place just one day after Israel launched a ground offensive in Lebanon, following days of escalating air bombardments that left thousands of people dead.

On Saturday, Israel assassinated Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, using 85 massive bombs that completely leveled high-rise residential buildings, killing hundreds.

Iran’s foreign minister released a statement saying the attack was a response to “the assassination of the head of Hamas’ political office in Tehran, who was an official guest of the Iranian government, as well as the assassination of the Secretary-General of Hezbollah in Lebanon and General Nilforoushan, a senior Iranian military advisor, in Beirut.”

Both the US and UK’s military forces participated in efforts to shoot down missiles used in the strike, which was larger, more sophisticated and less telegraphed than an earlier strike on Israel by Iran in April. US and Israeli officials sought to present the strike as having no impact, despite widespread footage on social media showing missiles impacting Israeli military bases.

Iran’s top military official, Mohammad Bagheri, stated on state TV that the missiles fired at Israel were aimed at three military bases—Nevatim, Hatzerim and Tel Nof—as well as the headquarters of Mossad, Israel’s intelligence agency. He emphasized that civilian areas and infrastructure were intentionally not targeted.

All sections of the US political establishment restated their support for Israel's actions in Gaza and its broader attack throughout the Middle East. "Make no mistake, the United States is fully, fully, fully supportive of Israel," said US President Joe Biden. He added, "The attack appears to have been defeated and ineffective, which is a testament to Israeli military capability and the US military."

Responding to Iran's missile strike, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared, "Israel, with the active support of the United States and other partners, effectively defeated this attack," adding, "We demonstrated, once again, our commitment to Israel's defense."

US Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democrats' candidate for president in the November election, added that the US would "never hesitate to take whatever action is necessary to defend US forces and interests against Iran and Iran-backed terrorists." She added, "I'm clear-eyed. ... Iran is a destabilizing, dangerous force in the Middle East, and today's attack on Israel only further demonstrates that fact."

Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "The United States will continue to stand by our ally Israel in support of Israel's right to defend itself. ... Iran and its proxies must be held accountable."

Meanwhile, Israel's bombardment and ground invasion of Lebanon continued, with at least five Israeli airstrikes attacking the southern suburbs of Beirut on Wednesday. The number of people killed by Israel in Lebanon in the past 12 months is approaching 2,000, compared to the 1,200 people killed in Israel's 2006 invasion of Lebanon.

And in Gaza—where the official death toll since last October has surpassed 41,000 but is likely over 186,000—at least 37 people were killed in two separate Israeli's airstrikes on the Nuseirat refugee camp and a school in Gaza City, where displaced families were sheltering.

The escalating calls for massive strikes on Lebanon came amid a report by *Politico* that US officials authorized Israel's ground offensive on Lebanon.

Politico reported, "Senior White House figures privately told Israel that the US would support its decision to ramp up military pressure against Hezbollah—even as the Biden administration publicly urged the Israeli government in recent weeks to curtail its strikes."

The report continued, "Presidential adviser Amos Hochstein and Brett McGurk, the White House coordinator for the Middle East, told top Israeli officials in recent weeks that the US agreed with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's broad strategy to shift Israel's military focus to the north against Hezbollah. ... Behind the scenes, Hochstein, McGurk, and other top US national security officials are describing Israel's Lebanon operations as a

history-defining moment—one that will reshape the Middle East for the better for years to come.”

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