

U.S. right-wing Congressional representatives demand war with Iran after attack on U.S. troops in Jordan

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Washington, January 30 (RHC)-- Warhawks in the United States wasted no time agitating for direct military conflict with Iran after a drone attack on a military base just inside Jordan's border with Syria on

Sunday killed three American troops and injured dozens more.

Both Republican and Democratic members of Congress called on U.S. President Joe Biden to quickly respond with strikes inside Iran, which denied any connection to Sunday's attack. "The only answer to these attacks must be devastating military retaliation against Iran's terrorist forces, both in Iran and across the Middle East," said Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), a longtime supporter of war with Iran. "Anything less will confirm Joe Biden as a coward unworthy of being commander-in-chief."

Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-Fla.) called Iran "an existential threat to the U.S. and our allies in the region" and said Tehran "must be held accountable for the murder of three U.S. soldiers." That sentiment was echoed by a number of lawmakers, including Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) and Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.).

United Against Nuclear Iran, a group chaired by former Sen. Joseph Lieberman, also demanded "a decisive U.S. military response against targets inside Iran." "The U.S. should attack and destroy Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) military and intelligence targets in Iran, as well as missile and drone bases where the Iranian regime's proxies are trained," the group said. "Those who have consistently counseled only violence to address the crisis unleashed on October 7 should be ashamed of the disastrous outcomes they have so far reaped."

Biden claimed in a statement Sunday that "radical Iran-backed militant groups operating in Syria and Iraq" were responsible for Sunday's drone attack, but acknowledged that the U.S. is "still gathering the facts." "Have no doubt—we will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner [of] our choosing," the president said.

U.S. forces stationed in the Middle East have faced increasingly frequent attacks since Israel launched its large-scale war on the Gaza Strip following the deadly Hamas-led assault on southern Israel on October 7th. Sunday marked the first time since October that American troops have been killed in a Middle East attack.

The Biden administration has blamed the attacks on Iran-aligned militias and responded with airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, intensifying concerns that the U.S. is fueling a regionwide conflict. The administration has also launched a series of unauthorized strikes in Yemen in response to Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea.

Contrary to the growing calls for a military response to attacks on U.S. troops, analysts and progressive lawmakers have argued that the only way to halt the escalating violence in the region is to secure a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip, where Israeli forces armed by the U.S. have killed more than 26,000 people in less than four months. The Biden administration has repeatedly stonewalled international efforts to secure a cease-fire.

"I am heartbroken by the loss of the servicemembers killed in Jordan," Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), a U.S. Senate candidate, wrote in a social media post on Sunday. "Like I feared, the violence is spiraling out of control. President Biden must demand a cease-fire in Gaza now."

Jamal Abdi, president of the National Iranian American Council, warned in a statement Sunday that "the U.S. and Iran are now closer to the brink of being pulled into a full-blown regional war by the vortex of violence that was unleashed by Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7th and Israel's assault on Gaza."

"Those who have consistently counseled only violence to address the crisis unleashed on October 7 should be ashamed of the disastrous outcomes they have so far reaped," said Abdi. "We are disgusted by calls for more escalation from opportunists like Senators Lindsey Graham, Tom Cotton, and John Cornyn who are urging yet again for the U.S. to directly attack Iran. After years of working to block and undermine diplomatic alternatives, these people may be closer than ever to realizing their dream of war

with Iran."

"President Biden must show leadership and recognize that there is no military solution to this crisis that has only been expanded and prolonged by military escalation and a dearth of diplomacy," he continued. "The president must calibrate his response so as not to condemn the U.S. and region to an intractable war and instead work to end this conflict. The most impactful thing Biden can do to prevent further deaths across the region and prevent a full-blown war is to secure an immediate cease-fire between Israel and Palestine."

Trita Parsi, executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, similarly argued that "to truly protect our troops and avoid both war and more needless American deaths, Biden should begin withdrawing troops from Iraq and Syria and press Israel for a cease-fire, since its slaughter in Gaza is fueling four fronts that put the U.S. at risk."

"There will be understandable calls for revenge and counterstrikes," Parsi said. "Biden will almost certainly go down that path. Know that this is how America gets dragged into endless war. Retaliations, which in the moment may feel justified by the unacceptable attacks of these militias, put us on a path toward a war that doesn't serve our interests and that we cannot afford—one whose victory we cannot define and whose exit we cannot envision."

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