

*Washington pushes to give more
funding for Israeli war machine
in genocidal war of aggression
against Gaza*



Washington, April 15 (RHC)-- The United States is renewing efforts to push through a stalled funding package for Israel despite stressing it will not help with any counteroffensive measures against Iran. U.S. President Joe Biden told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a phone call late on Sunday that the U.S. would not take part in any retaliatory action in response to Iran's air attack the previous day.

Despite the U.S. president joining global calls for restraint, the rising tensions in the Middle East look set to accelerate approval of a stalled funding package that would see Washington hand Netanyahu \$14 billion in aid. "We believe Israel has freedom of action to protect itself and defend itself ... That's a longstanding policy and that remains, but no, we would not envision ourselves participating in such a thing," a senior US administration official said on Sunday.

The Iranian attack, which came in response to a strike – as yet unclaimed by Israel – on Iran’s embassy in Syria on April 1st, saw more than 300 missiles and drones launched towards Israel. However, it caused only modest damage, with most shot down by Israel, with help from the U.S., the United Kingdom, France and Jordan.

Israel’s five-member war cabinet, which met on Sunday evening, is reported to favor retaliation. However, division over the timing and scale of any response is said to persist. In a statement issued late on Saturday, Biden said he had told Netanyahu that Israel had “demonstrated a remarkable capacity to defend against and defeat even unprecedented attacks”. However, he did not reveal if Israel’s response was discussed.

John Kirby, the White House’s top national security spokesperson, sought to set out the US position clearly in an interview on the NBC channel on Sunday. “Our commitment is ironclad” to defending Israel and to “helping Israel defend itself”, he said, before adding: “As the president has said many times, we don’t seek a wider war in the region. We don’t seek a war with Iran.”

However, the escalation of the low-level conflict that has been bubbling through Israel’s six-month bombardment of Gaza appears set to see U.S. lawmakers push through a funding package that has been stalled. Following a new plea from Biden, Republican lawmaker and House Speaker Mike Johnson said on Sunday that he will try to advance the \$95 billion package of wartime aid for U.S. allies.

Johnson has been key in holding up approval of the national security package, which would hand \$14bn to Israel and about \$60 billion to Ukraine, as well as sending funds to allies in Asia.

Johnson told Fox News Channel’s Sunday Morning Futures that he and Republicans “understand the necessity of standing with Israel” and he would try this week to advance the aid. “The details of that package are being put together right now,” he said. “We’re looking at the options and all these supplemental issues.”

Johnson is already under immense political pressure amid the Republican Party’s divided support for helping Kyiv defend itself from Russia’s invasion.

Kirby called on the speaker to put that package “on the floor as soon as possible”.

“We didn’t need any reminders in terms of what’s going on in Ukraine,” Kirby said. “But [Saturday night’s Iranian attack] certainly underscores significantly the threat that Israel faces in a very, very tough neighbourhood.”

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