

Defending Rafah massacre, White House vows to defy “public opinion”

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On Wednesday, the Biden administration endorsed Israeli airstrikes on women and children in refugee camps in Rafah that killed 45 people Sunday and 21 Tuesday.

The strikes, White House National Security spokesman John Kirby said, were “limited,” “targeted,” and succeeded in their aim to “kill Hamas operatives and a Hamas compound.” In embracing these massacres and Israel’s broader assault on Rafah, the Biden administration asserted its right to sponsor war crimes and genocide on a limitless scale.

Asked by a reporter, “How many more charred corpses does he have to see before the president considers a change?” Kirby bluntly declared there will be “no policy changes.”

When Kirby was asked if the White House would do anything in response to condemnations of Israel and the United States in the wake of the strikes, he replied:

The president does not make decisions or execute policy based on public opinion polling. He bases his decisions on our own national security interests.

This statement is a public admission on the part of the government that it is consciously acting in defiance of the views of the vast majority of the population, which overwhelmingly opposes the US sponsorship of the Gaza genocide.

Moreover, it asserts as the fundamental principle that the actions of the government are determined not by the will of the people, but the “national security” interests of the state—that is, the global interests of the financial oligarchy on whose behalf the state governs.

Responding to Kirby’s statement, Joseph Kishore, the Socialist Equality Party’s candidate for US president, explained, “One could not have a clearer declaration that the mass protests against the genocide and the expanding global war will not change government policy, which is dictated by the capitalist ruling elites.”

Kishore added, “Someone could remind Mr. Kirby of the Declaration of Independence, which states, ‘Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it...’”

The Biden administration is advancing the concept that “democracy” is a government that does whatever it wants, in which elections are a formality to provide a fig leaf of legitimacy for policies opposed by the vast majority of the population.

When, during his election campaign in 2020, did Biden tell the public it would be his intention to allow Israel to massacre tens of thousands of Palestinians and starve a population of two million?

In addition to representative government, the expression of the popular will is theoretically accomplished through protest, or, in the language of the First Amendment, “the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

But in the United States, peaceful assembly is being criminalized. Over the past two months, nearly 3,000 Americans have been arrested for peacefully demonstrating against the Gaza genocide.

The American government is embracing an entirely totalitarian vision of society, in which the preservation of the national security interests of the state—as the

guardian of the interests of the financial oligarchy—is its fundamental *raison d'être*, and all opposition is to be suppressed through force.

This conception was articulated in a discussion earlier this month by former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mark Milley and Alex Karp, CEO of defense contractor Palantir. Karp declared that anti-war protests were “an infection inside of our society... If you want to stop these people, you have to be willing to be fierce.”

The Gaza genocide marks a significant turning point in the embrace of naked criminality abroad and dictatorship at home. The massive crimes being carried out in Gaza are in preparation for even greater crimes to come, amid a frenzied drive to escalate war all over the world. Unrestrained militarism and imperialist barbarism are being promoted by all of the institutions of class rule, with the media playing its appointed role.

In an article published Wednesday, *New York Times* columnist Bret Stephens condemned any restraints on the conduct of war, whether the number of civilians Israel is allowed to kill or the scale of a US war with nuclear-armed Russia.

“Wars are not porridge; there’s almost never a Goldilocks approach to getting it just right,” Stephens asserted. “Either you’re on the way to victory or on the way to defeat.” In other words, any effort to “limit” war, either through adherence to international law or even self-preservation, is a recipe for defeat. Victory comes through brutality.

Stephens wrote:

Nations... tend to canonize leaders who, faced with the awful choice of evils that every war presents, nonetheless chose morally compromised victories over morally pure defeats.

Stephens’ statement virtually plagiarizes a 1939 speech by Adolf Hitler before the German high command, in which he urged the German military to commit war crimes and defy the internationally recognized laws of war.

Hitler declared:

Our strength consists in our speed and in our brutality. Genghis Khan led millions of women and children to slaughter – with premeditation and a happy heart. History sees in him solely the founder of a state.

Condemning these and other exhortations to criminality on the part of Nazi leaders, Roman Rudenko, one of the prosecutors in the Nuremberg trials, said:

The defendants knew that cynical mockery at the laws and customs of war constituted the gravest crime. They knew it, but they hoped that the total war, by bringing victory, would also secure their immunity. But victory did not arrive on the heels of their crimes.

The open turn to military violence and domestic dictatorship is the mark of a social order in terminal decline.

In times of war, the state reveals itself openly as a tool of class domination. The issue is not appealing to the state and its institutions, but rather developing a social movement capable of opposing the entire state apparatus and the ruling social class it represents.

That social force is the international working class, which holds the economic and social power to defeat the capitalist ruling elite. It is the working class that must be mobilized and made aware of the connection between its interests in fighting against capitalist exploitation and opposing imperialist war, which are united in the struggle to abolish capitalism and establish socialism.



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