



War With Iran Looms as Biden and Netanyahu Edge Closer to Direct Conflict

President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are moving toward an agreement on Israel's planned attack against Iran, raising concerns over a potential escalation of violence in the Middle East. According to [Axios](#), U.S. and Israeli officials indicated that Wednesday's call between the two leaders, as well as Vice President and presidential candidate Kamala Harris, was a "productive" step toward aligning their strategies.



The Call

According to the [readout](#) of the call, Biden "affirmed his ironclad commitment to Israel's security." He also "condemned unequivocally Iran's ballistic missile attack against Israel on October 1st." On that day, Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting Israeli defense infrastructure and military bases. This assault was reportedly in retaliation for the killing of key figures, including Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut. Israel said it thwarted much of the attack.

AP Images
Benjamin Netanyahu and Joe Biden

The White House also said,

The President affirmed Israel's right to protect its citizens from Hezbollah, which has fired thousands of missiles and rockets into Israel over the past year alone, while emphasizing the need to minimize harm to civilians, in particular in the densely populated areas of Beirut.

The call for "minimizing harm to civilians" stems from the devastating impact of Israel's retaliatory military offensive against Lebanon, following Iran's strike. Israel's attack targeted Hezbollah strongholds, military sites, and infrastructure in southern Lebanon and parts of Beirut. The bombardment resulted in significant casualties, with more than 2,000 people reported killed and more than a million displaced. The sheer scale of civilian suffering has intensified international demands for restraint, urging all parties to protect non-combatants as the conflict escalates.

Biden reiterated his support for Israel's right to defend itself against Iran and its proxies during a [later call](#) with Jewish American rabbis.



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on October 11, 2024

Israel

According to Axios, Netanyahu spent hours on Tuesday night in intensive discussions. He met with senior ministers and the heads of Israel's military and intelligence services. The focus of the meeting was the scope and timing of Israel's expected retaliation.

Israeli officials have indicated that the upcoming attack will be substantial:

Israeli officials say the retaliation is expected to be significant, and will likely include a combination of airstrikes on military targets in Iran and clandestine attacks like the one [that] [killed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh](#) in Tehran.

The Israeli Security Cabinet, the key body responsible for authorizing military operations, convened for four hours on Friday to discuss a retaliatory strike on Iran. Despite extensive discussions, the Cabinet postponed its vote on the timing and targets for the attack.

Local media [reports](#) suggest the Cabinet is strategically delaying the decision to maintain the element of surprise. This delay could also affect Gallant's planned trip to the United States, as Netanyahu had tied the visit to securing Cabinet approval for the operation. The Cabinet had previously agreed on the need for retaliation following Iran's October 1 missile attack. Yet, the specifics, including when and where to strike, are unlikely to be revealed publicly until they take place.

The Biden Administration

The Biden administration accepts that Israel is planning a major retaliatory strike on Iran. Yet, it has urged restraint regarding specific targets. President Biden has explicitly stated that the United States would not support an Israeli attack on Iran's [oil fields](#). He warned that such a strike would spike global oil prices and destabilize the world economy. The administration has also cautioned against targeting Iran's [nuclear infrastructure](#), fearing it could provoke a broader regional war.

The *Jerusalem Post* has [reported](#) that the United States is offering Israel a substantial "compensation package." This includes military aid and full diplomatic support. However, the offer is contingent on Israel restricting its strikes in Iran to targets that have been pre-approved by Washington. In addition, the United States has pledged to defend Israel against any retaliation from Iran.

Certainly, there's no guarantee Israel will accept the proposition. In fact, Israel has a track record of pursuing military actions despite U.S. warnings.

Yet, as [reported](#) by *The American Conservative*, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan indicated that Israel's ongoing military operations in the regions are "Washington's war, too."

U.S. War With Iran?

As the conflict is set to erupt into a full-blown war, footing the bill, as always, are American taxpayers. Since October 7, 2023, the United States has provided a record-breaking [\\$17.9 billion](#) to support Israel's war efforts.

Further, America's involvement in an attack could be direct. That is according to a recent NBC report referenced by a prominent anti-war advocate, former Congressman [Ron Paul](#).

Non-interventionist critics warn that unconditionally backing Israel's aggressive actions against Iran risks sparking a wider, bloodier conflict. This could pull more countries into the fray in an already



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volatile region, draining U.S. resources with little to show for the cost.

Adding to this concern, lone constitutional voices in Congress, such as Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), stress that any U.S. military action must receive Congressional approval. Massie has criticized the administration for not seeking this authorization.

Massie even hinted that President Biden would be committing an impeachable offense if he were to start a war with Iran without the consent of Congress:

Presidential Candidates

Both presidential contenders, Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, consider Iran a major threat to America.

In a recent interview with *60 Minutes*, Harris said Iran was America's "greatest adversary." She argued that the country "has Americans' blood on its hands" because of its October 1 strike on Israel's bases, even though there were no reports of American casualties.

As a staunch advocate of Israel, Trump, in turn, rallies for an aggressive approach to dealing with Iran. In the context of the latest escalation, "the art of the deal" includes hitting Iran's nuclear sites, [according](#) to the former president.

Trump also believes that Iran was responsible for the recent assassination attempts against him, [quoting information](#) shared with him by the intelligence community.

A few weeks ago, he [said](#) Iran threatened America "very directly," adding, "The best way to do it is through the office of the president, so that [if] you do any attacks on former presidents or candidates for president, your country gets blown to smithereens, as we say."



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