



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

# **Biden bombs Iraq and Syria, continues 30-year war to control world's oil**

written by Bill Dores

March 17, 2021



Wreckage along Iraq's "highway of death" after U.S. massacre of Feb. 26, 1991.

## **Blood and Oil and Trump and Biden, part 2**

- [Blood and oil and Trump and Biden, part 1: Trump seeks war on Iran to save U.S. fracking industry.](#)

It was called the highway of death.

On Feb. 26, 1991, U.S. military jets and helicopters rained napalm, cluster bombs and 30mm shells on convoys of Iraqi soldiers and civilian refugees leaving Kuwait. At least a thousand people were burned alive or shot to death while fleeing.

U.S. pilots called it a "turkey shoot" and "shooting fish in a barrel." It was the final act of the massive bombing campaign the first Bush administration named Operation

Desert Storm.

Between Jan. 27 and Feb. 28, 1991, U.S. planes dropped 88,500 tons of bombs on Iraq, killing 110,000 people. They destroyed the country's oil refineries, power grid, water pumping stations, sewage treatment plants, food and pharmaceutical industry — and its only plant for baby formula.

Among the targets was Public Shelter 25 in the Amiriyah neighborhood of Baghdad. On Feb. 13, the U.S. Air Force hit it with two laser-guided "smart bombs." At least 409 civilians, many of them children, were burned to death.

### **War never ended**

The bombing never stopped. Between 2001 and 2019, the U.S. military launched 326,000 bombs and missiles at countries in the region. At least 152,000 fell on Iraq and Syria.

In 2020, the Trump regime made the bombing figures secret. But the bombs kept falling.

According to a [Brown University study](#) released in September 2020, U.S. military action has displaced 37 million people since 2001.

Exactly three decades after the massacre on Iraq's Highway 80, President Joe Biden ordered an airstrike on the Syria-Iraq border. On Feb. 26, 2021, two U.S. F-15 Eagles dropped seven 500-lb. laser-guided bombs on the town of Abu Kamal. According to Reuters news agency, 22 people were killed. The airstrike was illegal under U.S. and international law.

The U.S. has now been at war in West Asia and North Africa for 30 years. No matter who is in the White House, the war machine rules.

Two days after the U.S. Air Force attacked Abu Kamal, Israel's made-in-the-USA air force launched missiles at the Syrian capital of Damascus. The settler state bombs Syria regularly on behalf of its armorers in Washington.

### **Sanctions and B-52 flights**

In its first days, the Biden White House stepped back from Donald Trump's pursuit of all-out war with Iran. It pulled the USS Nimitz strike force out of the Arab-Persian Gulf. Biden said the U.S. would rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) "nuclear deal."

However, on March 5, Biden renewed a "national emergency" against the Islamic Republic, extending the sanctions that are killing Iranian civilians. On March 4, he did the same thing to Venezuela. Iran has made clear there can be no talks with the U.S. unless the sanctions end.

On March 8, two U.S. B-52 long-range bombers flew over the Arab-Persian Gulf, the sixth such mission since November. They were escorted by U.S.-made Israeli fighters as they flew over Palestine.

### **No pause in arms to Israel**

Biden also said he wants to end the war in Yemen, which Washington's Saudi clients are losing. He "paused" arms sales to the Saudi kingdom.

There is no pause, however, in the flow of the most advanced arms in the U.S. arsenal to the racist state of Israel. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz openly threaten to use them to attack Iran.

Nor is there a pause in the U.S.-Israeli blockade of Gaza and the Israeli occupation regime's daily terror against the people of Palestine, on whose stolen land the racist settler state was created.

On March 7, an Israeli drone struck a fishing boat off Gaza, murdering three fishers.

Biden officials say the U.S. still supports the “Abraham Accords,” which the Trump regime brokered between Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. That so-called “peace deal” involves massive arms sales. It is in reality a military alliance against Iran.

### **Iraqi resistance strikes back**

On March 3, Iraqi Resistance forces retaliated against a U.S. base at Ayn Al Assad. The Pentagon says a U.S. “contractor” died of a heart attack after 10 Grad rockets hit the site. “Contractor” could mean a worker at the Pizza Hut or Burger King franchises on the base. Or it could mean a mercenary.

“The resistance sees confrontation as the only option that guarantees the freedom and dignity of this country after exhausting all the means that others have bet on with the occupation,” the coordinating body for the Iraqi resistance factions said in a statement on March 4.

On March 10, improvised explosive devices hit four U.S. military convoys in northern Iraq.

### **Biden won’t stand up to Wall Street, but he’ll kill on its behalf**

Joe Biden won’t stand up to corporate power. He’s not fighting the GOP to raise the minimum wage, even to \$15 an hour in five years. He’s not canceling student debt or fighting for Medicare for all.

But, like his predecessor, the new president has no problem denying medicine to people in Iran and Venezuela. He is willing to have U.S. troops fight the people of Iraq and Syria on their soil for control of their oil.

He is continuing the war George H.W. Bush started three decades ago.

### **30 years of war for plunder**

To be clear, it's all one long war — from bombing and invading Iraq to bombing Libya, from 10 years of destruction in Syria to mass murder in Yemen, from the 20-year occupation of Afghanistan to sanctions and covert attacks on Iran and Venezuela, from drone strikes in Somalia and Pakistan to the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and the ongoing U.S. proxy war in Ukraine. The war has been raging since 1991.

It is a desperate bid to seize back the stranglehold Wall Street corporations once had on the world's energy supply. In 1960, seven monopolies, five of them U.S.-based, controlled 99% of the oil production in the capitalist world. More than half the overseas profits of U.S. corporations came from the ownership of oil.

When the "Cold War" ended with the fall of the Soviet bloc, the U.S. capitalist ruling class thought they could get all that back. The Pentagon and CIA have taken millions of lives and spent trillions of dollars in a futile attempt to turn back time, even as the technology of energy marches forward.

### **Trump and Biden target people's defenders**

The Feb. 26 attack targeted members of Iraq's People's Mobilization Units (Hashd al-Sha'abi). The State Department and the lying corporate media call them "Iranian proxies." They are in fact popular militias formed to defend the Iraqi people against ISIS. "Fighting ISIS" is Washington's phony pretext for keeping U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria.

Last Jan. 3, PMU commander Mahdi Abu Muhandas, Iran's Gen. Qassem Soleimani and seven of their colleagues were murdered in an airstrike ordered by Donald Trump. The two had organized the military campaign that drove ISIS out of Iraq and

Syria.

Soleimani and Muhandas were heroes in the region. Millions turned out for their funerals. On Jan. 10, 2020, Iraq's parliament voted that U.S. troops should leave their country. The Trump regime refused.

On the campaign trail, Biden criticized the Soleimani-Muhandas assassination — not for the war crime it was, but for tactical reasons. He was speaking for those in the U.S. establishment who were leery of the Trump regime's push for direct war with Iran.

### **Operation Martyr Soleimani**

On Jan. 8, 2020, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps launched Operation Martyr Soleimani, a counterstrike on two U.S. bases in Iraq. In precision strikes, 16 1,000-lb. missiles destroyed buildings and injured 109 U.S. soldiers who were sheltering underground.

In an interesting political move, the Pentagon declassified footage of the attacks this March 2. The strikes demonstrated Iran's ability to strike U.S. occupation forces in the region.

### **Right to resist U.S. occupation**

The Pentagon claims it bombed Abu Kamal because of a Feb. 15 rocket attack on the U.S. base in Erbil, 300 miles away. The U.S. says a "military contractor" died and a U.S. soldier and other "contractors" were wounded.

U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria are an occupying force. They are there against the wishes of those countries' governments and people. They have no right to be there. Their presence is a crime under international law. And resistance to occupation is a right.

On Jan. 20, Syria's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Bashar Al Jaafari told the UN Security Council: "The American occupation forces continue to plunder Syria's wealth of oil, gas and agricultural crops, burning and destroying what it cannot steal.

"The new U.S. administration must stop acts of aggression and occupation, plundering the wealth of my country, withdraw its occupying forces from it, and stop supporting separatist militias, illegal entities and attempts to threaten Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity," he said.

Since October 2019, U.S. troops have occupied Syria's oil fields, denying Syrians access to their own oil. U.S. troops in Syria also provide shelter and logistical support for terrorist groups that attack Syrian and Iraqi civilians.

### **Mass murder in Yemen: Made in USA**

On Feb. 4, Biden announced he was "ending all American support for [Saudi] offensive operations in Yemen, including relevant arms sales."

Biden has said, "The war must end."

That six-year war has killed a quarter of a million people, many of them children. Many were murdered by U.S.-made bombs and missiles fired from U.S.-made Saudi aircraft flown by U.S.-trained Saudi pilots. Many more died of hunger and disease caused by the blockade of Yemen's ports by Saudi Arabia's U.S.-made Navy.

The United Nations says 16 million Yemenis will go hungry this year. A Yemeni child dies every 10 minutes because of the war.

Biden qualified his statement, however. He said that the U.S. would still help the Saudi Kingdom "defend its sovereignty."

What sovereignty is that?

### **Saudi Arabia is a U.S. colony**

Since the end of World War II, the Saudi kingdom has been, in effect, a U.S. colony. So have the other five monarchies on the Arabian Peninsula.

For 75 years, the House of Saud has forked over its oil revenue to U.S. banks, oil monopolies and arms contractors. It has funded CIA covert operations from Nicaragua to Afghanistan to Syria. It has used its oil wealth to prop up the dollar and its position as swing producer to manipulate world oil markets at Washington's command.

Those in the U.S. ruling class who have their hands on that cash cow are not about to let it go. It is too important to oil company profits, the military-industrial complex and the position of Wall Street and the dollar in the world economy.

On Feb. 27, Biden's Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said the U.S.-Saudi "relationship" was not "ruptured" but "recalibrated."

### **Iran's 'crime'**

Before the 1979 revolution, the U.S. ruled Iran as well. The tyrant Shah owed his throne to a CIA-orchestrated coup in 1953.

At Henry Kissinger's orders, the Shah bailed out the U.S. arms industry after the Vietnam War. He put the country's oil income at the disposal of U.S. bankers and arms firms.

The Islamic Republic of Iran ended that colonial relationship. Iran has been in Washington's crosshairs ever since.

Since 2015, the Saudi kingdom has been the U.S. arms industry's No. 1 overseas

paying customer. The United Arab Emirates is No. 2. And 2015 was also the year those states launched their murderous war on Yemen.

### **'Game of Thrones' in Riyadh and Washington**

In his 2016 election campaign, Trump fulminated against Saudi Arabia. Trump was the candidate of the U.S. fracking industry. His billionaire backers were in a price war with the Big Oil "supermajors" that control Saudi oil production.

But in May 2017, his fourth month in office, Trump went to Riyadh. He got his friends at Blackstone Group a cut of the Saudi petrodollar pie. And his tune changed.

Trump also made some big arms sales there. "Saudi Arabia's Naval Capabilities Will Balloon Thanks To Huge U.S. Arms Deal," [Warzone reported](#) on May 19, 2017.

Trump's visit to the kingdom was followed by a coup inside the Saudi royal family. King Salman ousted Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Nayef and replaced him with his own son Mohamed Bin Salman. Mass arrests and a few "accidental" deaths followed. The Salman faction forged an alliance with the Trump faction of the U.S. ruling class.

### **Fail to defeat Yemeni people**

On Aug. 18, 2018, a U.S.-made missile hit a school bus in Yemen, killing 40 children. On Oct. 2, 2018, Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi, a U.S. resident, was hacked to death inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The killers were a hit squad dispatched by Mohamed Bin Salman.

In March 2019, the U.S. Congress passed a bill restricting military assistance to Saudi Arabia. Trump vetoed the measure.

Despite the destructive power of its U.S.-made arsenal, the Saudis and their proxies

are losing the war in Yemen. Yemen's government and Popular Committee fighters are now on the verge of capturing Mar'ib, the last Yemeni city held by Saudi mercenaries.

Yemeni forces have also struck heavy blows at the Saudi kingdom itself, launching missile strikes on military bases and oil facilities. A Yemeni attack on two Aramco refineries in 2019 almost sank the oil giant's first public stock offering.

On March 7, Yemeni forces struck the Saudi's Abha International Airport and Aramco plants and tank farms in Jeddah, Dhahran and Ras Tanura.

Yemeni victories are the context for Biden's stated change in U.S. policy.

### **Will Israel take over U.S. role in Yemen?**

On Feb. 9, three days after Biden announced an end to "relevant arms sales," Israel announced a \$9.5 billion arms deal with the United States. According to Israel's Channel 12, it includes the purchase of more F-35 and F-16 fighter jets, SH53K helicopters, refueling planes, advanced weaponry and the Eitan, a new-generation armored personnel carrier developed jointly by Israel and the U.S.

"Purchase" isn't exactly the right word. Most of the money comes from a \$38-billion U.S. aid package negotiated by the Obama administration, passed by Congress and signed into law by Trump. That package, the largest U.S. military aid package ever, also allows Israel access to arms from the U.S. military stores in Israeli-occupied Palestine.

According to reports, Israel has set up a spy base on the Yemeni island of Socotra. UAE troops and U.S. Marines seized the island in March 2020.

The content of the arms deal raises the prospect that Israel could take over the U.S. logistical role in the Yemen war, and give Washington "plausible deniability."

## **Citi bankrolls arms deal**

There was a hitch with the arms deal: The \$38 billion Congress approved was supposed to last Israel 10 years. But Tel Aviv had already spent \$31 billion.

Citigroup, the fourth largest U.S. bank, solved the problem. It extended a \$2.5-billion loan to tide Israel through until Washington sends more money.

Citigroup is a mover in the U.S.-Israel-Saudi axis. In its own words, “Citi boasts the largest presence of any foreign financial institution in Israel, and offers corporate and investment banking services to leading Israeli corporations and institutions and global corporations operating in Israel.”

According to a March 6 Fox News report, “Among all the major large banks [sic], Citigroup has some of the deepest business relationships with the [Saudi] kingdom and its massive business empire.” Saudi Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal is one of the bank’s top shareholders.

## **Pivots and proxies**

“Can Biden Finally Put the Middle East in Check and Pivot Already?” read a headline in [Foreign Policy magazine](#) March 2.

Many in the U.S. military-political establishment now see Washington’s long war in the “Middle East” as a quagmire. They want a “pivot to Asia” to threaten China. That view has been expressed by Secretary of State Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

“China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system – all the rules, values, and relationships that make the world work the way we want it to,” Blinken said in a March 4 address.

However, energy corporations retain great power in Washington. So do the bankers who hold their debt. They are not about to let the U.S. retreat from its war to control the world's oil and gas. They are in a political alliance with Israel and the royal families of the Arabian Peninsula.

On March 11, the Wall Street Journal reported that Israel had carried out 12 clandestine attacks on Iranian tankers in the last year.

When Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu threatens to attack Iran if the U.S. eases sanctions, he speaks for the fossil-fuel faction of the U.S. ruling class.

### **Fight for Europe's energy market**

In the late 20th century, U.S. companies lost Western Europe's energy market to Russia. They want it back.

A weapon in their arsenal is the proposed East Mediterranean Pipeline Project, a \$7-billion scheme to bring stolen natural gas from the waters of Israeli-occupied Palestine to Greece via Cyprus.

The three countries agreed to build the pipeline at a March 2019 meeting in Jerusalem presided over by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. In a December 2020 visit to Athens, Trump's Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette proclaimed full U.S. support for the controversial project.

### **U.S. oil giants loot Palestine**

U.S. energy giant Chevron now operates and owns controlling stakes in the Tamar and Leviathan fields off the coast of Israeli-occupied Palestine. Chevron became the largest U.S. energy company in October 2020, when it acquired Trump-connected Noble Energy.

Noble was the first U.S. company to drill in Palestinian waters. Chevron paid \$4 billion and assumed Noble's \$8 billion debt. Chevron's Israeli drilling partner, the Delek Group, is owned largely by U.S. investors, including Citigroup.

ExxonMobil has joined the hunt for gas in the Eastern Mediterranean. Chevron and Exxon discussed a merger last year.

### **Israel – an imperialist land bridge**

Also in October, representatives of Israel's Europe-Asia Pipeline Company agreed to transport oil from the UAE to Europe via occupied Palestine. Trump's Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin went to Dubai to see the agreement signed. The U.S. International Finance Development Corporation announced it would back the project.

The EAPC pipeline runs from Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba to the ancient port of Askalon just north of Gaza. It was built in 1968 to carry the Shah of Iran's then U.S.-owned crude to the Mediterranean. The U.S. and Israel want to see a pipeline across Saudi Arabia from the UAE to occupied Palestine.

But will such massive capital investments be profitable?

### **Fossil fuel industry in crisis**

2020 was a disastrous year for energy prices. They have now rebounded — in part due to Saudi production cuts — but the fossil fuel industry's long-term prospects are dim.

Over the past four years, China has invested \$360 billion in solar power, fuel cells and other fossil fuel alternatives, driving down the cost of renewable energy worldwide. The Chinese Academy of Sciences is pioneering research in thorium reactors. In January, China unveiled the prototype of a electric-powered Maglev

(magnetic levitation) train that can travel 385 miles per hour.

Europe is trying to cut its gas imports, which already exceed what the Paris climate agreement will permit. Germany now operates a hydrogen-powered train. Half of that country's electricity is generated from non-carbon sources.

Meanwhile, new oil and gas fields are being discovered around the world — including in Iran, which has the planet's second-largest natural gas reserves. If Iran were to generate electricity with nuclear power, it could export a lot more gas.

### **Ted Cruz wants to block Russian gas**

Despite sanctions imposed by the Trump regime, it appears the Nord Stream 2 pipeline will bring more Russian gas to Europe by June.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz has blocked the nomination of Ted Burns, Biden's choice for CIA director, to force the White House to put even more sanctions on the pipeline.

Cruz is speaking for Texas-based Cheniere Energy, which exports liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe. In 1998, Cheniere patented the technology the U.S. fracking industry uses today. It took the energy price bubble caused by the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq to make its use profitable.

### **No profits without war**

Washington's long war in the "Middle East" is not about getting oil and gas for its own use. The world is swimming in these resources. It's about monopoly. It's a desperate effort to control supply so that U.S. energy companies can regain market share and value and find profitable outlets for their surplus capital.

In July 2011, Iran, Iraq and Syria agreed to build a \$10-billion gas pipeline from Iran to the Mediterranean. Its planned capacity is 40 billion cubic meters per year, four

times that of the proposed East Med Pipeline.

That very year, the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Israel began their murderous intervention in Syria. Sanctions, war and U.S. troops have prevented the pipeline's construction.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq bailed the U.S. energy industry out of the price collapse that followed the fall of the USSR. It created an energy bubble that transfixed Wall Street for a decade.

Sanctions and war unleashed the "shale revolution" that made the U.S. the world's top oil and gas producer. War and sanctions made Keystone XL, the Dakota Access Pipeline, Line 3, Line 5 and the plunder of Canada's tar sands seem profitable.

Back in 1968, Israel opened the Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline a year after its U.S.-paid troops seized Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and shut down the Suez Canal.

### **'The largest U.S. aircraft carrier'**

In June 1967, when the U.S. military was mired in the war against Vietnam, Israel attacked Egypt and Syria. The war was launched with Washington's blessing. Those countries were leading the opposition to U.S. control of the region's oil resources.

The 1967 war shifted the regional balance of power in favor of the U.S.-backed monarchs of the Arabian Peninsula and the Shah. For a while.

In the next few years, Libya and Iraq nationalized their oil industries. In 1979, the Shah was gone. Twelve years later, the U.S. launched its war to recolonize the region.

Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State Alexander Haig called Israel "Israel is the largest, most battle-tested and cost-effective U.S. aircraft carrier that cannot be sunk."

Will its U.S. paymasters launch the Israeli war machine against Iran in another desperate attempt to repeat 1967? To what lengths will the Biden White House go to keep U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria?

### **From Eastern Mediterranean to Western Pacific, U.S. out!**

How long will this war go on? How many more must die? How many more trillions of dollars will be spent so that U.S. energy companies can make money and Wall Street bankers can keep their hold on the world economy?

The \$1.9-trillion COVID relief package pales beside the amount spent on war.

The millions in this country facing joblessness, homelessness, hunger and debt don't need war or sanctions. We don't need confrontation with Iran or a "pivot" to Asia. We don't need troops in Iraq and Syria or bombs falling on the people of Yemen.

We need a mass movement to shut down the war machine, end aid to the racist state of Israel and bring all the troops home now.

