

# *Ex-U.S. diplomats urge Biden to stop providing arms to new Israeli regime*

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File photo shows the Israeli regime's Iron Dome missile system in action.

Washington, December 3 (RHC)-- Two former American diplomats have called on the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden to no longer provide offensive weapons or military aid to Israel's new regime, expressing fear that the far-right extremists would further aggravate the situation in the occupied cities of al-Quds and the West Bank.

Former U.S. ambassador to Israel, Daniel Kurtzer, and former U.S. State Department negotiator, Aaron David Miller, made the remarks in an opinion article published in the Washington Post this week, following the victory of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the general election early this month.

Kurtzer and Miller-- who have worked on the so-called Palestinian-Israeli peace process--further stressed that while Washington should continue to support Tel Aviv's "legitimate security needs," it should oppose efforts to change the status of the West Bank, the al-Aqsa Mosque Compound and illegal settlement outposts.

They also expressed concern that the incoming regime will increase settlement activity, settler violence and allow the use of force by the Israeli security forces, arguing that such actions would lead to the end of the two-state solution. The comments came after the appointment of Otzma Yehudit leader, Itamar Ben-Gvir, as National Security Minister, and Religious Zionist Party leader, Bezalel Smotrich, as Finance Minister.

Netanyahu is serving his sixth term after returning from over a year out of office. This time, though, he has further allied with the extremist elements, having campaigned on the promise to return to a "full right" regime with the support of the far-right Religious Zionism bloc.

The two former U.S. officials further urged the Biden administration to set terms to Israel that it will have no dealings with Ben-Gvir, Smotrich or their ministries, and that Washington's support for international forums such as the UN and international courts is limited.

Washington annually provides the occupying regime with \$3.3 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF), "including \$500 million for cooperative programs for missile defense." According to a report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in February, "the United States has provided Israel \$150 billion in bilateral assistance and missile defense funding to date."

Israel is also a purchaser of many U.S.-made defense products. According to the CRS, the US has sold 50 F-35s to Israel in three separate contracts, funded with U.S. aid. This is while Israeli forces have been recently conducting near-nightly raids and killings in the northern occupied West Bank, mainly in the cities of Jenin and Nablus, where new groups of Palestinian resistance fighters have been formed.

More than 150 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the Israeli-occupied territories since the start of the year, including 51 in the besieged Gaza Strip during Israel's three-day assault in August.

The Israeli regime has also recently ramped up incursions into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the occupied Old City of al-Quds, with Hamas warning that such infringements upon the holy site could lead to "explosions" in the region.

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