

## Is Biden preparing for a major war?

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After the January 28, 2024 attack, by an unidentified drone on the American base on the Syrian-Jordanian border, the international community has frozen in an alarming anticipation of US retaliatory measures, which could become a trigger for an all-out war against Iran. The official Washington, without hesitation, immediately accused Tehran of organizing the said assault with his proxies and announced the imminence of the comeback.

Over the past few days, the US President Joe Biden has already vote several times about the task already assigned to the Pentagon on development of “*retaliation operation*”. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also confirmed the White House’s determination to respond to the “*Iranian provocation*”, but emphasized that the US response could be “*multi-level, come in stages and be sustained over time*”. The US military representatives were less wordy, which is understandable. On January 30, an authoritative American journal *Politico*, citing its sources, reported that the Pentagon was considering several options for a “*retaliation strike*” against Iran. It is either an attack on Iranian military concentrations in Syria or Iraq, or a massive strike on the Iranian fleet grouped in the Persian Gulf.

One way or another, Tehran, having made sure that Washington did not accept its assurances of non-involvement in the explosion at the American base, immediately brought its armed forces into a state of heightened combat readiness and its air defense systems to maximum combat readiness.

Against the backdrop of alarming expectation, many American analysts are tend to assume that a large-scale US military operation is not useful for Joe Biden and his team in light of the dramatic electoral race unfolding in the United States and the *demarche* of individual States against the federal capital in the context of the “*Texas crisis*”. Allegedly, this could ruin the Democrats’ chances of retaining power in the next 4-year presidential term, since the already irritated American society may respond with discontent to another US military campaign in the Middle East.

According to analysts, Biden’s team is well aware of this, as well as worries that they were framed by an attack on the American base, thus posing a dilemma – either to respond harshly to Iran and face voters’ discontent, or to pretend that the death of American servicemen in the Middle East – it’s commonplace to come under a flurry of criticism from “*Capitol hawks*” and gloating D. Trump.

On the other hand, however, several actions by the White House do not fit into the above-mentioned situation and may be indicative of the ruling team’s interest in

a new war in the Middle East. In particular, it is shown by Washington's immediate reaction with accusing Tehran of attacking the American base, without any investigation or study of intelligence data. Meanwhile, in case of unwillingness to be in the "set trap", Biden and his team would not rush to accuse Iran, but would rather stretch out the time to investigate the incident, and then limit themselves to local retaliation against the groups that carried out the assault. In this regard, it is worth paying attention to one important detail missed by observers.

The fact is that since the incident, the White House and the media close to it have insisted that the attacked American base is located in Jordan, whereas, according to the Middle Eastern sources, including, in fact, Jordanian ones, we are talking about the Al-Tanf base, located in Syria, close to the Jordanian border, and this version seems more plausible.

At first glance, there is nothing significant in such a different definition of the location. However, it makes a fundamental difference. From the point of view of International law, the United States has the right to resort to an asymmetric response to its enemies if they attacked an American base founded, in this case, in Jordanian territory in line with bilateral agreements with Amman and in full compliance with International law. In Syria, American bases are placed on the US domestic laws – not international and, moreover, Syrian laws – and, therefore, the legitimization of combat operations in order to protect them or in retaliation for an attack on them is impossible by definition.

Thus, the distortion of information about the location of the attacked base may further indicate that the version of Biden's team's desire to avoid a lawful major war in the Middle East is, at least, controversial. It can also be assumed that it is in such a war that the Democrats see an opportunity a) to divert the attention of American society from the "Texas crisis" that threatens the country with a final political split, and b) to take away the votes of the patriotic electorate from Trump's ratings.