

The Real Reason Behind the US 'Port' in Gaza

The US goal of course is not to deliver humanitarian aid, after all, who builds an entire port just for a short-term effort?

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*Recently, it was announced by US **President Joe Biden** that American forces would take the initiative to build a "temporary" port in the Gaza Strip. According to the White House, this port will serve the role of delivering humanitarian aid to the besieged and bombed population of the Strip, of which an estimated 30,000 or so have died amid "Israel's" relentless invasion of it. While of course, the purpose of such a port distracts from the reality that "Tel Aviv" has always subjected the region to a naval blockade, one should not buy the premise that America would go as far as building such infrastructure purely out of benevolence. Rather, there is another agenda at play.*

In offering "Israel" unconditional backing to effectively invade and occupy the entirety of the Gaza Strip, despite what officials may say, the United States has long eyed an opportunity to give "Tel Aviv" control over offshore natural gas resources, which, by legal rights, belong to the Palestinian state. This area, known as "The Gaza Marine," is home to 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas resources. Although discovered in 2000, "Israel" has never permitted the Palestinian Authority to have access to it, and likewise, the Gaza Strip has long been under an effective maritime and economic blockade, which has prevented it from being developed outside of Israeli control.

Certain world events in the past two years have considerably amplified the strategic value of natural gas. Namely, the war in Ukraine has led Western countries to scramble for alternative energy resources to reduce dependence on Moscow, particularly those controlled by "friendly" countries who compliment the strategic goals of the United States. To this end, broader political interest in the Gaza Marine increased, and in June 2023, "Israel's" government decided to "approve" the notion of developing it in cooperation with Palestinian authorities, which according to Hamas also gave the Gaza Strip "rights to it."

However, the outbreak of the Israeli war on Gaza has clearly led to a change of plan. On this happening, **Benjamin Netanyahu** made the political decision to invade with the goal of completely occupying the Gaza Strip, calling bluff on western red lines and effectively affirming political control of it thereafter, which is coded as “being under Israel’s full security control.” This means, by extension, that “Israel” will also gain full control over the Strip’s economy and resources, and therefore not have to treat the system set up in the Strip as a co-party in any negotiations to utilize its natural gas resources accordingly. After all, the Palestinian authority in the West Bank is set in a landlocked territory away from the sea and has no leverage to control the natural gas resources which are legally their own.

Given this, it seems suspicious that the United States should determine to build a “temporary humanitarian” port in Gaza this time. The goal of course is not to deliver humanitarian aid, after all, who builds an entire port just for a short-term effort? Moreover, does such a pledge of maritime aid really make that much of a difference when the US continues to greenlight and enable indiscriminate Israeli bombing of the territory? Rather, the real long-term aim is to help strategically prepare the Strip for what they already envision to be the next stage of full Israeli military occupation, a premise which the Biden administration and others have claimed to oppose but never for that matter done anything about.

As Hisham Khreisat, a Jordanian military and strategic affairs expert, told Turkey’s *Anadolu* Agency that there are “hidden objectives” behind the construction of such a port and that it is a “humanitarian facade hiding voluntary migration to Europe.” In other words, it will be used to enable “the displacement of Gazans and their flee to Europe.” In addition to that, it will also enable “Israel” to control every single entrance point to the Strip, and he notes, in turn, that “Israel” will ultimately shut down the Rafah crossing with Egypt when it invades the city, therefore giving it 100% control over Gaza’s borders, critical to ending Palestinian sovereignty.

On a domestic level, it is also a public relations stunt to allow the Biden administration to give the impression that it is doing something to deflect some criticism, allowing Netanyahu to continue to push southward and invade Rafah and thus proceed with his plans, unopposed. Therefore, while depicted to the world as an act of humanitarian benevolence, in reality, the construction of this “temporary port” is part of the broader US-backed strategy to effectively end Palestinian sovereignty over the Gaza Strip, create a new outlet for refugee flows, and pave the way for “Israel” to seize its natural gas resources in the process, complementing the US’ energy competition policies with Russia. It is a classic case of “giving with one hand and taking away with the other.” The port is to be an effective asset in what will become the full Israeli occupation of Gaza.

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