

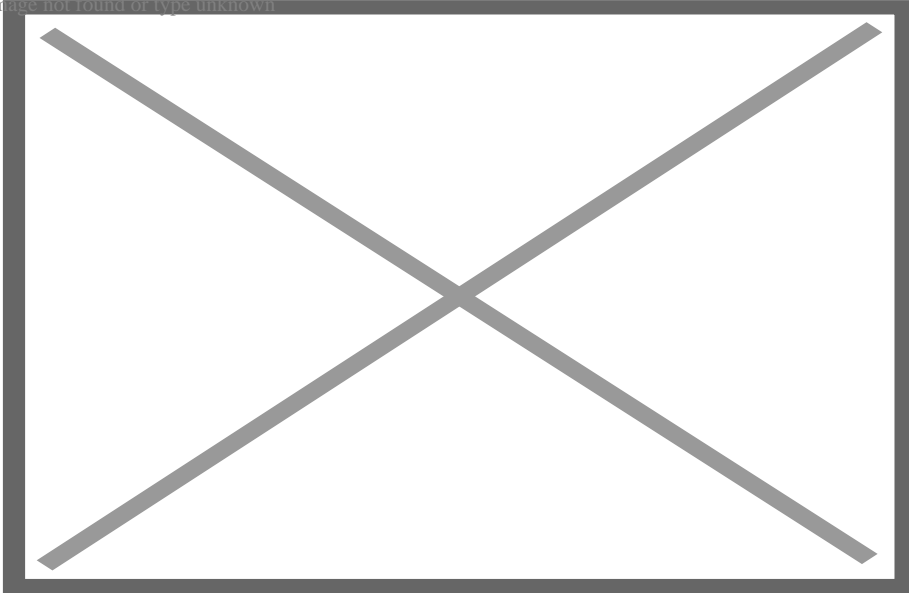
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## Hamas 'Laid Trap' for Israel as US Cannot Replenish Iron Dome

### Description

by James Tweedie via Sputnik

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Israel has demanded military aid from the US for its war with the Hamas movement. Former US Marine Corps intelligence officer and UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter pointed out that the Pentagon's cupboard was bare and it was failing to meet recruiting targets.

The US cannot give Israel the arms it needs for a war with Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran — or even maintain its own forces — says a military veteran.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared war on the Hamas movement that rules in the besieged Gaza Strip in the wake of the surprise attack by several allied militant groups on October 7.

The incursion and subsequent skirmishes — including with Lebanese Hezbollah guerrillas on Israel's northern border — has left almost 300 Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) troops dead with 200 more held captive in Gaza. around 1,000 Israeli civilians were also killed. That represents Israel's worst losses since its 1982 invasion of southern Lebanon.

Tel Aviv has called up some 350,000 IDF reservists and has bombed Gaza for almost two weeks in preparation for a ground offensive, which Economy Minister Nir Barkat said had been given the "green light" on Thursday. But that invasion has yet to materialise.

Former US Marine and UN weapons inspector **Scott Ritter** told [Sputnik](#) the IDF simply "can't go into Gaza."

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“If they go into Gaza, they will be slaughtered by Hamas who has deliberately set this trap,” Ritter stressed. “Hamas is waiting for them to come in. Hamas will kill them in large numbers.”

Along with the risk of heavy casualties in Gaza, Israel is wary of Hezbollah’s threat to launch a major attack from the north if the IDF goes in.

“Israel cannot beat Hezbollah,” Ritter argued. “There’s a real likelihood that if Hezbollah comes in with everything they have, they will seize northern Israel in its totality, all the way up to the Sea of Galilee. Syria will recapture the Golan Heights, and there isn’t anything Israel can do to stop it.”

US president Joe Biden visited Tel Aviv on Wednesday to pledge unqualified support to Israel — while [endorsing Netanyahu’s claim](#) that it was a stray Islamic Jihad rocket that killed 471 Palestinian refugees at the al-Ahli Baptist hospital in Gaza, not an Israeli bomb or missile.

Israel has asked Washington for large quantities of military equipment and munitions, including tens of thousands of 155mm-calibre artillery shells previously earmarked for Ukraine, and as many missiles for its Iron Dome air defense system — used to intercept rockets launched from Gaza — as the US could supply.

“Israel has exhausted its Iron Dome. They sent an emergency request to the United States for all of the Iron Dome ammunition we had,” Ritter noted. But while “Israel’s hoping to get several thousand rounds, maybe 10,000 rounds,” all the US could offer was “360-some odd. That’s all we have.”

“Hamas will exhaust that in one night, firing two salvos of 150 rockets each. That’s it,” he warned. “And Hezbollah’s sitting on a stockpile of tens of thousands. And if they fire these... and Israel has nothing to knock them down, that means Hamas will eviscerate Israel will destroy Israel’s leadership capacity, industrial capacity, military capacity.”

Ritter said Israel’s leaders had “backed themselves into a corner” by vowing to destroy Hamas, a goal they have failed to achieve several times in the past.

“They’ve let their rhetoric get the better of them,” he said, noting that even Biden had told Netanyahu to “calm down.”

“Behind the scenes he was actively telling the Israelis the hard truth: that America isn’t going to step in and fight Israel’s battles for it, that if Israel goes into Gaza, one of the consequences will be Hezbollah’s intervention,” Ritter said.

“America is not putting boots on the ground or dropping bombs on Hezbollah because we don’t want a wider war with Iran,” he added. We have thousands of troops positioned throughout the Persian Gulf whose lives would be put at risk if Iran joined this fight. We don’t want that. It’s not our fight.”

The former US Marine dismissed Biden’s deployment of two aircraft carrier strike groups along with a Marine Corps amphibious assault ship with F-35 fighters and 2,000 troops to the eastern Mediterranean in a warning to other nations not to intervene as the US “flexing its muscles.”

“If you reflect on the reality that’s all we have. There’s nothing else to send Israel,” Ritter said. “And what we’ve deployed is not enough to handle the threat that can be posed by Hezbollah in Lebanon or

by Iran if it chooses to intervene.”

He noted that, like its arms industry, the US military was increasingly hollowed out as young people lose interest in fighting — and losing — overseas wars.

“60,000 I think was the target to recruit for this year, and we were short 6000. That means that the army is missing 6000 soldiers, that it has billets for. If you don’t have soldiers to fill that billet, then you have to shrink your military further,” Ritter explained.

“In order to meet this new two-war concept that Biden and Congress are talking about, we’re going to have to increase the size of our conventional military. That means they will have to increase it by about 100,000 -150,000,” he pointed out. “We can’t meet the current recruiting requirements because nobody wants to fight.”