

Oppose Trump's criminal war against Iran!

The International Editorial Board of the World Socialist Web Site
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The *World Socialist Web Site* categorically condemns the January 3 assassination of General Qassem Suleimani at Baghdad's international airport.

The drone missile strike that killed Suleimani and nine others is a blatant act of murder, prosecutable—if the criminal statutes were enforced—under both international and US law.

The murder of Suleimani, the head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force, widely regarded as the second most important figure in the Iranian government, has been met with massive demonstrations in both Iraq and Iran and is widely seen in the Middle East as a US declaration of war against the entire region.

The Iranian government has vowed retaliation. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, said that the country would take "forceful revenge." Given the level of popular anger, to do less would risk losing control within Iran itself.

In Iran, the crowds gathering to honor Suleimani and the others killed in the attack—in all, five Iranians and five Iraqis were murdered in the drone missile strike—have been estimated in the millions as the funeral cortège has made its way from Ahvas to Mashhad and finally Tehran.

In Baghdad, over 100,000 people marched in protest against the assassination, chanting "Death to America!" in what has been described as the largest public demonstration in Iraq since the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958.

Under the weight of this immense outpouring of popular hostility, the Iraqi Parliament voted overwhelmingly Sunday for a resolution demanding the expulsion of US military forces from Iraq. While US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo indicated that Washington would ignore any Iraqi order to withdraw, the 5,000 US troops currently deployed have abandoned their ostensible mission of training Iraqi security forces, for fear the Iraqi soldiers will turn their guns on their instructors, and are preparing for attacks.

President Donald Trump has responded to Khamenei's statements with a series of increasingly frenzied threats delivered via Twitter. He first claimed to have selected 52 targets in Iran, "representing the 52 American hostages taken by Iran many years ago." These included, he said, sites important to "Iranian culture." Such an attack would add to the list of the US government's illegal acts.

In subsequent tweets, the US president vowed to hit Iran "harder than they have ever been hit before," and declared that

his Twitter pronouncements served as "notification to the United States Congress that should Iran strike any US person or target, the United States will quickly & fully strike back, & perhaps in a disproportionate manner. Such legal notice is not required, but is given nevertheless!"

Trump's wild threats are calculated to inflame the situation and leave the Iranian government, which is under immense popular pressure, no choice but to take violent retaliatory measures. This might appear to be sheer madness, given the consequences of a war with Iran. But it would be the height of political naïveté to believe that the attack on Suleimani was ordered by Trump in a personal fit of anger.

The order was given by Trump with the deliberate intention of provoking war. There is a method to this madness. It is an attempt to find a way out of the increasingly desperate crisis of American capitalism—international and domestic—through spectacular acts of violence.

The Suleimani assassination is not an isolated event, but rather the start of a new war. It marks a dividing line between a "before" and an "after" not only in the Middle East, but internationally. Future historians will treat this state crime with the same significance as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914.

No one should make the mistake of underestimating the consequences of war with Iran. The development of the conflict will rapidly acquire global dimensions. It will be only a matter of time before the logic of the conflict—which affects the vital interests of countless states on the vast Eurasian land mass—draws numerous countries into the vortex of war. Neither the Russian nor Chinese government will be able to accept American control over Iran. The Indian government will not be able to stand by while Pakistan is totally destabilized by the American-Iranian conflict.

Moreover, the American military—despite all the trillions of dollars that have been squandered on armaments—is not prepared for the mass resistance it will encounter. Having been unable to impose its will on Iraq and Afghanistan, even after decades of war, the United States will find that war with Iran leads to military and political catastrophe.

Why, then, has the Trump administration embarked on this disastrous course?

First, the decision to launch a war against Iran is bound up with the rolling out of a new strategic doctrine in 2018 based on

a shift from the “war on terrorism” to the preparation for wars arising from “great power competition.” The imposition of a colonial-style puppet regime in Tehran and control over the Persian Gulf’s energy supplies are seen by Washington as an essential preparation for war with Russia and China. Significantly, in the recently passed trillion-dollar military budget, a budget for world war, the Democrats and Republicans removed language that would have required the US president to seek congressional authorization before launching a military attack on Iran.

Second, and no less significantly, the reckless decision for war reflects the desperation of the American ruling class over the growth of class conflict within the United States. Its anxiety over the intensification of social anger and rise of anti-capitalist sentiment is compounded by the fact that the entire American economy is dependent on unlimited money-printing, known as “quantitative easing,” carried out to prevent a general collapse of the financial markets.

The American ruling class is well aware of the revolutionary implications of the crisis, and it is this sense of ultimate danger that underlies the reckless character of its actions. Faced with the accumulation of interacting and intractable economic, social and political crises, the Trump administration is gambling on war, not only to divert and distract the public, but also to legitimize the intensification of state repression and attacks on core democratic rights.

It is hardly an accident that within hours of the murder of Suleimani, heavily armed contingents of militarized police were patrolling the streets of major American cities.

The situation that now prevails in the United States—and, for that matter, in all the major capitalist countries in Western Europe—resembles that which existed in Nazi Germany on the eve of World War II. By 1938, Hitler’s regime, having accumulated massive and unsustainable debts to keep the economy afloat and finance the military buildup, saw war as the only way out of the impending disaster. One historian described the situation confronting Hitler as follows:

The only “solution” open to this regime of the structural tensions and crises produced by dictatorship and rearmament was more dictatorship and more rearmament, then expansion, then war and terror, then plunder and enslavement. The stark, ever-present alternative was collapse and chaos, and so all solutions were temporary, hectic, hand-to-mouth affairs, increasingly barbaric improvisations around a brutal theme. [*Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class*, by Tim Mason (Cambridge, 1995), p. 51]

American recklessness has created division and consternation in Europe. Heads of state and foreign ministers all talk of “de-

escalation,” even as their own governments are frantically building up their armed forces. The thuggish US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo condemned the Europeans for not having “been as helpful as I wish that they could be,” adding, “The Brits, the French, the Germans all need to understand that what we did, what the Americans did, saved lives in Europe as well.” Everyone, of course, knows that this is a lie and that the attack can only produce a new bloodbath. Nevertheless, despite their misgivings, European governments, mired in crisis, are lining up behind the Trump administration.

The US media is, as always, working to create a war psychology within the American public. Even those who express qualms about the implications of Trump’s action invariably couch their timid criticisms in denunciations of Suleimani as a “bad actor” and even “terrorist,” supposedly responsible for killing hundreds of US troops.

This is all a pack of lies. Suleimani directed forces that defeated both Al Qaeda’s US-backed affiliates in Syria and ISIS, Washington’s Frankenstein’s monster, in Iraq. He is not implicated in the crimes that resulted from the US war of aggression in Iraq, which killed over a million people and produced such horrors as the massacre in Fallujah and the torture chambers of Abu Ghraib. As for American soldiers who died in Iraq, their blood is on the hands of the Bush administration and the Democrats who supported sending them into a “war of choice” based on lies.

In its New Year’s statement, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote:

The movement toward a Third World War, which would threaten mankind with extinction, cannot be halted by humanitarian appeals. War arises out of the anarchy of capitalism and the obsolescence of the nation-state system. Therefore, it can be stopped only through the global struggle of the working class for socialism.

The new decade is not even a week old, but already this warning has been vindicated.



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