

Trump's threats against Iran and the criminalization of US foreign policy

Andre Damon
18 June 2025

On Wednesday, US President Donald Trump reiterated his threats to launch an illegal and unprovoked US war against Iran. “I may do it, I may not do it. I mean, nobody knows what I’m going to do,” Trump told reporters at the White House, reiterating his calls for “unconditional surrender” by the Iranian government. He added, “I like to make a final decision one second before.”

These are the words of a mafia don elevated to the highest office in the country. Trump, who pledged to rule as a “dictator on day one,” acknowledges neither international law nor the American Constitution and asserts his right to kill anyone, anywhere, whenever he feels like it—with the world confronted with the catastrophic consequences of decisions made “one second before.”

For six days, Israel has been carrying out a relentless assault on Iran, using US weapons and with Trump’s approval. It has targeted journalists, energy infrastructure, sewage treatment plants, police stations and civilian leaders. The Israeli bombing campaign against Iran is part of an ongoing US-Israeli war to subjugate the entire Middle East, including the ongoing genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza.

Now, Trump is threatening to directly involve the United States in a war against Iran, trampling both American and international law underfoot.

The Nuremberg Principles, a set of international legal standards established after World War II to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity, define crimes against peace as the “planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of a war of aggression.” This is precisely what an American attack on Iran would be.

Iran has not attacked the United States. It possesses neither nuclear weapons nor any means to threaten the US. The claims that an attack on Iran would be a

“preemptive war” are absurd. It is, rather, yet another illegal and criminal war of aggression, in the vein of the Bush administration’s 2003 invasion of Iraq.

As always, American imperialist policy is characterized by staggering hypocrisy. For years, the US media has referred to Russia’s attack on Ukraine as an “unprovoked, illegal and unjustified war.” But all of these adjectives are suddenly dropped by the American media when describing Trump’s plans to attack Iran, which are spun by the US media propaganda machine as a “just war” supposedly aimed at preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and threatening both Israel and the United States.

In his rant at the White House on Wednesday, Trump rhetorically asked Iranian leaders, “Why didn’t you negotiate with me before all this death and destruction? Why didn’t you negotiate?”

What a ridiculous fraud. Trump announced a new round of negotiations just hours before Israeli missiles began raining down on Iran. These negotiations were, in the words of the *Wall Street Journal*, “the perfect cover for a surprise Israeli attack.” Moreover, the Israeli bombing campaign killed Ali Shamkhani, a leading nuclear negotiator who would have played an active role in the supposed negotiations Trump claims he was so earnestly seeking.

Under the United States Constitution, Article I, Section 8, the power to declare war rests solely with Congress, not the president. If democratic forms of government were functional in the United States, Trump’s threats to launch a war against Iran would provoke congressional hearings and impeachment proceedings. But the response of the political establishment has been either silent assent or outright support for Trump’s criminal war of aggression.

There is no opposition from the Democratic Party. Its

leadership, including figures like Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Adam Schiff, has provided bipartisan cover for every stage of the Israeli genocide in Gaza and now openly signals support for war with Iran.

In an interview on Sunday, Schiff endorsed Israel's onslaught on Iran, saying, "So I support those actions. And I support the administration's actions in helping Israel defend itself."

Schiff opened the door to supporting the US bombing of Iran, saying, "If they should respond by attacking us, then we should respond by defending ourselves. And then I think Iran opens itself up to potential attacks on Fordow [an underground uranium enrichment refinery] or elsewhere."

For decades, US imperialism has sought to reverse the consequences of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which ended the Shah's reign and severed Iran from American domination. The slogan circulated within the Bush administration in launching the invasion of Iraq was: "Boys go to Baghdad, real men go to Tehran."

There is no reason to believe that the war being prepared by US imperialism against Iran will go any differently than the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan or the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which met with initial military successes but quickly turned into quagmires for the US occupying forces unable to subdue popular opposition. Despite Bush's infamous declaration of "mission accomplished" aboard an aircraft carrier in 2003, the wars launched under the "war on terror" will be forever remembered as bloody disasters.

What makes Trump believe that a war against Iran will be any different? In fact, if American troops are deployed, thousands will die.

The threatened American assault on Iran is not an act of strength but of desperation. American capitalism, confronting mounting popular opposition, a spiraling debt crisis and declining competitiveness on the world stage, sees global war as the only solution to its ever-mounting and all-pervasive crisis. The US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, Israel's onslaught throughout the Middle East, and the military buildup in the Pacific targeting China are not isolated conflicts but an integrated and accelerating global war.

These wars, far from providing any solution to the crisis of American imperialism, will only intensify political opposition to capitalism, both in the United

States and internationally. Last weekend, in a testament to the growing radicalization of broad sections of the population, millions of people protested in virtually every town and city in the United States against Trump's efforts to establish a dictatorship.

The critical task is to fuse the movement to defend the social and economic rights of the working class with the fight against imperialist war. This requires the struggle for a socialist program and a revolutionary leadership in the working class which the Socialist Equality Party and the parties affiliated with the International Committee of the Fourth International are fighting to build.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact