

Stop the war against Iran!

WSWS Editorial Board

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The following statement was published before the Trump administration's massive airstrikes against Iran on Saturday. While written in advance of these developments, the statement's analysis of the underlying forces driving imperialist war and the danger of a global conflagration is only further confirmed by this latest criminal act of aggression.

American imperialism and its Israeli proxy continue to escalate their illegal, unprovoked war of aggression against Iran, with US nuclear-capable B-2s and aircraft carrier battle groups readying to launch an imminent attack.

Nearly a quarter century after the United States invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, the American ruling class is once more preparing to launch a criminal war, this time against a vast country with a population more than three times larger than Iraq.

Through war, the would-be dictator Donald Trump and the financial oligarchy that rules via the Republican and Democratic parties hope to:

- Reimpose the shackles of neo-colonial subjugation on Iran, 45 years after the Iranian people toppled the monarchical dictatorship of the US-installed Shah.
- Secure unbridled US imperialist control over the world's principal oil-exporting region and key global ocean trade routes, so as to prepare for war with Washington's principal strategic adversaries, China and Russia.
- Stave off economic crisis and financial collapse through plunder.
- Divert attention from a massive domestic crisis and mounting social opposition.

The consequences of this reckless gamble will be catastrophic for the Iranian people, the Middle East and the entire world.

For all its massively armed gangsterism, deceit and treachery, the outcome of this war will be no less—and probably more—disastrous than the “wars of choice” that US imperialism waged in Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam and Korea.

The political establishments in the US and other imperialist centers, on the other hand, are in full war propaganda mode. Iran is vilified as a “terror state” and an “existential” threat to the Israeli and American people.

But who will take any of this seriously after decades of lies and criminality—after being bombarded with claims that Iraq possessed “weapons of mass destruction” and endless apologies for Israel as it bombs hospitals and slaughters people queuing for food in its drive to kill and expel the Gaza Palestinians?

Twenty-two years ago, at the launch of the Pentagon's “shock and awe” invasion of Iraq, *World Socialist Web Site* Chairman David North wrote, “Whatever the outcome of the initial stages of the conflict that has begun, American imperialism has a rendezvous with disaster. It cannot conquer the world. It cannot reimpose colonial shackles upon the masses of the Middle East.”

US imperialism is going to war not just against the 90 million people of Iran but against the entire world. On Friday, millions took to the streets of Iran and other countries in the Middle East to voice their opposition to the illegal US-Israeli assault.

Throughout the world, people understand that the Trump administration is preparing to launch a war of aggression in alliance with Israel, whose genocidal assault on Gaza has made it the most despised state in the world.

In the US, there is a growing mass movement against Trump, with 10-15 million people joining the June 14 “No Kings” protests. Moreover, a *Washington Post* poll found that the Americans it surveyed oppose US involvement in a war against Iran by a nearly two-to-one margin.

The working class, as the classical Marxists explained, must evaluate its attitude toward any war by examining the social interests involved.

The US-Israeli war on Iran is an imperialist war. It is being waged on a historically oppressed country. The dominant factor in its political history has been a century-long struggle for emancipation from first British and then American imperialism.

Moreover, the war is part of an interconnected chain of military operations spanning decades. The same governments, organizations and media outlets now backing Israel's onslaught on Iran were the most strident in supporting the war against Russia, provoked by the imperialist powers and justified on the basis of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Over the past 35 years, US imperialism has sought to reverse the consequences of the wave of anti-colonial and social revolutions of the 20th century and to counter the erosion of its global hegemony through ever-expanding militarism and aggression.

The *World Socialist Web Site*, the International Committee of the Fourth International and its affiliated Socialist Equality Parties stand unequivocally for the defeat of US imperialism and its Israeli proxy.

Iran is a capitalist country, led by a reactionary bourgeois nationalist regime. Rising to power on the basis of the 1979 Revolution, its greatest fear is the working class. Faced with mounting US threats over the past two decades, the Iranian bourgeoisie has combined repeated efforts to reach an accommodation with Washington with a drive to eliminate what remains of the social concessions made in the immediate aftermath of the popular explosion that overthrew the Shah.

The International Committee of the Fourth International opposes the bourgeois government in Iran. But its attitude to the imminent war is determined by the fact that Iran, a historically oppressed country, is threatened with subjugation and annihilation by an alliance of imperialist powers. The Iranian resistance to the imperialist onslaught is entirely legitimate and politically progressive.

Those who argue that the reactionary character of the Iranian government negates the right of Iran to defend itself are giving “left”

cover to the imperialist war drive.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in 1937, shortly after Japanese imperialism launched its war of conquest against China, when an oppressed country comes under imperialist attack, the duty of socialists is to defend it irrespective of the reactionary character of its government. Answering those who refused to defend China because it was then led by Chiang Kai-shek and the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang, which strangled the 1925-27 anti-imperialist revolution and massacred tens of thousands of revolutionary-minded workers, Trotsky explained:

China is a semicolonial country which Japan is transforming, under our very eyes, into a colonial country. Japan's struggle is imperialist and reactionary. China's struggle is emancipatory and progressive.

Japan and China are not on the same historical plane. The victory of Japan will signify the enslavement of China, the end of her economic and social development, and the terrible strengthening of Japanese imperialism. The victory of China will signify, on the contrary, the social revolution in Japan and the free development, that is to say unhindered by external oppression, of the class struggle in China.

The working class in Iran and globally must oppose the US-Israeli onslaught, but they must do so through their own class struggle methods. This means developing a global working class counteroffensive that ties the fight against imperialist war and the ever-widening assault on the social and democratic rights of the working class to the fight against capitalism. This requires the struggle for the building of sections of the ICFI in Iran, throughout the Middle East and internationally.

In conventional military terms, the US-Israeli attackers have a vast preponderance of destructive power. But as the history of revolutions and colonial wars has repeatedly shown, military might, although significant, is only one factor.

The principal vulnerability of imperialism lies in the massive and rapidly expanding potential for social opposition that exists in the Middle East, throughout Asia, Africa and in the growing resistance of workers in the imperialist centers.

It is this force that constitutes the decisive answer to imperialist aggression and the expanding global war and that must be mobilized. This can only be done in implacable opposition to all the rival bourgeoisies, their governments and political representatives.

In the US, all factions of the Democratic Party and its chief media voice, the *New York Times*, are supporting a war that has been organized by a president they themselves admit is systematically violating the Constitution and seeking to establish a presidential dictatorship.

Trump is waging war on two fronts: abroad against Iran, and at home against democratic rights and the working class. These are two sides of the same process. A war with Iran will inevitably be accompanied by an escalation of political repression and social austerity. With the war budget already over \$1 trillion, the working class will be forced to foot the bill.

Trump's anti-Constitutional drive to establish a presidential dictatorship within the United States and the launching of an illegal war against Iran are interconnected elements of a criminal government. The interaction of these elements threatens the US and

the world with a catastrophe. If there is any country that is in desperate need of a regime change, it is the United States.

The same basic processes are present in Europe. The talks held by the European imperialist powers with Iran's foreign minister in Vienna Friday were a fraud, aimed at browbeating Tehran into surrender. Any reservations they have about Trump's rush to war concern their own predatory interests: that they could be burned in the inferno Trump and Netanyahu have set alight; that all-out war in the Middle East will divert US war materiel from Ukraine; and that they are at risk of being cut out by Washington of the spoils of imperialist conquest and plunder.

The Chinese and Russian capitalist regimes, basing themselves on the most pragmatic, short-term calculations and clinging to the hope that they can reach some accommodation with Trump and US imperialism, have taken no action to oppose the onslaught on Iran.

As for the Iranian regime, its conduct before and during the war has only underscored that the national bourgeoisie is incapable of waging a struggle against imperialism. Even now after Trump has demanded "unconditional surrender," it persists in making appeals to the would-be fascist dictator, while pleading for the European imperialist gangsters to intervene on its behalf.

This war, like World War I and World War II, arises out of the fundamental contradictions of capitalism: between a globally integrated economy and the outmoded nation-state system, and between private ownership of the means of production and the social character of modern economic life.

The International Committee of the Fourth International and its affiliated Socialist Equality Parties call for mass opposition to the Trump administration's plans to launch a direct war against Iran. We call for protests, demonstrations and walkouts to oppose this act of imperialist aggression.

Only the international working class, armed with a revolutionary socialist program, can put an end to imperialist war and the capitalist system that breeds it. The ICFI insists that the fight against war must be fused with the fight for workers' power and the socialist reorganization of global economic life.

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