

European powers serve as accomplices to US-Israeli war against Iran

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While the US and Israel have bombed Iran and set the entire Middle East ablaze, the European powers have served as accomplices. Under the guise of calling for “de-escalation” and a “diplomatic solution,” they demand that Tehran capitulate unconditionally to imperialist aggression.

The events are reminiscent of a mafia movie. Israel launched an unprovoked attack against Iran, bombing industrial facilities and cities and deliberately assassinating high-ranking politicians, scientists and officials. The US sent a fleet of strategic bombers across the Atlantic and has destroyed Iranian nuclear facilities. President Donald Trump and his Secretary of War Pete Hegseth have threatened the country with total annihilation in gangster language if it does not surrender voluntarily. And the Europeans are playing the lawyer and calling on the regime in Tehran to commit suicide voluntarily in order not to be murdered.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer responded to the US attack on Iran with a joint statement that contains not a single word of criticism of the assault, which violates international law. While they do not go so far as to explicitly welcome the US action, their joint statement can only be understood as approval.

They support the pretext used by Israel and the US to justify their attack on Iran: “We have consistently been clear that Iran can never have a nuclear weapon and can no longer pose a threat to regional security.” They comment on the US military strikes on the nuclear facilities in Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan with the words: “Our aim continues to be to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.” And they demand that Iran, whose chief negotiator was assassinated by the Israelis, “engage in negotiations leading to an agreement that addresses all concerns associated with its nuclear program.”

One can be sure that they will also support further US attacks after Iran fired several missiles at the US military base in Qatar late Monday. They caused no damage, as Qatar was warned in advance and the missiles were intercepted. Merz, Macron and Starmer are only against “escalation” when it comes from Iran, not when it comes from the US or Israel.

The justification of the US attack by Berlin, Paris and London does not mean that they have no differences with Washington.

There are fears in European capitals that a conflagration in the Middle East could turn into a disaster and plunge the entire global economy into the abyss, especially if Iran carries out its threat to block the Strait of Hormuz, through which about one-fifth of the world’s oil supply is transported.

Just four days ago, President Macron warned that violent regime change in Iran, as sought by Israel and the US, would only lead to “chaos.” “The biggest mistake today is to try to bring about regime change in Iran by military means,” he said. “Does anyone believe that what was done in Iraq in 2003, what was done in Libya in the last decade, was a good idea? No!”

The European governments also fear that the Israeli and US attack on Iran would further discredit their war propaganda against Russia. After all, they accuse Russian President Putin of waging a “war of aggression contrary to international law” against Ukraine. But if anyone is waging a war of aggression contrary to international law, it is the US and Israel. International law experts largely agree on this.

But although the criminal nature of the war is obvious and European governments fear disaster, they are unreservedly siding with the aggressors. This alone shows that this is not about tactical issues, but about fundamental imperialist interests.

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius summed it up on Sunday evening on ARD television: “Legitimate or legal is a subtle but important distinction.” If the German government considers a goal, such as the bombing of Iran, to be “legitimate,” it disregards the law and legality.

Germany, France and Britain may view Trump’s aggressive approach with unease, but sharing in the spoils is more important to them than moral or legal scruples. They have been participating in the wars to subjugate the Middle East since the first Iraq war 34 years ago. In 2001, they even invoked NATO’s collective defense clause for the attack on Afghanistan.

There have been at times differences with France and Germany, such as in 2003 during the second Iraq war and in 2011 during the Libyan war. However, the German government never went so far as to oppose the US or even prohibit it from using the military base in Ramstein, Germany, which is important for the war effort.

The UK has always acted as the US's closest ally. Even now, Prime Minister Keir Starmer called Trump shortly after the attack on Iran to assure him of his support. This is not about "buddying up to the US," as Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds assured the press, but about "protecting British interests."

Germany is, alongside the US, Israel's most important supporter. It remains steadfastly loyal to the Netanyahu regime despite its war crimes in Gaza, and persecutes its opponents as alleged "anti-Semites." Chancellor Friedrich Merz aptly described the relationship between Berlin and Jerusalem when he said that Israel does "the dirty work for all of us."

Today, the NATO summit begins in The Hague, attended by the heads of state or government of all 32 member states, including Trump. The focus is on increasing military spending to 5 percent of GDP, which is two and a half times the previous NATO target of 2 percent. The massive arms offensive is intended to enable European NATO members to wage war against the nuclear-armed power Russia within three to five years.

The primary goals of the Europeans are to continue to commit the US to supporting the war in Ukraine and to prevent Trump from concluding an agreement with Russia over their heads. In return, they are expected to provide even stronger support for the US offensive in the Middle East and the encirclement of China.

As was the case before the First and Second World Wars, when one fateful decision followed another and all the imperialist powers were drawn deeper and deeper into the maelstrom of war, they are once again racing toward a catastrophe that threatens the survival of humanity.

What drives them is the insoluble crisis of the outdated capitalist system—the incompatibility of global production, which unites billions of workers in a single international production process, with the nation-state system and private property on which capitalism is based. As in 1914 and 1939, the capitalists are trying to resolve this crisis through the violent redivision of the world.

It would be fatal to expect any party that defends capitalism to provide a way out of this crisis. Whether right-wing extremist, like Trump's Republicans, "centrist," like the US Democrats and Macron, or social democratic, like Starmer's Labour Party and Germany's SPD—they all support war, rearmament and militarism and suppress social and political opposition to them.

The only realistic strategy against war and militarism is the mobilization of the international working class on the basis of an anti-capitalist, socialist program. The conditions for this are in place. The ruthless attack on Iran has also reignited resistance to the genocide in Gaza, against which hundreds of thousands have already taken to the streets. More and more workers are fighting back against the social cuts and layoffs with which they are expected to pay for the costs of war.

But this movement needs a perspective and political leadership. The ruling class relies on pseudo-left parties to absorb and neutralize resistance.

In Germany, the Left Party has gained support because it criticized militarism and the far-right AfD. But its stance on the war in the Middle East differs little from that of the federal government. Like the government, it calls for an immediate halt to Iran's nuclear program and claims that this can be achieved through diplomatic rather than military means.

In France, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leader of *La France insoumise*, is appealing to President Macron to oppose Trump and Netanyahu. He is trying to convince Macron that this is in France's best interests:

As terrible as the context is, and perhaps precisely because of it, there is an opportunity for our country to demonstrate its well-understood greatness and influence. France must refuse to join the deadly duo. If it holds high the banner of peace and international law, its word will be received everywhere as liberation and support.

What a pitiful farce! France, like the US, Germany and Britain, is an imperialist power with a bloody trail of colonial crimes behind it—from Vietnam to Algeria to the Congo, to name but a few. To expect Macron, the president of the rich, to uphold peace and international law is the height of political deception.

The International Committee of the Fourth International and its sections, the Socialist Equality Parties, are the only political tendency fighting for the unity of the international working class on the basis of a socialist program. Building these parties is the most important task in the struggle against war and capitalism.



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