

ILA dockworkers union president Harold Daggett celebrates Trump's attack on Iran

Erik Schreiber**26 June 2025**

In an extraordinary letter to President Donald Trump, Harold Daggett, president of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), offered gushing praise and enthusiastic support for the criminal bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities by the US military. Moreover, he pledged the ILA's backing for Trump in future acts of aggression.

On June 22, Trump ordered the largest B-2 strike operation in US history, targeting three sites in Iran. The main weapon was the GBU-57A/B Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP), a 13.6-ton bunker-busting bomb, the most powerful non-nuclear weapon of its kind ever used. B-2 Spirit stealth aircraft dropped 12 MOPs on the Fordow uranium enrichment site and two on its counterpart in Natanz. Numerous 2,900-pound Tomahawk missiles were also launched against both facilities and the Isfahan research complex.

This unprovoked attack was a flagrant violation of international law and a massive escalation of the war drive against Iran, which Israel had already launched on June 13. Israel's attacks targeted nuclear facilities and killed Iranian military leaders and scientists. These reckless acts of aggression threaten to drag the Middle East, and potentially Iran's allies Russia and China, into a global war.

Presuming to speak on behalf of all 85,000 ILA members, Daggett praised Trump's "bold and courageous decision to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities." With these words, Daggett celebrated an attack on a country that had neither attacked nor threatened the US. Parroting the propaganda of the American ruling class, he called Iran "an enemy of the United States."

Daggett's support for the bombing of Iran is a doubling down on his endorsement of Trump during the ILA contract negotiations, when he claimed that Trump was the "greatest friend" of the American worker. The Trump camp, which had yet to take office at the time, was

reportedly instrumental in brokering the deal.

In reality, the contract contains no meaningful protections against automation, the main issue over which workers carried out a three-day strike last October, which was shut down without an agreement by the ILA. After the ratification of the present deal, Daggett arrogantly lectured ILA members to work harder to prevent their jobs being automated out of existence.

The ILA was one of many major unions across the US to endorse Trump's right-wing "America First" populism, including the United Auto Workers, the Teamsters, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union on the West Coast (despite insincere statements to the contrary), the United Steelworkers and others.

The criminal character of Daggett's letter is underscored by the man himself. The US Department of Justice has previously alleged that Daggett is an associate of the Genovese crime family and attributed his rise in the ILA to mob influence. In his slavish praise of Trump, Daggett—a gangster in charge of a union bureaucracy—has offered his full support to a gangster at the head of American capitalism.

Since taking office, Trump has launched mass deportations of immigrant workers, deployed troops to suppress protests, and dramatically expanded his powers under the banner of national security. While the ILA has praised the war on Iran, it has kept a guilty silence on the war on the working class at home.

Daggett is endorsing a longstanding aim of US imperialism for regime change in Iran, which it has viewed as an obstacle to its dominance over the oil-rich Middle East, particularly since the 1979 revolution that overthrew the US-backed dictatorship of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Washington seeks to return Iran to a semi-colonial status and tighten its grip on the region's energy supplies and trade routes, especially the Strait of Hormuz, through

which one-fifth of global oil flows. This forms part of a broader strategy aimed at weakening Iran's key allies: Russia and China.

Daggett also lauded Trump for "defending Israel, one of our nation's most faithful and supportive allies." He made no mention of Israel's own unprovoked airstrikes on Iran, and still less of its genocide in Gaza. Since October 2023, Israel has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians with the full backing of US imperialism. Under the cover of so-called humanitarian corridors, Israeli forces have deliberately targeted civilians, medical workers and aid convoys. Daggett's silence on these crimes signifies his tacit endorsement.

The brief letter is drenched in flag-waving nationalism and hero worship. "How proud we are as Americans to be led by you as our bold and fearless Commander in Chief," Daggett wrote. He assured Trump that "all Americans know that you are protecting us." He even referred to the ILA as the "I Love America" longshore union.

Daggett also glorified the US military and boasted of the ILA's historic role in supplying it: "ILA members have proudly joined with our Armed Forces for over a century in the loading and unloading of military cargo." Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US military has been used to wage illegal wars across the globe, from Iraq and Serbia to Libya and Yemen. These wars, fought in the interests of finance capital, have killed and displaced millions.

Daggett solemnly swore that the ILA membership is "100 percent behind" Trump. "As the ILA's leader, I stand ready to offer you and your Administration any assistance and support," he wrote. This pledge means that Daggett will suppress strikes, enforce speedup, and otherwise discipline the workforce to serve the requirements of US imperialism.

There is a political logic at work here that goes beyond the crude thuggishness of Daggett. His support for war flows naturally from the nationalist policies which the ILA shares with the entire union bureaucracy. UAW President Shawn Fain, who postures as a progressive, has tried to square the circle by claiming it is possible to support Trump's tariff policies while opposing some of his other far-right policies.

But Daggett's letter demonstrates that this is a political fraud. Having accepted the logic of economic nationalism, the unions cannot avoid its consequences. If they accept "America First" trade policy, they must also accept war.

Even where other union leaders refrain from endorsing airstrikes and bombings, they have long supported the

strategic aims of US imperialism. They back the drive to reassert American hegemony over its global rivals and redivide the world market in the interests of Wall Street.

Their support for tariffs is part of their campaign to prove the unions' usefulness in preparing for war. Fain has been the most explicit, repeatedly invoking the World War II-era "Arsenal of Democracy" to propose using idled factories to build military hardware.

It is impossible to defend workers in the US while killing and maiming their class brothers and sisters in Iran, China or elsewhere. The real allies of American dockworkers are not in the White House or the ILA headquarters, but among workers in Iran and around the world.

The working class is the only force capable of opposing war because its social interests are bound up with the fight for equality, not conquest.

To fight war and defend their interests, workers must prepare a fight not just against Trump but against the union bureaucracy. This means the development of rank-and-file committees, independent of union officials and the two capitalist parties, to organize a struggle which combines the fight against war and dictatorship in the US with the fight to overthrow bureaucratic dictatorship within the trade unions.

These committees must unify workers at every port and factory, across national lines, to wage a common struggle against imperialism and for the socialist reorganization of society.

His groveling before Trump is a crude expression of the unions' role as instruments of the state and defenders of the profit system. Figures like Daggett and Fain promote nationalism, discipline the workforce, and prepare for war, all to defend their six-figure salaries and their position atop the labor apparatus.

The task now is to expose the entire union bureaucracy before the working class and mobilize workers to take up the fight for socialism and internationalism. Only through the political independence of the working class and the unity of workers across borders can a movement be built to prevent a global catastrophe.



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