

Showing its true colours

India's Modi government tacitly backs the US-Israeli war on Iran

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India's Narendra Modi-led BJP government has supported the US-Israeli war of imperialist aggression on Iran and in multiple ways.

These include:

- Sanctioning the US-Israeli onslaught on Iran in all but name, by refusing to make any criticism, no matter how timid or benign, of its criminal character, or of any of the numerous war crimes that the US and its Israeli proxy have committed in waging it;
- Pressuring Iran to forgo its right to self-defense in the name of "de-escalation";
- And seeking, in the midst of the new US-Israeli Mideast war, to strengthen Indo-US ties and the Quad—the US-led, anti-China alliance of Indo-Pacific powers.

However, the Modi government is trying to cover up its complicity in the imperialist assault on Iran for both geopolitical and domestic reasons.

New Delhi professes to be an ally of Iran, and it has been seeking to develop port facilities at Chabahar on Iran's southeastern coast, with the aim of expanding India's influence and trade ties with Afghanistan and Central Asia more broadly. Even more importantly, India doesn't want to in any way harm relations with the Gulf States, which supply much of its oil and provide employment for 10 million overseas Indian workers.

Modi's Hindu supremacist BJP recognizes, and to some degree champions, its political-ideological affinity with the Zionist far-right. But the government is also aware that the mass of India's workers and toilers are sympathetic to the Palestinian people and hostile to imperialism and Washington's global bullying and aggression.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has explained, the US-Israeli war on Iran arises from and is part of a decades-long drive by Washington to impose, through aggression and war, unbridled US imperialist domination over the world's most-important oil-exporting region.

This drive has dramatically escalated since October 2023. The US has provided unstinting political and military support to its Israeli satrap for the past 20 months, as it has waged a genocidal assault on the Gaza Palestinians and rampaged across the Middle East, attacking states and militia groups opposed to the US-Israeli domination of the region.

With the unprovoked assault on Iran initiated by Israel on the

night of June 12, in close coordination—as Trump has boasted—with the White House and Pentagon and then Washington's illegal sneak-attack on Iran's civil nuclear facilities, American imperialism has brought the entire region and the world to the brink of catastrophe.

Trump's Monday night announcement of a ceasefire offers no guarantee of a genuine, let alone prolonged, end to hostilities. Washington and Tel Aviv have repeatedly used the White House's pledges of negotiations with Tehran as a smokescreen for escalating aggression. They will, in any event, make full use of Iran's weakened military position and the failure of its Chinese and Russian allies to take any meaningful action in its support to demand, to use Trump's words, "unconditional surrender" in any subsequent negotiations.

More fundamentally, Trump's direct assault on Iran and relentless drive for regime change in Tehran are bound up with the rapid deterioration in the world position of US imperialism. Washington is determined to re-impose on Iran the type of neocolonial bondage it exercised during the time of Shah Reza Pahlavi and establish thereby unchallenged imperialist domination over the Mideast, so as to better position itself to confront and, if necessary, wage all-out war against those its deems its most important strategic adversaries, China and Russia.

In the face of all this, the principal concern of the Modi government is to continue to expand the Indo-US "global strategic partnership," under which New Delhi has integrated itself ever more fully into the US military-strategic offensive against China in return for Washington's support in realizing the Indian bourgeoisie's great-power ambitions.

Within this framework, India, under the would-be Hindu strongman Modi, has also developed increasingly important military-strategic ties with Israel and its far-right government.

India's response to the US attack on Iran's nuclear facilities was silence. Although it was patently illegal, hugely provocative and employed the most powerful non-nuclear bombs ever-deployed, New Delhi failed to criticize, let alone condemn, the attack.

What Prime Minister Modi did do was to telephone Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday, so as to press Tehran, amid phony expressions of concern and sympathy, to do nothing.

In a statement posted on X (formerly Twitter), Modi scrupulously avoided any mention of the US aggression,

explaining that in his conversation with the head of Iran's government he had "reiterated our call for immediate de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy as the way forward and for early restoration of regional peace, security and stability." In other words, he joined the leaders of imperialism, who were all issuing statements framing any action of Iranian self defence as "escalation," in demanding that Tehran submit in the face of the US-Israeli aggression.

Earlier, on June 13, India had conspicuously dissented from a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) resolution, supported by all the other nine-member states, that strongly condemned Israel's military strikes on Iran, denouncing them as gross violations of international law and the UN Charter. Formed in 2001 at the initiative of China and Russia, the SCO is a regional political, economic and security alliance that includes Pakistan, India, several Central Asian states, Belarus, and since 2023, Iran.

India subsequently explained its dissent by claiming it hadn't been properly consulted on the resolution and by pointing to a Foreign Ministry statement that notably contained no language criticizing Israel's attack on Iran.

Arguably the most substantive and significant support India's government gave to the US-Israeli war on Iran, was the phone call that Modi made to US President Donald Trump on June 17, as he was plotting war on Iran. The evening before, Trump had cut short his participation in the G7 summit in Canada so he could return to Washington and meet with his security team and Pentagon top brass to finalize plans for an attack on Iran. Trump himself all but publicly announced this.

In the hours before he took Modi's call, Trump issued a barrage of threatening tweets against Iran that culminated later in the day in a demand for its "unconditional surrender."

It was under these circumstances that Modi chose to underline the strength of India's predatory partnership with US imperialism by issuing an invitation to Trump to travel to India later this year to participate in a summit of the heads of government of the Quad—the anti-China "security dialogue" led by Washington and including India and American imperialism's principal Asian-Pacific allies, Japan and Australia.

Much has been made of the Modi government's failure to support the US-NATO war on Russia, and its insistence on preserving India's longstanding close military-strategic ties with Moscow, which date back to the Cold War, as well as the possibility of getting large amounts of Russian oil at discount.

To be sure, this has miffed Washington and the other NATO powers, but India has responded by aligning itself still more fully with the US in regards to China. Moreover, during the course of Israel's Gaza and broader Mideast war, the Modi government has expanded its ties with the Netanyahu regime to the point that India and Israel are increasingly acting as partners in crime.

In this context, it is worth recalling that an integral part of the US plan for a "New Middle East" promoted by the Biden administration and backed by Netanyahu was for an India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor that would pass through the Israeli port of Haifa.

During the now 20-month old war, New Delhi has consistently avoided any substantive condemnation of Israel's campaign of

mass murder and ethnic cleansing in Gaza. In a high-profile UN General Assembly vote held on June 12, only hours before Israel attacked Iran, 149 countries—including several imperialist powers like Canada and France that were trying to cover their complicity in the ongoing Israeli assault on the Gaza Palestinians—voted in favour of "an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire" and unrestricted humanitarian aid for the besieged enclave. India was not among them. Reversing the stance it took on similar resolutions in December 2023 and December 2024, it abstained.

Israel has become a major weapons supplier to India, and as a recent Al Jazeera report exposed, India has exported weapons, including rocket engines and explosives, to Israel during the Gaza war, with shipments from Chennai and missile debris in Gaza marked "Made in India."

Important as all this is, a deciding factor in India's vote on the UN resolution may well have been the unequivocal support that Israel gave New Delhi when it illegally attacked Pakistan on May 7 with scores of planes, provoking four days of fighting that came close to triggering all-out war between South Asia's nuclear-armed powers. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was virtually alone among world leaders in endorsing the Indian action, something he did within hours of the Indian air strikes.

India's complicity in the US-Israeli war on Iran underscores the urgency of mobilizing the working class in opposition to the Indo-US alliance. It has already transformed India into a frontline state in Washington's war drive against China, while emboldening the Indian ruling class to try to impose itself as the regional hegemon through aggression and war.

Significantly, while the official opposition Congress Party sought to make some political capital by condemning Israel's attack on Iran, it failed to denounce Washington's entry into the war. This is because all factions of the ruling class view the Indo-US alliance as critical to their global strategy, including their efforts to make India an alternative cheap-labour production hub to China.

On June 22, five Stalinist and Maoist parties, including the Communist Party of India (Marxist), condemned the US bombing of Iran but avoided calling for any working class mobilization. Allies of the Congress Party and the Congress-led opposition bloc, the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, appealed to "peace-loving people" and urged the Modi government to change its pro-US, pro-Israel stance.

In contrast to these political accomplices of imperialism, the *World Socialist Web Site* calls on the Indian and international working class to oppose the imperialist assault on Iran and the developing global war through methods of class struggle and the fight for workers' power and socialism.



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