

After Venezuela, Trump targets Iran—the imperialist rampage escalates

Keith Jones**14 January 2026**

The Trump administration is preparing an imminent military attack on Iran, in the next stage of a regime-change operation aimed at returning the Middle Eastern country of 93 million people to neocolonial subjugation and placing its vast oil reserves under US imperialist control and domination.

For days, Trump, America's fascist would-be dictator president, and his henchmen have been threatening to strike Iran with bombs and missiles under the cynical pretext of "defending" anti-government protestors.

On Tuesday morning, in a social media post framed as a message to the Iranian protesters, Trump declared, "TAKE OVER YOUR INSTITUTIONS... Help is on its way." This was just hours before he was to confer with top Pentagon generals and his national security staff on "options" for attacking Iran.

Open-source intelligence and flight-tracking data reveal that since December there has been a surge of US war materials to the Persian Gulf region, a necessary prerequisite for waging war on Iran.

Trump's attempt to depict himself as the "liberator" of the Iranian people is a monstrous fraud, based on the Hitlerian concept of the "Big Lie."

US imperialism never reconciled itself to the mass uprising that overthrew the tyrannical regime of the Shah in 1979. It has mounted a decades-long campaign of threats, military aggression and economic warfare against Iran and its people. In 2018, Trump torpedoed the UN-backed Iran nuclear accord and unilaterally imposed crippling sanctions—subsequently reinforced under the Democrat Biden—with the avowed aim of crashing Iran's economy and bringing about regime change.

Washington's desired outcome has always been driving the Iranian people into deprivation and misery. The sanction-enforced cut-off of access to drugs and advanced medical devices has alone caused tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of premature deaths.

As always, the US corporate media are all reading from the same script dictated from the White House. They

question nothing, investigate nothing.

Less than two weeks ago, Washington illegally attacked Venezuela, killing more than 80 people, kidnapped its president and seized what are the world's largest oil resources. In the weeks preceding, the media repeated the administration's transparent lies that President Nicolás Maduro headed a narco-terrorist regime, just as they breathlessly repeated the claims of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney regarding Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction" in the run up to American imperialism's 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Now Trump, his Democratic Party enablers and the media would have us believe that Iran is in the grip of a "popular uprising" that is being "brutally" crushed by the Iranian authorities. This is the new manufactured *casus belli*. It replaces that used to justify last June's 12-day US-Israeli war on Iran that killed more than 1,000 people and which Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu invoked when they held a war conclave at Mar-a-Lago on December 29—the threat supposedly posed by Iran's civilian nuclear program.

No doubt there is widespread anger and dissatisfaction with Iran's clerical-led bourgeois nationalist regime, which represses any form of working-class political self-expression and has systematically dismantled the social concessions made to the working people in the immediate aftermath of the 1979 revolution that overthrew the tyrannical monarchical-dictatorship of the Shah.

But the protests now unfolding in the streets of Iran are not a movement of and for the working class. This is attested by their social composition, absence of any demands to address the pressing socio-economic problems facing Iran's workers and rural toilers, and the lack of any organized working-class intervention in the form of mass strikes.

The protests were initiated by the bazaar—that is a section of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie comprised of money-lenders, merchants and shopkeepers—and have taken on an ever more explicit right-wing, pro-imperialist character akin to the "color revolutions" instigated by

American imperialism and its agents in Ukraine, Georgia and elsewhere.

The operatives of the CIA and other imperialist intelligence agencies are manifestly present and playing a major role in inciting violence, alongside such foreign-based imperialist operatives as the Shah's son, the Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, who late last week urged protesters to press for the government's overthrow by "seizing and holding city centers." On Thursday, Israel's far-right Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu boasted that Israeli agents are operating on the ground in Iran.

As in 1953, when the CIA and Britain's MI5 organized the coup that overthrew Iran's elected president, the nationalist Mossadegh, imperialism works through sections of the Iranian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, including no doubt disaffected sections of the Islamic Republic's establishment, eager to secure their wealth and privileges by functioning as direct imperialist agents.

These elements are viciously hostile to the plight of the oppressed masses as exemplified in the prominent protest slogan, "My heart beats only for Iran—not for Gaza, not for Lebanon!," the protesters' targeting of Afghan refugees and increasing embrace of the Pahlavi dynasty.

Due to the misrule of the Islamic Republic and the political confusion spread by the pseudo-left in and outside Iran, who call for unity with far-right forces in the name of "democracy," tragically some workers and students have no doubt been caught up in the ongoing protests and state repression. But as the *World Socialist Web Site* previously explained, "any progressive tendency in Iran would have to immediately repudiate Trump's 'support', denounce the threat of imminent US military action and call for the immediate lifting of the punitive sanctions that are strangling Iran's economy."

From all indications, as the pro-imperialist character of the protests has become clearer, they have become restricted to more privileged sections of Iranian society. Within the working class the memory of the Shah's regime, its subservience to US imperialism, monopolization of the country's wealth and the brutal repression upon which it rested, endures.

Those now expressing their "horror" and "revulsion" at the "brutality" of the Iranian regime have not been moved by the ongoing slaughter of tens of thousands of Palestinian men, women, and children in Gaza—to say nothing of the Nazi-style starvation of the entire enclave's population—perpetrated by Israel with the full support and military assistance of Washington, first under Biden and now Trump.

As in Venezuela at the beginning of the year, the Trump administration is acting with utter criminality and

recklessness.

However, more than criminality connects the attack on Venezuela and the regime-change operation, and an impending military attack targeting Iran. They are part of a developing world war.

The US is seeking to seize hold of the world's oil resources in preparation for military confrontation with China. China imports more than 70 percent of its daily oil consumption, with Iran accounting, according to various estimates, for 11 percent or more of all Chinese imports in 2025 and Venezuela's 3-4 percent. Losing access to Iranian oil would be a significant economic and strategic shock to China's independent industrial base.

Workers must be warned: US imperialism is on the verge of launching a new war against Iran whose consequences are incalculable. In threatening Iran, Secretary of State Marco Rubio has stated "When [Trump] says he'll do something, he means it." Trump has repeatedly vowed to unleash military fury against Iran, just as he has pledged to rule like a dictator.

"I don't need international law," Trump told the *New York Times* last week. "The only thing that can stop me," he continued is my own will.

In reality, there is something that can stop him: the international working class. Even as Trump prepares for war on Iran, 15,000 nurses are on strike in New York City—the largest nurses' strike in the city's history. In France, hundreds of thousands have struck against austerity. Italy saw a general strike in November. Belgium's workers walked out against the country's coalition government. From Germany to the UK to Latin America, the objective conditions for a global movement against capitalism and war are emerging.

As the WSWS wrote in its New Year statement: "The ruling class has made clear what they want 2026 to be: a year of unrestrained military violence. The answer must be to make 2026 a year of class struggle and the development of a mass movement for socialism." This depends on the building of a new leadership in the working class, rooted in the principles of Marxism and armed with the strategy of permanent revolution to forge its political independence and unify its struggles across state boundaries and continents.



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