

As the US prepares war against Iran, NATO ally Türkiye attempts to mediate

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As President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government deepens cooperation with the Donald Trump administration, Türkiye is attempting to mediate against the US's upcoming attack on Iran. In recent days, Turkish government officials have voiced growing concerns and made efforts to establish diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian announced on social media that he had instructed Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to begin negotiations with the US. Erdoğan embarked on a two-day trip to Saudi Arabia and Egypt on Tuesday and said that discussions would cover "what can be done to prevent the Iran crisis from escalating further."

According to a report on *Axios*, "White House envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi are expected to meet on Friday in Istanbul together with representatives of several Arab and Muslim countries to discuss a possible nuclear deal, according to two sources with knowledge and a U.S. official."

This meeting was planned after a meeting between Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Araghchi in Ankara on January 30. During a joint press statement, Fidan said, "...we are against resorting to military options to resolve the issues. We do not believe that [the military option] will be very effective. We advocate negotiation and diplomacy." "We call on the parties to come to the negotiating table," Fidan said, adding that negotiations "will pave the way for Iran's integration into the international system."

Fidan stated in an interview with *Al-Jazeera* television at the end of January, "It's wrong to attack Iran. It's wrong to start the war again. Iran is ready to negotiate on the nuclear file again."

Reports in the Turkish press around the same time that Ankara was developing plans to establish a kind of "buffer zone" along its border with neighboring Iran to

prevent a wave of migration underscored the seriousness of the possibility of a US attack on Iran.

A new imperialist attack on Iran, with its population of 93 million, carries the danger of turning into a regional war that rapidly draws in US-allied forces, including Türkiye. Such a war would deepen geopolitical instability across the Middle East, radicalizing the working-class and youth masses who despise imperialism and Zionism, thereby shaking the collaborative regimes.

The Trump administration, has amassed a large military buildup in the Middle East and threatened Iran with a new war following last June's illegal attack. Meanwhile, speaking in Tehran Sunday, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, warned, "They should know that if they start a war this time, it will be a regional war."

In mid-January, while Trump threatened to strike Tehran, exploiting the ongoing protests in Iran for its own benefit, an unnamed senior official reportedly stated that Iran had asked regional states to prevent a US attack. According to Reuters, the same official said, "Tehran has told regional countries, from Saudi Arabia and the UAE to Türkiye, that US bases in those countries will be attacked." Türkiye hosts the Incirlik air base, which the US uses for its operations in the region. The radar base in Kürecik provides intelligence against Iran and its allies.

After Venezuela, the Trump administration wants to seize Iran's energy resources and control the energy and supply chains of its global rivals, primarily China. Türkiye, led by Trump's "friend" Erdoğan, fears that a large-scale US-Israel war against Iran could negatively affect it as well, and is playing the role of "good cop" in helping Washington achieve its goals through negotiation. Türkiye's ruling elite is concerned that such a war could eliminate Iran's role as a counterweight, further increasing Israel's regional influence and encouraging Kurdish separatism in Iran.

Following his meeting with Araghchi, Fidan stated,

“We have seen that the PKK terrorist organization is attempting to take advantage of recent developments. This situation demonstrates that the PKK/PJAK terrorist organization poses a threat not only to Türkiye but also to Iran. We would like to reiterate the need for joint action against the PKK.” Iran’s Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK), the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), and Syria’s Democratic Union Party (PYD) are affiliated with the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), which recognizes Abdullah Öcalan, who is in prison, as its leader.

The Turkish bourgeoisie is not a victim of 35 years of imperialist aggression now targeting Iran in the Middle East, but an accomplice. The Turkish ruling elite directly aided the US in its crimes across the region, from the attack on Iraq to the regime change wars in Syria and Libya. As a result of these imperialist attacks and regime change wars, Ankara has established strong ties with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, despite occasionally threatening it. On the other hand, Türkiye has attempted to suppress the de facto Kurdish autonomy that has emerged in Syria and make it subordinate to the new Damascus regime.

Türkiye’s ruling elite played a hypocritical and facilitating role in Israel’s genocide in Gaza, made possible with US support. Ankara aided Israel’s war machine by indirectly continuing trade and facilitating the flow of Azerbaijani oil through Türkiye. Meanwhile, as competition with Israel intensified in Syria and the Middle East in general, Erdoğan attempted to position himself as a defender of the Palestinians by using anti-genocide rhetoric. Ankara also played a role in getting Hamas to accept Trump’s new colonialist Gaza “peace” plan. Erdoğan now gladly accepts membership in Trump’s “Peace Council” in Gaza.

The current border between Türkiye and Iran is largely based on the 1639 Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin. Since this treaty ended the Ottoman-Safavid War of 1623–1639, the two countries have not fought each other. Iran is also a major supplier of natural gas to Türkiye, with 15-20 percent of Türkiye’s annual consumption supplied by Tehran.

However, neither the concerns of the Turkish ruling elite nor the bankrupt attempts at compromise by the bourgeois-clerical regime in Iran can put an end to imperialist aggression and the new colonial war in the Middle East. Imperialism pursues total submission and domination everywhere. There is no way forward other than a revolutionary strategy that will eliminate

imperialism.

The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi (Socialist Equality Party), the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, calls on the working class in Türkiye, the Middle East, and worldwide to unconditionally oppose and take action against the threats of war against Iran, a historically oppressed country, by US imperialism and Israeli Zionism. US-NATO bases in Türkiye must be closed, and Ankara’s support for imperialist-Zionist aggression must end.

The struggle against imperialism must be based on a genuinely revolutionary, that is, Trotskyist perspective. As stated in the Statement of Principles of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi,

... the causes of war are embedded in the economic structure of society and its political division into nation-states, the struggle against imperialist militarism and war can be successful only to the extent that it mobilizes the working class on the basis of an international revolutionary strategy and program. A mass anti-war movement must reject the bankrupt perspective of demanding that governments change their policies and aim for the working class to take power and abolish capitalism, the source of war.

... the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi insists that the only way to the lasting peace and democratic rights that the working people long for is the unification of workers of all nationalities in the Middle East and in the imperialist countries in the fight for global socialism and against war and neo-colonial oppression. It means fighting for the Socialist Federation of the Middle East, which will be part of a world socialist federation.

We call on Middle Eastern workers, youth, and intellectuals who agree with this perspective to contact us to build Socialist Equality Parties affiliated with the ICFI in their countries.



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