

# Trump and Netanyahu hold Iran war conclave

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US President Donald Trump held a three-hour war council at the White House Wednesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss plans for a massive military assault on Iran. America's would-be dictator has repeatedly vowed that a new war would dwarf last June's 12-day US-Israeli aerial bombardment of Iran, which killed more than a thousand Iranians, the vast majority of them civilians.

The US has surged vast amounts of military personnel and firepower to the region since the beginning of the year, while Trump and his aides have issued a steady drumbeat of bellicose threats.

Led by the USS Lincoln aircraft carrier, an American armada now surrounds Iran's shores. Warships bristling with Tomahawk cruise missiles and F-35 and F-18 fighter jets are deployed in the Arabian Sea, at the Strait of Hormuz and further north in the Persian Gulf off Qatar. Tracking data also indicates a massive influx of Globemaster C-17 US military cargo planes arriving at US military bases across the region, bearing no doubt all manner of weapon systems, missiles and other munitions.

On Tuesday, Trump said he may soon dispatch a second "armada," that is, a second aircraft carrier battle group to the region. According to reports, the US Navy is now poised to start seizing tankers transporting Iranian oil, ratcheting up Washington's decades-long campaign to strangle the Iranian economy through sweeping sanctions that are themselves tantamount to an act of war.

The US started seizing tankers off Venezuela shortly before last month's illegal attack on the South American country, the kidnapping of its president and Trump's announcement that Washington has seized its vast oil reserves.

The pathological liar Trump claims that he is pursuing "negotiations" with Iran in the hopes of avoiding a military clash. What a monstrous fraud! The talks are a mafia-style "shakedown," with Tehran being given the choice between capitulation and war.

Following Wednesday's meeting with Netanyahu, Trump said his "preference" would be for a "deal," then menacingly added, "Last time Iran decided that they were better off not making a Deal, they were hit with Midnight Hammer (the US military's name for its June 21-22 attack on Iranian nuclear facilities). That did not work well for them."

Earlier Wednesday, Vice President JD Vance similarly threatened Iran. At the end of a trip to Iran's northern neighbours, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Vance told reporters that Trump has "a

lot of options" to attack Iran "because we have the most powerful military in the world."

Driven by predatory imperialist aims, this policy is not just aggressive. It is reckless and could rapidly culminate in a catastrophic war.

The massive deployment of US military power to the region has its own political and military logic. With ships carrying thousands of military personnel and billions of dollars in weaponry deployed to the region, pressure to use them will grow. The most aggressive sections of the financial elite and military-security establishment will argue that failure to act carries its own risks, from a potential preemptive Iranian attack to appearing "weak."

In the event of Iranian counterstrikes from any action, the resort of a rattled Trump administration to the use of tactical nuclear weapons is entirely possible.

Washington is demanding Iran forsake its sovereign right under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to a civil nuclear program; cease all support to Hamas, Hezbollah and the other members of its "Axis of Resistance"; and accept sweeping limits on its ballistic missile program. Acceptance of these demands would leave Iran defenceless and powerless in the face of US and Israeli aggression and reduce it effectively to the status of a semi-colony.

Iran is a historically oppressed country whose development has been indelibly misshaped and thwarted over the past century and a half by its encounter with first British and then US imperialism. It must be defended against imperialist aggression irrespective of the anti-working class character of its Shia clergy-led, bourgeois nationalist regime.

With the support of the Democratic Party and the pliant corporate media, Trump has advanced various pretexts to justify the escalating military aggression against Iran. From stopping nuclear proliferation to "defending" the Iranian people from state repression, each is more grotesque than the last.

Ten years ago, under the UN-backed Iran nuclear accord, Tehran agreed to dismantle most of its civil nuclear program and to subject the remainder to the most intrusive regime of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) surveillance ever devised. Yet in 2018, Trump torpedoed the accord and unilaterally imposed a punishing regime of sanctions, enforced through Washington and Wall Street's control of the world financial system, with the express aim of crashing Iran's economy and triggering regime change.

The US ruling class and its political representatives, Democratic

and Republican alike, have no more interest in the democratic rights of the workers and rural toilers of Iran than they do those of the Palestinians, or those who live under the Gulf state absolutist monarchies and the blood-soaked dictatorship of Egypt's General el-Sisi.

Washington has never reconciled itself to its "loss of Iran" as the result of the 1979 anti-imperialist upsurge that toppled the tyrannical regime of the US-installed Shah. For decades it has relentlessly pursued regime-change through sanctions, threats, sabotage and military aggression.

The impending attack on Iran arises directly out of the bipartisan project—initiated under Biden and continued seamlessly under the second Trump administration—to violently fashion a "New Middle East," using Israel as American imperialism's attack dog. Since October 2023, Washington and Israel have gone on a rampage across the region, using aggression, war and, in Gaza, outright genocide to establish a Greater Israel within a Middle East under unbridled US domination.

By seizing control of the Middle East, which in addition to being the world's most important oil-exporting region lies at the juncture of three continents containing more than 90 percent of the world's population, American imperialism hopes to gain a stranglehold over all its great power rivals, beginning with China.

Terrified of the working class, Iran's beleaguered bourgeois regime is incapable of making any progressive appeal to the masses of the region, let alone the workers of the world, for a joint struggle against imperialism. When Trump boasts that Tehran is desperate for a deal, he no doubt for once speaks the truth. On Wednesday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stated that the country would open up its nuclear sites for "any verification," in an apparent attempt to reach some sort of accommodation.

But the Islamic Republic's repeated attempts to negotiate a rapprochement with Washington stretching back to the early 1990s have been rebuffed time and again.

American imperialism, meanwhile, has suffered a massive erosion of its global economic power making it only the more desperate and predatory. The gangster Trump is the personification of its harebrained ambition to rule the world.

Based on its publicly stated positions, Tehran views acceptance of Trump's demands as regime suicide. In the event of an attack, it has vowed to strike back at US bases across the region and at Israel. On Wednesday, the 47th anniversary of the Shah's overthrow, millions, including many who no doubt have profound grievances with the current regime, took to the streets across Iran to voice their opposition to US imperialist aggression.

The course of events in the next days and weeks remains uncertain. But Trump and US imperialism could at any time set the Middle East ablaze, recklessly initiating a regime-change war against a country of 93 million people that could rapidly engulf the entire region and draw in other great powers.

The Trump administration, moreover, is beset by crisis. It confronts mass opposition to its ICE-led terror campaign against immigrants and, more broadly, its drive to establish a presidential dictatorship, and a growing strike movement involving teachers, health sector and other industrial workers. The Epstein scandal has implicated the entire political and financial elite—and Trump,

members of his cabinet and key billionaire supporters directly—in a network of venality and criminality, where obscene wealth provides impunity.

Trump could well see a foreign war against an enemy long vilified by the American media as a means of extricating himself and his administration from its myriad crises. Undoubtedly, he would seize on a war with Iran to intensify his operation dictatorship, including by labeling antiwar protesters treasonous.

War is a well-trodden path for governments and ruling classes facing intractable problems and mounting social opposition. That was the gamble many of Europe's leaders took in 1914, most famously Nicholas II, the Russian Czar toppled in the first stage of the revolution that brought the working class to power under the Bolsheviks in October 1917.

A jackal is never more vicious and dangerous than when it is wounded. American imperialism and the global capitalist system that it has politically and economically backstopped for most of the past century are visibly rotting on their feet. The same objective processes that are impelling imperialism, led by the United States, to aggression and world war, are fueling a global upsurge of the working class that can and must be infused with a socialist perspective.

Workers in the United States and around the world must come to the defence of the Iranian people, demand the immediate withdrawal of all US military forces from the Middle East and the rescinding of all sanctions on Iran as part of the development of a global movement against war.

The fight against war is a fight against capitalism. It must be based on the revolutionary mobilization of the international working class. Opposition to rearmament and war must be linked to the struggle to defend workers' living standards and social and democratic rights, oppose oligarchy and dictatorship and for social equality.



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