

Washington mobilizes for war, as Iran's bourgeois-clerical regime offers major concessions

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19 February 2026

The threat of a massive American military onslaught on Iran and a broader region-wide war continues to loom large over the Middle East following the latest round of bilateral talks in Geneva Tuesday.

Mediated by Oman, the negotiations proceeded as the world's largest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford, traveled to the region to accompany the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group already positioned in the Arabian Sea, giving American imperialism its strongest military presence in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In what would amount to total surrender by Tehran, US President Donald Trump has demanded that Iran dismantle its civilian nuclear programme, destroy its entire stockpile of medium-range ballistic missiles and end cooperation with its Axis of Resistance allies across the region.

The Pentagon has made no secret about the fact that the US is preparing a weeks-long military onslaught aimed at devastating Iran's military and civilian infrastructure. Trump has openly boasted about conducting "decapitation" strikes aimed at eliminating Tehran's political and military leadership. The campaign would also seek to annihilate Iran's capabilities to target US bases and other assets throughout the region. Trump and other US officials have menaced Iran with references to last June's 12-day war on the country, during which Israeli and US jets struck nuclear and other facilities, killing at least 1,000 people.

Military analysts have noticed an increased concentration of military hardware heading to the region, including F-22 and F-16 warplanes, a seventh missile destroyer, and surveillance and radar aircraft. These are the capabilities required for operations that would last several weeks, rather than days.

Iran's bourgeois-clerical regime is offering substantial concessions to the US in talks, while at the same time issuing sabre-rattling warnings about the consequences of an all-out war. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi commented after Tuesday's three-hour-long talks that a "set of guiding principles" had been agreed to.

US officials were less concrete, noting merely in anonymous remarks to the *New York Times* that Iran had been given two weeks to draft proposals aimed at overcoming areas of disagreement between the two sides. This deadline conveniently fits with the approximately three weeks it will take the USS Gerald

R. Ford to reach its position in the Middle East.

Tehran initially asserted that the talks would be limited to its nuclear programme, but this standpoint has been abandoned. "For the sake of an agreement's durability, it is essential that the U.S. also benefits in areas with high and quick economic returns," stated Foreign Ministry Deputy Director for Economic Diplomacy Hamid Ghanbari on Sunday. "Common interests in the oil and gas fields, joint fields, mining investments, and even aircraft purchases are included in the negotiations."

On Monday, Iranian negotiators also met in Geneva with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reportedly to float the possibility of renewed inspections of its nuclear sites as part of a deal. One possibility being considered would be a three- to five-year moratorium on uranium enrichment, combined with regular inspections and the reduction of Tehran's current uranium stockpiles, which the country has repeatedly stressed are not intended for nuclear weapons.

For his part, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei warned the US in a speech delivered as Tuesday's talks got underway that Tehran was prepared to send US aircraft carriers "to the bottom of the sea." He said, "The US President keeps saying that they have the strongest military force in the world. The strongest military force in the world may at times be struck so hard that it cannot get up again." Also Tuesday, Iran's navy closed parts of the Straits of Hormuz, a key transit route for world oil supplies, to carry out live fire exercises.

The bourgeois-clerical regime is not only being pushed towards a deal with the imperialists based on the illusion that Washington and the European powers will offer Tehran fair terms for its reintegration into the world capitalist market. At home, the regime confronts deep popular opposition. The protests which broke out at the end of 2025 before being bloodily suppressed in January were led by bazaar merchants, traditionally a strong constituency for the regime since 1979.

While it is true that the protests were increasingly dominated politically by right-wing, pro-imperialist forces, this does not change the reality that millions of Iranians are living in bitter poverty. Hammered by the sanctions of the imperialist powers that have produced a collapse in the country's currency, the rial, broad sections of workers and rural poor are struggling to make ends meet. The ruthlessness with which the regime crushed the protests,

notwithstanding the wildly overstated casualty figures produced by CIA-backed “human rights” groups in exile, underlines the fear within ruling circles that it would only take a spark to ignite a social explosion. Social inequality has risen sharply in Iran, as the regime has responded to the sanctions regime by overturning the social gains achieved by the masses during the revolution of 1979.

Whatever transpires in the coming days and weeks, US imperialism’s drive to reorder the Middle East to consolidate its hegemony and seize control of Iran’s energy resources will escalate. Whether through huge concessions extracted from the current nationalist regime at the point of a gun or an all-out war for “regime change,” Washington’s goal is to sideline its rivals for influence in the Middle East, above all, Russia and China.

Washington never accepted its loss of influence over Tehran and virtual exclusion following the Iranian Revolution, which toppled the Shah’s brutal US-backed dictatorship. Decades of devastating economic sanctions and military threats have intensified over the past two-and-a-half years with Washington’s support for the Zionist regime’s genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. The genocide provided the framework for Israel, US imperialism’s attack dog in the region, to decimate the Iranian-aligned Hamas and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Under both Biden and Trump, Washington supplied tens of billions of dollars in high-powered weaponry to the Zionist regime and hosted the war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu for multiple consultations in the White House.

Direct control over Gaza through the creation of a Greater Israel is aimed at setting the stage for a US-dominated economic corridor for trade between India and Europe that will attempt to sideline China’s Belt and Road initiative.

The European imperialist powers fully endorse Trump’s drive for regime change in Tehran. When the would-be dictator unilaterally abrogated the UN-backed Nuclear Accord with Iran in 2018, reimposing crippling economic sanctions, the European powers asserted their readiness to defend the agreement and maintain trade with Tehran. However, this never came to pass, principally because the European bourgeoisie feared losing access to the much more lucrative US market if it openly challenged Washington’s sanctions regime.

The breakdown in the transatlantic relationship is a major factor driving the aggressiveness of the European powers towards Iran. Having already witnessed Trump’s efforts to cut a deal with Russia over their heads to end the war in Ukraine, Berlin, Paris and London are determined not to be shut out from a share of the spoils of imperialist plunder in the Middle East.

In addition, they want to continue the war with Russia at all costs, while Iran has provided support to the Putin regime. They therefore helped reimpose UN sanctions on Iran under the so-called “snapback” mechanism last September.

The clearest statement in support of a “regime change” war from the European imperialists came from German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who declared in January that the Tehran regime’s “days are numbered” and that it must be removed from power. Then, at last weekend’s Munich Security Conference, the organisers, who have close ties to the German government, cancelled invitations to Araghchi and an Iranian delegation.

Instead, they offered a prominent platform at their war summit for Reza Pahlavi, the son of the last Shah. A large demonstration of far-right activists and Iranian exiles, carted to Munich from across Europe, was assembled on the city’s Theresienweide to hear Pahlavi speak.

In his remarks, the Crown Prince explicitly appealed for a US bombardment of the country to facilitate the reimposition of an Iranian monarchy. Under his father’s despotic rule from 1953 to 1979, the Iranian monarchy served as a US puppet in the region and was notorious for its torture, killing and ruthless persecution of political opponents. Speaking alongside Pahlavi at the demonstration was Lindsey Graham, one of Trump’s closest confidantes. Demonstrations coordinated with the Munich event also occurred in Los Angeles and Toronto, where far-right MAGA slogans, Israeli flags and the pre-1979 Iranian flag emblazoned with the monarchy’s insignia were on full display.

The imperialists and their lackeys are in a position to so brazenly prepare yet another war of aggression thanks above all to the systematic demobilisation of the global mass movement against the Gaza genocide. While millions of people from the US to Indonesia, Britain, Germany, Canada, Australia and elsewhere took to the streets for over two years to express their outrage at imperialist-backed barbarism, the leaderships of these protests sowed fatal illusions in the very great powers guilty of backing mass murder. They claimed that the US and European imperialists could be pressured to call Netanyahu’s fascist regime to heel or that the United Nations could intervene.

Hostile to any attempt to mobilise the working class in the imperialist centres and throughout the Middle East against war and genocide, they deliberately confined the demonstrations to appeals to the ruling class and blocked efforts to link the mass movement with struggles by workers against job and public spending cuts, which governments in every country have enforced to pay for the rearmament of their militaries to wage war.

Now, with the genocide continuing and imperialism escalating its conscious plan to the next stage to subjugate the entire middle East with brute force, not a single demonstration is being called by the political organisations who dominated the leadership of the anti-genocide demonstrations in North America and Europe.

The urgent task before workers in the imperialist centres of North America and Europe, as well as in Iran and throughout the Middle East, is to build a global anti-war movement. It must combine opposition to imperialist barbarism with the struggles of workers against the attacks on jobs and social programmes imposed by the ruling elites to pay for militarism and war. Such a movement must be animated by the programme of socialist internationalism to abolish capitalism, the source of war, ever deepening social inequality and the threat of dictatorship.



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