

With US imperialist war machine in position, Trump menaces Iran in State of the Union speech

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American imperialism's preparations for an aggressive and illegal war against Iran are all but complete, with a massive war machine consisting of two aircraft carrier strike groups and hundreds of aircraft in position throughout the Middle East. US President Donald Trump issued groundless accusations against Tehran in his State of the Union address Tuesday designed to legitimise the impending military onslaught.

Denouncing Tehran's "sinister" ambitions to secure a nuclear weapon, Trump asserted of the country's nuclear programme, "We wiped it out and they want to start all over again," a reference to the 12-day war waged by Israel and the US last June. The Tehran regime had failed to respond to a warning to make "no future attempts" to establish a nuclear weapons programme.

Moreover, the would-be dictator added, "They've already developed missiles that can threaten Europe and our bases overseas, and they're working to build missiles that will soon reach the United States of America." He concluded by vowing not to allow "the world's number one sponsor of terrorism" to win.

These lies resemble nothing so much as the accusations levelled against Iraq's Saddam Hussein about his "weapons of mass destruction" prior to the 2003 invasion. The reality is that Iran's bourgeois-clerical regime has repeatedly denied any intention of creating nuclear weapons, insisting instead that its nuclear programme is purely for civilian use. The bourgeois nationalist regime in Tehran has instead sought to use its nuclear programme and ballistic missiles, together with its trading and security relations with Russia and China, as leverage to reach a deal with imperialism that would integrate the Iranian economy into global capitalism.

By contrast, US imperialism has in Trump's own words assembled an "armada" for war thousands of miles away from the United States. Washington has spent decades strangling Iran's economy with brutal sanctions and conducting sabotage and other disruption operations through Israeli and US intelligence services.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, successive US governments have endorsed Israel's genocide of the

Palestinians in Gaza, which decimated Hamas, one of Iran's closest allies. With US encouragement, Israel bombarded Lebanon, destroying much of Iranian-aligned Hezbollah's capabilities. US logistical support enabled the Zionist regime to assassinate Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh while he was a guest of honour of the Iranian regime in Tehran, as direct US intervention led to the bombing of the country's nuclear sites last June. In neighbouring Syria, US-funded Islamist forces, successors to the al-Qaida terrorist group, toppled the Tehran-backed Assad regime, cutting off a key Iranian access route to Lebanon and the Mediterranean coast.

Nobody should be fooled by Trump's remark during his address that he would prefer a "diplomatic solution." The talks between US and Iranian officials set to continue in Geneva on Thursday have more the character of a mafia shakedown given the aggressive posture of the US military and Trump's threats. Washington's insistence that Iran end its nuclear programme, scrap its ballistic missiles and halt all cooperation with the movements aligned with Tehran across the region will be delivered as an ultimatum, with the alternative being a US imperialist-led war.

Washington's goal is to consolidate its hegemony over one of the world's most important oil-producing regions. Under both Biden and Trump, the US has pursued the agenda of a "new Middle East," based on a Greater Israel, "regime change" in Iran and the sidelining of Russia and China. Trade routes from India to Europe, investment partnerships with the despotic Gulf sheikhdoms and the direct exploitation of energy resources by American capital would be the result. The universal support from the imperialist powers for the Gaza genocide shows the barbaric methods they are ready to use in pursuit of these goals.

Washington can proceed with such brazen criminality because no opposition to its war of plunder exists within the European imperialist powers. On the contrary, they are equally as enthusiastic about installing a Western puppet regime in Tehran because they hope to secure their own pound of flesh by opening up the country's economy to ruthless exploitation by global finance capital and major energy conglomerates.

Addressing the media on Monday, German government

spokesman Stefan Kornelius reiterated virtually word for word the Trump administration's demands on Tehran. A solution to the crisis "requires Iran to verifiably stop its military nuclear programme. No ballistic missiles may be launched from Iran against Israel or the Gulf states, and destabilising activities in the region must cease," he declared. Last month, Chancellor Friedrich Merz declared in India that the Iranian regime's "days are numbered," a clear indication of support for US war plans from a political leader who lauded Israel's savage bombardment of Iran last year because the Zionists were "carrying out the dirty work for all of us."

The unrestrained warmongering from governments in North America and Europe extends to broad sections of the pro-imperialist middle class. An indication of this was provided by the substantial numbers mobilised in demonstrations in Munich, Toronto and Los Angeles earlier this month by right-wing Iranian exile groups and businessmen on a programme of imperialist-led "regime change" and the return of the monarchy to Tehran in the person of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, the son of the last Shah, who was toppled during the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Police reported 250,000 participants in Munich and tens of thousands in Toronto, where participants carried the old monarchist and Israeli flags, and chanted pro-Pahlavi slogans.

The official "left wing" of the political establishment is no less exuberant about the prospect of a war for regime change. Democratic Socialists of America member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez attended the Munich Security Conference earlier this month, where the red carpet was rolled out for Pahlavi. Ocasio-Cortez declared, "Right now, what the Iranian regime is doing, particularly with respect to protesters, is a horrific slaughter—some estimates have tens of thousands of people now" killed. This is an unsubstantiated death toll, provided by CIA-funded exile "human rights" groups and repeated by Trump to justify war preparations.

In Germany, the Left Party is campaigning for the German government to join in the imperialist regime change operation more aggressively. In January, the Left Party's parliamentary group in the Bundestag presented a motion calling for the German state, which is investing €1 trillion in its military to wage war around the world, to take steps to strengthen "the democratic strivings of civil society in Iran and the right to self-determination." The motion insisted that this should include sanctions against Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), before adding cynically that measures be adopted so that "economic and financial" sanctions do not impact the civilian population. This under conditions where the IRGC plays a major role in the Iranian economy through its business operations in sectors like manufacturing, oil and gas, banking and telecommunications. Two weeks after the motion was filed, the European Union formally designated the IRGC a terrorist organisation.

The aggressiveness of the imperialists exposes the bankruptcy of Iran's bourgeois-nationalist regime. It has long sought to

strike a balance between maintaining economic and military relations with China and Russia respectively and working for an agreement with Western imperialism. But the American and European imperialists' demands will only be satiated if Tehran totally capitulates to their bullying threats.

At home, the bourgeois-clerical regime, which has already dismantled almost all of the social gains made following the 1979 revolution, confronts mounting social anger. While the protests that broke out in late December among bazaar merchants, traditionally a key pillar of support for the government, were dominated politically by right-wing, pro-imperialist and pro-monarchist forces, anger and frustration are building among the workers and rural poor. Iran's currency has collapsed in value due to US sanctions, making basic necessities unaffordable. Any concessions the regime makes to imperialism will only exacerbate these social tensions.

Other bourgeois forces in Iran are eagerly vying for the support of the imperialist powers to overturn the Islamic Republic. In addition to the royalist forces led by Pahlavi, a group of five Kurdish nationalist parties announced last week the conclusion of a "Coalition of the Political Forces of Iranian Kurdistan" to seek patronage from American imperialism. The statement put out by the Kurdistan Freedom Party, Kurdistan Freedom Life Party, Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, Khabat and Komala Party of Kurdistan dated February 22 made no mention of the looming imperialist war against Iran, even though Washington has deployed its largest military force to the region since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The disastrous consequences of the Kurdish nationalists' reliance on imperialist backing has been proven time and again over recent decades, from the first Gulf War in the early 1990s to the recent "regime change" operation in Syria. In the latter instance, Washington has thrown its former Kurdish allies to the wolves after installing former al-Qaida operative Ahmed al-Sharar at the head of an Islamist regime in Damascus, which has among other things opened up Syria's oil market to US energy giant Chevron.

The urgent task before workers in Iran and throughout the Middle East, and the working class in the imperialist centres of North America and Europe, is the construction of a unified anti-war movement to stop another eruption of imperialist barbarism. This is possible only by arming workers with a socialist and internationalist programme to put an end to the capitalist profit system, the root cause of imperialist war and exploitation.



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