

Stop the criminal US-Israeli war against Iran!

Statement of the Socialist Equality Party (US) National Committee
2 March 2026

1. The joint US-Israeli assault on Iran, which began in the early morning hours of February 28, is a criminal act of war waged in flagrant violation of the United States Constitution and international law. Its opening salvo included the murder of Iran's head of state, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and other senior leaders of the Iranian government. There is not a shred of legal justification for the attack. No authorization has been sought from or granted by the United States Congress, as required by Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. No resolution of the United Nations Security Council sanctioned the use of force. The assault was launched while US and Iranian negotiators were still engaged in talks mediated by Oman, which had concluded just two days earlier in Geneva. The attack on Iran is precisely what was described at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders in 1945–46 as a “crime against peace”—the “supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.”

2. The war began just two weeks after Secretary of State Marco Rubio used the Munich Security Conference on February 14, 2026 to dress up a program of predation and domination as a civilizational mission—urging Europe to cast off “guilt and shame” over empire and openly lamenting the decline of the “great Western empires,” i.e., the very colonial order built on plunder, repression and mass killing. The rhetoric of imperial nostalgia has been followed by the real thing—cruise missiles, airstrikes and the bombardment of Iranian cities—confirming that the talk of “civilization” is the customary lying preface to barbarism.

3. The bombardment of Iran is a crime—against a people and against civilization. When strikes hit cities like Tehran, Qom and Isfahan, the target is not merely “infrastructure” but the accumulated intellectual, cultural and social life of a historic society. The reduction of a nation of 90 million to coordinates and “regime-change” slogans is the language of imperialist barbarism. Working people in the United States and internationally must oppose this onslaught, demand an immediate end to the attacks, and reject the normalization of mass killing and cultural annihilation as instruments of policy.

4. It is widely acknowledged, even in the capitalist media, that the United States faced no threat from Iran. In fact, Trump himself, following the Twelve-Day War of June 2025—in which the United States struck three Iranian nuclear facilities with the largest conventional munitions in its arsenal—declared that Iran's nuclear weapons capacity had been “obliterated.” He repeated this claim as recently as his State of the Union address on February 24, 2026. His assertion, four days later, that Iran posed an “imminent threat” to the United States was directly contradicted by a 2025 assessment from the Defense Intelligence Agency, which concluded that Iran was years, if not a decade, from developing intercontinental missile capability. Two intelligence sources told CNN that Trump's claim was not backed up by intelligence. Even the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Representative Jim Himes, said after being briefed: “We have not heard articulated a single good reason for why now is the moment to launch yet another war in the Middle East.”

5. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) warned repeatedly that such an attack was imminent. On February 19, just

nine days before the assault, the ICFI stated: “The objectives of US imperialism—the domination of the planet—cannot be achieved peacefully. War against Iran is, for the United States, an essential stage in its preparation for the coming conflict with China.” It continued with a warning of the most far-reaching implications: “War will not be stopped by appeals to imperialist and bourgeois governments. The international working class confronts a situation comparable to that which existed on the eve of World War II. But the comparison is inadequate, because the consequences of war today would be infinitely more terrible than they were 87 years ago. Humanity faces the imminent danger of a nuclear catastrophe that could result in the destruction of all human life.”

6. Trump is hardly attempting to present a coherent, let alone convincing, explanation for his decision to launch a war. Just four days earlier, he had delivered a State of the Union address, the longest in history, that devoted barely a few sentences to Iran, even though he had by that time signed off on the war. The military buildup—the largest in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq—was well advanced. Israeli and American intelligence agencies had been tracking Khamenei's movements for months.

7. Trump announced the war not in a nationwide address from the Oval Office, not before the Congress that the Constitution charges with the power to declare war, but in an eight-minute video posted at 2:30 in the morning to his private social media platform, Truth Social, from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida. He wore a white baseball cap emblazoned with “USA.” Trump was not speaking to the American people. He was speaking to his base—to the fascistic movement that he has cultivated and that constitutes his real political constituency. As the WSWS wrote in a statement on February 28, “Now, Trump, baseball cap on his head, announced his decision in the dead of night, while most Americans were sleeping. He has set the United States and the entire world on a disastrous course.” The statement drew the inescapable historical parallel: “In the future, historians will compare Trump's February 28, 2026 attack on Iran to Hitler's September 1, 1939 invasion of Poland. They are crimes of equal magnitude.”

8. The fact that polls confirm overwhelming popular opposition to war has no effect whatsoever on Trump's calculations. A University of Maryland poll conducted weeks before the strike found that only 21 percent of Americans favored an attack on Iran, while 49 percent were firmly opposed. A YouGov snap poll taken on the day of the strikes found just 34 percent approval—the lowest public backing for a US military campaign in modern history, less than half the support recorded for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. A Reuters/Ipsos poll found 43 percent disapproval versus only 27 percent approval. Seventy-four percent of respondents in a CBS/YouGov poll said Trump required congressional approval he never sought. The Quinnipiac poll found seven in 10 voters opposed military action against Iran. These figures reveal the depth of the chasm between the American ruling class and the population it oppresses. The war is being waged not in the name of the American people but against their clearly expressed will.

9. The war itself has taken the form of targeted assassinations of political leaders and military commanders, accompanied by massive

bombardment that has produced terrible civilian casualties. Within hours of the first strikes, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was confirmed dead, along with the chief of army staff, the defense minister, the head of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, the secretary of the Defense Council and approximately 40 other officials. A girls' elementary school was struck in the city of Minab in southern Iran; Iran reported nearly 150 schoolchildren killed. The Iranian Red Crescent reported more than 200 dead in the initial hours alone. The assault has continued, with strikes "in the heart of Tehran" as the toll mounts. The killing of Khamenei's daughter, grandchild, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law have been confirmed.

10. In a telephone interview with the *New York Times* on Sunday, Trump declared that the United States and Israel "intended" to continue the war for "four to five weeks," making clear that Washington is preparing a sustained bombing campaign aimed at bludgeoning Iran into submission. In the same interview, Trump spoke with chilling indifference about the deaths of US soldiers, stating bluntly, "We expect casualties," while adding that Pentagon estimates could be "quite a bit higher." These remarks amount to an open declaration that the White House is prepared to sacrifice countless lives—above all, in Iran but also throughout the region and among US troops—to prosecute a criminal war of conquest.

11. Iranian leaders and military officials were caught by surprise, once again accepting, as they had done before the June 2025 war, American assurances that negotiations were being pursued in good faith. Iran's foreign minister had left Tehran for Geneva only days before the attack. Iran's state news agency published a commentary expressing disappointment over the talks but blaming Washington for the impasse—still, even at that late hour, operating on the assumption that the diplomatic process was real. The pattern is now unmistakable: The United States uses the pretense of diplomacy to lull its adversary into a false sense of security while preparing the killing blow. In June 2025, Israel struck while US-Iran talks were scheduled to resume days later. In February 2026, the assault came two days after the Geneva round ended.

12. The response of the European imperialist powers has been no less contemptible. Though it was the United States and Israel that launched the war—striking a sovereign nation while negotiations were ongoing, assassinating its head of state, bombing a school full of children—the joint statement issued by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron, and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz denounced not the aggressors but the victim. The E3 statement "condemned Iranian attacks on countries in the region in the strongest terms" while saying merely that the three governments "did not participate in these strikes." Starmer called the Iranian regime "utterly abhorrent" and demanded that Iran "refrain from further strikes"—as though a nation subjected to a surprise attack that killed its leadership and its schoolchildren has no right to defend itself. By the next day, Starmer had gone further, announcing that British jets were conducting "defensive operations," that Britain had already intercepted Iranian strikes, and that he had accepted a US request to use British bases to strike Iranian missile sites. The pretense of non-involvement is being discarded day by day, precisely as it always is. The European powers are being drawn into the vortex of American militarism, just as they were in Iraq, in Libya, and in the proxy war in Ukraine.

13. The United States and Israel have certainly inflicted serious damage. The decapitation of Iran's political and military leadership is a devastating blow. But history teaches that it is usually a grave mistake to judge the outcome of a war on the basis of the results of its first days or even months. The initial shock and awe of the 2003 Iraq invasion was followed by two decades of insurgency, sectarian civil war, and strategic catastrophe for the United States. The fall of Kabul to the Taliban in 2021—20 years after the "successful" invasion of Afghanistan—stands as a monument to imperial hubris. Iran is a nation of 90 million people with a land mass nearly 74 times that of Israel. Its population has endured eight

years of war with Iraq, decades of sanctions and repeated foreign assault. The assumption that the murder of Khamenei will produce the collapse of the state, with a grateful population welcoming regime change imposed by US mass murder, is the same delusion that has attended every American military adventure since Vietnam.

14. The United States has unleashed a war with incalculable economic, social and political consequences. Iran's retaliatory strikes have already spread across the Persian Gulf, hitting US military bases, civilian airports, and infrastructure in Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan. Missiles have struck Israel, killing civilians in residential areas. The Strait of Hormuz—through which approximately 20 percent of the world's oil passes daily—faces disruption. Oil prices have surged. Global shipping routes are in turmoil. Airlines have canceled flights across the region. The conflict threatens to engulf the entire Middle East in a conflagration whose scale and duration no one can predict. The first American casualties have already been reported.

15. The real reasons for this war lie not in Iran's nuclear program—which the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) has repeatedly stated it cannot confirm is anything other than peaceful—but in the geopolitics of oil, the struggle for control of strategic resources and the deepening crisis of American global hegemony. Iran sits atop the world's fourth-largest proven oil reserves and second-largest natural gas reserves. It commands the northern shore of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most strategically significant chokepoints in the global energy system. The control of these resources—and more importantly, the ability to deny rivals access to them—has been the central preoccupation of American foreign policy in the Middle East for more than seven decades.

16. The drive to subjugate Iran cannot be separated from the broader trajectory of American imperialism. As the WWS explained even before the attack, the seizure of Venezuelan oil and the assault on Iran are components of the same strategy: The United States is seeking to take hold of the world's energy resources in preparation for military confrontation with China, which imports more than 70 percent of its daily oil consumption. Iran accounts for more than 10 percent of Chinese energy imports, and losing access to it would be a major strategic blow to China's independent industrial base. The war against Iran is, in this sense, a war for global hegemony, directed not only at Tehran but at Beijing, Moscow and the European capitals whose dependence on Middle Eastern energy gives Washington an instrument of coercion. The Trump administration has threatened not only Iran but also its nominal allies—imposing tariffs on European goods, threatening Greenland, seizing control of Venezuelan oil, and making clear that in the emerging era of great-power competition, the United States intends to use its military supremacy to maintain dominance over every strategically significant region on Earth.

17. The role of the Democratic Party in enabling this war makes it the accomplice of Trump. The Democrats are not an opposition to the war. They are its accomplices. They have funded every weapon now being deployed against Iran. The \$901 billion National Defense Authorization Act passed the House in December with 115 Democrats voting yes. In the Senate, two-thirds of the Democrats voted in favor. In January, 149 House Democrats voted for \$839 billion in defense appropriations. In the weeks preceding the attack, as the largest military buildup since the 2003 Iraq invasion was underway, neither House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, nor Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, nor Senator Bernie Sanders, nor Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez mounted any serious effort to prevent the war. On the contrary, AOC repeated the administration's regime-change talking points at the Munich Security Conference. Democratic Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania explicitly pledged his support for bombing Iran on Newsmax, declaring: "I absolutely was fully supportive and was cheering for that Midnight Hammer." Democratic Representative Josh Gottheimer issued a bipartisan statement

explicitly opposing a resolution that would have prohibited the use of force against Iran without congressional authorization. Democratic Senator Mark Warner declared: “I think it’s appropriate the president has all the options on the table.”

18. The Democrats promote all the vicious anti-Iran propaganda employed by Trump. They echo his characterization of Iran as the “number one state sponsor of terror.” They recycle every lying argument for regime change—from the need to ensure that Iran never has a nuclear weapon to the claim that the Islamic Republic is uniquely oppressive (in a region with savage US-backed dictatorships in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states). The *New York Times*, speaking for the Democratic Party, was actively involved in legitimizing and preparing public opinion for the attack, publishing detailed outlines of military options, including strikes designed to “create the conditions on the ground” for murdering Khamenei. Now that the war has been launched, the Democrats’ “opposition” consists entirely of procedural complaints about the absence of congressional authorization—not a single word of principled opposition to the war itself. Jeffries himself declared, “Iran is a bad actor and must be aggressively confronted.” This is not opposition to war. It is a demand to be included in the decision to wage it.

19. The assault on Iran is the outcome of a 73-year history of American imperialist aggression against that country—a history that makes nonsense of the propaganda presenting Iranian resistance as irrational or unprovoked. In 1953, the CIA and British MI6 overthrew Iran’s democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh to secure Western control of Iranian oil; some 300 people were killed in the streets of Tehran. For 26 years the United States sponsored the Shah’s dictatorship, training and equipping the SAVAK secret police in the methods of torture and repression. During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980–88, the US provided intelligence to Saddam Hussein’s regime knowing it would be used to direct chemical weapons strikes against Iranian soldiers—tens of thousands of whom were gassed. In July 1988, the USS Vincennes shot down Iran Air Flight 655, a civilian airliner, killing all 290 passengers and crew, including 66 children; the warship’s captain was awarded the Legion of Merit. Since 2007, Israel, with American complicity, has assassinated at least seven Iranian nuclear scientists by car bomb, magnetic device and remote-controlled machine gun. The Stuxnet cyberweapon, jointly developed by the US and Israel, destroyed approximately 1,000 centrifuges at the Natanz facility. In January 2020, the US assassinated General Qasem Soleimani at Baghdad International Airport. In June 2025, the US bombed Iran’s nuclear facilities under international safeguards, killing over 1,000 people and specifically targeting nuclear scientists in their homes. And now, in February 2026, it has assassinated the country’s head of state and dozens of other top officials, as well as bombing an elementary school. To describe Iranian hostility to the United States after all this as irrational is not analysis. It is the self-serving mythology of an imperial power.

20. This is, moreover, a war being waged by a government that is simultaneously at war with the American people. The Trump administration is systematically dismantling democratic rights, purging the civil service, weaponizing federal agencies against political opponents, attacking the judiciary, gutting social programs and concentrating unprecedented power in the executive. It has deployed ICE and CBP agents to terrorize immigrants and subject American cities and neighborhoods to police-state methods that violate the Bill of Rights. The same administration that has launched this criminal war against Iran is seeking to impose a dictatorship at home. It governs in the interests of a financial oligarchy whose wealth has reached obscene levels, while the working class confronts falling real wages, a housing crisis, collapsing public services and the erosion of every social gain won over the past century. The war against Iran and the war against the American working class are not separate phenomena. They are two fronts of the same

offensive. Militarism abroad has always served as the instrument and companion of social reaction at home.

21. The working class—in the United States, in Iran, in Europe and throughout the world—must be mobilized against this criminal war. No section of the capitalist political establishment will stop it. The Democratic Party, as demonstrated above, is not an opposition to imperialism. The trade union bureaucracies, bound hand and foot to the Democratic Party and the capitalist state, will do nothing. The pseudo-left organizations that orbit these institutions serve only to channel opposition back into the framework of capitalist politics.

22. The Socialist Equality Party and the International Committee of the Fourth International advance the following program in the fight against the criminal war on Iran:

- **The immediate and unconditional cessation of all US and Israeli military operations against Iran.** Not a single bomb more, not a single drone more. This war must be stopped now, and with it the broader US-Israeli campaign of aggression across the Middle East—including the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the escalating attacks aimed at subjugating the entire region through terror, blockade and military force.

- **The withdrawal of all US military forces from the Middle East and the closure of the hundreds of military bases that serve as the infrastructure of imperialist domination.** The vast network of American military installations across the Persian Gulf—in Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq—exists not to defend the American people but to project the power of American finance capital over the world’s energy resources.

- **The disbanding of NATO and the liquidation of the massive military-intelligence apparatus of American imperialism.** More than 1 trillion dollars a year is funneled into the Pentagon and the intelligence agencies—a colossal diversion of social resources into the machinery of death. These resources must be redirected to meet the pressing social needs of the working class: healthcare, education, housing and the rebuilding of crumbling infrastructure.

- **The repudiation of all forms of sanctions and economic warfare against Iran and every other country.** The sanctions regime that has strangled the Iranian economy for decades, restricting access to medicine and essential goods, is a form of collective punishment directed against an entire population. It must be ended immediately.

- **Full accountability for the architects and perpetrators of this war.** The launching of a war of aggression without congressional authorization, in violation of the U.S. Constitution and the U.N. Charter, is a criminal act. Those responsible—from the president to the military and intelligence officials who planned and executed the assassination of a head of state and the bombing of civilian targets, including an elementary school—must be held to account.

- **The defense and extension of democratic rights.** The fight against war cannot be separated from the fight against the fascist transformation of the American state. The same government that bombs Iran without congressional approval is gutting democratic rights at home, attacking the judiciary, weaponizing federal agencies and criminalizing dissent. The working class must defend the right to protest, to organize and to oppose the policies of its government without fear of repression.

23. These demands cannot be achieved through appeals to any section of the political establishment. They require the independent political mobilization of the working class. The International Committee of the Fourth International has established that the building of a genuine anti-war movement must be based on four essential principles:

- **First, the struggle against war must be based on the working class, the great revolutionary force in society, uniting behind it all progressive elements in the population.**

- **Second, the new anti-war movement must be anti-capitalist and**

socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war except in the fight to end the dictatorship of finance capital and the economic system that is the fundamental cause of militarism and war.

- **Third, the new anti-war movement must be completely and unequivocally independent of, and hostile to, all political parties and organizations of the capitalist class.**

- **Fourth, the new anti-war movement must, above all, be international, mobilizing the vast power of the working class in a unified global struggle against imperialism.**

24. American workers have nothing to gain and everything to lose from a war that will cost lives, drain resources, fuel inflation and accelerate the drive toward dictatorship. The fight against war is inseparable from the fight against the capitalist system that produces it. Imperialism is not a policy choice; it is the inevitable product of the contradiction between a globally integrated economy and its division into rival nation-states, each dominated by a ruling class that pursues its interests through the exploitation of the working class at home and the plunder of resources and markets abroad. The struggle to stop this war is the struggle to put an end to the profit system itself and to replace the outmoded division of the world into rival nation-states with a world socialist federation, in which the productive forces of humanity are harnessed for the benefit of all.

25. Call meetings in your factories, workplaces, schools and neighborhoods demanding the immediate end of this war. The world must know that the American people oppose this war and demand that it be ended immediately. Take a stand. Join the Socialist Equality Party in the fight to build a powerful movement against imperialist war.



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