

# War abroad, mass layoffs in the US: The working class must stop the assault on Iran

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*The World Socialist Web Site is holding an emergency global webinar this Sunday, March 8, at 3:00 p.m. EDT, “Stop the War Against Iran!” We urge all our readers to register to attend.*

While the criminal war against Iran rages in the Middle East, a parallel war is being waged by the American ruling class at home. The United States economy shed 92,000 jobs in February, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Thursday, as the unemployment rate stands at 4.4 percent.

The figure sharply reversed expectations of job growth and marked the third contraction in five months. Since April 2025, the US economy has lost jobs on a net basis, while layoffs announced by major corporations have surged to levels not seen outside a recession.

US employers announced more than 1.2 million job cuts in 2025, according to monthly figures compiled by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, the highest total outside a formal recession or the beginning of the pandemic since they began tracking layoffs in 1989. Hiring announcements plunged by 55 percent last month and have fallen to their lowest level since 2010.

The scale of layoffs is vast. Oracle plans to cut up to 30,000 workers, Amazon has eliminated 30,000 corporate jobs since October and UPS is carrying out tens of thousands of layoffs after eliminating 48,000 positions last year. Block, the parent company of Square, fired nearly half its workforce in a single day.

The Trump administration forced out 317,000 federal workers last year alone, and social programs on which tens of millions rely, including Medicaid, Medicare and food assistance, are being gutted.

And this is just the start, as AI is being used to destroy huge sections of the workforce. Microsoft’s AI chief predicted that “most, if not all, professional tasks”

will be automated within 18 months. Amazon’s internal plans envision automating 75 percent of its warehouse operations, eliminating the need for 600,000 jobs over the next several years.

The resources ripped from the working class are being used for two purposes: the enrichment of the oligarchy, whose wealth has soared to the highest levels in history, and to fund imperialist war. The United States has already spent roughly \$3.7 billion in the opening days of its bombing campaign against Iran, while the Trump administration is proposing a \$1.5 trillion military budget. This would be a 50 percent increase over what is already the largest military budget in history.

At the same time, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has driven oil prices up 35 percent in a week, sending shockwaves through global supply chains and raising the specter of a new stagflation crisis. It is the workers who will be made to bear the cost of this through price increases.

The crisis is global. In Germany alone more than 250,000 manufacturing jobs have disappeared since 2019 as soaring energy prices—driven by the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine—ravage European industry. The same governments backing that proxy war are now rushing jets and warships to the Middle East in support of the US assault on Iran.

Opposition to the war has emerged immediately. Polls and demonstrations show deep hostility among workers and youth toward another imperialist catastrophe, including among many who previously supported Trump.

This widespread opposition finds no expression within the official political establishment. In Congress, both parties support the basic aims of the war and the massive expansion of military spending required to

wage it. Within the corporate media the debate is confined to questions of strategy and effectiveness, not the legitimacy of the war itself.

As the jobs massacre accelerates, the trade union apparatus is doing absolutely nothing to organize resistance. The unions representing federal and state workers, the Teamsters, the UAW and the rest of the labor bureaucracy have not lifted a finger to mobilize their members against layoffs, closures and the destruction of jobs by automation. In response to the first wave of struggles this year—including the nurses' strikes in New York and on the West Coast—the union apparatus has worked systematically to isolate workers and prevent any broader fight from developing.

This same apparatus has issued no call for opposition to the war. There has not been a single statement from the AFL-CIO, the UAW or any major trade union federation opposing the assault on Iran. Their silence reflects the social function of the union bureaucracy: suppressing the class struggle and enforcing the requirements of the corporations and the capitalist state.

Just weeks before the bombing began, the United Steelworkers pushed through a concessions contract covering tens of thousands of refinery workers, guaranteeing uninterrupted energy production and the continued flow of profits as the war escalated.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) encourages the development of rank-and-file committees in every section of the working class—independent of the trade union apparatus—to organize a coordinated offensive against the jobs massacre. This fight is inseparable from the fight against imperialist war.

The working class is the decisive social force that can stop the war. The catastrophic economic consequences of the war, as well as the connection between it and the developing dictatorship within the United States, will demonstrate to millions of workers the need to force an end to the war, the dismantling of the US war machine and the downfall of the Trump administration. This must find an organized, politically conscious expression in a mass working class movement.

The working class must oppose the war with the methods of the class struggle. Coordinated stoppages in the ports, shipping logistics, refineries, rail networks and military supply chains would directly disrupt the

operations that sustain the war. The recent protests by Mediterranean dockworkers refusing to handle military cargo demonstrate the potential of such actions to impede the machinery of war.

The vast resources now being funneled into militarism must be redirected to meet urgent social needs. The proposed military budget of more than \$1 trillion should be scrapped and the funds used instead to create jobs and finance housing, education and healthcare. ICE and other agencies involved in domestic repression must be dismantled.

The logic of such a movement points toward a general strike, that would draw behind it youth and progressive sections of the middle class.

Such a movement cannot be carried out through the existing union apparatus. The IWA-RFC encourages and supports the construction of rank-and-file committees in workplaces, schools and neighborhoods, democratically controlled by workers themselves. These organizations must take the initiative out of the hands of a union bureaucracy that for decades has supported US imperialism.

Above all, the fight against war must be conducted on an international basis. Workers in the United States have far more in common with workers in Iran and throughout the Middle East than with the billionaires and politicians who profit from war.

The growing opposition to the war must be transformed into a conscious political movement of the working class against the capitalist system that produces war, austerity and dictatorship. By mobilizing its immense social power, the working class can halt the war and open the road to a socialist reorganization of society on the basis of human need, not private profit.



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