

The US-Israel war against Iran threatens to engulf Türkiye and Azerbaijan

Bar?? Demir
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As the US-Israel imperialist war against Iran enters its second week, the risk of this criminal aggression expanding to include NATO member Türkiye and its ally Azerbaijan is coming to the fore.

According to a statement by the Ministry of National Defense on Wednesday, March 4, “A ballistic munition detected to have been launched from Iran and, after passing through the airspace of Iraq and Syria, directed towards Turkish airspace, was timely engaged and neutralized by NATO air and missile defense assets deployed in the Eastern Mediterranean.”

Speaking to AFP, an unnamed Turkish official said the target of the destroyed missile was “not Türkiye,” adding, “We believe the missile was targeting a base in the Greek Cypriot part of Cyprus but veered off course.” The Iranian General Staff also stated that it did not target any US bases in Türkiye.

However, following a meeting of NATO ambassadors, a statement was issued saying, “We condemn Iran’s targeting of Türkiye. NATO stands firmly with all Allies, including Türkiye.” Meanwhile, the Turkish press ran false and provocative headlines such as “Iran attacked Türkiye,” “Iran was going to hit Incirlik,” and “Iran fired missiles at the Ceyhan oil pipeline.”

This incident was used to strengthen the Turkish government’s ties with its US-NATO allies. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said, “We are taking all necessary measures in close consultation with NATO allies and intervening immediately when required. We also issued our ‘strongest’ warnings to prevent similar incidents from occurring again.” Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan conveyed Türkiye’s reaction to his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi, and Iran’s ambassador to Ankara was summoned to the Foreign Ministry.

On Thursday, it was announced that an attack had been carried out with drones on Nakhchivan Airport in Azerbaijan’s territory bordering Türkiye. President Ilham Aliyev immediately blamed Iran for the attack, calling it a “terrorist action” and said he had ordered the army to “prepare and implement appropriate retaliatory measures.”

Azeris, concentrated in northern Iran, are the country’s largest minority with at least 15 million of Iran’s 90 million population. In 2025, Israel imported 46 percent of its total oil from Azerbaijan. Most of this crude oil flows through the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan Pipeline, which passes through Türkiye, and Türkiye’s Ceyhan Port.

Iran has denied allegations of attacks on Türkiye and Azerbaijan. Speaking to the US press, Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi said, “Our armed forces deny any claim that a missile was fired at Türkiye or Azerbaijan. NATO says this missile was fired by Iran, but we have no reason to attack Türkiye. Türkiye is our good neighbor. Similarly, there is no reason to send drones to Azerbaijan.”

Workers in Türkiye, Azerbaijan, and internationally need to be warned: The US and Israel may resort to any kind of provocation to directly involve regional states in the war against Iran. Türkiye’s involvement in the war could, under Article 5 of NATO, formally draw the entire alliance into the conflict.

This danger was even raised by the pro-NATO bourgeois opposition party, the Republican People’s Party (CHP). CHP MP Hasan Öztürkmen warned that the attacks could be a “possible false flag operation by the US and Israel,” adding, “There is no treachery they would not commit to drag Türkiye into the dirty anti-Iran front and stir up anger against Iran in the Turkish public.”

However, neither the Erdoğan government's calls for a ceasefire and negotiations nor the CHP's warnings can prevent the war from spreading. The Turkish bourgeoisie and state are bound to NATO and international financial capital by thousands of ties and are completely incapable of waging a consistent struggle against imperialism. Türkiye's objective position in this war, as a host to US-NATO bases and an aid to Israel's oil supply, is on the side of the US and Israel.

Moreover, any step Ankara takes that disrupts the US imperialist war and its objectives could place Türkiye in the crosshairs, regardless of its NATO membership. As stated in the *World Socialist Web Site* Editorial Board's statement, the aim of the chain of imperialist wars that the US has waged in the Middle East for 35 years is "to undo and reverse the setbacks suffered by imperialism in the 20th century as a result of the revolutionary and anti-colonial movements of the oppressed masses."

The Trump administration demonstrated in Venezuela that it will not engage in any negotiations when the interests of the national bourgeoisie of sovereign states clash with those of US imperialism; it demands complete submission and a puppet government. Trump is now demanding "complete submission" in Iran.

Following World War I, the territories of present-day Türkiye, which had been occupied and carved up by imperialist powers and their proxies, won their national independence war in 1922 with the support of the Soviet government led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, thereby escaping colonization. However, as Trotsky brilliantly explained in his *Theory of Permanent Revolution*, this "political independence" did not end the country's dependence on imperialism as a backward country. Türkiye joined NATO against the USSR in 1952 and became a critical ally of US imperialism in the Middle East.

Whenever this military-strategic alliance faltered, Türkiye witnessed military coups and changes in government. The 1960 coup was followed by the 1971 military intervention, while the 1980 military coup was clearly carried out in collaboration with the CIA. This coup also secured imperialist dominance in Türkiye following the loss of Iran after the 1979 Revolution.

The most recent, NATO-backed, coup attempt was

made against Erdoğan on July 15, 2016, almost 10 years ago. It failed. The main reason for the attempt was that the foreign policy of the Erdoğan government was increasingly coming into conflict with the interests of its American and European allies.

While Ankara enthusiastically supported the US war for regime change in Syria, it could not accommodate the Pentagon's decision to make Kurdish nationalist forces in Syria its main proxy force. The possibility of a Kurdish state was unacceptable to Türkiye's ruling elite, given the country's large Kurdish population. Ankara responded by deepening its policy of manoeuvring between the US-NATO and China and Russia, while Washington's response was a coup attempt that included efforts to assassinate Erdoğan.

Following the suppression of the coup, Türkiye purchased S-400 air defense systems from Russia. In 2017, during the first Trump administration, the US Congress imposed CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) sanctions on Türkiye.

Today, the S-400s remain unused in Türkiye under US pressure. Erdoğan has strengthened ties with Washington during Trump's second term and largely aligned with his "new Middle East" policy. The government's speed in reconciling with the US after the coup reflects the objective interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie rather than its political spinelessness. The ruling class historically fears not imperialism, but the threat of social revolution coming from the working class.

Now, workers in Türkiye also face the danger of being drawn into an imperialist war against Iran due to Ankara's close ties to Washington and NATO. The government, and the capitalist political establishment as a whole, is inherently incapable of providing a progressive response to this crisis. This requires a consistent revolutionary struggle against imperialist war, and the only social force capable of doing so is the working class.



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