

The Riyadh statement: Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Arab regimes legitimize US-Israel war on Iran

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The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates held a summit in Riyadh on Wednesday, March 18, titled the “Consultative Ministerial Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of a Group of Arab and Islamic Countries on Iranian Aggression,” and condemned Iran, which is under illegal assault by the United States and Israel.

In the meeting’s final statement, the ministers “affirmed their condemnation and denunciation” of Iran’s attacks on US targets in Arab countries under the right to self-defense and declared that “such attacks could not be justified under any pretext or in any manner whatsoever.”

The statement, which distorts the truth, called on Iran to respect “international law, international humanitarian law and the principles of good neighborliness,” and to put an end to “the escalation.” The ministers signaled their intention to join the war against Iran by declaring that they would adopt the “necessary legitimate measures ... to halt the Iranian heinous attacks on their territories.”

This shameful statement, which bears witness to the reactionary nature of the pro-imperialist regimes across the region, not only fails to condemn the unlawful, unprovoked imperialist war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran but also fails to even mention the aggressor by name and instead blames Iran. This statement provides political justification and active support to the Trump administration, which is making criminal threats against Iran’s energy infrastructure and preparing for a ground operation, using the closure of the Strait of Hormuz as a pretext.

By allowing the United States to use their military bases and airspace, these regimes have aided and abetted the killing of dozens of high-ranking Iranian officials, the bombing of civilian infrastructure—including hospitals and

schools—and the killing of more than 1,000 civilians, at least 210 of whom were children.

The gap between Ankara’s support for the war—as evidenced by its signing of this statement, which is an expression of its subservient allegiance to US imperialism—and the sentiments of the people is so vast that the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has still not been able to publish the statement on its Turkish-language website or social media accounts.

According to a survey conducted by Asal Research in 26 provinces following the US-Israel attack on Iran, 96 percent of participants did not support the war. According to more recent research by Areda Survey, when asked, “Is there a legitimate reason for the war launched by Israel and the U.S. against Iran?”, 94.7 percent of respondents answered “no.”

While President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s government is unable to openly defend the statement in public, the Republican People’s Party (CHP) is attempting to exploit the government’s predicament; however, in doing so, it is revealing its inability to take a principled stand against imperialist war.

Namık Tan, the CHP’s deputy chairman responsible for foreign policy and foreign relations, stated that condemning Iran was appropriate, but then complained that the attacks by the US and Israel against Iran had not been mentioned, and spoke of the importance of international law. In fact, under international law, it is not possible to condemn both the unjust attacks by the US and Israel and Iran’s legitimate acts of self-defense at the same time.

Regardless of the CHP’s token criticisms, it too acts as a mouthpiece for the same ruling class as the Erdoğan government. A report submitted by the CHP to NATO in September echoed US and Israeli propaganda, declaring

Iran the source of regional instability and recommending NATO's expansion into Middle Eastern countries.

The Turkish bourgeoisie fears that the escalation of the war will drag NATO member Türkiye into the vortex of conflict, trigger a new wave of migration, further increase the influence of its rival Israel, and lead to separatist initiatives by Kurdish nationalist forces linked to the US and Israel in Iran and Türkiye. Ankara therefore continues to call for a solution through negotiations.

However, Ankara's response to the escalation of the war is increasingly aligned with the aggressive Middle East policy of US imperialism. In doing so, the Erdoğan government has fully embraced the narrative that portrays the war against Iran as an "Israeli war," in order to avoid straining relations with the Trump administration.

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, speaking in Qatar on Thursday, once again condemned Iran, stating, "As you know, Israel is the instigator of this war that has plunged our region into an unprecedented crisis," and called for "putting a stop to Israel's expansionism."

This narrative is untrue and aims to conceal Ankara's collaboration with US imperialism and, consequently, with Israeli Zionism. As David North, Chairman of the International Editorial Board of *the World Socialist Web Site*, stated at an emergency meeting organized by the WSW: "The tail may wag very, very vigorously, but it's the dog that's running the show. Israel does not drive American policy.... To present this as simply an Israeli war is to provide an alibi for American imperialism and to extract this war from the entire global strategy of the United States."

The Turkish bourgeoisie's deep financial and military-strategic ties to imperialism are dragging Türkiye—along with Israel's open ally Azerbaijan and collusive Arab regimes—into a reactionary, disastrous war against Iran alongside the United States.

According to a statement from the Ministry of National Defense, following the outbreak of war against Iran, Patriot air defense systems were deployed to the Incirlik Air Base in Adana and the Kürecik Radar Base in Malatya, both of which are used by the US as part of NATO. Ankara has stated that the bases in Türkiye are not currently being used directly in the war against Iran. Tehran has also stated that it has no intention of striking US bases in NATO member Türkiye.

These deployments were made following claims that Iran had fired missiles at Türkiye on three occasions. Tehran had categorically denied these claims. *Cumhuriyet* columnist Mehmet Ali Güler drew attention to the

possibility of a false-flag operation, stating: "The U.S. claims that an Iranian missile targeted Türkiye, while Iran asserts that it did not launch an attack against Türkiye. What is certain is that the debris that fell in Hatay and Gaziantep belongs not to the alleged Iranian missile, but to the U.S./NATO munitions said to have struck it. So, while the three missile incidents were not enough to provoke Türkiye against Iran, they served as a pretext for deploying Patriots at Incirlik and Kürecik!"

Güler added, "At this stage, the Patriots will serve not so much as a protective shield but rather as a tool for the U.S. to integrate Türkiye into its Iran strategy."

The war against Iran is escalating at a time when discontent and spontaneous strikes are on the rise among the working class due to rising living costs and eroding wages in Türkiye. As the Erdoğan government prepares for war in cahoots with the Trump administration, this is accompanied by the suppression of opposition at home. The recent arrests of Mehmet Türkmen, chairman of the independent rank-and-file union BİRTEK-SEN, on baseless charges of "inciting the public to hatred and hostility," and of *BirGün* newspaper columnist İsmail Ar? on charges of "publicly disseminating misleading information," are part of this campaign of repression.

The escalating US-Israeli war against Iran and the collaborationist nature of the Riyadh statement reveal that the anti-war sentiments prevailing among workers and youth in Türkiye, the Middle East, and around the world can only find political expression on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program against imperialism.



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