

The war against Iran and the normalisation of war crimes

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2 April 2026

US President Donald Trump's threat to bomb Iran back to the Stone Age has met with no reaction in the European media, or at best a shrug of the shoulders. Trump's threat to destroy the livelihood of a country with 90 million inhabitants and a 5,000-year-old culture was not deemed worthy of protest by any of the editorial writers and commentators who otherwise can't keep their mouths shut about Russian President Putin.

Trump made the threat several times in his tweets and, on Wednesday, also in a televised address to the American people. "We are going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks. We are going to send them back to the Stone Age," he said.

There is no doubt that Trump means this threat seriously. The only question is how far he will go. As far as using nuclear weapons? That cannot be ruled out.

Since the start of the war, Israel alone has dropped over 6,500 bombs on Iran; the number of US bombs is likely to be even higher. Thousands of people have already been killed, tens of thousands injured. The destruction of oil fields, nuclear power stations, energy and water supplies threatened by Trump, and the destruction of hospitals, schools and industrial facilities that has already begun, would condemn millions more to starvation, disease and death.

It is not only Trump's actions, but also his language that is reminiscent of the Nazis' genocidal policies. Shortly before the start of the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, Hitler's propaganda chief Goebbels wrote in his diary: "It will be a massive offensive on the grandest scale, probably the most powerful that history has ever seen... Bolshevism will collapse like a house of cards. We are on the verge of an unparalleled triumph."

Yet none of this is deemed worthy of comment by the

opinion-makers in the newsrooms. They did report on Trump's "Stone Age" threat, in some cases even in the headlines. But outrage or dissent? None whatsoever. At most, they are concerned about the consequences for oil prices, share prices and the future of NATO.

The *F.A.Z.*, the mouthpiece of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, even sought to detect a sign of moderation in Trump's inflammatory speech. "After the harsh rhetoric of recent days, Donald Trump comes across as relatively tame in his first live address on the war in Iran," it claimed. "Relatively restrained, relatively brief, but above all with relatively little new information."

The German tabloid *Bild* quoted Trump's threats at length and without criticism, and accused him of keeping "his further strategy, particularly regarding the 440 kilos of uranium suitable for nuclear bombs," vague.

The Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* noted with relief that Trump did not repeat the threat to leave NATO in his speech. "In fact, nothing new was said at all," it wrote.

The Polish *Rzeczpospolita* concluded: "The US President's late-night address was nothing groundbreaking. Neither regarding the war against Iran, nor oil prices, nor the future of NATO."

The Austrian *Standard* called Trump "President Haphazard" and accused him of failing, in his "weakly droned-out speech," to "rally his own people behind him," "unite his international partners," "set out concrete strategic goals" and "threaten to send in ground troops."

The Estonian *Postimees* even compared Trump's speech to a failed April Fool's joke. The Belgian paper *La Capitale* also quipped: "Do you know why newspapers no longer publish April Fool's jokes?"

Because with Donald Trump, every day is 1 April.”

Silence in the face of a capital offence amounts to consent. This applies not only to the media, but also to official politics. European governments are complicit in Trump’s war crimes.

Three days after the war began, German Chancellor Merz sat in the Oval Office and assured Trump of his support. Ramstein and other military bases in Germany, which are indispensable for US warfare, are available for use without restriction. Israel’s security remains a “German national interest”—even after the genocide in Gaza, the attack on Iran and the bombing and occupation of Lebanon.

This position is also supported by the Greens and the Left Party. The Left Party’s parliamentary group leader in the Bundestag (Germany’s Federal Parliament), Sören Pellmann, played down Trump’s speech: “Many announcements, little substance.” According to Pellmann, there is a lot of hot air behind Trump’s threats. After all, he did not announce the deployment of ground troops and did not threaten to withdraw from NATO again, he said.

British Prime Minister Starmer yesterday invited 40 countries to an online meeting on reopening the Strait of Hormuz, in which Germany and France also took part. In addition to diplomatic and political measures, military action was also discussed. The European powers are preparing to occupy the Strait of Hormuz with their own troops.

This is why they do not condemn Trump’s ‘Stone Age’ threat. They are not kowtowing to the criminal in the White House, but are themselves preparing similar crimes. The normalisation of war crimes is the inevitable by-product of the militarisation of foreign policy in the struggle for the imperialist redivision of the world.

This did not begin with the recent war against Iran. It is now becoming clearer why the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and its youth organisation, the IYSSE, became the target of a vicious smear campaign by the bourgeois press over ten years ago for criticising the far-right historian Jörg Baberowski. Baberowski had declared in *Der Spiegel* at the time that Hitler was not vicious, and had justified war crimes at a gathering at the German Historical Museum.

He stated there that in order to participate in the wars

against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, one must be prepared to “take hostages, burn down villages, hang people and spread fear and terror, just as the terrorists do.” Otherwise, one should keep out.

At the time, the IYSSE established a direct link between Baberowski’s propaganda for war crimes and the German government’s plans to rearm Germany as a major military power. Almost all the media and professors rallied behind Baberowski, while the IYSSE received strong support from students and their representatives.

Ten years and several wars later, legal consciousness in the media has sunk so low that even Trump’s call to bomb a country of 90 million people back to the Stone Age is accepted without batting an eyelid.



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