

# French government refuses to denounce US threat of genocidal attack on Iran as a war crime

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The French government's response to Trump's threats to annihilate Iranian civilization is an infamous mixture of cynicism and cowardice. While seeking to distance itself from Trump's most undeniably genocidal statements, it has made itself complicit in crimes against humanity.

President Emmanuel Macron did not bother to comment after Trump pledged to destroy Iran's bridges and electrical infrastructure, threatening: "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again." Macron left it to Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot to issue a statement. On France2 television, Barrot trivialized Trump's threats, calling them "excessive" and declaring, "Everything that is excessive is insignificant."

Barrot completely sidestepped the politically criminal and genocidal character of US policy. He naturally claimed that "France is firmly opposed to strikes on civilian infrastructure," while ignoring French attacks on civilians like the January 3, 2021 bombing of a wedding in Bounti during the war in Mali. But when asked point-blank whether US actions are war crimes, Barrot refused to answer, stating: "We must first analyze their strikes and their consequences in order to say."

This is a disgusting, cowardly evasion. The leader of the US government is threatening to destroy a civilization by annihilating its electrical and transport infrastructure. There is no legitimate debate as to the character of such a policy. It is unmistakably a statement of genocidal intent as US forces deliberately bomb civilian infrastructure in what, as even the United Nations has admitted, is a war crime.

Barrot's response exemplifies the bankruptcy of the French bourgeoisie's response to Trump's war on Iran. Relations between the US and European ruling classes are disintegrating, particularly after Trump threatened to invade the Danish territory of Greenland earlier this year.

Yet despite admitting that Trump launched the war outside of international law, the French government has not taken any significant action to halt the war.

It has refused to denounce Trump as a criminal, and his war as one of aggression and extermination. It has remained in the NATO alliance and continues to allow US supply planes carrying matériel to the Middle East to use its airbase at Istres. Despite its refusal to allow US fighter jets to fly out of French airbases to go bomb Iran, Paris thus remains complicit in US war crimes against the population of the Middle East.

Moreover, Macron has not publicly spelled out the disastrous impact on the French and world economy of the cutoff of Persian Gulf oil and gas exports due to Trump's war. Even as gas prices explode to over €2 per liter across France, there is no concrete discussion of what the collapse of energy and fertilizer supplies means for workers. Officials are silent on the impoverishment of the working class due to a surge in global fuel and food prices that is set to escalate, as well as on the threat, especially in more vulnerable countries, of famine claiming millions of lives.

Instead, a criminal light-mindedness about the implications of Trump's threats against Iran pervades the entire French ruling class. Last week, when Trump threatened to bomb Iran "back to the Stone Age," *Le Figaro* dismissed it as a "non-event" and complained that Trump had "no clear strategy to end the conflict."

Masses of Iranians gathering tonight around electrical plants, water treatment facilities and other civilian infrastructure are exposing attempts to downplay Trump's threats as insignificant. Trump's strategy is extermination, and claims that he has no strategy are lies. History will not look more favorably on those who peddle this lie than on French Nazi collaborationists in World

War II who, as the Red Army defeated Hitler's armies, complained behind closed doors that Nazi Germany had no strategy to deal with the Soviet Union.

The war on Iran is also exposing the reactionary character of the European bourgeoisie's calls for rearmament to wage an independent foreign policy from Washington. This policy, financed by hundreds of billions of euros in social cuts targeting workers across Europe, does not aim to prevent or stop US war crimes. Rather, it is preparing the European imperialist powers to pursue their own wars of plunder across Eurasia and the world.

This was apparent this weekend, during Macron's trip to Japan and South Korea. He met Japan's far-right prime minister, Sanae Takaichi, who has applauded Japan's genocidal war of occupation in China during World War II as a "war for security." In private, Takaichi and Macron no doubt discussed their anger with Trump amid the looming collapse of their economies due to the war on Iran.

In public, Macron stressed France's role in NATO operations while claiming to offer a "Third Way" policy independent of Washington and Beijing. Pointing to his deployment of the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle to the Eastern Mediterranean, where it is observing Israel's invasion of Lebanon, Macron said: "Our objective is not to be vassals of hegemonic powers. We do not wish to depend on China or be exposed to US unpredictability. ... Predictability has its virtues, as we have shown in recent years and, I daresay, recent weeks: We are where you know we will go."

In reality, the war with Iran exposes the impossibility of relying on second-rank imperialist powers such as France to restrain capitalism's plunge into a new world war and genocide. With the war set to create bitter hardship and explosive social anger among workers around the world, conditions are emerging for a united, international movement in the working class against war, genocide and the fascistic capitalist oligarchy that is unleashing them on humanity.

Such a movement can only proceed, however, by mobilizing the working class independently of national union bureaucracies and their political allies, such as Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed (LFI) party.

In his latest blog post, "Calm before the Storm," Mélenchon admitted that "popular anger can be felt today even in the hall of power," but nevertheless advised: "Let us savor this period of calm which is given to us. Soon, the shock wave of the Israeli and US war of aggression against Iran will spread stronger than ever across every

corner of the globe." He proposed to work with the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) union bureaucracy, to mount national protests calling on Macron to adopt price caps on key goods:

Preventing price increases is [our] priority and that of [CGT General Secretary] Sophie Binet, who luckily is coming to help us with the CGT. In many European countries, price caps on various goods are being proposed or adopted by governments. But not in France. Macron remains the president of the rich, who will get fat off the dividends that [French oil firm] Total will hand out.

While price caps are undoubtedly necessary and legitimate, workers must reject such complacent arguments that ignore the need to mobilize the working class directly against the war, and that tie workers in France to the CGT bureaucracy—a supporter of Macron's call to militarize France and prepare its industry for "high intensity war."

As bombs rain down on Iran, genocide continues in Gaza, and Trump threatens to blot out a civilization and plunder its oil, it is not time to "savor a period of calm." The working class cannot wait. It is time to urgently mobilize workers in France and across Europe against war, to defend Iran against imperialist war and genocide, and to struggle alongside their class brothers and sisters in America, where there is explosive opposition to Trump.



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