

# Trump's deployment of warships to Strait of Hormuz escalates Iran war

WSWS Editorial Board

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The announcement by President Donald Trump that the US military will “guide” commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz marks a major escalation of this criminal war of aggression. The *World Socialist Web Site* calls for the immediate mobilization of workers in the United States and internationally to demand: US troops out of the Middle East and an unconditional end to the US-Israeli war against Iran, which threatens the entire world with catastrophe.

According to US Central Command, “Project Freedom” will involve the mobilization of guided-missile destroyers, more than 100 aircraft and some 15,000 service members. Within hours of Trump’s statement, the fragile truce that brought over six weeks of savage US-led bombing of Iranian cities to an end on April 7 began breaking down.

Trump alleged that US forces had destroyed seven Iranian small boats, while the United Arab Emirates reported 15 drones and four missiles fired toward its territory from Iran on Monday. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps said it fired “warning shots” at US destroyers approaching the Strait.

The Strait of Hormuz—through which roughly one-fifth of the world’s oil supply passes—cannot simply be “secured” by escorting tankers with warships. Trump is recklessly endangering the lives of thousands of American sailors and airmen, placing them in the line of fire in a narrow chokepoint where Iran retains the ability to disrupt traffic with drones, missiles and small naval vessels. The point is not to “protect commerce,” but to create the conditions for a provocation. Any clash can be seized upon as the pretext for a new stage of imperialist barbarism.

Trump’s escalation flows directly from the failure of the war to achieve its objectives. Washington began this war on the assumption that Iran could be rapidly coerced into submission, that its state structures would fracture under decapitation strikes and mass bombardment, and

that US control over the Persian Gulf could be asserted without provoking major disruption. However, Iran has not capitulated, and the Strait remains contested.

On Friday, Trump, employing the language of a gangster, declared that if Iran did not “make a deal,” the United States would “go and just blast the hell out of them and finish them forever.” Such statements define the logic of the escalation now underway: a war of annihilation. Once the decision is made to wage an illegal war for domination of strategic chokepoints, the pressure to escalate acquires a momentum of its own.

Nothing can be ruled out, including the use of nuclear weapons. Their deployment would mean mass slaughter on an unprecedented scale. It would risk a radiological and environmental catastrophe across the Persian Gulf—poisoning air and water, threatening the region’s desalination-dependent populations, and contaminating critical energy infrastructure. It would detonate global consequences—fueling a wider war, tearing through world trade and supply chains, and pushing humanity to the brink of a general conflagration.

This is not simply a consequence of “bad policy” decisions or the product of one administration’s recklessness. It is rooted in the insoluble contradictions of American imperialism itself. For 35 years, the central project of American foreign policy has been to offset the long-term erosion of US economic dominance through the use of military force. In these conditions, militarism takes on an increasingly existential character for the ruling class: Retreat threatens the credibility of its global power, while escalation courts catastrophe.

The consequences of this escalation fall first and hardest on the working class, in Iran and the Middle East, in the United States, and across the world. The war has already consumed nearly \$50 billion, according to estimates, while the administration pleads poverty when it comes to any social need. The same government demanding

unlimited funds for missiles and destroyers could not find a fraction of that to prevent the collapse of Spirit Airlines, which has thrown 17,000 workers out of work as war-driven fuel costs surged.

The disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has driven oil prices above \$110 per barrel and injected a new shock into an already fragile world economy. Airlines in Europe and North America are cutting capacity and canceling tens of thousands of flights, translating directly into layoffs, reduced hours and intensified exploitation for pilots, cabin crew, ground staff and maintenance workers, while tens of thousands of seafarers are effectively trapped in the Gulf amid the danger of attack.

Higher energy costs ripple outward into every supply chain—raising transport and import costs, accelerating inflation and driving up prices for food and basic necessities. This crisis is global in the most literal sense: Disruptions in the transit of key food inputs and fertilizer compounds through the region are already translating into mass impoverishment, deepening hunger and the threat of famine for millions in the poorest countries, who will be made to pay for a war waged in the interests of the imperialist powers and the financial oligarchy.

While there are bitter conflicts within the ruling class, these relate entirely to questions of tactics. There is unanimity on the goal of regime change in Iran and US imperialist domination over the Middle East. The *New York Times* editorial board, speaking for the Democratic Party, declared last month that it is a “mistake for any Americans, including Mr. Trump’s critics, to root for this country to fail.”

The Democratic Party functions as a partner in the prosecution of imperialist policy. This includes prominent figures associated with the Democratic Party’s so-called left, including Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and the trade union bureaucracies. The union apparatus held “May Day Strong” events that avoided mentioning the war on Iran in order to keep a lid on the mounting opposition within the working class

The decisive factor is the intervention of the working class. Only the independent mobilization of workers, acting as a class and uniting across borders, can halt the war drive, block the descent into wider conflagration, and oppose the social counterrevolution that accompanies militarism abroad with repression and austerity at home.

The international working class is already being driven into struggle by the war and its consequences. In opening the International May Day Online Rally on Friday,

WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North noted that in the first quarter of 2026, some 458 strikes were recorded across eight European countries alone, a significant rise compared with 2025. In the US, over 8 million joined March’s No Kings demonstrations against Trump’s erection of a fascist dictatorship.

“The same contradictions that produced World War I in 1914 resulted in socialist revolution in Russia in 1917,” North explained. “The same historical dynamic is at work today. The global crisis of capitalism that underlies the eruption of imperialist violence is also preparing the explosion of revolutionary struggle by the international working class.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* calls on workers in the US and throughout the world to demand: Stop the war against Iran! Withdraw all US forces from the Middle East. Expropriate war profits and use them to guarantee jobs, wages, benefits and social programs. Defend democratic rights. Build an independent movement of the working class against war and dictatorship—international in scope and socialist in program.

We urge workers to call meetings in your workplace and community. Discuss what is happening and what must be done. Break from the Democratic Party and all attempts to subordinate opposition to the institutions of the capitalist state. Build rank-and-file committees and link up with workers internationally.

These demands can only be realised within a broader perspective—one that recognises that war is not an aberration, but a product of capitalism itself. The fight against war is inseparable from the fight for socialism: The reorganisation of economic life on the basis of human need rather than profit, and the establishment of democratic control by the working class over the vast resources of society.



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