

Trump's police state crackdown and the onslaught against Iran: Two fronts of one war

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Over the past week, the Trump administration has simultaneously escalated its campaign to destroy democratic rights in the US and its criminal war against Iran.

At home, federal immigration agents have murdered two workers in six days—Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, gunned down July 7 as he drove his construction crew to work in Houston, and Joan Sebastian Guerrero, shot Monday through his windshield in Biddeford, Maine, then handcuffed as he lay on the pavement. These were men who began their days with no conception that within hours they would be dead.

In the face of mounting popular opposition, Trump is escalating his attacks on democratic rights. Trump responded to mourning protests against the ICE murders Wednesday by doubling down on allowing federal immigration thugs to carry out the type of traffic stops that led to the murder of the two innocent men. “We CANNOT give up one of I.C.E.’s most important and effective Crime Fighting tools, THE TRAFFIC STOP!” he posted on Truth Social, telling the agency: “go back and do your very important job.”

In every respect, the killings of Araujo and Guerrero were as violent and brutal as the murders of Renée Good and Alex Pretti. The Trump administration treats murder at the hands of the agencies of the state as part of normal operations.

Abroad, US forces have carried out five consecutive days of airstrikes against Iran through Wednesday, reimposed a naval blockade of Iranian ports Tuesday and struck coastal-defense and missile sites from Bushehr to Greater Tunb Island. Iran’s government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said Wednesday that the strikes on southern Iran had killed more than 30 civilians. The Health Ministry counted more than 260 wounded.

These are two fronts of the same war. American imperialism wages war abroad to subjugate Iran. It wages the war at home against the class that must pay for it and whose opposition must be broken. The police state erected at home is the domestic requirement of the wider war prepared abroad.

American imperialism went to war on February 28 to bring down the government in Tehran and take control of the Strait of Hormuz. More than four months on, the government stands, and the strait remains under Iranian control.

To dominate the country, Washington will need a major escalation of military violence, and the administration has made clear that it is actively considering sending ground troops. Asked on Fox News Tuesday about sending ground troops into Iran, US President Donald Trump said, “Sometimes you need a ground campaign.”

“It’s very difficult to envision any scenario where you could satisfactorily secure the Strait of Hormuz absent ground forces,” Jason Campbell, a former Pentagon official now at the Middle East Institute, told the Associated Press Tuesday. Such an operation, he said, would take tens of thousands of troops and come at “very high costs.”

A ground invasion of Iran would mean American dead and wounded on a scale not seen in decades—not since the wars in Korea and Vietnam. The Pentagon acknowledged 14 American dead and 414 wounded as of Monday, a count that is systematically understated and completely ignored in the media.

The Pentagon publicly puts the war’s cost at some \$30 billion, but NBC News reported Tuesday that the department’s internal estimate—counting damaged bases, destroyed aircraft and expended bombs and missiles—runs as high as \$100 billion. In estimates

published in *Fortune* in late June, Linda Bilmes of Harvard's Kennedy School put the war's long-run cost above \$1 trillion, including \$200 billion to \$300 billion to repair 228 damaged American military sites. All of this would be a down payment on the cost of a ground invasion of Iran.

Where is the money to come from? The US government is functionally bankrupt. The federal debt stands at \$39.4 trillion. Debt held by the public has passed 100 percent of the country's annual output. In this fiscal year's first seven months, the Treasury paid \$628 billion in interest, which is more than it spent on Medicare.

The American ruling class can finance such a war only through massive attacks on social programs. These attacks will provoke enormous opposition to a deeply unpopular war. In a Reuters/Ipsos poll completed Sunday, just 37 percent of Americans backed the resumption of the bombing.

American imperialism can achieve its aims only by escalating the war against Iran and slashing social spending, and it can impose both only through a frontal assault on democratic rights.

The Trump administration itself asserts the connection between the two fronts. In a *Wall Street Journal* column published Monday, "Why We're Dismantling the ICC," Secretary of State Marco Rubio declared that the United States would destroy the International Criminal Court "brick by brick, if necessary"—to shield, in his words, "Border Patrol agents working to remove violent criminals from our country, US Marines risking their lives to restore order in the Western Hemisphere, federal prosecutors working to dismantle terror networks plotting attacks on the American homeland."

Rubio places the immigration agents killing workers in American streets, the Marines waging war abroad and the prosecutors jailing political opponents under a single shield of impunity.

At 9:00 p.m. Thursday, Trump will deliver a prime-time address billed as a speech on election integrity and voting machines, while the bombing of Iran continues. The administration is building this apparatus ahead of the November elections, which will take place amid an immense political, social and economic crisis. But the elections are only the occasion. Social inequality is soaring, the war is swelling the oil companies' profits

while workers pay for it at the pump, and a police state is the only means of defending such a social order.

The Democratic Party opposes none of this. It is a faction of the same ruling class, and its criticisms of Trump are that he is not effectively defending the interests of American imperialism. When US and Israeli forces assassinated Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on February 28, the war's first day, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer welcomed the murder from the Senate floor: "I will not shed a tear for Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, who was killed in the initial rounds of airstrikes."

As the failure of Trump's war aims becomes clear, the Democrats turned to condemning the administration for insufficiently defending the interests of American imperialism. Schumer denounced the "ceasefire" Trump signed in mid-June as the "art of surrender."

When the killings of Good and Pretti produced mass outrage, the Democrats arranged a deal with Trump that kept ICE funded without a single condition. When millions joined the "No Kings" demonstrations against the administration, the Democrats and their political allies worked systematically to exclude the question of war from the protests. This is a party of war and Wall Street, and its function is not to fight the movement toward dictatorship but to contain the opposition to it.

The defense of democratic rights falls to the working class, and it cannot be separated from the fight against war. Both dictatorship and war arise from the same source: a capitalist oligarchy that can no longer rule by democratic means or maintain its world position by peaceful means. The struggle against ICE terror and against the war on Iran must be unified in an independent movement of the working class, in the United States and internationally, directed against the capitalist system itself.



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