US resumes strikes on Iran as global war escalates

Jordan Shilton
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After a pause of five days, American warplanes struck targets again in Iran early Thursday morning local time. The hour-long bombardment, which killed a family of three on Qeshm Island according to Iranian state media, including a 2-year-old child, was framed by Washington as a retaliation for attacks Tuesday and Wednesday by Tehran on US assets in Jordan and Egypt.

Speaking like a mafia hitman ahead of the US attack, President Donald Trump stated at the White House Wednesday that the US was "going to beat the f***ing sh** out of Iran." He added, "We're going to be hitting them very hard because it's our turn to hit them. They know it's coming. They asked us not to do it."

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps claimed responsibility for retaliatory attacks Thursday on military bases in Kuwait, Jordan, and Bahrain where US equipment is located. Washington denied Iranian claims that the attack in Jordan had destroyed three F-35 fighter jets and damaged three more. Whatever the truth of these assertions, the bourgeois-clerical regime in Tehran clearly retains the ability to hit US bases throughout the region. It also retains control over the crucial Strait of Hormuz, which accounted for about one-fifth of the world's oil tanker traffic prior to the war.

Trump ordered a pause to 13 nights of US air strikes on Iranian targets Friday under conditions in which US munition stockpiles, especially for its missile defence systems, are running low. However, recent days have underscored that American imperialism and its allies continue to systematically escalate the war. On Saturday, Ukraine struck an Iranian ship in the Caspian Sea for the first time, killing an Iranian sailor and demonstrating how the US/NATO war on Russia and the US/Israeli war on Iran are rapidly converging into a global conflagration.

The US strikes on Iran came on the heels of the first publicly announced coordinated attack by Saudi Arabia and the US on Iranian-aligned militias in Iraq. Riyadh's increasing aggression follows the warning by Yemen's Houthis earlier this month that they would block the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea, posing a major risk to Saudi energy exports.

The Popular Mobilisation Force, which consists of Shia militias that have been integrated into the country's security forces, reported 20 deaths and over 30 injuries in the strikes. A statement from the group denounced the Saudi-US attacks as a "dangerous escalation, a violation of Iraq's sovereignty and an attack on its official security institutions."

Hours later, an American-owned vessel storing liquified natural gas at the Egyptian port of Damietta was struck by a drone. Iran has yet to publicly claim responsibility for the incident, but Trump placed the blame on Tehran during his White House remarks. It was the first time that targets in Egypt were struck since the US and Israel launched their illegal war in February.

The Trump administration is also working to draw the European imperialist powers into the war. According to a *Politico* report, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth held consultations with his British counterpart Wes Streeting and other senior officials from both governments last Friday on creating a "defensive" patrol mission involving the European powers in the Strait of Hormuz. The mission would be US-led, with some ships tasked with guarding civilian vessels and others deployed to clear mines, the *Politico* report noted.

Streeting and Hegseth held talks with French Armed Forces Minister Catherine Vautrin on the proposal Monday and will continue discussions with other European capitals this week. According to the news site, European officials indicated their reluctance to "jump into a dangerous" mission after Trump failed to consult them prior to launching the war on Iran.

The European imperialists' objections have nothing to do with opposition to military violence. Over the past year and a half, they have emerged as the leading proponents and funders of the aggressive war on Russia, financing and supplying long-range weaponry that Ukraine has used to strike targets far behind the front lines in Russia. Led by Germany, European governments are spending well over a

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trillion euros to rearm and militarise society on a scale not seen since World War II. Berlin, Paris, and London were above all troubled by the prospect that Trump's war on Iran could hamper the war on Russia by draining US weaponry and diverting Washington's attention from the drive to inflict a defeat on Russia in order to subordinate it to a semi-colonial status.

Saturday's missile strike by Ukraine in the Caspian Sea has linked the two fronts in the rapidly intensifying world war more directly than ever before. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the White House just days later for consultations with Trump, the same day that the US President sat down in the Oval Office with the war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu. The genocidal regime in Israel that Netanyahu heads has waged the war on Iran alongside Washington, while at the same time continuing its bloody onslaught on southern Lebanon, the illegal seizure of land from Palestinians in the West Bank and regular strikes on Gaza, where the genocide against the Palestinians continues.

The events over recent days fully vindicate the assessment of the US/Israeli war on Iran made by the *World Socialist Web Site*. In its first statement on the war, issued just hours after Trump launched the war without any democratic consultation in the dead of night, the WSWS noted that in retrospect, the 28 February assault would be compared with Hitler's 1 September, 1939 invasion of Poland, a criminal act that marked the outbreak of World War II. WSWS International Editorial Board chairman David North continued,

> He [Trump] has set the United States and the entire world on a disastrous course. This war will not solve the internal social crisis of American society, nor will it reverse the protracted deterioration in the global position of US capitalism.
>
> All these contradictions, domestic and international, will be intensified. The war itself will inevitably escalate and engulf the entire planet.

Less than six months on, the war has already engulfed the entire Middle East and is merging with the war on Russia into a zone of conflict embracing much of the Eurasian landmass.

NATO's war on Russia is escalating no less dangerously than the war on Iran in the Middle East. NATO responded aggressively Thursday to the announcement that a missile had crossed into Polish territory in the early hours of the morning, where it crashed in an uninhabited area and left a 10-metre-wide crater. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk stated that Warsaw was "ready to shoot down the missile if it continued its flight. Everything indicates that it was a Russian KH-101 cruise missile." Russia was attacking targets in Ukraine at the time, including areas near the border city of Lviv. Eight people were reported killed across Ukraine, while the missile caused no casualties or damage to buildings in Poland.

NATO's Supreme Command confirmed that it had activated its air defence systems alongside Poland. European Union Council President Antonio Costa denounced "Russian aggression," which he declared to be "a threat to the security of Europe as a whole."

These howls of outrage are thoroughly hypocritical because the NATO powers are to all intents and purposes at war with Russia. Over recent months, the far-right regime in Kiev has launched numerous attacks with long-range drones and missiles paid for by billions of euros in additional funding from the European imperialists on targets throughout Russia, including oil refineries and residential buildings. Numerous workers have died over recent weeks in strikes targeting the warehouses of the retailer Wildberries.

Portraying the war as driven by "Russian aggression" against Ukraine's fight for "democracy" has served the ruling classes in all of the NATO powers as a means to cover up what has from the outset been a predatory war waged to lay hold of natural resources and cheap labour, and secure geostrategic influence. Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine was a reactionary response by Putin's capitalist-restorationist regime in Moscow, but it followed three decades of NATO's eastward expansion and the Western-backed coup in Kiev in 2014 aimed at bringing Ukraine under the direct control of the imperialist powers.

The same imperialist goals are at play in the Middle East. The contradictions of the capitalist system, between globalised production and the division of the world into nation-states, and between the mass, social character of production and private ownership, are deepening the antagonisms between the major powers and fuelling world war.

Stopping this descent into barbarism depends upon the political mobilisation of the international working class on the programme of world socialist revolution to put an end to imperialist war and its root cause: the capitalist profit system.

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