

Washington threatens war against Iran

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Three months into the most right-wing government in modern US history, the meaning of the “America First” doctrine proclaimed by Donald Trump in his inaugural address has been spelled out by Washington’s deeds: US war everywhere.

The latest threat of military aggression was delivered Wednesday by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson against Iran. It came in the midst of Washington’s reckless nuclear brinkmanship on the Korean peninsula and followed the US cruise missile attack launched against Syria on the basis of wholly unsubstantiated allegations of chemical weapons use and the dropping on Afghanistan of the most destructive bomb used since the atomic attacks on Japan in 1945.

Tillerson’s bellicose tirade came just one day after the administration had certified to the US Congress that Tehran was in full compliance with the nuclear agreement that it negotiated in 2015 with the major powers, scaling back its nuclear program in return for the lifting of punishing economic sanctions. The terms of the agreement make it impossible for Iran to develop nuclear weapons, something that its government insisted it was not pursuing in the first place.

The statement from the US secretary of state appeared to have been orchestrated in order to dispel any illusion that Tehran’s compliance with the nuclear agreement would have the slightest influence in staying Washington’s hand in terms of the organization of military provocations and outright aggression against Iran.

Tillerson issued a blistering, though at times barely coherent, indictment of Iran as “the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism.” He charged it with “intensifying multiple conflicts and undermining U.S. interests in countries such as Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon, and continuing to support attacks against Israel.”

He went on to denounce Iran for what he termed “one of the world’s worst human rights records.”

Such allegations, coming out of the mouth of the former ExxonMobil CEO who is now Washington’s face to the world, reek of hypocrisy.

In Syria, Yemen and Iraq, US imperialism bears direct responsibility for the deaths of over a million people, the displacement of tens of millions and, in the case of Yemen, the driving of an entire population to the brink of starvation. From the US invasion of Iraq 14 years ago, direct American military intervention and CIA-orchestrated wars for regime change in Libya and Syria, along with the US backing for the near genocidal Saudi-led war against the Yemeni people, have laid waste to entire societies and turned much of the region into a killing field.

As for “human rights,” Tillerson was pointing the finger at Tehran even as Trump has embraced the Egyptian dictator Gen. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, responsible for the massacre of thousands of protesters and the jailing and torture of tens of thousands more. As the secretary of state was delivering his tirade in Washington, US Defense Secretary James “Mad Dog” Mattis was in Saudi Arabia paying homage to a dictatorial ruling family that outlaws all dissent and regularly beheads those who dare oppose it.

And, when it comes to exporting terror, Washington really has no competition. Al Qaeda, ISIS and similar Islamist militias all got their start through covert CIA operations using them as proxy forces for US aggression and regime change operations.

In relation to the nuclear deal signed between Iran and the so-called P5+1—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States plus Germany, Tillerson made it clear that, as far as the US administration is concerned, it is not worth the paper on which it is printed.

The agreement, he said, “fails to achieve the objective of a non-nuclear Iran; it only delays their goal of becoming a nuclear state. This deal represents the same failed approach of the past that brought us to the

current imminent threat we face from North Korea. The Trump administration has no intention of passing the buck to a future administration on Iran.”

What does this ultimatum mean? “The objective of a non-nuclear Iran” would require the country to renounce all nuclear technology, destroy its existing facilities and presumably place its scientists under US lock and key. The “same failed approach of the past” is the conception that there is anything whatsoever to negotiate.

And the vow not to “pass the buck” to a future US government means that the Trump administration intends to launch a war to subdue this nation of over 77 million people to the dictates of American imperialism. Its aim is to restore the kind of US domination that prevailed under the bloody dictatorship of the Shah, turning back the historical clock four decades, even if it costs the lives of millions.

Given the Trump administration’s insistence that it will not give any indication of its plans for military action until after they are executed, the Iranian government must calculate that a barrage of US cruise missiles could fall on Tehran at any moment.

This policy of naked aggression is being directed by the cabal of recently retired and active-duty generals who are largely in charge of US foreign policy under the Trump administration. They see Iran as the principal obstacle to the imposition of US hegemony over the oil rich regions of the Middle East and Central Asia, which the Pentagon has pursued by means of virtually uninterrupted war over the course of a quarter century. The American military brass bitterly resents the fact that the US war in Iraq served largely to strengthen Iranian influence in the region.

The recklessness of opening up a new front of military confrontation with Iran under conditions in which US provocations against North Korea continue to escalate the threat of war, including a nuclear conflict, in east Asia is staggering. There were reports Thursday that Russia has sent troops and military equipment to its border with North Korea, while China has expressed its concern over provocative US-South Korean air exercises designed to simulate an attack on the north.

This seemingly wild thrashing about in search of a military confrontation on the part of Tillerson and the Pentagon brass is the subjective expression of the

objective crisis of the capitalist system, rooted in the same essential conflict between global economy and the capitalist nation state system that erupted into world war twice in the 20th century.

The parasitic and criminal American ruling class, personified in the figure of Trump, increasingly see war as the only way out of economic and social crises for which it can offer no progressive solution. Thus, new acts and threats of militarism in one country after another are rolled out on virtually a daily basis, with the support of a corporate media that functions as a willing instrument of war propaganda, and the full complicity of the Democratic Party, which had previously criticized Trump from the right as “too soft” on Russia and Syria.

While opposition to militarism and war finds no expression in the existing ruling establishment, it is deeply rooted in the working class, both in the United States and internationally. This opposition must be given conscious expression in the organization of a new mass movement against war, based on the mobilization of the working class on a socialist and internationalist program, independent of and hostile to all of the parties and organizations of the capitalist class.

This is the only way that war, including a nuclear confrontation that threatens the survival of humanity, can be stopped.

We urge all of our readers and supporters to join in this fight and to participate in and build the April 30 annual International May Day Online Rally, being organized by the International Committee of the Fourth International with the overriding purpose of uniting workers across the world against imperialist war.

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