

For a working-class strategy against the imperialist repartition of the Middle East!

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US imperialism, in concert with its junior partner, Israel, has launched an across-the-board military, diplomatic, and economic offensive against Iran.

On Tuesday, President Donald Trump announced that the US was withdrawing from the UN Security Council-sanctioned Iran nuclear accord and would unilaterally enforce the “highest level” of global “economic sanctions against Iran.” In doing so, Trump snubbed Washington’s traditional European allies and brazenly dismissed their warnings that he was lighting the fuse for military conflagration across the Middle East.

Wednesday night, more than two dozen Israeli warplanes, as well as Israeli surface-to-surface missiles, struck Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard positions across Syria, where they, along with Russian forces, have played a pivotal role in opposing the eight-year, US-sponsored insurgency against Bashar al-Assad and his Baathist regime.

Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman boasted yesterday that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had “hit almost all of the Iranian infrastructure in Syria.” There are conflicting reports, but the Syrian Human Rights Observatory says the Israeli attack killed at least 24 people, most of them “foreign fighters.”

The aim of Washington’s new offensive against Iran is regime-change in Tehran and the neo-colonial subjugation of the Iranian people. Trump has himself highlighted this. He has reshuffled the top personnel of his administration in recent weeks to place longtime advocates of war with Iran, like National Security Adviser John Bolton, in key positions. In Tuesday’s speech renouncing the Iran nuclear accord, he once again sung the praises of pre-1979 Iran, when the Shah’s US-backed monarchical dictatorship brutally suppressed the Iranian people and served as a linchpin of American imperialist strategy in the Middle East and across Eurasia.

After a quarter-century of war across the greater Middle East, US imperialism is doubling down on its drive to establish unbridled dominance over the world’s most important oil-producing region through intimidation, violence and all-out war.

The principal European powers, Britain, France and Germany, have reproached Washington for torpedoing the nuclear agreement with Iran. But they have all rushed to endorse Israel’s military strike against Iran as “self-defense” and they are insisting Tehran do nothing to “escalate” the situation, i.e. that it must passively accept the slaughter of its forces. France, declared a French Foreign Ministry statement, “demands Iran desist from all military provocation and warns it against all temptations for regional hegemony.”

The European imperialist powers deplore Trump’s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal because it cuts across their plans to economically exploit Iran and because they dread the economic and political fallout from a US war on Iran. Their greatest fear and frustration, however, is that Washington remains in the driver’s seat in any military repartition of the Middle East, leaving Berlin, London, and Paris to haggle over mere scraps. That is why the European debate over how to respond to Trump’s trashing of the Iran nuclear accord is bristling with calls for Europe to accelerate rearmament and develop of an independent European military intervention force.

Iran’s mullah-led bourgeois-nationalist regime has been stunned and shaken by this week’s events.

The Iranian government has not even publicly acknowledged that it has been the target of Israeli aggression. Press TV, Fars News Agency, and other websites tied to the Iranian regime are portraying the Israeli assault as simply a failed strike on Syria.

Following Trump’s election, Tehran banked on the European powers saving the nuclear deal. Instead, Britain, France and Germany threw their weight behind Trump’s demands for further concessions from Tehran, including an end to its supposed disruptive activities in Syria and Yemen—only they proposed that these be the subject of a separate “negotiation,” not immediately tied to the fate of the current deal.

No less worrying for Tehran is Russia’s complicity in Wednesday’s Israeli attack, which was clearly given a greenlight by Moscow during the ten hours that Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spent with Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier the same day.

Thus Iran now faces not just the collapse of the Iran nuclear deal, but the possibility that an “understanding” could be cobbled together among the great powers to exclude it from Syria, which is vital to maintaining its ties with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and other Palestinian groups.

Last but not least, there is the increasing social crisis in Iran. Over the course of the past year, and most dramatically in the mass street-protests at the beginning of 2018, the long repressed Iranian working class has come forward to challenge the brutal austerity policies pursued by all factions of the Iranian elite, including the so-called hardliners.

Finding itself cornered, Iran’s clerical-bourgeois elite might choose to lash out militarily.

But everything suggests—and this is underscored by Tehran’s failure to even acknowledge Wednesday’s Israeli assault—that the Iranian bourgeoisie will intensify its efforts to reach a rapprochement with imperialism and, moreover, that to do so it will further prostrate itself, offering concessions, including further anti-working class, pro-investor policies.

For most of the past four decades, the rulers of the Islamic Republic, the chants of “death to America” notwithstanding, have been actively seeking an accommodation with Washington. That is why Tehran gave tacit support to the US in the 1991 Gulf War and provided logistical and political support to the US invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003.

Washington is well aware of this. Indeed, Trump and his advisers are banking on it. By intensifying military and economic pressure on Iran, Washington calculates that it can push the Iranian bourgeoisie, terrified of mounting social opposition from below, to surrender to US demands that Tehran demonstrably abandon any challenge to US dominance of the Middle East and open Iran’s economy to rapacious exploitation by Wall Street.

As Leon Trotsky explained 90 years ago, in answering the claims advanced by Stalin to justify his insistence that the Chinese Communist Party subordinate itself to the bourgeois Koumintang of Chiang Kai-Shek:

“It is a gross mistake to think that imperialism mechanically welds together all the classes of China from without. ... The revolutionary struggle against imperialism does not weaken, but rather strengthens the political differentiation of the classes ... [E]verything that brings the oppressed and exploited masses of the toilers to their feet inevitably pushes the national bourgeoisie into an open bloc with the imperialists. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the masses of workers and peasants is not

weakened, but, on the contrary, is sharpened by imperialist oppression, to the point of bloody civil war at every serious conflict.” (*Leon Trotsky on China*, New York: Monad 1976, p. 161).

In the Middle East, as around the world, the struggle against imperialist aggression and war must be founded on the independent political mobilization of the working class and the perspective of Permanent Revolution.

Globally and in the Middle East and North Africa, 2018 has been marked by a resurgence of working class struggles. In addition to the mass protests in Iran, there have been major strikes in Tunisia, Israel and Turkey, as well as in the United States and Europe.

It is this force, the international working class, that has the social power to mobilize the masses of the region across ethnic and religious-communal lines—Iranian, Arab, Turkish, Kurdish and Israeli—to oppose war and the predations of Washington and the other imperialist powers.

Workers around the world must oppose the imperialist drive against Iran, whether in the form of brutal economic sanctions, war threats, military strikes or all-out war. Those who are leading the drive to subjugate the Iranian people are the very same forces that are leading the assault on the social and democratic rights of working people in North America and Europe.

Opposition to the imperialist offensive against Iran means encouraging and supporting the growing class movement of the Iranian working class against austerity and social inequality and fighting to arm it with an international socialist program that links the struggle against the Iranian bourgeoisie and for workers’ power in Iran to the mobilization of the masses of the Middle East against imperialism and in the struggle for a Socialist Federation of the Middle East.

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