

# **Submission or War? Capitalism and the Tendency Towards Generalised Imperialist War, and the Internationalist Response**



## **Internationalist Voice**

Military tensions and warfare are no longer confined to specific regions of the world; they have spread across the entire globe—from the Middle East to Latin America, and from South-East Asia to Europe. This expansion of wars and the intensification of militarism on a global scale cannot be reduced merely to the decisions or adventurism of dictatorial, irrational, or reckless leaders such as Khamenei or Trump. Rather, it is, above all, a reflection of the objective conditions of the capitalist system and the way in which it continues and reproduces itself in its stage of historical decline.

Capitalism offers humanity nothing but the intensification of war, barbarism, and destruction, and war has become an inseparable part of the system's logic of existence. Incapable of offering a humane perspective to the majority of society, capitalism produces nothing but violence, devastation, and the slaughter of the working class. For this very reason, wars, military tensions, and social crises inevitably spread and become generalised across the entire world.

In the period of capitalism's decline, avoiding war is no longer a political choice but a structural impossibility, for capitalism itself is the source of violence, destruction, and war, and the logic of its survival necessitates the continual expansion of this devastation and warfare on a global scale.

Western imperialists, led by the United States, have, in pursuit of their imperialist interests, turned the Middle East into a theatre of slaughter and destruction. The inability of rival imperialist powers—whether Eastern imperialists or regional powers such as the Islamic Republic of Iran—to play a decisive role at the present juncture in no way diminishes their reactionary and criminal character. The antagonism between these imperialist powers is a struggle among rival capitalist states over hegemony, influence, and geopolitical position.

Under present conditions, the United States, relying on the support of other Western imperialist powers, is pursuing a policy of “surrender or war,” like a band of brigands—a policy that reflects its strategic imperatives within a

transforming global order. The primary objective of this policy is to compel the Islamic bourgeoisie to retreat from its regional ambitions, weaken its position, and curtail its room for manoeuvre.<sup>1</sup>

If, in the course of this containment, the possibility arises of reintegrating it into the orbit of Western imperialism, such a scenario would be considered preferable. However, should this project fail, the option of a bloody and devastating war will remain on the table as the ultimate solution.

Trump launched his election campaign under the slogan of “no new wars” and prioritising “America’s interests”—a slogan that, on the surface, appeared at odds with the outbreak of a new war. Yet this very bellicose Trump, following military clashes and during the ceasefire after the Twelve-Day War between the United States, Israel, and Iran, presented himself as a “peacemaker” and, in a populist manner, claimed that a war which could have lasted for years and devastated the Middle East had been brought to an end.

He went even further, claiming that the “destruction of the Middle East” has neither occurred nor will ever occur—a claim that stands in stark contradiction to the warmongering policies he himself defends. It is not Trump who has lost touch with reality; rather, his delusions reflect the chaos and instability of the capitalist system itself. Only a few months after presenting himself as a “peacemaker,” he returned once again in the guise of a warmonger. A few months ago, the bellicose Trump stated:

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<sup>1</sup> Israel has, at least since the Twelve-Day War, openly placed a policy of “regime change” in Iran on its agenda. This policy began with the bombing of Evin Prison and now continues in the form of a project known as the “National Revolution”—a project that, by highlighting and promoting the son of the Pahlavi executioner, seeks to sideline the Islamic bourgeoisie by any means possible. This approach forms part of Israel’s broader “New Middle East” plan. That Israel is able to pursue such a policy—that is, to advance the New Middle East project—among its Western allies and regional partners is not a sign of strategic cohesion, but rather a reflection of chaos, contradiction, and deep crisis within the strategy of Western imperialism and its network of regional allies.

*“This is a War that could have gone on for years, and destroyed the entire Middle East, but it didn’t, and never will!”<sup>2</sup>*

The notion that the West’s disputes with Iran are limited solely to uncertainties surrounding Iran’s nuclear programme is both superficial and simplistic. The central issue is not the “nuclear file” but Iran’s position in the distribution of power, influence, and shares within the global capitalist-imperialist order. Iran, like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, has regional hegemonic ambitions—ambitions rooted in the logic of imperialist competition rather than in the ideological characteristics of a religious regime.

This reality is not confined to the era of the Islamic bourgeoisie. During the period of the Shah’s bourgeoisie, the same tendency to assert itself as a regional power was evident. In other words, a change in the form of government does not necessarily entail a change in the position or class interests of Iran’s bourgeoisie within the framework of global relations.<sup>3</sup>

It should not be forgotten that, for a significant part of its several-thousand-year history, Iran played the role of a major global power for around nine centuries. This historical legacy has shaped the intellectual horizon and ambitions of Iran’s bourgeoisie—not out of nostalgia, but as a political and economic foundation—regardless of the form of government in power. For this reason, even if a different bourgeoisie were to replace the Islamic bourgeoisie, these imperialist ambitions would not disappear; rather, they would be reproduced in new forms, perhaps employing different language, tools, and allies.

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<sup>2</sup> [Truth Social](#).

<sup>3</sup> This issue is explored in detail in the following pamphlets:

- *Imperialist Tensions Between Iran and the Democratic Gangsters: Internationalist Position and Duties*
- *Imperialist Tensions and Agreements: Position and Internationalist Perspective*

The fundamental difference is that, prior to 1979, Iran's bourgeoisie was recognised as one of the West's principal allies in countering the advance of the Eastern bloc within the framework of the Cold War in the region. At that time, Western bourgeoisies not only tolerated Iran's imperialist ambitions—as claims to play the role of a regional power—but also acknowledged them as part of their broader strategic framework.

But today, the West and its allies are unwilling to recognise the imperialist ambitions of the Islamic bourgeoisie as those of a regional power, preferring instead that Iran remain weak, contained, and obedient. This approach can also be analysed within the framework of the Western bourgeoisie's long-term objectives to curb the expansion of China's influence and to isolate Russia within the globally reorganising order.

If Iran lacked regional ambitions, it is quite possible that even its acquisition of nuclear weapons would not have faced serious opposition from the West—as is clearly illustrated by the example of Pakistan. The 2015 agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with the world's major powers was, to some extent, implicitly an acknowledgment of Iran's claim to play the role of a regional power. However, Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018 demonstrated that Western imperialism, particularly the United States, no longer recognises such a right for Iran—a stance that other Western powers subsequently followed in practice.<sup>4</sup>

With tensions intensifying between the United States, Israel, and their allies on the one hand, and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the other, the question arises with real urgency as to whether this situation will lead to a new war. The reality is that, following the ceasefire resulting from the Twelve-Day

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<sup>4</sup> For further details, please refer to the article "[\*Escalating Imperialist Tensions: Only the Working Class Can Offer a Future.\*](#)"

War, although there is currently no direct military confrontation, the war has by no means ceased; rather, only its forms and instruments have changed.

Today, war no longer necessarily means a classical military confrontation. For years, Western governments, led by the United States and its allies, have waged a form of full-scale economic war against Iran through the imposition of extensive and crippling sanctions—a war whose primary consequence has not been the weakening of political sovereignty, but the destruction of the livelihoods of the working class and the labouring masses. These sanctions are part of the imperialist logic of global capital, in which economic pressure becomes a tool for political subjugation and the reproduction of relations of domination within the framework of imperialist competition.

In this context, the policy known as the “oil war” must also be understood. This policy is, at the same time, aligned with the interests of the Arab countries bordering the Gulf<sup>5</sup>, as sanctions on Iranian oil serve to improve their position in the global energy market. Alongside the oil war, cyberwarfare and organised sabotage have become one of the main arenas of confrontation between states and rival imperialisms—a confrontation that, above all, reflects the competition between centres of power within the global capitalist order.

With the growth of technology, the forms of warfare have also evolved. Whereas in the past the destruction of infrastructure, communication networks, and the productive capacity of rivals was primarily carried out through direct military attacks, today these objectives can be achieved through cyberattacks, computer viruses, disruptions to critical networks, and

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<sup>5</sup> We usually use the term “the Gulf” instead of “the Persian Gulf” to avoid any nationalist ambiguity. Until the 1970s, international documents referred to it as the “Persian Gulf”; at that time, the Shah’s bourgeoisie in Iran held a strong position as a close ally of the Western powers and was able to promote its propaganda at the international level. The term “Arab Gulf” emerged in the 1960s, coinciding with the rise of Arab nationalism, when some Arab countries in the region sought to emphasise their Arab identity. In recent decades, following political tensions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the countries bordering the Gulf, these states have increasingly insisted on using the term “Arab Gulf.”

a combination of intelligence operations and sabotage.<sup>6</sup> These developments show that war has, in effect, already begun, even without tanks and bombs—a war whose main victims are not states, but the working class and the lower strata of society, while the risk of it escalating into a direct military confrontation increases with each passing day.

It appears that the United States is seeking an agreement similar to the “Libya model”—a model that also enjoys the support of other Western imperialist powers and their allies in the Gulf countries. However, the American negotiating team did not present all of its demands explicitly and at once during the first round of talks, adopting a cautious approach. Nevertheless, the main points of the United States’ demands can be summarised as follows:

1. Zero per cent uranium enrichment, the complete removal of enriched uranium from Iran, and full access for the International Atomic Energy Agency to all nuclear sites.
2. Reduction of Iran’s missile range to 300 kilometres and limitations on its missile capabilities.
3. Cessation of support for proxy forces and groups in the region.
4. Raising the issue of human rights.

Although the Islamic bourgeoisie has declared that it will not accept zero per cent uranium enrichment, given its extremely weak position at present, it is possible that enrichment could be temporarily suspended and that enriched uranium might, for example, be transferred to Russia. Iran’s current weakest position stems less from a weakening of its military capabilities or a reduction in the power of its proxy forces than from an unprecedented

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<sup>6</sup> Ali-Mohammad Norouzadeh, head of the Centre for the Management of Threats in the Information Exchange Space of the Islamic bourgeoisie, stated that, over the fifteen-day period from 10 January to 24 January, more than **four million cyber activities** targeting the country’s infrastructure had been identified.

economic collapse—a collapse in which Western imperialists have played a central role in both its formation and its deepening.

This deep economic crisis has generated widespread and unprecedented discontent within society—a discontent that has not only severely eroded the political legitimacy of the ruling authorities but has also created the material and social conditions necessary for uprisings and popular unrest.

Another important point is that the United States and its Western allies, in their efforts to maintain military superiority and ensure Israel's security, seek to impose limits on Iran's missile range in order to eliminate any possibility of a direct threat to Israel. However, the ruling authorities in Iran have firmly rejected any restrictions on their missile programme, regarding it as a fundamental element of national defence and a means of deterrence against foreign aggression. Even if they were to abandon their nuclear ambitions, they would not limit their missile programme.<sup>7</sup>

The Islamic bourgeoisie has firmly rejected any move to abandon support for its proxy forces, regarding them as a vital component of its deterrence against attacks by Israel and the United States. However, the Islamic Republic's regional influence has declined noticeably, and its proxy forces across the region are facing increasing challenges. Syria has effectively fallen out of Iran's sphere of influence. In Lebanon, Hezbollah has suffered heavy losses following recent clashes with Israel, with a significant proportion of its leadership killed. The group now faces serious difficulties in securing weapons and financial resources, and its influence in the political and military arenas of the region has diminished.

Following the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities, Trump claimed that these facilities had been completely and utterly destroyed and that the world had been freed from the dangers posed by the ruling authorities in Iran—a claim

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<sup>7</sup> In response to the West's demand for restrictions on Iran's missile programme, the country unveiled its latest missile, an enhanced version of the Khorramshahr-4.

he made in an openly populist manner, asserting that a major threat had been permanently eliminated, and he stated:

*“A short time ago, the U.S. military carried out massive precision strikes on the three key nuclear facilities in the Iranian regime: Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan... Tonight, I can report to the world that the strikes were a spectacular military success. Iran’s key nuclear enrichment facilities have been completely and totally obliterated.”*<sup>8</sup>

The key question is this: if Iran’s nuclear facilities have been completely destroyed, what need is there for a new agreement in the first place? In fact, this is precisely the question that Laurence Norman, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, put to Trump:

*“Trump claimed he had obliterated Iran’s nuclear program last summer. Why does he need a deal then?”*<sup>9</sup>

The reality is that militarism has become a global phenomenon today. Almost all governments, without exception, are increasing their war budgets—presented under the misleading label of “defence spending”—budgets that are funded directly by seizing the livelihoods and welfare of the working class. This trend is not the result of the choices of warmongering governments, but rather a reflection of the specific historical conditions of global capitalism in its stage of decline. It is global capitalism itself that drives states towards military tensions and extends war, as a mode of existence, to every corner of the world.

Under such conditions, military exercises have become an inseparable part of the capitalist order. For example, the “ORION 2026” exercise, led by France in the Mediterranean from 8 February to 30 April 2026, involves extensive participation from Western countries and their allies, including

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<sup>8</sup> [Trump’s speech](#).

<sup>9</sup> [Laurence Norman](#).

France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Greece, Norway, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Poland, Romania, Estonia, Croatia, Brazil, Canada, South Korea, the United States, Japan, Qatar, Singapore, and Morocco.<sup>10</sup> Such exercises serve as practical drills for the management of future imperialist wars.

As noted, militarism can be observed in every corner of the world. Even in regions that appear to lie on the margins of major conflicts, the logic of war asserts itself. For example, it is reasonable to ask why Azerbaijan, in the South Caucasus, should conduct a joint exercise with the United Arab Emirates called “Peace Shield 2026”—and that, moreover, on Emirati soil?<sup>11</sup>

In the latest 2026 *National Defense Strategy* document from the Pentagon, the United States once again warned of the possibility of Iran rebuilding its conventional military capabilities and of renewed efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. The document emphasises that, together with Israel, the US has dealt heavy blows to Iran, resulting in a significant weakening of the Islamic Republic’s regional position.<sup>12</sup>

The document also states that Iran’s proxy forces, including Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other groups, have suffered severe losses.

In other words, Iran is currently in one of the weakest positions it has occupied in recent years, and from a strategic perspective, this situation provides more favourable conditions for containing its imperialist ambitions.

In the logic of imperialism, containing these ambitions means strengthening the position of the United States and its allies in the intensifying competition among global powers.

Within this framework, J.D. Vance, the US Vice President, has stated that Donald Trump is reluctant for a scenario similar to the Iraq War to be

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<sup>10</sup> ORION 2026.

<sup>11</sup> Operational-tactical exercise Peace Shield.

<sup>12</sup> The 2026 National Defense Strategy.

repeated and prefers that the path of diplomacy be pursued—unless, from Washington’s perspective, no option remains but to resort to military action:

*“President Donald Trump will seek to resolve the Iran issue through ‘non-military means,’ but warned that if Trump concludes military action is the only option, ‘he’s gonna choose that option.’”<sup>13</sup>*

The recent nuclear talks between Iran and the United States were held indirectly in Muscat, Oman, on 6 February 2026, with the Omani government acting as mediator. The discussions focused on Iran’s nuclear programme and the issue of US sanctions. Iran emphasised that the negotiations should remain strictly confined to the nuclear file and the lifting of sanctions, and that missile or regional issues were not on the agenda. In contrast, while expressing a willingness to resolve the dispute, the American side called for the complete dismantling of Iran’s nuclear activities.

The next round of these negotiations is scheduled to take place in the coming days. However, public opinion remains sceptical about the talks, as during the previous round Israel launched military attacks while discussions were still under way, and ultimately the United States brought the Twelve-Day War to an end through extensive bombing—an experience that has left deep distrust towards the negotiation process.

In a symbolic gesture, the aircraft carrying the Iranian negotiating team announced the Tabas Desert as the point of departure for its flight to Oman<sup>14</sup>—a move that, rather than conveying a diplomatic message, amounted to an ideological attempt to project “authority” within the logic of

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<sup>13</sup> [J.D. Vance](#).

<sup>14</sup> In a symbolic gesture, the aircraft carrying the Iranian negotiating team announced the Tabas Desert as the point of departure for its flight to Oman—a region where, during Operation “Eagle Claw” on 25 April 1980, US Delta Force special operations units encountered a sandstorm while attempting to rescue American hostages. The operation ended in complete failure, resulting in the deaths of eight US servicemen and the destruction of a significant quantity of their equipment.

imperialist confrontation. On the other side, following the conclusion of the talks, the American delegation sought once again to showcase US military power by appearing on the deck of the aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln*. The presence on board of figures such as Steve Witkoff, Jared Kushner, and the commander of CENTCOM is best understood within this very framework: a naked display of power. This reciprocal show of force provoked an angry reaction in the Iranian press, with some commentators calling for the Foreign Minister or other officials of the Islamic Republic to appear aboard Iranian naval vessels:

*“The specific proposal is that Iran’s Foreign Minister, within a formal and entirely diplomatic framework, should carry out a reciprocal symbolic gesture.”*<sup>15</sup>

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic bourgeoisie stated that the United States failed to achieve its objectives during the Twelve-Day War and was consequently forced to request a ceasefire. He went on to claim that the Islamic Republic is now “more powerful” and that any attack on Iran would be met with a “strong and shocking” response. Like its imperialist rivals, the Islamic bourgeoisie seeks to present itself as a prepared and dominant power on the international stage by exaggerating its deterrent capabilities and threatening a “shocking” response. Within this framework, he declared:

*“The US was defeated in the 12-day war and failed to achieve any of its goals. In the end, it was forced to approach us regarding a ceasefire. Our ballistic missiles are in place. We have refocused on our strengths and are ready with greater power... This is the clearest message we can give to the US.”*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Tabnak.

<sup>16</sup> Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic bourgeoisie sought to observe diplomatic considerations, stating that, should hostilities escalate, Iran would target only US bases and has no intention of attacking neighbouring countries. Within this framework, he declared:

*“If the United States attacks, we will not strike its territory; rather, we will respond to its bases in the region. We will not attack neighbouring countries; we will target only US bases in the region.”*<sup>17</sup>

The Islamic bourgeoisie has emphasised that Iran will not be the initiator of war. Within this framework, its Foreign Minister stated that the Islamic Republic has no intention of attacking neighbouring countries. However, in response to threats from the United States, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic bourgeoisie warned that, if war is imposed, its scope will not remain limited and could escalate into a regional conflict. On this matter, he said:

*“If the US starts a war, the whole region will be drawn in.”*<sup>18</sup>

In response to the statements of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic bourgeoisie—who had warned that any attack on Iran would lead to a regional war—Trump claimed that the United States possesses the strongest army in the world and emphasised that, should hostilities occur, time would show who is correct. Within this framework, he stated:

*“Why wouldn’t he say that? Of course, he could say that. We have the biggest, most powerful ships in the world over there, very close, a couple of days. Hopefully, we’ll make a deal. If we don’t make a deal, we’ll find out whether or not he was right.”*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> BBC.

<sup>18</sup> Sky News.

<sup>19</sup> Sky News.

The drumbeat of war from every direction—particularly from the United States and its allies—paints a grim picture of the days ahead. However, the Islamic authorities are no less bellicose in their rhetoric and displays of militarism than their Western counterparts. Both sides of this confrontation, through threats and demonstrations of power, reproduce a single logic that normalises war as a tool for advancing their imperialist interests.

Within this framework, and simultaneously with the arrival of the strike group of the aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln* and other US military equipment in the Middle East, a new mural was unveiled in Tehran's Revolution Square. The mural depicts an American aircraft carrier as the target of an attack, with a bloody trail painted across the sea, inspired by the United States flag. Likewise, the mural in Tehran's Palestine Square, featuring the slogan “Israel as the Target,” was accompanied by the phrase “You start it, we finish it” in Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and English.

Such murals demonstrate that war begins not on the battlefield, but in the realm of propaganda, symbolism, and ideological mobilisation—a sphere in which governments seek to stir emotions and portray the enemy in order to prepare society to accept the costs of war.

The United States maintains approximately 19 military bases across the Middle East. It is important to note that not all of these bases are equipped with advanced air defence systems; some rely solely on short-range defensive systems, which are largely ineffective against ballistic missiles. For this reason, in recent months the US has prioritised strengthening the air defences of its bases in the region.

The primary objective of this measure is to prevent a potential retaliatory response from Iran and to minimise the extent of damage in the event of a prolonged conflict. Within this framework, the United States is deploying additional air defence systems to protect its forces, as well as Israel and its Arab allies, including Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

The US military has already deployed a range of air defence systems in the region, including destroyers capable of intercepting and neutralising aerial threats. However, the Gulf states are well aware that Iran's missile programme remains capable of inflicting significant damage on the interests of the United States and its allies. For this reason, strengthening the regional air defence network is not a matter of choice for Washington, but a strategic necessity within the framework of the balance of power and the logic of deterrence in the Middle East.

The Islamic bourgeoisie has consistently sought to calibrate its response to strikes by the United States and Israel so as not to provoke a wide-ranging and uncontrollable reaction; in other words, it has aimed to avoid escalation into an “existential war.” The rationale for this approach is clear: for the Islamic bourgeoisie, maintaining political power is the highest priority. Consequently, as long as the objective of the United States and its allies is merely to weaken the Islamic Republic through limited military tensions, Tehran's response will remain largely controlled and calculated, in order to prevent full-scale confrontation. In such a scenario, both sides—according to the prevailing logic of imperialist wars—will ultimately declare themselves “victorious.”

However, if the objective of the United States and its allies is to move beyond containment and weakening, and towards **an existential war** against the Islamic bourgeoisie, the situation assumes a fundamentally different character for Iran's rulers. In such a scenario, the political survival of the Islamic bourgeoisie would be directly threatened, and its response could escalate into full-scale war. Nevertheless, the material reality of the balance of power indicates that Iran lacks the capacity to compete with the military strength of the United States in a conventional conflict. For this reason, the likely strategy of the Islamic Republic under such circumstances would be to extend the conflict in the form of an “asymmetric war” across the Middle East and even beyond, including the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

The Islamic bourgeoisie possesses greater experience and manoeuvrability in the realm of asymmetric warfare. In such a scenario, it would not only be the direct military targets of the United States that are struck; forces and networks loyal to the Islamic Republic would seek to extend the scope of violence and instability across the entire region. In addition to modern missiles, Iran has thousands of older short-range missiles in storage and would most likely attempt to deploy these reserves in the event of a large-scale conflict. How successful it would be in doing so is a separate question. However, even the impact of a limited number of these missiles on cities such as Dubai, Doha, Manama, Baku, and other key regional centres would be sufficient to generate fear and instability. This very prospect is the primary source of concern for the governments of the Gulf states.

Meanwhile, Israel enjoys the highest level of defensive protection: a multi-layered network designed to counter all types of threats. By contrast, US bases in the region are both dispersed and less well-protected than those in Israel. It is precisely for this reason that, in recent days, the United States has sought to significantly enhance the protection and air-defence systems of its bases in the region.

Within the framework of asymmetric warfare, each of Iran's proxy forces is capable of independently extending the scope of violence and instability. These forces are fully aware that, without their "inspiring source" and primary backer—the Islamic bourgeoisie—their political and military existence would have no meaning or function; for this reason, such a confrontation takes on an existential character for them as well. It is this shared understanding that has made all of these forces acutely aware of the dangers ahead.

Among Iran's proxy forces, Yemen's Ansar Allah has been less weakened than other groups and still retains significant operational capability. Simultaneously, with the escalation of imperialist tensions between the United States and Iran, this force has announced that, in the event of an attack

on Iran, it will resume operations in the Red Sea—an action that, according to these actors, goes beyond a mere threat to close the Bab al-Mandab Strait. Such a threat not only directly targets the economic and military interests of global powers, but, within the framework of asymmetric warfare, would also extend the scope of imperialist tensions and deepen chaos across wider parts of the world.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General of Lebanon's Hezbollah, Naim Qassem, has stated that any attack on Iran would be regarded as an attack on Hezbollah itself, warning that such an action could ignite a new war across the region. These positions indicate that, within the logic of asymmetric warfare, a chain of reactions is set in motion that could plunge the entire region into a renewed cycle of violence and instability.

The Shiite coalition in the Iraqi parliament has backed Nouri al-Maliki for the position of Prime Minister, a figure widely regarded as openly aligned with Iran. In response to this stance, Trump has threatened that, should Nouri al-Maliki be appointed Prime Minister of Iraq, the United States would cut all support to the country. The Shiite coalition views this threat as conveying a clear political message, aimed at placing Iraq firmly under US tutelage.

The United States possesses significant levers of pressure to advance its imperialist interests. One of the main instruments is control over Iraq's oil revenues—revenues that constitute around 90 percent of the Iraqi government's budget and are primarily held in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. In practice, this gives Washington control over Baghdad's access to its oil dollars. The agreement to store Iraq's oil revenues in this bank was established following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and it continues to serve as one of the key instruments of political and economic pressure.

In this context, in recent days, Iran-backed paramilitary groups in Iraq have, one after another, declared their readiness to support Iran in the event of any potential attack by the United States or Israel. Among these groups are

Kata'ib Hezbollah, the Najbah Movement—a branch of the Popular Mobilisation Forces—and the Badr Organisation. These groups have warned:

*“Any targeting of Iran will draw the entire region into a broader confrontation, involving Iraq and the Gulf states as well.”<sup>20</sup>*

The Iraqi group Saraya Awliya al-Dam released a video clip showcasing part of its missile arsenal in one of its underground tunnels.<sup>21</sup> The group had previously emphasised that such military actions are carried out within the framework of what it terms “legitimate resistance” and in response to the continued presence of foreign forces on Iraqi soil. The recent unveiling of this missile arsenal should be understood in the same context: an action that coincides with rising regional tensions and increasing US military threats, serving a clear purpose in displaying power and sending a deterrent message.

In the same regional context, in Bahrain, a segment of the Shiite population closely aligned with the Islamic bourgeoisie has become a tool amid imperialist tensions. During certain anti-government demonstrations, slogans such as “At your service, O Khamenei” were chanted, highlighting how social and political demands are increasingly being drawn into regional power alignments, with protest movements becoming arenas for competition between states and imperialist powers.

One of the measures the Islamic bourgeoisie could pursue in the event of a full-scale war is the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. While such an action would have extremely serious consequences for global energy supplies, its effects would be unevenly distributed. Although the United States has only limited direct reliance on oil transiting this route, the greatest impact would fall on China, as around 50 percent of its oil imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

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<sup>20</sup> BBC.

<sup>21</sup> Saraya Awliya al-Dam.

For this reason, the threat of closing the Strait of Hormuz is not aimed directly at US interests. Rather, in addition to exerting a severe impact on the economies of the Arab Gulf states, it forms part of the complex dynamics of global imperialist competition—an instrument capable of disrupting energy supply chains and exposing the entire global economy to crisis.

In the current context of the imperialist balance of power, Europe is experiencing a decline<sup>22</sup>—one that is evident even in the case of Iran’s nuclear issue. Around twenty years ago, the three main European powers—Britain, France, and Germany—played an active and decisive role in nuclear negotiations alongside the United States. Today, however, these countries have been effectively sidelined from the decision-making process, their role reduced to following US policies and participating in pressure on Iran—a situation that reflects the weakening of Europe’s position within the global imperialist balance of power.

Despite the differences that have emerged between Europe and the United States in recent years, in most cases—though not all—Europe has continued to operate within Washington’s orbit. The overarching aim of these policies is to pressure Iran into integration within the pro-Western order; and, if this fails, to reduce Iran to a weak, contained, and powerless state. Following this logic, during the twelve-day US–Israel war with Iran, Europe set aside the façade of “peacemaking” and openly assumed the role of a warlike force.

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<sup>22</sup>It is very important to distinguish between the decline of European bourgeois power and the position of the European proletariat. Although, in the context of the new global disorder, the position of European countries—or more precisely, European bourgeoisies—is in decline, this in no way implies a decline in the role or standing of the European working class. The weakening of the economic and political power of Europe’s bourgeoisie at the global level does not necessarily diminish the position of the European working class and may even create conditions for the emergence of new forms of class struggle. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of this distinction and to analyse current trends, the booklet “[The Shifting Balance of Imperialist Powers and the Recomposition of the World Order: The Necessity of Independent Proletarian Organisation](#)” is recommended—a publication that draws on statistical data, historical events, and the historical memory of the working class.

In this context, Friedrich Merz, the Chancellor of Germany, not only praised Israel's attacks but also stated that Israel is carrying out the “dirty and difficult work” on behalf of everyone. He has recently announced that Germany is prepared to increase pressure on Tehran and to participate actively in negotiations aimed at shutting down Iran's nuclear programme. These positions, above all, demonstrate Europe's alignment with US imperialist strategy and its inability to play an independent role in global affairs. Merz wrote:

*“We want to work with the Gulf states to promote peace in the region. Developments in Iran, however, stand in the way. The violence must stop. We are prepared to further increase the pressure and to engage in talks aimed at bringing Iran's nuclear programme to a swift end.”<sup>23</sup>*

In response to this verbal and propagandistic exchange, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic bourgeoisie accused Friedrich Merz of “political immaturity” and claimed that Germany had resorted to pleading in order to return to the negotiating table with Iran. These statements form part of a reciprocal rhetorical and propaganda contest, in which both sides seek to control domestic public opinion while projecting an image of authority and strength on the international stage:

*“Merz is begging to be allowed back into the same negotiations.”<sup>24</sup>*

Within the framework of the European Union, France has consistently been one of the countries that repeatedly emphasises the protection of its imperialist interests, and in pursuing this path, it has at times been punished or humiliated by the United States. Nevertheless, on the issue of exerting pressure on Iran, France continues to follow a policy of alignment with the United States.

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<sup>23</sup> [Friedrich Merz](#).

<sup>24</sup> [Abbas Araghchi](#).

In this context, Jean-Noël Barrot, the French Foreign Minister, during his visit to Beirut on 6 February 2026, stated that, should tensions between Iran and the United States escalate to a regional level, Iran-backed groups in the Middle East must exercise “maximum restraint” to prevent widespread instability in the region. He said the following on this matter:

*“If, however, we witness a regional escalation, it would be appropriate for groups supported by Iran to exercise the greatest restraint in the whole region so as not to worsen a situation...That would profoundly destabilize the Near and Middle East.”<sup>25</sup>*

Another clear indication of Europe’s declining position is the resumption of military talks between Russia and the United States—talks that had been suspended following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. As the *New START* treaty—a bilateral agreement limiting the two countries’ nuclear warheads—approaches its expiry, the US military has announced that Washington and Moscow have agreed to hold high-level military negotiations, a development that could signal a move towards the normalisation of relations between the two major powers.

Donald Trump had previously called for this treaty to be replaced with a “better” agreement that would also include China, but Beijing has so far rejected such talks. By way of comparison, China possesses around 600 nuclear warheads, whereas the United States and Russia each have close to 4,000.

Despite all these developments, the NATO Secretary General continues his distasteful flattery, seeking to ensure that China and Russia do not gain access to Greenland’s economic resources:

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<sup>25</sup> [The Darien Times](#).

*“Russia is NATO’s primary adversary, China also building strength. We have to make sure that the Russians and the Chinese do not gain access to Greenland’s economy in military terms.”<sup>26</sup>*

The question that arises is whether, in the event of a war between the United States and Iran, Russia and China would directly and militarily support Iran. In other words, would these countries genuinely enter the field in defence of Iran? If Iran, China, and Russia had formed a bloc, such military support would logically be guaranteed. However, experience and evidence suggest that the existence of agreements and declarations of cooperation alone does not ensure practical or military support in real crises; rather, such arrangements are often political and propagandistic in nature. More precisely, no such bloc currently exists.

Some media outlets, including *Middle East Monitor*, have claimed that “Iran, China and Russia have signed a trilateral strategic agreement”.<sup>27</sup> However, this claim is inaccurate: neither Iran’s domestic press has reported such an agreement, nor have officials of the Islamic bourgeoisie made any such assertion.

The reality is that Iran and China have a 25-year cooperation project and strategic partnership, yet this arrangement has largely remained on paper and has not been fully implemented. Iran and Russia have also signed a comprehensive strategic cooperation agreement regulating relations between the two countries in the fields of politics, security, the economy, energy, and broader cooperation over the next twenty years. Nevertheless, the experience of the twelve-day war demonstrated that such agreements have limited practical effectiveness under conditions of intense military crisis, and that their outcomes and consequences are correspondingly restricted or ineffective.

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<sup>26</sup> [msn](#).

<sup>27</sup> [Middle East Monitor](#).

It is clear that each of the imperialist powers pursues its own interests, and that China and Russia will not go to war with the United States on Iran's behalf. Each seeks to secure its own imperialist interests, even if neither wishes to lose Iran. In its weakened condition and dependence on these powers, Iran can, to some extent, help to safeguard their economic and strategic interests.

Although the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty between Russia and Iran has been ratified and establishes a legal framework for long-term cooperation between the two countries—including provisions relating to technical and military cooperation and military interaction—it does not constitute a mutual military alliance. Andrey Rudenko, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, emphasised in his address to the State Duma that, in the event of military tensions between Iran and the United States, Russia has no obligation to provide military assistance to Iran. He stated:

*“In the event of such a scenario, Russia is not obligated to provide military assistance.”*<sup>28</sup>

China, on the eve of the talks between Tehran and Washington, also announced that it supports Iran's right to defend its interests and opposes “unilateral coercion”. A statement issued by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated:

*“China supports Iran in safeguarding its sovereignty, security, national dignity, and legitimate rights and interests.”*<sup>29</sup>

Iran is grappling with a deep structural crisis in the economic sphere. On the one hand, the global crisis of capitalism manifests itself in peripheral countries with far greater intensity and destructiveness; on the other, the policy of “maximum pressure” pursued by Western imperialists—

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<sup>28</sup> [Tass](#).

<sup>29</sup> [Statement by Beijing's foreign ministry](#).

particularly the United States—through crippling sanctions has driven the living conditions of the working class and the lower strata to catastrophic levels. As a result, the collapse of Iran’s economy appears not as a temporary recession, but as a profound, destructive, and pervasive crisis—to the extent that the purchasing power of Iranian workers has fallen to one of the lowest levels globally.

This economic collapse has generated widespread, deep, and unprecedented discontent within society—discontent which, in terms of both scale and intensity, is unparalleled in contemporary Iranian history. For this reason, the greatest fear of the Islamic bourgeoisie stems not from the danger of external war, but from internal upheaval, social uprisings, and the possibility of the existing order being overturned from within society itself.

Under such conditions, the criminal Islamic bourgeoisie, despite opposition within the ruling apparatus to negotiations, has been compelled to engage in the negotiating process. These negotiations represent an attempt to contain the crisis by reducing or suspending some of the sanctions and, as a result, preventing the escalation and eruption of social discontent—discontent that could challenge the very foundations of the existing order.

It can be argued that military expansion and war have always been inseparable features of capitalism in its period of decline. In particular, following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, military intervention and war have constituted central pillars of United States foreign policy, aimed at securing and reproducing its global hegemony.

However, there is a fundamental difference between the present situation and the period of the Gulf Wars, Afghanistan, and Iraq. At those junctures, the United States was able, through political demagoguery, “humanitarian” rhetoric, and the language of human rights, to rally sections of global public opinion and its allied governments to its side, lining them up behind it. Moreover, during that period Russia was in its weakest position since the

collapse of the Soviet Union, and China had not yet openly emerged as a self-assertive global power.

But today the configuration of global powers has changed. Imperialist rivalries have become more multipolar, more unstable, and more unmanageable than in the past. The issue is not merely that Trump has lost his balance and makes increasingly bizarre statements from one moment to the next—from turning Canada into a “fifty-first state” and annexing Greenland as a “fifty-second state” to threatening to unleash a bloodbath in the Middle East. What lies behind these remarks is a deeper savagery: **a capitalist system that has increasingly slipped out of control and now reproduces brutality and chaos.**

From this perspective, Trump’s instability and lack of equilibrium as President of the world’s largest economy and military power are not an individual aberration, but rather a reflection of the crisis-ridden and chaos-generating conditions of capitalism in the present period.

We believe that conditions of war — or even a climate of the constant threat of war — do not provide favourable ground for the growth and development of class struggle. What truly creates the basis for the expansion of class struggle is the deepening of economic crises alongside the raising of class consciousness, not an atmosphere of nationalist mobilisation and war hysteria.

The consequences of militarism should not be sought solely in countries directly involved in war. Its effects can be seen even in so-called “civilised Europe”: in the erosion of working-class living standards, in the spread of austerity, in the curtailment of “social freedoms”, and in the growing militarisation of public space. Militarism is not confined to the battlefield; rather, it penetrates social relations and the everyday life of the working class.

At a time when the rulers of capital beat the drums of war, the working class, instead of struggling against wage slavery, life below the poverty line, wage freezes, mass unemployment, and dozens of other structural problems, is summoned as “cannon fodder” to defend the “homeland of capital”. War pushes class struggle to the margins and conceals the contradiction between labour and capital behind the façade of “national unity”.

In the present period, capitalism is expanding militarism day by day and has turned it into a global phenomenon. The militarisation of society as a whole has become part of the ordinary fabric of contemporary capitalism. This militarism, together with all the institutions of the capitalist state — from trade unions to schools, from the judiciary to ideological apparatuses — functions as an instrument in the hands of the ruling class to obstruct the growth of class consciousness and to prevent the awakening of the “sleeping giant”, the global working class. Karl Liebknecht explains this point clearly:

*“Militarism manifests itself as a pure tool in the hands of the ruling classes, designed to hinder the development of class-consciousness by its alliance with the police and the system of justice, with the school and church, and further to secure for a minority at any cost, even against the conscious will of the majority of the people, its dominant position in the state and its freedom to exploit.”<sup>30</sup>*

Even if this round of negotiations between the United States and Iran were to result in an agreement, it is unlikely to bring about any real reduction in tensions or militarism in the foreseeable future, since both the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran are pursuing and advancing their own imperialist interests. From this perspective, any potential agreement is not an endpoint to the crisis, but merely a temporary instrument for managing imperialist tensions.

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<sup>30</sup> [\*Militarism & Anti-Militarism - Karl Liebknecht\*](#).

Within this framework, Iranian imperialism has played a tension-inducing, destabilising, destructive, and war-provoking role at the regional level — a role rooted in the logic of imperialist competition and not limited to the ideological characteristics of the Islamic bourgeoisie. Conversely, the United States has played the same role on **a global scale** and continues to do so, from fomenting unrest and political instability to war-mongering and direct military interventions.

Both states, by pursuing policies that intensify imperialist competition and expand military tensions, have played a decisive role in destabilising the global order. Accordingly, even if temporary agreements are reached, the logic underpinning these policies will remain unchanged, and it is highly likely that this crisis-prone, war-oriented trajectory will continue into the future.

Under such circumstances, the role of internationalists is more vital than ever. This role cannot be limited to issuing mere statements; it requires active and organised engagement in the defence of **proletarian internationalism**. For in today's war-torn and polarised environment, both the right and left tendencies of the capital play a role in obscuring and diverting class consciousness and, by throwing dust in the eyes of the working class, lead it astray.

Bourgeois tendencies—whether under the banner of defending democracy, opposing Trump, or opposing Khamenei—actively serve to confuse the working class. The left of the capital and so-called pro-democracy forces, meanwhile, attempt—through slogans and ostensibly radical appeals—to draw workers into bourgeois anti-war movements and inter-class fronts, movements that ultimately remain within the framework of the capitalist order.

Such obfuscation prevents the formation of an independent, conscious, and class-based struggle. The historical task of the working class is not to support

one faction or another of the ruling class, but to advance an independent struggle against the entire capitalist system. The working class must fight not for the “homeland”, not for “bourgeois democracy”, and not in defence of this or that state, but for its own class interests and objectives.

History has shown that the only force capable of halting the bourgeois machinery of slaughter—that is, war—is the working class. During the First World War, it was the threat of revolution in Germany that compelled the bourgeoisie to accept an armistice. This historical experience demonstrates that war criminals do not retreat out of humanitarian concern or political rationality, but only under the pressure of **a real proletarian threat**—a retreat intended to regroup and prepare for a class war against the proletariat itself.

This historical logic remains valid. Wherever the working class has entered the stage as an independent, organised, and conscious force, it has been able to challenge the machinery of capitalist war and destruction. Although the global working class is not currently in such a position or balance of forces, the development of class struggle, the raising of class consciousness, and independent proletarian organisation can once again open up this horizon for the proletariat—a horizon in which neither states nor agreements between imperialist powers, but the independent action of the working class, will determine the fate of war and peace.

Only the global working class can turn the wars of capitalism into a war against capitalism itself, and by dismantling this system on a global scale, eliminate the material foundations of militarism, military tensions, and imperialist wars. True peace is only possible when class struggles extend beyond national borders and the wars of capitalism are transformed into a struggle against capitalism itself. For this reason, ending militarism and war, and achieving lasting peace for humanity, is only possible through the global

overthrow of capitalism—a goal that can be realised only through a worldwide proletarian revolution.

**Workers have no country!**

**Down with the imperialist war!**

**Long live the war between the classes!**

**Internationalist Voice**

10 February 2026

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