



# No to sanctions: Hands off Iran!

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The growing chorus of international voices which are demanding action against Iran points to a drive to war and an urgent need to begin to prepare resistance, writes Martin Suchanek

Britain and the US have increased their threats against the Iranian regime and are now demanding more sanctions. Together with the imperialist's watchdog Israel, they have threatened the Iranian state repeatedly with pre-emptive bombardments to prevent the country from building a nuclear bomb.

In order to "back" their threats, they have repeatedly used the International Atomic Agency, by claiming that Iran would not collaborate and was out to deceive the "international community".

The Western imperialist governments and their allies, the bourgeois media all present the affair, as if it was Iran who posed a real threat to the peoples of the Middle East, as if it was Iran who prepared for a war. This all turns reality upside down.

The occupation of the British embassy by several hundred Iranians in protest against these threats and the unwillingness of the regime to act to prevent this, are now used as further "proof" for the West's case, and are being used in order to justify the call for further sanctions and a policy of weakening of the regime in Teheran. In response to the occupations, Britain has not only withdrawn its ambassador, but also kicked out the Iranian diplomats out of London. Other Western government have recalled their ambassadors for "consultations".

The incoming EU summit will see another "top item" on the agenda in the midst of the Euro-zones biggest crisis ever - imperialist sanctions and war threats against Iran. In this situation, the International Atomic Energy Agency's claim that Iran has carried out a test related to the "development of a nuclear device".

No one should be deluded by this. The "proof" which this imperialist puppet agency provides is just a trustworthy as the "evidence" provided by George Bush's and Tony Blair's for Iraq's "weapons on mass destruction". They are there to justify a political objective.

The attack on the British embassy is now being turned into diplomatic gold by the US, Israel and Britain. Even Russia and China - Iran's most important allies - will have to condemn Teheran. The case will make it much more ease to push the European Union to more severe sanctions, particularly against the financial sector or the country.

## Why are the sanctions stepped up? Why a war threat now?

Everybody should be clear that further imperialist sanctions against Iran are on the agenda. Whether they will be followed by aerial bombardment is open - but it is clear that a wing of US-imperialism, alongside the British and Israeli governments, are openly preparing the ground for such a strike.

Of course, all this is hidden behind a smokescreen of "democratic" reasons and the supposed threat Iran is for the world. In reality, the reason for the increased US aggression is different: Firstly, it is part of the US strategy to "re-order" the strategically crucial Middle East and Central Asia. Via increased sanctions and (possible) strikes, they want to prevent the growth of hinder Iran's continued development as a small regional power. Ironically, the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan have removed regimes hostile to Shiite run Iran and weakened its neighbouring states. Therefore,

the US-strategy also involves creating a counter-weight to Iranian influence across the region, for instance by giving more support to the gulf states and Turkey. This is why they want to see the Assad regime removed or weakened, since this would remove one of the few allies of Iran in the Arab world. Sanctions to hit the Iranian economy ? already under massive strain ? are important part of their strategy.

But the picture and understanding of the driving force and motive would be incomplete, if one would not see that the threats against Iran are a part of an increased rivalry between the US and emerging Chinese imperialism. Just as China tries to build up its influence, the US has launched a massive diplomatic offensive in the Far East ? recently with a visit in Myanmar to improve relations with a ?Chinese ally?.

The threat against Iran is part of this wider geopolitical issue. In addition it is also a pre-emptive strike against sections of the European capitalist class, who are afraid that more sanctions and military intervention will put them at a disadvantage concerning their influence in Iraq. Whilst large sections of the US and British imperialist machineries are following a ?hard? line against the Iranian regime, German imperialist strategists are divided on the issue. A faction ? the ?transatlanticists? - are prepared to back the US, Britain, Israel to the end. Another faction ? whilst officially also backing ?measured? sanctions ? is opposed to military threats and to a policy to ?isolate? the regime. They want to pursue a strategy of ?Wandel durch Handel? (change via trade). They have simple, short-term economic reasons ? Germany still has trade relations worth €4 billion a year. But much more importantly, they think that a strategy to increase economic ties and trade will allow a much Greater German or German led European influence at the expense of the US.

Finally, it is not a coincidence that the US is entering an election year. With huge domestic problems back in the US, President Obama is keen to distract attention and focus it elsewhere. If all else fails a good dose of Iran-bashing could help him in the polls with right-wing voters.

### **How can we stop a war against Iran?**

All this means that the workers, the youth all of the world must be clear. In the current period, more aggression against countries like Iran is likely because of the increased inter-imperialist tensions and struggle to re-divide the world. In the end, no diplomatic manoeuvres, no ?peace missions? by imperialist states or the UN will remove such threats. This can only be done by the action of millions, of workers, youth, masses mobilised in the democratic revolutions in the Arab world or the occupy movement. We need an international movement, especially in the imperialist countries of the west, which can mobilise sufficient pressure to force our governments to back down from their threats against Iran. We also have to give active solidarity and support to democratic and working class movements in Iran to assist them in their struggle against the regime, and not leave pro-democracy organisations to be co-opted by imperialist ?democrats?.

### **What do we stand for?**

We are for the immediate lifting of all sanctions against Iran.

We reject the right of the International Atomic Energy Agency and any other puppet institutions of imperialism to ?investigate? and make judgment on Iranian policy. As long as the US and its gendarme in the Middle East, Israel, are armed to the teeth with weapons of mass destruction including nuclear missiles, it is just pro-imperialist and pro-Zionist hypocrisy to deny Iran's right to arm itself.

We oppose any war threats and we openly support Iran's right to defend itself against any strike by the US, Israel, Britain, NATO or other regional allies.

The defence of Iran against all Western imperialist threats, however, must not mean for a moment to support the competing other imperialist powers like China or Russia. They are not ?friends of the Iranian people?, but only want to make the country an ally of their own global neo-empires, dominated by their finance capital, serving as a geo-strategic and economic ally in the region.

Nor does defence of Iran against imperialist threats mean for a minute that we give any political support to the

dictatorial, reactionary Islamist regime in Teheran. The clerical regime is based on the vicious exploitation of the working class, especially in the oil fields and industry. Faced with a growing economic crisis, with massive inflation around 20 percent, the workers, the poor, the women, youth and peasants are being made to pay for the crisis as in any other country of the world.

### **Is Iran anti-imperialist?**

As we have seen in the past years, the Iranian regime, its official and secret police and its reactionary semi-fascist clerical hit-squads, are defending the clerical despotism of the rich, the capitalist and the corrupt state bureaucracy just as the army and police do in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria.

In this context, sections of the regime try to play the 'anti-imperialist card?', perhaps the only card remaining means they have got to raise support from parts of the popular masses. This fake, bourgeois-clerical 'anti-imperialism?' must be exposed sharply.

The occupation of the British embassy would have been impossible without a tacit toleration from a faction of the regime, in this case through the unofficial state militia, the Basiji.

In any case, this has nothing to do with serious anti-imperialist policy designed to rally and organise the masses of workers and the poor, given support to all the uprisings in the Arab world etc. - but it was a political gamble by a faction of the regime in order to strengthen its own position.

### **Bring down the regime**

All this leads to one conclusion: The defence of Iran against imperialist war threats and the rejection of sanctions against the country, must be a part of a broader political strategy aiming at the revolutionary overthrow of the Iranian regime, the struggle for revolutionary workers and peasant government to replace the Mullah regime and to fulfill the democratic and social goals of the Iranian masses.

Only such a regime would be a reliable bulwark against imperialism and Zionism, it would be a regime aiming to spread the revolutionary overthrow of the reactionary governments, to oust all imperialists and their advisers and to create a federation of workers and peasant states, a United Socialist States of the Middle East.

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