

THE NATURE OF THE WAR IN IRAN

We consider the war initiated by US imperialism and the Nazi-state of Israel against Iran to be a proxy war in nature, in which the Ayatollah regime acts in the geopolitical interests that link it to Chinese imperialism (and Russian imperialism) in the context of the intensifying dispute over world hegemony. The attack on Iran, after the US intervention in Venezuela and the strangulation of Cuba, is the penultimate episode of a global war in which the Trump administration tries to hold onto the global hegemony of decaying US imperialism. The operational theater of the war in Iran covers a radius of many thousands of kilometers, all the way from Cyprus, Turkey and Azerbaijan to the coast off of Sri Lanka, where an Iranian frigate was sunk after taking part in a joint military exercise with India (suspected of selling information about the vessel to the US)¹.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which more than 20% of world petroleum trade passes, has become a key theater of the ongoing war. Iran has planted up to 10 mines in key transit zones for vessels in the Strait, with the goal of disrupting the flow of traffic and dissuading a US ground invasion. Maritime traffic has plummeted by 90%, because insurance companies refuse to guarantee coverage for the loss of vessels due to attacks, resulting in a de-facto closure of the Strait². The price of oil has increased by close to 40%, gas by around 10% and the price of diesel has shot up by 20%³. Recently, the US carried out attacks on Kharg Island, one of the key locations for the Iranian oil industry, housing the country's largest crude oil exporting terminal (90% of all crude is exported from here). This attack was carried out as a means to pressure Iran to lift the blockade of Hormuz. The Iranian Regime has started allowing transit of oil tankers under the condition that all the transactions related to the trade of crude and the right of passage through the Strait be conducted using the Chinese Yuan, challenging the hegemony of the US Dollar and the Petrodollar System as a whole⁴.

China has the largest oil reserves of the planet, estimated at between 1.1 and 1.4 billion barrels, which it can use to play a lead role in the setting of crude oil prices worldwide. It is expected that China will begin

utilizing 1 million daily barrels of its reserves in order to keep up with its internal demand, which would also drastically reduce its demand on the global market and lower the price of oil globally. However, Beijing is aware that these measures would ease the political pressure faced by the Trump administration in the midst of the dispute over hegemony between both imperialisms⁵.

CHINA

The second largest economy by GDP continues to face a low consumption rate, a prolonged housing crisis and enormous amounts of local debt. China has now reduced its goal for annual economic growth to between 4,5% and 5%, the lowest since 1991, despite the rapid development of high tech and renewable energy industries. China may have hoped to find a way out of its economic troubles through exports, but after a long period of trade war with the US –in 2003 tensions were already arising over US control of major trade routes, and are now intensifying– it faces a prospective long-term crisis in the Middle East, affecting both its major trade routes and its financial investments, as well as large portions of its energy supply. Although China has months worth of oil reserves, almost half of its imported crude and 30% of Liquid Natural Gas passes through Hormuz⁶.

A prolonged period of turmoil and insecurity in the Middle East will also disrupt other regions of importance to China. African economies, for example, have benefited from steady and substantial streams of capital from the Gulf. If that tide of investment recedes, there is a risk of increased instability that could undermine the sustainability of China's broader, long-term interests. In other words, given China's global presence, its investments and markets beyond the Middle East are also vulnerable to a prolonged war⁷.

In March 2021, China and Iran signed the "25-Year Cooperation Program", a strategic agreement designed to strengthen economic, military, and political ties. It aims to direct up to

\$400 billion in Chinese investment across key Iranian sectors—such as oil, energy, and infrastructure—in exchange for a stable supply of crude oil. The agreement positions Iran as a strategic node in China's trade network across West Asia (as part of the Belt and Road Initiative) and encompasses joint military

exercises, weapons research and development, and intelligence collaboration. The "25-Year Cooperation Program" is part of a strategic partnership that deepens the alliance between the two nations—a relationship formally established in 2016 during Xi Jinping's visit to Iran. Additionally, linked to the Belt and Road Initiative is a railway corridor that opens up new trade alternatives between Chinese and Iranian markets and the European Union, enabling them to bypass maritime trade routes which, until now, were controlled by the United States.

China purchases nearly 80% of Iran's oil exports (based on 2024–2026 data), accounting for approximately 14% of its total crude oil imports⁸. According to CNBC, throughout the ongoing war, Iran has continued to export large quantities of oil through the Strait of Hormuz to a single destination: China. Samir Madani, co-founder of the maritime vessel tracking platform TankerTrackers, told the outlet that since the conflict began on February 28, Iranian vessels have transported at least 11.7 million barrels to China.

According to various sources, China has deployed the Liaowang-1 vessel to the Gulf of Oman, very close to the Strait of Hormuz, from where it has a surveillance range of approximately 6,000 km. This vessel, which serves as a satellite tracking and monitoring platform, is escorted by two other Chinese Navy warships specialized in air defense and electronic warfare. There has also been talk of the alleged sale of Chinese arms to Iran; although China has denied selling anti-ship cruise missiles to Tehran, US intelligence has accused Beijing of supporting Iran's ballistic missile program by training engineers and supplying components. Human rights groups have alleged that the brutal Iranian crackdown on protesters and regime critics has been facilitated by Chinese facial recognition and surveillance technology shared by the government in Beijing.

It is worth noting that China has recently reached a new milestone in the global arms race by successfully tracking the world's stealthiest bomber—the U.S. B-2—by interpreting traces that were previously undecipherable. The Chinese technology firm Jingan Technology has announced that its AI-driven military analysis system (Jingqi) detected signals linked to the U.S. deployment weeks before the strike. Using an algorithm, the system combines satellite imagery, flight

paths, ship movements, public records, and other open sources to reconstruct patterns of military activity⁹.

China, having just increased its military budget by 72%¹⁰, ranks as the world's third-largest military power (after the US and Russia) according to the Global Firepower 2026 report—a ranking that evaluates over 60 factors¹¹. Despite having a mutual defense agreement only with North Korea and—for the time being—not having publicly committed to the armed defense of any nation targeted by Trump's warmongering escalation, China is far from being a politically passive actor in this process. Beijing initially condemned the attacks by the US and Israel and called for a ceasefire. China's stance on the war in the Middle East is the need for an immediate end to the conflict, as it urgently requires an international environment of stability and thus more favorable to the continuation of its imperialist development. A few days ago, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun reiterated that "China has again called on all parties to immediately halt military operations and avoid further escalation of tensions to prevent regional instability from exerting an even greater impact on the global economy". Meanwhile, China is reshaping its public image by positioning itself as a global power that upholds civilization and the international order against "US war madness" according to its Defense Ministry spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang. It has constantly called for respect for the international order and adherence to the principles of the UN Charter. In this vein, Beijing also seeks to play a mediating role in the conflict, having announced plans to send a special envoy to the Middle East¹². Finally, negotiations between China and the US are ongoing—such as the one that led to the rollback of the exorbitant tariffs imposed by Trump on "Liberation Day" in exchange for guaranteed access to rare earths, a fundamental raw material for high-tech industries, the green transition, and defense—an area where China holds an indisputable advantage (accounting for nearly 70% of production and over 90% of refining as of 2025¹³). Trump is set to visit Beijing later this month.

China has understood that the military offensive launched by the US in the Middle East and the Caribbean has set a precedent allowing any power to act at will within its sphere of influence. Against this backdrop, the situation regarding Taiwan could be

affected, as the prospect of a Chinese military intervention in a territory Beijing considers its own draws nearer. During the annual session of the National People's Congress (China's parliament), Xi Jinping addressed the issue of annexing Taiwan, notably omitting any call for a peaceful process with the Taipei government, a departure from his stance the previous year. Indeed, the report presented by Premier Li Qiang states that China "will be firm in advancing reunification." Recently, in light of the situation caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, China has once again considered the option of peaceful annexation by exploiting Taiwan's energy vulnerability; the island imports over 95% of the energy it consumes. The proposal suggests that territorial integration take place in exchange for guaranteeing a more stable and affordable energy supply. Despite Taiwan's refusal, Chinese imperialism could continue to play this strategic card in the long term; Taiwan's need for energy is both real and critical, and as geopolitical conflicts persist and intensify, Beijing is well aware that energy resources are becoming decisive tools of leverage¹⁴

RUSSIA

In January 2025, Russia and Iran signed a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty, agreeing to cooperate in defense, security, and other areas such as nuclear energy and hydrocarbon trade¹⁵. Currently, Russia is assisting Iran with advanced drone tactics used in the war in Ukraine to attack US and Gulf targets in the Middle East, according to a Western intelligence official speaking to CNN¹⁶. The Shahed drones, initially designed and supplied by Iran to Russia for the war in Ukraine but mass-produced by Moscow, have had unexpected success penetrating the air defenses of Gulf countries. Until now, the known Russian intelligence sharing with Iran consisted of general assistance in target location. Specific tactical advice would indicate a new level of support. Russia is also sharing imagery from its sophisticated airborne satellite network with Iran. On NBC, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi confirmed the existence of the alliance with Moscow for matters pertaining to intelligence¹⁷.

Kyiv has sent drone interception experts to the Gulf region to share Ukraine's experience in intercepting the relatively inexpensive Shahed drones, which can cost up to US\$30,000. Ukraine has developed tiny interceptors

that cost about US\$5,000 each and can be produced quickly.

Negotiations between Russia and the US are also continuing. Days ago, Putin and Trump spoke by phone – their first call since December – about the wars in Iran and Ukraine, and with the objective of lowering global energy prices. Subsequently, Trump authorized the purchase of Russian oil from ships in transit until April 11. It is estimated that with this measure, which has been met with opposition by the EU, Russia could earn €9 billion, which can be used to reinforce its military presence in Ukraine.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM FOR THE IRANIAN WORKING CLASS

In Iran's proxy war, it is fundamental that we revolutionaries position ourselves based on the principle of the political independence of the Iranian working class from the regime of the ayatollahs and absolutely distinct from US imperialism and Israel. On this point, we agree with the declaration of the CRP18, but we believe we must go further. It is also crucial to explicitly denounce and delimit Chinese and Russian imperialism. To develop our approach, we will begin with some important points of agreement with the article "We Defend Iran but Do Not Support the Ayatollahs' Theocracy," written by Nathaniel Flakin and published on March 4 on the Izquierdadiario website¹⁹.

Regarding the characterization of the ayatollahs' regime, the article states the following: "Despite its rhetoric, the Islamic Republic is not an anti-imperialist force. (...) The Iranian government, like that of other semi-colonial countries, does not question a world order based on the plunder by the great powers; it simply wants a slightly larger slice of the pie. Even Iran's support for anti-Zionist forces in the region has more to do with geopolitical calculation than with anti-imperialist conviction. (...) The clergy led a counter-revolution and massacred thousands of communists so that the bourgeoisie could stay in power.

The Islamic Republic was re-established to guarantee the exploitation of Iranian workers (...) communists in Iran are subject to arrest and torture (...) The "resistance" of a bourgeois government to imperialism will always be partial. By defending private property, all capitalist states defend the economic foundations of

imperialism. The only way to break with imperialism would be for a workers' government to nationalize the means of production and natural resources of Iran (...) however, the Islamic Republic suppresses all unions and organizations with this perspective. (...) This is just one example of how a bourgeois "anti-imperialist" government represses and weakens the working class, suppressing the only force that could truly defeat US imperialism."

The Tehran government has just implemented a 60% increase in the minimum wage and a rise in family and child allowances to curb social discontent and try to defuse a potential response from the working class amidst the war. The measure comes months after protests against the regime, sparked by economic hardship, which left at least 36,000 dead. The ongoing military conflict is disrupting supply chains and accelerating the depreciation of the rial. The minimum wage has risen from 103 million rials (€67.50) per month to 166 million rials (€109) but still falls far short of the 580 million rials (€380) considered necessary per month for a basic family food basket. In February, the Iranian Statistical Center reported that inflation reached 68.1%, the highest level since World War II. Food prices soared 110% year-on-year, with increases of 142% for bread and cereals, 117% for meat, and 207% for cooking oil²⁰.

In May 2024, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash. He was succeeded by Masoud Pezeshkian in July, following elections with low turnout, in which the Guardian Council approved only six of the 80 registered candidates. In June, criminal cases were opened against hundreds of people for publicly criticizing Ebrahim Raisi after his death. Hundreds more received threatening phone calls, warnings, or summonses after authorities declared that "encouraging" online boycotts of the presidential elections was a crime.

Similarly, the authorities subjected family members of people who had been victims of unlawful killings during the 2022 "Woman, Life, Liberty" uprising to human rights violations. The Islamic Penal Code retains punishments that constitute torture, such as flogging, blinding, amputation, crucifixion, and stoning. The authorities also censored media outlets, disrupted satellite television channels, and continued to block or

filter mobile applications and social media platforms. Women continue to be treated as second-class citizens in areas such as marriage, divorce, child custody, employment, inheritance, and political office. The legal age for marriage for girls is 13, but parents can obtain judicial permission to force them into marriage at even a younger age. The authorities carried out a campaign, known as Plan Noor, to intensify the repression against women and girls who defied the mandatory wearing of the veil, even resorting to digital surveillance such as facial recognition technology. Ethnic minorities, such as the Ahwazi Arab, Azerbaijani Turkish, Baloch, Kurdish, and Turkmen communities, suffer widespread human rights violations, as do religious minorities including the Baha'i, Christian, Gonabad Dervish, Jewish, Sunni Muslim, and Yaresan, among others. LGBTI people suffer systemic discrimination and violence. Consensual same-sex relationships remain criminalized, with punishments ranging from flogging to the death penalty. People of Afghan nationality (by far the largest immigrant group in Iran) suffer widespread discrimination. The authorities use the death penalty as a tool of political repression against protesters, dissidents, and ethnic minorities. The authorities continue to ban political parties, civil society organizations, and independent trade unions, and retaliate against workers for striking and peacefully assembling. Iran maintained high levels of fossil fuel production and subsidies and failed to protect marginalized communities from the effects of climate change²¹.

Therefore, in order to achieve the defeat of the US and Israel, the complete withdrawal of US troops from the region, and the end of the genocide of the Palestinian people, as the CRP declaration correctly concludes, it is not enough for the Iranian working class to organize itself politically independently of the ayatollahs' regime. It is also essential that this organization be strategically oriented toward overthrowing that regime, seizing power, and establishing a Revolutionary Workers' State in Iran, as a lever for a regional revolutionary process toward a Federation of Revolutionary Workers' States in the Middle East.

Furthermore, considering the brutal repression and the virtual absence of human and democratic rights in Iran, as we have just seen, how can the Iranian working class organize itself politically under the bourgeois theocratic dictatorship of the ayatollahs? This political

independence can only be partially achieved within the framework of the impetus and development of a revolutionary process in Iran, and will only be complete with the fall of the freedom-crushing regime and the establishment of a revolutionary workers' government.

The article continues: "The working class must aspire to lead the struggle against imperialism. This is how an anti-imperialist defensive war can be transformed into a socialist revolution: this is the perspective of the permanent revolution, a perspective that became visible in 1979-80. It was the mullahs (religious figures of Islam) who crushed workers' self-organization back then, and there is no reason for the workers to trust them today."

We agree with the perspective of the permanent revolution put forward; however, we do not agree with assuming that Iranian workers will not trust the mullahs today because they betrayed the revolutionary process of 1979. We cannot demand that the working class accumulate the experience, the assessment, and the conclusions of the entire preceding class struggle. This is the role of the revolutionary party. Therefore, to prevent Iranian workers from being defeated again by the mullahs, or by any other treacherous leadership, it is essential to build a program for the socialist revolution in Iran. A program that, starting from the basic needs of the working class (first and foremost, the immediate end of the US-Zionist attack), guarantees the rights of ethnic minorities, including the right to self-determination; that demands the effective restoration of all democratic freedoms seized by the regime of the ayatollahs and the fall of the regime itself; that proposes the expropriation under workers' control of the oil industry and strategic sectors; that fights consistently for the total defeat of the US and Israel and for the withdrawal of US imperialism from the entire Middle East, and that also severs all ties with Chinese and Russian imperialism. This is a brief outline of a transitional program toward the seizure of power in Iran that will have to be deepened and carried out by the Iranian working class, leading all oppressed sectors behind it.

To conclude our contribution, we would like to use an excerpt from the CRP's second declaration on the Iran war²²:

"In the struggle to build this socialist strategy, it is especially important to recover the historical thread of the heroic 1979 revolution. The Iranian working class, its youth, and its women have written heroic chapters, and in those years the revolution, which began with democratic and social demands, gave the working class the possibility of developing mass self-determination bodies. The alliance between imperialism and the clergy, the brutal repression, and the absence of a revolutionary socialist leadership succeeded in expropriating a workers' revolution, which was a global reference point, turning it into an Islamic counter-revolution.

Today, despite the profoundly reactionary and oppressive nature of the Iranian regime, and without giving it any political support, we believe that a defeat of the United States, the Zionist state, and its allies would open new possibilities for the exploited and oppressed people of the world."

Here the contradiction is evident. In the first paragraph, the need to revisit the experience of the 1979 revolution is raised, and it is stated that one of the fundamental elements of the defeat of that process was the absence of a revolutionary party (with its respective revolutionary program). However, in the following paragraph, the role of the revolutionary party, the program, and therefore, the experience of 1979, is ignored. The conclusion that emerges is that the regime of the ayatollahs (gravedigger and product of the 1979 defeat) is the one that must lead the anti-imperialist struggle in the course of the current war. The declaration at no point even considers the possibility that the Iranian working class could lead the strategic anti-imperialist struggle for total defeat of US imperialism and the Nazi state of Israel.