

Remembering and Forgetting: No to War with Iran!

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The criminal negligence of the Iranian regime and military — shooting down a passenger airliner that had just taken off from their own Tehran airport — should immediately remind us of the dozens, if not hundreds of occasions when United States forces have caused the same kind of civilian collateral carnage.

We don't have to go all the way back to July, 1988 when the USS Vincennes shot down an Iranian jetliner, Flight 655 with 290 victims aboard — for which the United States eventually paid compensation but never apologized. From 2001 till the present moment, in the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, just think of the wedding parties bombed from the air, civilian convoys annihilated by laser-guided "smart bombs," journalists targeted by an attack helicopter, families wiped out when the "wrong" house was bombed or raided, the Blackwater massacre of civilians at the Baghdad traffic circle — just those cases that have been revealed, to say nothing of so many more unknown ones.

I say the Ukraine Flight 752 disaster "should remind us" of these things, but of course that's not happening. Quite the opposite: Thanks to corporate media and the vast majority of politicians on the conservative-to-liberal spectrum, focusing on the Iranian military's latest crime serves to make the U.S. public forget what our own country's wars and interventions have done to the populations of so many other nations. That includes what our strategic ally Saudi Arabia, with its U.S.-trained pilots, U.S.-supplied planes and bombs has done to the population of Yemen.

Similarly, the U.S. assassination of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani — and the ever-shifting lying pretexts put out by Trump and his administration about an "imminent threat" — should remind us that this same "terrorist" figure and Iran itself over the past two decades had also been a partner of the United States in fighting against the Taliban, al-Qaeda and the "Islamic State." Instead, of course, the pundits' debate over whether this murder was "sound policy" makes people conveniently forget almost everything that came before.

The crude lying coverup attempted by the Iranian regime for three days after the plane shootdown should also remind everyone of the Saudi kingdom's efforts to hide its targeted kidnap-murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul — for which the United States has imposed no penalties worth mentioning. Again, that's all but forgotten now.

The Iranian regime's lies to its own people have re-ignited the wave of popular protests against the murderous brutality, corruption and incompetent administration of the Islamic Republic. On this and other important points, everyone should read *Iran Popular Protests Against Regime Intensify in Response to Iran Downing of Passenger Plane* on the website of the Alliance of Middle Eastern and North African Socialists.

For the movement here in the United States, our focus must be on the threat of war and the final dismantling of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA).

Clearly the Iranian regime wants no part of a war with the United States, and it seems that the U.S. administration doesn't want war either with the exception of the neocon holdovers who infest the White House's national security apparatus. Certainly the American people want no part of it.

This doesn't alleviate the danger of the present moment. U.S.-imposed sanctions have crushed the Iranian economy, which has reportedly shrunk by an incredible 9.5% over the past year. At this writing, European states that promised to hold the JCPOA together appear to be abandoning it under Trump's bullying. The Iranian people, to whom Trump cynically tweets his "support," are suffering the collapse of their living standards, medical infrastructure, and food security.

The predictable results will be more asymmetric conflict, more U.S. targeted killings — and perhaps ultimately Iran's attempt to achieve a deterrent nuclear weapons capability (which it had no longer wanted after 2003 with the fall of its traditional great enemy, Saddam Hussein's Iraq).

If the momentary outlook isn't clear — whether toward escalating tension or a period of relative relaxation — what's absolutely clear is the necessity of mass antiwar resistance that speaks to the people of this country. Demonstrations that are happening in dozens of cities are a good thing, but more is needed. It's not only a question of exposing the daily lies of Trump and his enablers. Every Democratic candidate should be asked point-blank whether they repudiate war, the threat of war, and crippling sanctions against Iran, with no weasel words and evasions allowed.

At a time when the planet is already burning, we must not forget that another war for empire is absolutely unacceptable.

No War With Iran — U.S. Troops Out of the Middle East Now!

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