



Speak Out Now

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The Enormous Costs of the US War on Iran Continue to Grow

The U.S. claims their unjustified war of destruction on Iran is pausing in order to negotiate new terms of a settlement. But how is anyone supposed to believe anything the U.S. administration says? They started their war on Iran back in February in the middle of negotiations. And this recent bombing of the last two weeks started when they claimed to reach a new settlement. Their announcements mean nothing!

Instead of winding down, this war has escalated in the last two weeks. U.S. forces have bombed Iran night after night, openly targeting civilian infrastructure, bombing roads, bridges, power plants, a desalinization plant for drinking water, and many more sites, killing some 6,000 people in Iran since February, mostly civilians. Iranian forces have struck several U.S. military bases, killing at least 18, including four more in the last two weeks, and injuring many more U.S. soldiers.

The threats coming from the Trump administration are blatant violations of international law. Trump has threatened that every time Iran fires at a ship in the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. will destroy one bridge or one power plant — including bridges and power plants inside Tehran, a city of nine million. Trump has also threatened a new attack that is bigger than anything the U.S. has ever done. Trump makes these blatant threats, which would lead to the death of thousands of innocent civilians, live on social media for all to see.

Now the fighting has spread further in the region. The Houthis, an ally of the Iranian regime that control the western part of Yemen, have now declared a naval blockade in the Red Sea. They are doing this because Saudi Arabia, one of the U.S.'s main allies in the region, ships much of their oil and other goods through the Red Sea. The Houthis have struck Saudi oil tankers and a refinery with missiles and drones. Tankers are now turning around before they reach it. So, in addition to the Strait of Hormuz, a second chokepoint in the global oil market is being closed off, sending global prices soaring even further.

Iran and the Houthis know they cannot match the scale of the U.S. military, the largest military power in world history. But the one real weapon to emerge from this war for Iran has been their ability to disrupt some of the world's major oil arteries. So, they are unlikely to surrender the Strait of Hormuz because it is now the main leverage they have in negotiations. The U.S. on the other hand is totally unwilling to accept a world where their

rivals can disrupt oil flows in the Middle East. So now, by the U.S. starting this war, they have created a new standoff that didn't exist before: a standoff for control of the Strait of Hormuz, and now possibly the Red Sea as well.

While the U.S. has claimed that one of their goals in bombing Iran was to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, the Trump administration just announced a multi-billion-dollar agreement with Saudi Arabia to develop a nuclear program — one that opens a path to develop nuclear weapons. The U.S. attacks on Iran were clearly never really about nuclear weapons. The issue was always about how the U.S. would try to dominate the Middle East, and dictate its interests to other nations in the region. Now it seems a nuclear-armed Saudi Arabia could be part of that agenda.

As the war on Iran has escalated, Israel has continued its genocidal takeover of Gaza with full U.S. backing. Last October, under the so-called "ceasefire," Israel agreed to pull back all of their forces to a designated "yellow line," which basically split the Gaza Strip down the middle. Instead, they have pushed past that line and have completely destroyed and displaced the population in 65% of Gaza, and they are continuing to push further. Claims of ceasefire mean nothing to Israel either.

And to pay for all of this death and destruction, the Trump administration has already admitted to spending over \$37.5 billion on their war with Iran. But U.S. analysts estimate the actual costs could be as high as \$132 billion. On top of this, while they claim to be working towards a ceasefire with Iran, they just asked for an additional \$67 billion for their war, and a \$1.5 trillion military budget for next year, the largest request ever. This war money doesn't just appear from nowhere, but is being taken away from funding the services we rely on, like education, food assistance, public health and more.

This is the reality of their system — wars of chaos, death, and destruction. In their competition to dominate the globe, those who rule this society are a threat to all of us. The enormous costs from this war have already taken a toll on working people in the Middle East, and all over the world. It would cost a lot less to get rid of their whole system of exploitation and domination for good.

Nolan Wells Case:

Young Black People at Greater Risk

The suspicious death of 18-year-old Nolan Wells, whose body was found on a Mississippi barrier island, reflects the greater risk of death of young Black people. Black children and youth are more than twice as likely to die as white. Nolan Wells joins the long list of other young Black people whose suspicious deaths in recent years have been brushed aside by police with little investigation. Some of these deaths have resembled lynchings. The rich in America have always used race to divide people to prevent us joining to fight together against oppression and exploitation perpetrated by the One Percent. Too many white folks have fallen for the lies of white supremacy, while Black families have been forced to carry this extra burden of fear and grief. This is not just an issue for People of Color; all of our lives are worse because of this.

JHH Food Service is Underpaid, Overworked, and Delayed

Food service at Johns Hopkins Hospital is a department with chronic turnover, understaffing, and call-outs. These jobs are hard and the pay doesn't match the long, tiring days. On top of this, the hospital has only one kitchen for patient rooms, while in the past it had two. Both these factors have contributed to major delays delivering patient meals. At times, meals simply never arrive. This is not just an inconvenience or frustration; it is a safety concern. Patients who are diabetic, who must take medication with food, or are on special diets are all affected when meals take 2-3 hours to come, or just don't show up. This is impossible to solve by already-stretched food staff working harder. Hopkins needs to spend some money to solve the problem through better wages and an expanded or second kitchen. This is basic patient care.

Another Year of Begging for a Pay Raise

By July 31st, Hopkins Hospital employees need to submit their annual review. HR and management make us list out all the tasks we do within and outside of our job description. We are told that pay at Hopkins is "merit based," so depending on your manager's opinion of what you do and how hard you work, you'll get a bigger or smaller raise.

But how can a short list of our tasks really reflect how hard we work? When management says they base raises on "merit," they put the onus on us to explain why we deserve a raise (and implicitly someone else doesn't). We're kept in the dark about how much everyone's getting, while bosses (with biases) get to say what our work's worth. Raises should be standard, public, and go up to match inflation.

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, and it is our labor that has created all of this wealth. We aren't the ones who benefit from this. The super rich — the bosses of the big corporations and banks — keep the wealth and make all the decisions. Working people do the work that makes society run, and we can organize to unite our forces. When we do, we have enormous power to change things and make a better world.

Code Purple Air!

We've been warned! Scientists have been telling us for decades that global heating is threatening all life on this planet. Here in Baltimore, we just went through at least two days of Code Purple air due to wildfires thousands of miles away in Canada. It was worse in a lot of places—Chicago, Detroit, New York, Toronto, and more.

Code Purple is worse than Code Red. Children, the elderly, and people with respiratory diseases should stay in air conditioning. Everyone is told not to exert themselves outdoors. But many people must work outdoors. Many must live on the street. Some who have shelter lack air conditioning. Some end up in emergency rooms because they can't breathe normally.

Politicians like Trump still deny climate change is real. Others, including most Democrats, acknowledge the crisis but don't have the guts or interest to take on Big Oil. We need to stop relying on them before it's too late.

