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U.S. out of Iraq, hands off Iran!

A mass demonstration at the militarily defended fortress of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, is being used by the White House to threaten yet another attack on Iran. What's the excuse this time? The White House is blaming Iran for the demonstration in Baghdad, as though the Iraqis didn't have enough reasons of their own to detest the U.S. occupation of their country.

Before examining this latest confrontation, we need to review recent U.S. history in the West Asia region (also known as the Middle East).

U.S. imperialism invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003, under the pretext — later proven to be absolutely false — that Iraq had “weapons of mass destruction.” Subsequently, to defeat Iraqi resistance to U.S. occupation, Washington provoked and exacerbated sectarian and regional differences among the Iraqi population, until these broke out into a virtual civil war.

The initial U.S. invasion and the ensuing conflict killed over a million Iraqi people and displaced millions more, ripping apart Iraqi society. These casualties were on top of the staggering loss of Iraqi lives caused by almost 13 years of U.S. sanctions on that country that had preceded the outright military action.

There is nothing the U.S. occupation did that helped the Iraqi people. There is no legitimate reason for U.S. imperialism to remain in Iraq.

It is important to bring up this history of U.S. war crimes because the corporate media won't. They present the U.S. invasion as an aberration of the George W. Bush administration, which conducted the attack. But nearly all Republicans, most Democrats, and nearly all the corporate media backed the invasion at the time. The fact that prior sanctions and the invasion itself were war crimes by the U.S. imperialist ruling class must be exposed and stressed.

From the people of the U.S. — especially from the working class and all oppressed sectors of U.S. society — the demand should be: “Get the U.S. out of Iraq! No war against Iran!”

Another U.S. attack on Iraq

This Dec. 29, the U.S. launched an airstrike on Iraqi militia who had allegedly killed a U.S. citizen — called a “contractor” by U.S. officials and corporate media. The U.S. airstrike killed at least 24 Iraqi people.

U.S. officials are using the word “contractor” to disguise the individual's actual role on the ground. To remove the disguise, use the proper word: “mercenary.” Most military contractors are former U.S. combat forces who — for more pay than they received from the U.S. Armed Forces — are carrying out “work” as hired gunslingers. Thousands of them are in Iraq and also Afghanistan.

In response to the mercenary's death, U.S. strike forces hit targets in Iraq allegedly housing militia with ties to Iran. Many officials in the Iraqi government warned the U.S. against making these strikes and called them an assault on Iraqi sovereignty.

Washington overrode the Iraqi leaders and ordered the strike. Trump followed with a belligerent tweet threatening Iran.

Another U.S. threat against Iran

On May 8, 2018, the Trump administration increased hostility against Iran by breaking the 2015 nuclear weapons treaty and re-imposing economic sanctions. It has continued to tighten them since. The sanctions have damaged the Iranian economy and provoked popular discontent.

Those forces within the U.S. ruling class and its agents who are most belligerent toward Iran — for example, former national security adviser John Bolton and Sen. Lindsay Graham — had already attacked Trump's decision last spring to halt (at the last moment) a U.S. military strike on Iran, a country of 80 million people.

Media like the New York Times repeat the warmongers' incitements. Now Bolton and Graham are again pushing the administration to attack Iran.

Such an attack threatens a conflagration in the West Asian region — and raises the danger of a world war. This is also a threat to people within the United States.

The only possible legitimate position for progressive and anti-imperialist forces inside the U.S. is to oppose any attack on Iran and fight to get the U.S. out of Iraq and the entire Middle East region.