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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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06.10.2024

Israel “in discussion” with Washington on attacking

Iran’s oilfields amid intensified bombardment of Lebanon

With the full backing of American imperialism, Israel is continuing to terrorise the Lebanese population with a savage air bombardment and intensifying ground operations in the south. The Zionist regime’s impending attack on Iran, which is presented in the Western media and political establishments as “retaliation” for Iran’s missile attack on Israeli military installations Tuesday, will represent a further escalation of the region-wide war that has already begun.

US President Joe Biden told reporters Thursday that Washington is “in discussion” with Israel about striking Iran’s oilfields.



Flames rise from Israeli airstrikes in Dahiyeh, Beirut, Lebanon, Friday, Oct. 4, 2024 [AP Photo/Hussein Malla]

An attack on Iran's oilfields risks plunging the entire region into a bloodbath. It would not only make the eruption of an all-out war between Israel, supported by the US, and Iran all but inevitable, it would also heighten the risk that other major powers—like Russia, which has troops and naval vessels positioned in neighboring Syria, and China, which is Iran's most important trading partner and is heavily reliant on Iranian oil supplies—would feel compelled either to intervene in the war or retaliate against the US and its allies in another part of the world.

The fact of the matter is that Israel is not an independent actor in the escalating region-wide conflict. Every action it takes, including its terrorist attacks on and indiscriminate bombing of Lebanon and assassinations of political leaders like Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah, is coordinated closely with the White House and the Pentagon. Washington wants war with Iran to secure US imperialist domination over the energy-rich Middle East so that it can serve as a staging ground for military operations against China and Russia. This reckless re-division of the world is seen as necessary to offset US imperialism's precipitous economic decline.

A statement by the G7 imperialist countries Wednesday turned reality on its head by portraying Iran as the chief aggressor throughout the region. Close to a year after Israel launched its genocide against the Palestinians, killing at least 186,000 people, and after two weeks of terrorist attacks and constant bombardments that have claimed the lives of thousands of Lebanese, the G7 wrote:

We, the Leaders of the G7, express deep concern over the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and condemn in the strongest terms Iran's direct military attack against Israel, which constitutes a serious threat to regional stability.

We unequivocally reiterate our commitment to the security of Israel. Iran's seriously destabilizing actions throughout the Middle East through terrorist proxies and armed groups—including the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas—as well as Iran-aligned militia groups in Iraq, must stop.

In other words, the world's leading "democracies," a group including Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States, fully endorse the far-right Zionist regime's "war on seven fronts." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who are the subject of war crimes charges by the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, speak of the fronts in their war as stretching from Gaza and the West Bank to Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran, just like the G7.

While condemning Iran for a missile attack that claimed no direct fatalities (one Palestinian was killed by falling missile debris, probably resulting from the shooting down of an Iranian

missile by Israel and its allies), the G7 statement did not utter a word about the illegal assassination by Israel of Nasrallah in a strike that flattened multiple residential buildings and claimed at least 300 lives. Nor did it mention the thousands of Lebanese, including children, with mangled hands and limbs or who have lost their eyesight, due to the Israel Defense Forces' terrorist attack that saw thousands of pagers and other devices explode across the country.

These attacks were only possible due to the logistical and political support Israel enjoys from Washington and the European powers, including a virtually unlimited supply of bunker-busting bombs from the US that the IDF has used to turn Gaza into a wasteland and which it is using to devastate densely populated areas of Beirut. This silence can only be understood as approval of Israel's barbaric methods.

Israel got the message. In the early hours of Friday, one of the heaviest air raids on Beirut's southern suburbs was carried out, with local correspondents reporting at least 11 loud explosions. Dozens of people were reported killed. The Masnaa border crossing was also hit, cutting off the main road between Lebanon and Syria. Some 300,000 people have fled to Syria over recent weeks to escape the bombardment. Over a million Lebanese have been displaced from their homes.

Israel's air strikes on Lebanon have already forced 40 medical facilities to close. "We're seeing almost verbatim a repeat of what was happening in Gaza with the Israelis' breaches of international humanitarian law," Laila Baker, regional director for the UN Population Fund, told *Al Jazeera*.

In his first public appearance since Iran's missile strikes on Israeli military bases Tuesday, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei addressed a crowd in Tehran after leading Friday prayers for the first time in five years. Khamenei declared that Iran won't "procrastinate or rush to carry out its duty" in standing up to Israel. He continued:

The Palestinian people have a lawful right to defend themselves. To stand up to those criminals—the occupation forces. There is not a single court or international organisation that can blame the Palestinian people for simply defending their homeland.

Stating that Hamas' 7 October uprising was "legitimate and logical," and that all Muslim nations confront a "common enemy," he went on:

The policies adopted by our enemy is to sow the seeds of division and sedition, to drive a wedge among all the Muslims. They are the same enemies to the Palestinians, Lebanese, Egyptians, and the Iraqis. They are the enemy to the Yemeni and Syrian people.

Under conditions in which the imperialist powers incessantly claim that only Israel has the “right” to “defend itself,” as they supply high-powered weaponry to the Zionist regime to exterminate entire populations, Khamenei’s comments denouncing the criminality of Israel and its allies and defending the Palestinians can win a hearing among politically inexperienced workers and youth throughout the region and beyond.

But they are made by the head of a bankrupt bourgeois-clerical regime that offers no alternative to the rapid descent into a region-wide bloodbath. Far from “uniting” all Muslims, Khamenei heads a regime that is itself bitterly divided between a faction that wants to conciliate with the imperialist powers to secure improved access to the world economy, and another pushing for a more hard-line stance, including the use of military force, and closer ties with the capitalist regimes in China and Russia.

More fundamentally, Khamenei’s portrayal of the conflict in the Middle East as a religious war between the “Muslims” and the “common enemy” is thoroughly reactionary. The cause of the war erupting between Washington’s attack dog Israel and Iran is the imperialists’ drive to reimpose colonial chains on the energy-rich region as part of a bloody re-division of the world. The Middle East is one front in a rapidly developing third world war, which includes the US-NATO war on Russia in Ukraine and advanced preparations for war with China in the Asia-Pacific.

The task facing workers and the oppressed masses throughout the Middle East is not to “unite all Muslims,” which would include the despotic Saudi regime, a close ally of Washington and Israel, and Iran’s bourgeois-clerical rulers, among others. Rather, the urgent task is the forging of working-class unity across all artificial national, religious, and ethnic divisions in a unified struggle to put an end to imperialist war and the capitalist profit system that gives rise to it.

Uniting Arab, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish and Jewish workers in such a fight is possible only on the basis of the perspective of permanent revolution. The only way for the region’s working class to end the imperialist oppression of the Middle East, and to secure the social and democratic rights of its long-suffering population, is by connecting its struggles with those of its class brothers and sisters in the imperialist centers of North America and Europe in the fight for the program of world socialist revolution.