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USA

US Antiwar Movement Grows Slowly Amid Political Confusion

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U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have conducted a tremendously powerful air war against Iran which, as Iran responded and Israel also made war on Lebanon, quickly became a regional war bringing death and destruction to many Middle Eastern nations, killing thousands. Trump is now demanding Iran's "unconditional surrender" and the right to a role in choosing the country's future leaders. Elected as a candidate who opposed foreign wars and regime change, Trump has repeatedly betrayed his promises.

Early this month the Democratic Party attempted to introduce a war powers resolution in Congress that would have limited President Donald Trump's war on Iran without congressional backing. The Democrats' measure was defeated by a 53-to-47 vote almost entirely along party lines.

A recent poll shows that 56% of Americans disapprove of Trump's war on Iran. Still, it has been difficult in the first two weeks of the war to assemble a national antiwar movement of any size. The trade union bureaucracy, closely linked to the Democratic Party, has generally supported U.S. wars either overtly or tacitly. Today, with many industrial and construction workers supporting Trump, it may be even more difficult to find unions in opposition.

The National Union of Nurses, however, took a strong stand, stating: "Nurses across the country are outraged that the Trump administration has ignored the Constitution and committed yet another imperialist act of war over the weekend without approval from Congress. Just like Trump's unilateral military action in Venezuela, the U.S. attack on Iran is paid for by our patients: working-class people across the United States who are already struggling here at home to afford basic necessities such as health care, food, and housing."

Similarly, the Service Employees International Union – 1199, the country's largest health care workers union, "condemns the Trump administration's illegal war on Iran, a conflict which has already taken hundreds of innocent lives and threatens to create yet another ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in the Middle East. This latest regime-change war is an appalling betrayal of working people's priorities."

Indivisible, the principal organization responsible for organizing the massive "No Kings" protests, issued a statement saying, "Trump has launched unauthorized military strikes on Iran, dragging the United States toward yet another war without congressional approval. This reckless military escalation is putting the lives of U.S. servicemembers and innocent Iranian civilians in danger—all to advance a unilateral agenda that Congress did not authorize and the American people do not support."

Some groups on the American left, however, have tended to sow confusion. The Workers World Party, the Party of Socialism and Liberation, and the ANSWER Coalition have taken positions that make it more difficult for most people to join their protests because they have supported the Iranian dictatorship and the actions of Hamas. Though now for the first time a majority of Americans sympathize with Palestine over Israel, there is little sympathy with Iran's brutal dictatorship or with Hamas' murderous tactics. The anti-war work of the Democratic Socialist of America (DSA) the country's largest socialist organization, has been thrown into disarray by an internal fight over whether or not to work with those groups.

There is no unanimity on the war among the million or more Iranians in the United States, though a majority of Iranian-Americans oppose the war (53 percent according to a recent poll) there are strong opposing positions. Some Iranians hate the violent theocratic dictatorship and so they support the war despite its destruction of their country.

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Despite all the divisions, if war goes on, a movement will be built.

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