

On Twitter, He Declares War on Iran: The Twenty-Sixth Newsletter (2019)



Morteza Nikoubazi, North Tehran.

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the desk of the **Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research**.

In a bunker in the White House, US President Donald Trump fiddles his thumbs. His advisors – John Bolton and Mike Pompeo – want him to annihilate Iran. He agrees with them but cannot decide. On Twitter, he has declared war; but his hand hovers over the orders, which he has not yet signed. But he could – at any moment. That is the mercurial attitude of Trump.

Meanwhile, from Tehran, the view is different. Iran has faced aggression from the United States for decades. In 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) overthrew democratically-elected prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq and then fully backed the authoritarian monarchy of the Shah of Iran until he was overthrown by a popular rebellion in 1979. It was the United States, other Western European countries and Saudi Arabia that egged on Iraq to invade Iran and prosecute a terrible war for eight long years. Two ill-advised US wars – against Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) – defeated Iran’s long-standing adversaries, the Taliban and Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath Party. The US conducted those wars, but it was Iran that won them.



Alfred Yaghobzadeh, Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988).

Iran could now stretch out in both directions. Towards the east, Iran deepened its links to various forces in Afghanistan and developed close ties with China. Towards the west, Iran's old links to Iraq, Syria and Lebanon strengthened. It was in order to confine Iran to its borders and limit its influence in the region that the United States pushed for regime change in Syria in 2004, pushed for its Iraqi allies to win the two parliamentary elections of 2005, pushed for the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006, and pushed for use of the nuclear issue to sanction Iran from 2006.

For over a decade, Iran has faced a hybrid war from the United States and its allies (Israel and the Gulf Arabs). Our **Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research dossier** on the concept of 'hybrid war' and Venezuela gives us important pointers to understand the nature of the war against Iran.



Presentation in Buenos Aires (Argentina) by our team about the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research dossier no. 17 on the hybrid war on Venezuela

Sabotage of Iran's nuclear facilities (as well as the murder of its nuclear scientists), an information war and a war through sanctions have created a series of crises in Iran. Nonetheless, as Professor Mohammed Marandi of the University of Tehran told us this week, the 'mood in Tehran is normal'. Certainly, says Marandi, the sabre-rattling has had an impact on the markets, but 'on the whole, people are going about doing what they usually do'.

The point of a hybrid war is to strike at the confidence of a people. It is to cause dissension and chaos, raise the level of fear and paralyse the country. Threats about the attacks on tankers in the Persian Gulf and threats after the downing of a US drone by Iran have a cumulative effect. But the Iranian people know this. Many Iranians suspect, as Marandi says, that Trump is bluffing. Trump's comments about stopping a US strike minutes before it was to take place are part of this neurological warfare, as I note in my **report** on the hybrid war on Iran.

Part of the information war is to say that it is Iran that is aggressive and eager for war. Iran is blamed for the attack on the Norwegian and Japanese tankers, even though there is no forensic evidence for that claim and even though the Norwegian and Japanese companies want an investigation rather than finger-pointing. It is the United States that sent its drone into Iranian territory, but Iran is blamed for shooting down the drone. Iran is always to blame. That is the key outcome of the information war.



Morteza Nikoubazi, Backgammon on the streets of southern Tehran.

The conversation about the US provocations against Iran – from sabotage to the attacks on the tankers – do not include the CIA’s Iran Mission Centre, created to generate the ‘facts’ that seek to allow the US to bomb the country (for more on this Iran Mission Centre, please see my **report**). This Centre is run by men who are eager for war against Iran, men who will do anything to produce this war. Nothing should be put past them – not even sabotage or deception. To assume that they play by the rules of international law is naïve; they disdain these rules, pillory them in public and violate them in private.

To suggest malevolent intent of the United States or to suggest that the bureau of dirty tricks in the US might be up to something shady in the Persian Gulf invites the raised eyebrow of disbelief. One of the curiosities of history is that when a powerful force does something nasty – an assassination, a coup – it denies it at the time, a denial that is widely accepted by a media subservient to power.

95

To: Mr. Waller


[Redacted]

22nd July 1953

I have been asked to tell you that Mr. Roosevelt wishes you and Mr. Wilber to pursue the question of the preparation of an official American statement to follow a "successful" coup.

~~Top Secret~~

Later, when the historian digs into the archive and uncovers the ugly truth, heads are nodded, and slight smiles are offered. There are even smoking guns – CIA cables, such as the one above, and the diary of US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, below. The cable above comes from the CIA station in Tehran (1953), where Kermit Roosevelt – who ran the CIA operation on the ground – wrote to John Waller – who was overseeing the CIA operation from Langley, Virginia. Roosevelt wanted Waller to prepare the US statement a month before the ‘successful’ coup. The latter document, below, shows Eisenhower admitting the ‘covert’ US role in the coup, and then offering the key point that if this role were to become public, then ‘our chances to do anything of like nature in future would almost totally disappear’.



Another recent development that we helped bring about was the restoration of the Shah to power in Iran and the elimination of Mossadegh. The things we did were "covert." If knowledge of them became public, we would not only be embarrassed in that region, but our chances to do anything of like nature in the future would almost totally disappear. Nevertheless our agent there, a member of the CIA, worked intelligently, courageously and tirelessly. I listened to his detailed report and it seemed more like a dime novel than an historical fact. When we realize that in the first hours of the attempted coup, all element of surprise disappeared through betrayal, the Shah fled to Baghdad, and Mossadegh seemed to be more firmly entrenched in power than ever before, then we can understand exactly how courageous our agent was in staying right on the job and continuing to work until he reversed the entire situation.

Diary of US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 8 October 1953, declassified 2009, Eisenhower Library.

All of this is revealed. But this does not change the attitude towards the next set of mysterious assassinations and coups, of bombings of tankers in shipping lanes and car bombs near shopping districts. Eisenhower’s worry is irrelevant. The truth about the Gulf of Tonkin and the Kuwaiti incubators is recorded, but it does not dent the belief that the US government – as an example of an aggressive power – is nothing other than judicious in its actions. This is the power of the hybrid war, of the control of information. It is a war to control the minds, hearts, and bodies of the people.



One of Iran's beloved poets – Siavash Kasrai (1926-1996) – for good reason sings of the United States government as the 'club for the mean spirited'. The people of the United States do not want this war, Marandi tells **Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research**. If there is a war, he said, 'everyone would lose, obviously'. It is true that the US has an overwhelming ability to destroy large parts of Iran, but if Iraq – with a population three times smaller than that of Iran – could prevent a US victory, then it is inevitable that Iran will also do so. But the cost will be catastrophic for all, which is why Marandi – humanely – says that 'everyone would lose'. It is something to bear in mind.

The interview with Marandi will form a dossier from **Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research** that will appear in August. It will contain not only his assessment of the sanctions war on Iran but also on the role of China and Russia in the Iranian orbit.

Twenty-five countries have gathered together to form a group against the use of unilateral sanctions by the United States. We are working on a *briefing* document on the history and use of these unilateral sanctions, which we will release by early October. These sanctions are part of the hybrid war.

History, as we often note has its good side. The election for the mayor of Istanbul (Turkey) resulted in the victory of a progressive candidate, while in Quito (Ecuador) our friend Ola Bini has been released on bail. As the great Iranian poet Forough Farrokhzad (1934-1967) sang,

I had a dream.

Someone is coming – for sure.

I had a dream about a red star.

Warmly,

Vijay.

PS: our newsletter is available in English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. We are grateful to our translators for their hard work – Alexandre Bovey, Dafne Melo, Daniela Schroder, Pilar Troya, and Kamil Alimov. All of our newsletters – and our other materials – are available on our **website** for free download.

