



CASMII Press Release

20 February 2010

An appeal to anti-war organizations & activists to oppose the increasing threats against Iran

Around the world, anti-war activists are preparing for major protests this spring to oppose the continuing U.S.-led occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, a storm of developments is dramatically increasing tensions between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In response, the Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMII) is issuing this appeal to the anti-war movements in the United States, United Kingdom and other countries to raise the demands of “No war, no sanctions, no internal interference in Iran!”

Iran is a country that hasn't attacked a neighbor in more than 200 years. Even when Saddam Hussein invaded Iran after the 1979 Revolution and, with support from the West, used chemical weapons against both civilians and combatants, the Islamic Republic did not retaliate in kind. And yet the U.S. government claims that Iran represents a serious threat to the Middle East region and the entire world. Without a shred of evidence, the U.S. charges that Iran's program to develop nuclear power for peaceful energy purposes is just a cover to develop nuclear weapons. Never mentioned is the fact that, as a signatory to the U.N.'s Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran's right to develop nuclear energy is enshrined in international law. Just a few months ago, the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Chief, Mohammed ElBaradai, the person responsible for monitoring compliance with that treaty, stated that “Nobody is sitting in Iran today developing nuclear weapons. Tehran doesn't have an ongoing nuclear weapons program. But somehow, everyone in the West is talking about how Iran's nuclear program is the greatest threat to the world.” (Interview with the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Sept. 2009) Instead, warning of world disaster if Iran should succeed in its imaginary goal of obtaining nuclear arms, Washington argues that Iran must be forcefully brought to its knees, through a combination of increasingly crippling sanctions, taking advantage of Iran's internal divisions and preparing for a possible military attack.

Consider these recent developments:

- The U.S has been pressuring the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to impose a fourth and more severe round of sanctions against Iran. The only real holdout has been the People's Republic of China, which in January held the council's revolving presidency. On Feb. 1, however, the president's seat passed to France, which is nearly as hostile to Iran's nuclear program as is the U.S. (France itself, by the way, relies on nuclear power for 80 percent of its own energy needs.) The Security Council's permanent members, including China and Russia, have never been a real barrier for the US. Not only has the council already approved three rounds of sanctions against Iran, but the Obama Administration is now talking of “bypassing” the U.N. in its latest push for sanctions. While sanctions are often promoted as an alternative to war, the world



now knows that the sanctions imposed by the U.N. against Iraq during the first Persian Gulf War resulted in the deaths of up to 1.5 million Iraqis, a third of them children.

- Not content with just pressuring the U.N., the U.S. is pushing ahead with plans for more of its own unilateral sanctions. Congress is getting close to passing the Dodd-Shelby Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act. Among other provisions, this bipartisan bill would “impose new sanctions on entities involved in exporting certain refined petroleum products to Iran or building Iran’s domestic refining capacity.” This provision starkly exposes the real U.S. goal: to economically cripple Iran in an attempt to so complicate life for the Iranian people that they might demand a “regime change.” In the past, the U.S. has argued that Iran doesn’t need to develop nuclear power because of its vast oil reserves, while conveniently omitting the fact that Iran doesn’t have sufficient refinery capacity to meet its energy needs through oil alone. Targeting companies and countries that sell refined petroleum products to Iran, or that help Iran expand its own refining capacity, shows that the real goal has nothing to do with countering nuclear proliferation. (The U.S. even pressures European countries not to provide Iran with the means to develop wind energy!) Those who desire hegemony over the oil-rich Middle East can tolerate no independent regional powers, whether or not they present a threat to any other country. This reality was dramatically demonstrated in 1953, when the CIA toppled Iran’s democratically elected prime minister, Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh, for the “crime” of nationalizing Iran’s oil industry.
- Meanwhile, these threats of new sanctions are being accompanied by a military build-up in the Persian Gulf region. On Jan. 31, The Wall Street Journal reported that, in recent months, the U.S. and its Persian Gulf allies have stepped up their military defenses “in response to Iranian missile tests and Tehran’s continued defiance of international efforts to curtail its nuclear program.” The moves have included “upgrades, new purchases of American-made Patriot antimissile batteries and the addition of advanced air- and missile-defense radars ...” The Journal reported that, although “some of the buildup has been going on for years ... the heightened profile of the moves comes as the Obama administration has toughened its rhetoric against Tehran.”
- And, according to a Feb. 1 Reuters report, “The United States has expanded land- and sea-based missile defense systems in and around the Gulf to counter what it sees as Iran’s growing missile threat The deployments include expanded land-based Patriot defensive missile installations in Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Bahrain, as well as Navy ships with missile defense systems in and around the Mediterranean, officials said. ... The chairman of the U.S. military’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, said last month the Pentagon must have military options ready to counter Iran should Obama call for them.”
- Finally, Iran’s ongoing internal political crisis has apparently led some Western anti-war organizations and activists to be ambivalent about the need to stand against Western aggression against Iran. Regardless of how activists view Iran’s internal



situation, we all must agree that outside pressure and interference must be opposed. Recognizing this, Iran's political opposition has urged Western countries to stay out of Iran's internal affairs. As presidential opposition candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, has put it, "We are opposed to any types of sanctions against our nation. This is what living the Green Path means." (Statement No. 13, Sept. 28, 2009) No truly progressive democracy activist in a country targeted by the U.S. would appeal to the U.S. for support.

The political positions taken by anti-war activists in the West can become a real factor in strategic decisions made by the U.S. government and its allies. Because of this, we are heartened to see that in the United States the National Assembly to End the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and Occupations and the ANSWER Coalition have added the demand of "No War or Sanctions Against Iran!" to their fliers promoting national anti-war protests on March 20. We call on all other coalitions, organizations and individual activists to do the same, and to further demand "No Outside Interference in Iran's Internal Affairs! Self-determination for the Iranian People!"

Regardless of differences in our political analyses and views, these demands should be acceptable to all who struggle for peace, justice and a better world for all.

This appeal has been initiated by the
Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMII)
www.campaigniran.org

For more information or to contact CASMII please visit <http://www.campaigniran.org>

[END]