

The Barbarism of US Imperialism Exposed Again

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague unanimously ruled yesterday that Washington must let Iran use international financial payments systems to buy humanitarian supplies. When the Obama administration imposed sanctions on Iran in 2012-2015, it tried to strangle Iran's economy by freezing it out of all financial transactions denominated in US dollars. At its request, the Brussels-based Society for Worldwide Inter-bank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) network expelled Iranian banks, ending Iran's ability to use US dollars for international purchases. Since unilaterally repudiating the 2015 accord this May, the Trump administration has made clear it plans to re-impose sanctions as part of its preparations for war with Iran.

The ICJ ruling demands that Washington not block trade in critical goods, and makes clear that the US war drive against Iran—including calls by US officials such as White House national security adviser John Bolton to re-impose SWIFT sanctions on Iran—violate international law.

The Iranian foreign ministry applauded the ICJ decision, stating that it “vindicates the Islamic Republic of Iran and confirms the illegitimacy and oppressiveness” of US sanctions. The ICJ has no mechanism or power to enforce its decision, however, and US officials immediately made clear they will defy the ICJ ruling.

The relentless campaign by Washington to isolate Iran since the 1979 Revolution, and in particular the 2012-2015 sanctions, have taken a terrible toll. Between 2012 and 2016, Iran's critical oil and gas exports fell from over \$9 billion to under \$3 billion, shattering its economy and its access to critical food, pharmaceutical and industrial supplies.

And after Aseman flight 3705 crashed in Iran in February, killing all 65 aboard, the *Guardian* noted that at least 1,985 people have died in Iranian plane crashes since 1979: “There have been scores of plane crashes in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, mainly because western sanctions for decades limited its ability to purchase spare parts or buy new planes.” US sanctions on Iran have had devastating humanitarian consequences.

Over a span of decades, economic sanctions have been a key foreign policy tool for the US imperialism to inflict untold suffering on innocent people in an attempt to bully various countries it targeted for regime change to force them to fall in line with its hegemonic policy.

US imperialism imposed sanctions against Iraq, Cuba and the former Yugoslavia. They caused horrific losses. The UN embargo Washington imposed on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War cut off Iraq's access to health supplies, leading to an estimated 500,000 deaths of Iraqi children. Asked about this number on television in 1996, then-US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright infamously defended the sanctions:

“A hard choice, but the price, we think the price is worth it.”
