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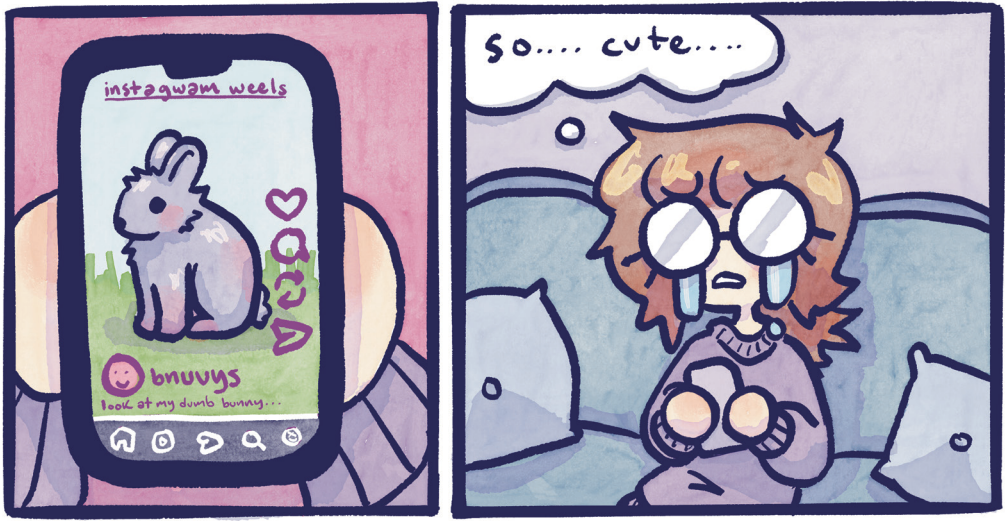
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No more imperialist wars on Iran



Some holding pictures of the late Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, mourners reach out to coffins during a funeral for people killed during the ongoing U.S.–Israeli military campaign in Isfahan, Iran, Thursday, March 5, 2026. AP PHOTO BY PAYMAN SHAHSANAEI

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On Saturday, Feb. 28, attacks from the United States and Israeli military killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In response, Iranian forces have begun sustained strikes against U.S. military sites across the region. After months of escalating tensions since the last bout of strikes in June 2025, it is clear now that the region is hurtling toward all-out war.

On the domestic side, the American public is left with an open question in response to this deeply unpopular violence. It is easy to focus on the fact that this action was unauthorized by Congress, or that this aggression is being pushed forward recklessly by the incompetent, erratic leadership of President Donald Trump. However, these narratives about “how it is being handled” fundamentally obscure the true nature of this war and, as a result, confuse any potential response to it. The only way to a unified, broad-based opposition to this war is to be clear about what it really is: an effort by the U.S. to punish one of the only countries against its imperial-

ist agenda in the Middle East. To prove this redefinition requires going back into Iranian history, which, frankly, is a largely unknown subject to most Americans. Far too often, public perceptions of the nation rely on a caricature presented by Western governments and press. What is depicted is a backwards, evil theocracy oppressing a population that is crying out for freedom that can only be provided by U.S. action. It’s just as The Washington Post published in a recent op-ed by Iranian monarchist leader Reza Pahlavi: “For years, my compatriots have called on the free world to stand with them. Now President Trump has answered their call. The Iranian people know they are not alone.” This so-called answer came in the form of unprovoked missile strikes that killed 150 schoolgirls in one day, but that is beside the point. What must be understood about these Western narratives is their reticence to mention how their own actions fueled the Iranian government they now so loathe.

The truth starts in 1951, with the election of Premier Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh. Iran was coming out of a dark, difficult time characterized by repeated periodic

takeovers from various world powers stretching back to the late 1800s. Additionally, there were repeated efforts over many decades to impose constitutional restrictions on the monarchy, which seemed to be making progress after the end of WWII. Mossadegh was a popular leader who represented the feeling of the time, as his policy focused on the development of state independence through “social security, land reform, higher taxes and — most significantly — the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry.”

However, this oil nationalization policy put him at odds with American and British interests, whose companies enjoyed the free, easy access to Iranian oil supplies. So, in 1953 the CIA and MI6 orchestrated a violent coup to overthrow Mossadegh. In fact, declassified files from the time show the CIA proudly declaring it was “an American project from beginning to end.”

The leader they put in place was the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (father to the above cited Reza Pahlavi). He was, in short, one of the most brutal dictators the world has ever seen. In 1974, Amnesty International would report that “no country in the world has a worse record in human

rights than Iran.” Largely, this is due to the creation of SAVAK, Pahlavi’s secret police force, which implemented widespread tactics of deep surveillance and torture among everyday Iranians. They kidnapped and executed civilians off the street for crimes of which they had no proof nor needed any trial. It was pure, violent suppression of dissent. The group was also funded almost entirely by the U.S. government, with the CIA personally “[train- ing] virtually all of the first generation of SAVAK personnel,” according to the Hampton Institute. Economically, the dictatorship was just as bad: by 1963, “some 85% of the of wealth that remained in the country went to a small elite.”

The people knew where the problem lay all along. It was clear that the incredible repression they faced really derived from foreign powers. Ideological differences were put aside, and extremely broad sects of society came together to reject Pahlavi and overthrow the government in 1979. Ultimately, the movement was anti-imperialist at heart and was directly caused by the sheer, unadulterated brutality of Western intervention in the years after Mossadegh.

To this day, the Iranian state has upheld this anti-imperialist position. Their present opposition to the West, through interference in the genocide of Palestinians and their support for Venezuelan independence, directly follows from the original exigence for their revolution. The current escalation of violence against them is to make these global power plays easier for the U.S.-led coalition. The coinciding of attacks on Venezuela, Iran, Cuba and Palestine is no mistake, but rather different parts of one grand strategy to erase any

group that does not align with America.

Now, all of this is not necessarily to show support for the current Iranian government. Although the 1979 revolution was united by anti-imperialism, it was entirely co-opted by right-wing reactionary forces. These fundamentalist groups took power in the end, shifting the revolution from strict anti-interventionism to a harshly conservative position. However, it is necessary to see that this was not just a chance occurrence, but rather an unfortunately prevalent process for countries overthrowing colonial chains. Violent repression causes anger, and such widespread anger is a breeding ground for reactionary leadership to take charge. Additionally, colonial interference deliberately erases positive social structures and relations in places like Iran, leaving the people without the necessary groundwork to create progressive governments.

This is all to say that despite any objections Americans have to the Iranian government, there is no room for criticism when the root cause is still the American government. The Iranian people have a right to resist and fight for a more just society, but this will not be won for them by international actors. Trump’s government is not acting in their best interests by attempting to bring back the repressive Shah, and the



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public cannot be duped into supporting it by misunderstanding that point. Since the 1950s, U.S. interference in Iran has been undeniably imperialist and exploitative in nature, and this continuing process must be firmly opposed. Anything other than condemnation of foreign involvement from those within the imperial core will only be used to manufacture consent for the further destruction the Iranian people. We must not be co-opted.