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Nepal's people resist U.S. anti-China alliance

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Protest in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, condemns U.S. Millenium Compact Challenge, Sept. 28. Photo: NWPP

Continuous protests shook the length and breadth of mountainous Nepal in September as the U.S. pushed again to chain this Asian country of 28 million people to its anti-China alliance through the Millenium Challenge Compact (MCC).

The U.S. claims that the MCC's \$500 million grant agreement is merely a generous gift to help improve the country's infrastructure, with no strings attached. But that story has been shot full of holes by anti-imperialist forces leading the protests.

They point out that the George W. Bush administration set up the MCC to promote “free market economies” and further Washington’s geopolitical goals. Since then, numerous statements by both Democratic and Republican administration representatives in international forums have demonstrated that the MCC is viewed as a component of the U.S. Asian-Pacific “pivot” and the New Cold War against China.

Nepal’s government signed the MCC agreement in 2017, but the country’s parliament has not taken the necessary steps to enact it so far because of mass opposition.

A big push to have Nepal enact the MCC was made in early 2020, coinciding with President Donald Trump’s visit to neighboring India, where the U.S. inked a \$3 billion weapons deal with the far-right Modi government to threaten China. Protests erupted across Nepal against the MCC and Indian territorial aggression, including a thousands-strong [march to the U.S. Embassy](#) in the capital, Kathmandu.

Now, a new U.S. administration is pushing the same anti-China agenda. The arm-twisting is intensifying again with MCC Vice President Fatima Sumar’s [mid-September visit](#), which included closed-door meetings with government officials and opposition leaders and thinly veiled threats.

The Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP) has been [leading protests in many cities](#), towns and villages against the MCC. Struggle-La Lucha spoke with educator and NWPP leader Surendra Raj Gosai, who has been traveling the country to participate in protests and public meetings.

“The U.S. MCC delegation headed by Fatima Sumar called upon the prime minister, ex-prime ministers and other leaders of ruling parties,” Gosai told SLL. “The NWPP and a few other organisations have organized protests against the U.S. interference. Her visit intensified the protests.

“Everybody is raising a general question: ‘If it’s a grant, why is the U.S. trying to impose it?’ The ruling parties, under heavy U.S. pressure, are trying to forward the agreement in the parliament and amend it. But, the Nepalese people have continuously disagreed and are in the streets.”

Gosai said: “The NWPP defines MCC as a neocolonial tool. That’s why the U.S. is pushing it. Also, U.S. imperialism wants a new war in Asia, as Europe cannot bear any new war after the two world wars.”

Farmers’ organizations condemn MCC

The MCC is supposed to be independent of institutions like the State Department and U.S. Aid for International Development. But the selection process and program administration are [overseen by right-wing organizations](#) like the Heritage Foundation, Freedom House and the Brookings Institution, which loyally serve U.S. imperialism, and its criteria are largely based on countries accepting market-driven economies, austerity budgets and cooperation with the U.S. military.

On Sept. 8, six peasant farmers’ organizations [issued a joint statement](#) condemning the MCC and demanding its rejection: “The project is designed to be above Nepal’s laws and constitution and in a way that is a gross insult to Nepal, and its financial accounts cannot be audited by the Government of Nepal and the Office of the Auditor General.

“If there is corruption in it, the Commission for Control of Abuse of Authority of Nepal cannot take any action. Provision has been made to prevent any official or person involved in this project from being tried for committing any heinous crime in accordance with the laws of Nepal.

“In the same way, MCA will contract out all the construction works of the agreement itself, retaining all the rights in the project area. The agreement clearly states that

MCC (USA) will have full ownership of all the land and underground of the project area during the agreement period and all the valuables and raw materials obtained during the construction and all the intellectual property [that] will be established.

“The possibility of bringing U.S. troops into the country in the name of project security and conducting operations against Nepali communists and allied China cannot be ruled out. ... The MCC agreement, which has many controversial issues, is against Nepal’s nationhood and the sovereignty of the Nepali people.”

On Feb. 28, 2020, the government of Sri Lanka [rejected an MCC agreement](#) on the recommendation of an expert panel, which said it would damage the country’s sovereignty and was incompatible with the constitution.

The Nepali people likewise feel that the MCC is an attack on their sovereignty and a step toward establishing a U.S. military presence in their country. Nepal only deposed the monarchy and established a parliamentary republic in 2008 after decades of struggle, including a communist-led guerrilla movement. The masses have made it clear that becoming an appendage of U.S. imperialism is something they will not accept.

