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Turkey-Syria earthquake catastrophe needs global cooperation, not U.S. sanctions

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Collapsed buildings in the town of Jinderis, Aleppo province, Syria, Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023. The quake that razed thousands of buildings was one of the deadliest worldwide in more than a decade.

February 9 — The death toll from the unprecedented scale of the 7.8-magnitude quake that hit Turkey and Syria is now over 23,000. As of this writing, almost 70,000 people have been injured, and some 315,000 displaced. At least 24 million people and 4 million buildings were affected.

Human catastrophe looms for the survivors, who are now homeless and exposed to harsh winter conditions. The infrastructure that provides water and food is destroyed.

Biden and U.S. response lacking

President Joe Biden did not allude to this tragedy during his Feb. 7 “State of the Union”. On Feb. 6, Biden sent a perfunctory message to the Turkish government, offering unspecified support.

To date, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which helps fund the “regime change” National Endowment for Democracy (NED), has announced that they are sending two rescue teams. One team is from the Los Angeles County Firefighters, and the other is the Virginia Task Force-1.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that there will be no assistance for Syria. Period.

On the other hand, China has already announced \$5.9 million in aid to Turkey and \$4.4 million to Syria. China’s search and rescue teams, both governmental and private, are on the ground.

Immediately lift Sanctions

The National Union of Syrian Students in Damascus issued an appeal on Feb. 2 calling for an immediate end to the siege and unilateral coercive economic sanctions imposed on Syria and its people for the last 12 years. In addition, they demanded urgent aid to stem the suffering, including cash transfers for those affected.

John Parker, a national organizer for the Socialist Unity Party who recently traveled to Donbass on a fact-finding trip and visited Syria in 2013, angrily exclaimed, “U.S. and E.U. sanctions on Syria must be immediately lifted during this crisis!”

Parker continued, “How can there be any justification for the U.S. government to spend over \$100 billion dollars to fund a U.S.-NATO proxy war against Russia while the needs of millions of people go unmet and the anguish of children and their

parents in Turkey and Syria ring in our ears.”

“It is now over a week since the deadly earthquake struck. When it came to sending tanks, bombs, drones and all sorts of other armaments to Kiev, it was practically overnight. How many lives have been lost under the rubble in Syria that could have been saved if the necessary equipment and people power were rushed to the scene.”

The massive earthquake impacted a large area of southern and central Turkey, including the provinces of Kahramanmaras, Hatay, Gaziantep, Adiyaman, Osmaniye, and Adana. In Syria, the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo, as well as the coastal regions of Latakia and Tartus were impacted. Northern Syria is also home to 62,000 Palestinian refugees who reside in Lattakia, Neirab, Ein-el Tal, and Hama camps.

While scientists have yet to figure out how to make exact predictions on when earthquakes will strike, seismologists can estimate where earthquakes may be likely to strike by calculating probabilities and forecasts. Probabilities can be calculated based on the average rate of past seismic activity in a region.

China is leading use of AI

Artificial Intelligence systems have been developed by researchers at the University of Science and Technology of China and the China Earthquake Administration to fast-track predictions. The AI is being tested in Yunnan and Sichuan, where China lost over 87,000 lives to earthquakes in 2008. The system is called EarthX.

Global cooperation and socialism are desperately needed to save lives; U.S. imperialism, war, and sanctions threaten humanity.

