

The upcoming summit of the G77 group plus China in Havana: A draft declaration goes around the world

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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G-77 + China Summit in Havana,
Sept. 15-16.

As part of the preparations for the Summit of the G77 Group plus China, to be held in Havana from August 15 to 16 this September, a draft declaration has been under discussion for months, to be approved by the heads of delegations attending the forum, and which would constitute the main political message to be projected by that conclave towards the future. Almost two weeks before the meeting, the text was disclosed, which already has the consensus of the representations of the member countries at the United Nations in New York, and which will be known as the declaration on “Current Development Challenges: The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation”.

For many, this could be just another document, another exercise in multilateral diplomacy that has nothing to do with the day-to-day lives of the people who pay tribute to an event that could be a tournament of speeches and memorable photo

opportunities. But the reality, as always, is much more complex.

Before referring to some of the ideas contained in the document, it is worth mentioning that it is the synthesis of an extensive negotiation process in which 134 nations, that is, 134 governments and their 134 chancelleries, have summarized those ideas on which they have a consensus.

If we have any doubts about the significance of this achievement, let's do the exercise of calling together only 3 or 4 friends to write at least one page on any topic of common interest, be it sports, cultural or religious. Immediately differences will arise that cannot be resolved by voting, whereby the majority simply defeats the minority, and the latter does not feel part of the final draft. It is much more complicated when the exercise is carried out by official representatives of States that have their own history, culture, principles, legacy and also political differences within their social fabric.

So let's return to the point that the announced consensus has been reached among 134 nations, representing 80% of the world's population.

This fact in itself would indicate the leadership capacity shown by Cuban diplomacy, on behalf of its people and authorities. It also represents a significant vote of confidence from small, medium and large countries that have bet on Cuba's professionalism, honesty and transparency to lead this exercise.

This consensus also points in the direction of the urgency felt by all to address these issues, because we will act expeditiously in the face of some of them, or there will no longer be time to recover.

Other elements to be taken into account in this analysis are the circumstances in which this result has been achieved and its content. With regard to the former, it must be said that we are living in a circumstance of great uncertainty, in which

Humanity is going through a period of transition towards a new international order. This transition has already taken place on several occasions throughout history, but it has always been preceded by a war of major proportions, which on two occasions, both during the twentieth century, has been on a global scale. This fact implies that a good part of those summoned to the Summit would be taking a new look at their environment, their alliances and their external projections.

The content of the announced consensus also deserves to be highlighted and analyzed separately. In this type of document, it is perhaps just as important to record those issues that are expressly mentioned as those that are not stated.

Of the former, one of the most important is the definition made by the G77 plus China of the priority issues of the moment, a sort of collective snapshot of current affairs.

The shutter of this fictitious camera has been fired in the face of an international economic order that is “unfair to developing countries”, which have not yet recovered from the shock of COVID19 , have not been able to overcome all its ravages and fear the occurrence of a similar pandemic in the future, without having healed the wounds of the first one. But the Group believes that all this is exacerbated by:

- geopolitical tensions
- unilateral coercive measures
- economic and financial crises
- the fragility of the global economic outlook
- the increasing pressure on food and energy

- displacement of people
- market volatility
- inflation
- monetary tightening
- growing external debt burden
- increasing extreme poverty
- increasing inequalities within and between countries
- the adverse effects of climate change
- loss of biodiversity
- desertification, sand and dust storms and environmental degradation
- digital divides

These phenomena gravitate on the so-called Global South without a clear roadmap to deal with them in a coherent and effective manner.

Certainly, the North could show some interest in this list, since these are common problems suffered by communities and areas within their own geographies, which are far removed from the standard of living of higher-income segments and far from the opulence of large cities and capital cities.

In the analysis, it is also worth mentioning some of the issues that are not listed in the text in question, but which are at the center of the “concerns” expressed by the associations of the political North, particularly NATO, and which its social communication machinery tries to persuade everyone that they are the most urgent

issues.

In the consensus draft that has been disclosed there are no references to: Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine, the technological aggressiveness of the Asian tigers (not only China), the political changes taking place in Africa and removing pro-European rulers from power, the decrease in the relative weight of the dollar in international transactions, the increase of progressive and socialist proposals in Latin America.

The draft declaration to be reviewed in Havana does not mention the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution by name either, beyond the increase of the so-called digital divide, but there is a significant reference to "ensuring ethical, reliable and more equitable development, access and use of artificial intelligence". There is not even a similar approach in this regard in collective documents of the G-7, or the European Union. On the contrary, the interests of the large transnationals that venture into such developments are protected.

There is another fundamental element in this proposal and it has to do with the way in which these 134 nations intend to advance their actions. The nine pages of common points are full of references to "acting together", "global solidarity", "international cooperation", "benefit for all", "community of shared future", in addition to calls for "sustainable livelihoods" and "open science/knowledge at all levels", "inclusive information society".

There is no single idea that implies the preponderance of one of the members of the group over the rest, there is no hegemon, there is no single country that is considered as the paradigm, or the example to be imitated by the others.

As a novelty we should also mention the collective understanding, perhaps as never before, that Science, Technology and Innovation have a role to play for the development of all those who have been left behind, which is why new meetings and

collective exercises are proposed to achieve such purposes. In other words, it is understood that not everything can be expressed at once, so it is intended to take subsequent steps in that direction.

Among the issues not mentioned in the document, and which should be the focus of attention in future meetings, should be the training of human resources in universities and research centers within the group itself. Those that do not exist today will have to be created. At least in the field of the social sciences, it is a contradiction to think that the magnitude of the changes that must take place can be led by leaders who are trained, and incidentally molded, in the educational institutions of those countries of the North that have been the protagonists of dispossession, marginalization and exclusion against the rest of humanity. There will always be exceptions, but there is also a need for doctors, engineers, experts, researchers, entrepreneurs, who put collective fulfillment ahead of individual fulfillment, who have the benefit of their communities above personal goals in their horizons. Buildings will have to be constructed on new pillars.

As is well known, the G77, unlike the Aligned Movement, rotates its presidency, but does not convene summit meetings on a cyclical basis. Therefore, each G77 summit is historic in itself and this one will be even more so because of the juncture in which it takes place.

Every Cuban should ask himself what is the significance of the fact that 133 other nations have now trusted our quality as hosts, in spite of the enormous material limitations the country suffers from. The choice of Cuba to temporarily coordinate this collective is not only a sign of the failure of the U.S. policy of isolation against our country. It is much more. It is a shout to 133 voices saying that Cuba is a respected country within the international community, which is recognized for its leadership and weight. Havana has hosted two summits of the Non-Aligned Movement (1979, 2006), ministerial meetings associated with the previous ones and

a South Summit (2000, also of the G77), although it did not hold the pro tempore presidency at that time. It is worth adding to this list the multiplicity of events of CELAC, CARICOM, ACS, ALBA-TCP and many other regional bodies.

In the middle of the 1960s, when more than 100 bands of the so-called “alzados” were operating in Cuba, financed and organized from U.S. territory, causing 600 victims among the civilian population, when we were just beginning to suffer the effects of the economic, commercial and financial blockade, Havana was again and again the meeting point for the political forces that finally convened the first Tricontinental Conference, which in January 1966 created the Organization of Solidarity for Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL). It is considered that this moment meant an extension of the Non-Aligned Movement to the latter region.

In Havana, once again, we convene and welcome, we discuss and agree, we offer and receive solidarity, we listen and propose on an equal footing, we respect and defend sovereignty. Only in this way will we be able to dream and build a better future.

José Ramón Cabañas Rodríguez is Director of the International Policy Research Center (CIPI) in Havana, Cuba and former Cuban Ambassador to the U.S.

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Translation [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



All out to defend trans lives, fight racism

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Defeat bosses' campaign of division

With just a month to go, the National March to Protect Trans Youth & Speakout for Trans Lives is catching fire. A [growing number of endorsers](#) in Florida and nationally have signed on.

The march will gather at 12 noon on Saturday, Oct. 7, at Orange and Anderson streets, near City Hall in Orlando, Florida. Following the march, protesters will return to the City Hall site for a speakout featuring local trans youth, groups from around the country, and musical performances.

The protest will call for reversing the vicious measures enacted by Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida legislature as well as their counterparts in other states, banning gender-affirming health care for trans children and adults, prohibiting queer students and teachers from being out at school, banning trans people from using public restrooms that match their gender, and other genocidal policies.

Organizers aren't just focused on attacks on the LGBTQ+ community. They say they hope to unite all those under attack by the far right in Florida and nationwide.

The demand "Stop racist attacks on our communities" is prominently featured on the leaflet and poster, which also draws attention to the suppression of voting rights and repression of Black history in schools.

The protest will also demand free, accessible abortion on demand, an end to threats against Pride celebrations, and dropping the charges against the Tampa 5 protesters.

Organizers aren't letting Washington off the hook either – they demand that the Biden administration stop sitting on its hands and enforce civil and human rights.

You can read the full list of demands at [ProtectTransKidsMarch.org](https://www.protecttranskidsmarch.org).

“DeSantis and the capitalists he represents are using these attacks to distract us from the fact that they are slashing social programs and handing money over to war corporations and oil companies,” says Sally Jane Black of the Louisiana Women’s Action Committee. “Their anti-trans agenda isn’t what the people want or need — it’s just an attempt to divide us and terrorize us.

“The only answer to that is to fight back, which is why we’re marching in Orlando with those who have been standing up against him, uniting LGBTQ+ people and everyone DeSantis has targeted against him and his rich backers,” Black told Struggle-La Lucha.

Melinda Butterfield of Women in Struggle/Mujeres en Lucha explained, “We have an amazing multigenerational, multinational, multigender team organizing for this historic anti-fascist event – but we need your help!

Butterfield urged readers to [fill out the sign-up form](#) at the website. “Our priority in September is to get out to schools and colleges with leaflets and posters and to spread our social media presence far and wide. Sign up at our website, come to a zoom meeting, join a committee, make a donation – every effort helps!

“If you are able to come to Orlando for the march, now is a great time for you and your friends to make travel plans. Find out who else is going from your area. We can help you find housing options,” she explained.

“We’ll have people coming from all over the U.S., and many need help with transportation costs. [Please give a donation](#) if you can.”

Butterfield added that readers can download posters and leaflets in English and Spanish from the website to be printed and distributed.

“A very easy way to help get out the word is on social media. Go to [Linktr.ee/transyouthmarch](#) and follow us on the platforms of your choice. Share our

posts with your friends and contacts,” she urged.

Struggle-La Lucha is proud to share these statements from some of the Oct. 7 organizers.



Samira Burnside, editor of [The Queer Notion](#):

As a transgender youth in Florida, it would be hard not to become an activist, like allowing yourself to be taken by the river instead of swimming against it. When I spoke in Washington, D.C., on Trans Day of Visibility, I felt the power in the air, the will for change, the NEED for change — and I thought: I need to bring this home. Liberal D.C. doesn’t need this, not like Florida does. Florida needed a uniting event, a grand, unignorable display of the unrest that the recent laws had caused. We had heard whispers, but we needed a scream. So, when Melinda approached me, I was ecstatic. I had to carry the momentum of that Trans Day of Visibility forward, I had to make it worth something at home.

This march has done something special – something that I don’t think has been seen since the ‘60s. This march is for the protection of trans youth first and foremost, but it brought together so many people, so many groups, so many disparate ideologies and complex individuals to fly under one flag, to stand in solidarity against one foe.

On Oct. 7, we will march with clasped hands and raised voices next to union workers, we will chant our disagreeable chants beside radicals and moderates, we

will share the stage with people of all creeds and colors and ages and denominations, and we will do it because what has happened in Florida has become a threat of such an utterly existential nature that it has become a threat without borders. It has encroached on the civil liberties of everyone, and I am beyond excited to see what we can do when we are united, both on Oct. 7 and beyond.



Tsukuru Fors, Red Berets for Queers:

Being part of this march, to me, is extremely personal. As a non-binary trans person who “came out” and began the process of transition at age 50, I know the pain of being “closeted,” having to live with the sense of guilt, alienation, and shame for so long. I’m not going to let anyone take away our rights to live our lives as dignified, fully self-actualized, and powerful beings. I’m fighting for the young me that couldn’t.

Another thing is that this is not a fight only for trans people. As an Asian/immigrant/trans person who was assigned female at birth, I know that all marginalized folx are currently under attack. The march is to demonstrate to those who want to oppress and subjugate us that “united, we will win.”

We will not remain silent as our siblings are being murdered. We are fighting back. Let this march be a catalyst for a revolution.



Yuki, trans college student:

Every day, I read more and more headlines about a law being passed against us or a judge abusing their power to oppress us, and I'm more than happy to have the opportunity to do something about it. That's what really motivated me to get involved. I need to do something for my community while I still can.

Seeing queer people be themselves and be happy is something sacred. I've seen so many people smile because, for the first time, they can be themselves and be celebrated, cared for, and safe. I've been one of those people before, and knowing that fascists are trying to make sure I'm one of the last fills me with rage and a need to act.

I don't know what will fix all this, but I know a National March to protect trans youth is something I need to be at.



Christynne Lili Wrene Wood, 2023 San Diego Champion of Pride winner:

Love from the West End of the rainbow! I'm a 67-year-old transgender woman from Lakeside, California. I'm a mother and grandmother, as well as an eight-year Navy veteran who's experienced every bit of the civil rights struggle from the 1960s through right now!

January 2023 began with my being targeted by an organized campaign of hatred and lies challenging my legal rights to use the women's locker room at the Cameron YMCA in Santee, California.

Because of the love and support of my Aqua Sisters (from my water aerobics classes), I was empowered with the strength to stand in a very public, televised forum and call out the lies of the racist, transphobic bigots and religious zealots that sought to vilify me.

And I'm bring tha love, confidence, and support to all of you, my beloved rainbow family in Florida. Stay strong! Your valkyries are coming!



Class struggle is back! 150,000 Auto Workers poised to strike

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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A strike by 150,000 workers at automakers Ford, General Motors, and Stellantis (formerly Chrysler) looks imminent.

In a recent Facebook Live event, United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain declared the Stellantis proposal trash, tossing it into a wastebasket. Fain has aptly declared contract talks as war between billionaires and workers.

If the Auto Workers walk out when their contract expires on Sept. 14, it would be the second-largest strike in over 25 years, second only to the current actors' strike by 160,000 members of SAG-AFTRA.

Strikes of 100 or more workers are up 40% in the past 12 months, according to [Cornell University's "strike tracker."](#)

What's fueling this fight is the drive to reverse concessions the union made from

2007 to 2009. In real terms, workers who sacrificed to make obscene profits for the auto bosses, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, have seen their wages eroded, their backs and minds broken by forced overtime, and their health sacrificed. They are sick to death of inequalities and injustice.

Collectively, the Big Three auto companies posted net income of \$164 billion over the last year. CEOs earn multiple millions in annual compensation. That's not even counting the bailouts by the federal government.

UAW President Fain spoke plainly to Ford workers in Louisville, Kentucky. "They get out-of-control salaries," he said. "They get pensions they don't even need. They get top-rate health care. They work whatever schedule they want. The majority of our members do not get a pension nowadays. It's crazy. We get substandard health care. We don't get to work remotely."

Canadian auto workers, whose contract expires four days later, have also voted to strike. They have targeted Ford.

There are separate contracts with the three U.S. automakers, and so it is possible that the union could stay on the job at one or two of them even if it strikes others.

Top union demands

The UAW has set a series of bold and necessary contract proposals meant to reverse workers' losses and to better position its members for future battles, especially with the development and manufacture of electric cars.

Some of the top demands include:

- Ending the two-tier wage and benefit system for those hired since 2007;
- 46% pay increase over the four-year contract;
- 32-hour work week;

- Increased sick and vacation days and an end to mandatory overtime;
- Traditional pensions plan rather than the current 401K plans, including retiree health care;
- Limits on part-time and contract workers;
- Reinstating COLA (cost of living allowance);
- The right to strike in the event of a plant closing, including provisions that would require bosses to pay workers to do community service if their plant closes.

This is a partial list.

Two-tier wages, benefits

The two-tier wage system, which was one of the key issues for Teamster drivers at United Parcel Service (UPS), became a strategy for bosses to beat back workers' gains and a ploy during union contract negotiations following the Reagan administration's defeat of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike in 1981.

It deepened during the financial crisis of 2007. By 2008, an estimated 30% of workers had been corralled into a two-tier wage system. Much of the union leadership had given up on class struggle during that period. The reasons for this acquiescence are complex.

In simple terms, it meant new workers were hired at a lower scale of pay and benefits than workers already employed. It insidiously pits workers against each other and has a devastating impact for all workers by ultimately lowering wages and benefits across the board.

How this works in the auto industry was explained by Vox in the article, "[What a UAW strike could mean for labor](#)":

“But a major driver of the strike is actually a two-tiered wage system first instituted in the UAW’s 2007 contract; workers hired before that are in the first tier and started at about \$28 per hour, while second-tier workers start at between \$16 and \$19 per hour — a rate that has barely increased over the past decade. The second-tier class of workers grows as first-tier workers retire and are replaced by new second-tier workers, ultimately bringing down wages for an increasing number of workers — who also increasingly make up the UAW membership.”

32-hour work week

The demand for a 32-hour work week is long overdue. Technology for people, not for profit, can give all humans a life where culture and leisure can become central. But in the hands of the capitalist class, it means fewer workers and greater exploitation, including longer hours for those still working.

It is exciting that the UAW is making this demand central. It lays the basis to restore a shorter work week as a major labor demand for all workers.

The union’s call to end the grueling work culture that forces people to put their lives last is best described directly in the words of its president:

“If COVID did anything, it made people reflect on what’s important in life, and it sure as hell isn’t living in a factory. We need to get back to fighting for a vision of society in which everyone earns family-sustaining wages and everyone has enough free time to enjoy their lives and see their kids grow up and their parents grow old,” Fain said.

Electric vehicles: a key issue

With union workers set to battle the Big Three, the issue of the transition to electric vehicles remains ever-present.

Automakers are spending tens of billions of dollars to transition to electrical vehicles. Their manufacture will require fewer workers. What happens in this contract will set the stage around this issue.

So far the UAW has [withheld its endorsement](#) of President Joe Biden in 2024 because of concerns over jobs created with federal subsidies for EVs (electric vehicles) and their related jobs.

If the union emerges stronger, it will better position itself in this fight.

Strike! Strike! Strike!

There is no way to predict the outcome of this battle. Certainly, the stakes are high for the entire working class both at home and globally.

For the rank-and-file members, it takes confidence and courage. It means facing the potential of losing homes and apartments, the risk of being locked out, of being cut off from needed health care, not just for themselves, but for their children and families. No worker takes a strike lightly.

What we do know is that it is certainly overdue and any form of win will reverberate widely among non-unionized workers – especially in the South, among Amazon and Starbucks workers who continue to stand up to Bezos and Schultz. And it will raise the floor for all workers.

A strike will be a test on many levels. It will test the newly elected leadership of the UAW, both its skill and resolve. Have preparations been successful? Will the leadership skirt company traps? Transparency and solidarity will be key, keeping workers informed will be critical.

But most importantly, it will be the rank-and-file members, the wind beneath the union's wings, who will hold the answer in their hands.

Everyone's role will be to give these workers and all others on strike our active solidarity.

The writer is a former assembly line worker at the General Motors Wilmington, Delaware, plant, which shut down in 2009. She was one of the first women workers hired at the Boxwood plant during that period.



Washington's expanding military footprint on China's doorsteps

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A series of announcements by the U.S. reflects its large and still growing military presence across Asia-Pacific, particularly in East and Southeast Asia. Together, they reflect a continued and increasingly desperate desire by Washington to encircle and contain China.

These announcements include plans for expanding the number of U.S. air bases across the region as part of the U.S. Air Force's (USAF) new "Agile Combat Employment" (ACE) doctrine. It also includes plans for a "civilian port" in the Batanes islands, less than 200 km from the Chinese island province of Taiwan. Then there were recently announced plans by the U.S. Department of Defense to create drone swarms for countering China's growing advantage in materiel and manpower.

Washington's "ACE" in the Hole?

A recent [article](#) published by Defense One titled "Air Force expanding number of bases in Pacific over next decade," reported on the Pentagon's plans to expand the number of air bases across the Pacific over the next decade to fulfill the requirements of the U.S.AF's "ACE" doctrine.

More than simply increasing the number of air bases in the region, ACE seeks to disperse U.S. aircraft, ammunition, and personnel among a larger number of smaller bases, thus creating more targets for potential adversaries and increasing the overall survivability for U.S.AF assets.

The article notes:

The U.S. Air Force will increase its number of bases across the Pacific over the next decade, in an effort to spread out and become more survivable in conflict.

And that:

In the ACE concept, a few airfields serve as central ports, or hubs, while several smaller airfields serve as spokes. The idea is to be able to distribute weapons and assets over a large area and to increase survivability, versus just having a few large airfields throughout the geographically enormous region.

Despite U.S.AF assets being distributed, command and control would be able to mass together assets from across multiple smaller bases for each specific mission or “force package.”

The concept is meant to make it more difficult in a potential conflict with China for it to target and destroy U.S. air bases with its large missile arsenals and, by doing so, significantly disrupting U.S. air capabilities in the region.

While ACE doctrine may be a realistic shift away from the relatively centralized nature of U.S. military bases across the Pacific, it will take many years to implement and only if the Pentagon’s budget is adjusted to do so. By then, China’s missile arsenal will only have increased in size and capabilities, possibly neutralizing any advantage the U.S. seeks to achieve by pursuing this doctrinal shift.

And while an eventual dispersal of U.S. air assets may complicate China’s ability to target and destroy U.S. warplanes before even leaving the ground to perform missions, China also possesses a large and very capable integrated air defense system able to intercept both U.S. warplanes and the munitions they would be using against Chinese targets.

U.S. seeks “civilian port” dangerously close to Taiwan

Reuters, in an [article](#) titled “Exclusive: U.S. military in talks to develop port in Philippines facing Taiwan,” would report:

The U.S. military is in talks to develop a civilian port in the remote northernmost islands of the Philippines, the local governor and two other officials told Reuters, a move that would boost American access to strategically located islands facing Taiwan.

U.S. military involvement in the proposed port in the Batanes islands, less than 200 km (125 miles) from Taiwan, could stoke tensions at a time of growing friction

with China and a drive by Washington to intensify its longstanding defence treaty engagement with the Philippines.

The article also notes:

The Bashi Channel between those islands and Taiwan is considered a choke point for vessels moving between the western Pacific and the contested South China Sea and a key waterway in the case of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. The Chinese military regularly sends ships and aircraft through the channel, Taiwan's defence ministry has said.

The article fails to mention a much more important fact, that this “choke point” leading into the “contested South China Sea” is already “a key waterway,” one for Chinese maritime shipping.

While the U.S. poses as underwriting peace, stability, and prosperity in the “Indo-Pacific” region and, more specifically, in upholding “freedom of navigation” in areas like the South China Sea, the reality is that most of the “navigation” taking place in these waters is trade moving to and from China between other nations in the region which consider China their largest trade partner.

U.S. government and arms industry-funded think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), as part of its “China Power” project, published a [post](#) titled, “How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?” It included an interactive map indicating the percentage of trade that flowed through the South China Sea from each nation.

China, by far, was the largest beneficiary of navigation through the South China Sea, accounting for over a quarter of all trade passing through it. South Korea (7%), Japan (4%), and Southeast Asian nations like Thailand (5%), Vietnam (5%), and

Singapore (6%) also accounted for large percentages of trade through the sea, with each of these nations counting China as their largest trade partner.

Very clearly, the U.S., by expanding its military presence in and around the South China Sea, including at choke points like the Batanes islands, is best positioned to threaten, not protect, maritime shipping in the region, which would hurt China first and foremost. But it would also hurt trade among Washington's supposed "allies" in the region it seeks to recruit in its escalating confrontation with Beijing.

Within the pages of U.S. government-funded think tank documents detailing war games between the U.S. and China, the disruption of Chinese commerce is a key element of Washington's strategy. By creating a "civilian port" at the northernmost reach of the Philippines, so close to Taiwan and at a critical choke point leading in and out of the South China Sea, the U.S. is placing itself one step closer to a better position from which to launch a war against China.

Drone swarms aimed at China

Defense One, in another [article](#) titled "'Hellscape': DOD launches massive drone swarm program to counter China," would report:

China's most important asset in potential war with the United States is "mass," says Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks: "More ships. More missiles. More people."

To counter that advantage, the Defense Department will launch an initiative called Replicator to create cheap drones across the air, sea, and land in the "multiple thousands" within the next two years.

Cheap drones, of the type Ukraine has deployed to great effect against Russia, can be produced close to the battlefield at much lower cost than typical Defense Department weapons.

While at first glance, the strategy may seem sound, within the article itself, the primary problem with these plans reveals itself. The proliferation of swarms of cheap drones being used by both sides in Ukraine is made possible by easy-to-purchase Chinese-made components.

The whole reason China has “more ships” and “more missiles” than the United States in the first place is because of its much larger industrial base. Whatever drone swarm the U.S. may be preparing for China, China will have the capacity to create one much larger to strike back with.

A future war with China

Amid the current conflict in Ukraine, Ukrainian drones have repeatedly targeted Russian air bases deep within Russian territory. Despite the vast majority of these drones being disabled or intercepted, small numbers still occasionally make it through, causing damage. Had Ukraine possessed greater long-range strike capabilities or were Russian air defenses less capable, the damage to these centralized air bases could have been much greater and may have even potentially disrupted Russian combat operations.

The wisdom behind the U.S. Air Force’s “ACE” doctrine is apparent. Should Russia adopt a similar doctrine, distributing its warplanes over a larger number of smaller airfields, the rare instances of success Ukraine currently achieves would be even rarer still.

China is certainly learning from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and is likely studying the posture of its own air assets in relation to the U.S. military’s build-up and plans to not only disperse their assets over a wider number of smaller facilities but also their plans to utilize drone swarms in addition to other long-range strike capabilities on a scale much larger than Ukraine is currently using.

Finally, as the U.S. moves closer and closer to Chinese territory with its military and “civilian” infrastructure, and specifically near “choke points” that could potentially restrict or cut off Chinese maritime shipping, Beijing must consider contingencies to sustain its economy including its trade even under the worst-case scenario.

In many ways, the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) already partially accomplishes this. Growing trade with Russia across Russia and China’s shared border represents another means of maintaining essential trade, including the flow of energy and raw materials, even if the U.S. implements a naval blockade in the Indo-Pacific.

Taken together, it is clear the U.S. is moving as quickly as possible to position itself best for a coming conflict with China. While U.S. leaders and the Western media suggest China is rushing to war “by 2025,” it is clear that time is on China’s side and that it is the U.S. rushing to war.

The economic and industrial advantages China enjoys over the U.S. today did not exist 2-3 decades ago. A decade from now, however, China’s advantages over the U.S. industrially and thus militarily will only have grown. The U.S. seeks to exploit a closing window of opportunity to fight now before the odds tilt any further in China’s favor. But considering the realities of these recent announcements by the U.S. and how little they actually change the odds in Washington’s favor, some may conclude that the window has already shut.

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What's behind recent protests in Syria? Capitalist media hides the truth!

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The bourgeois media, from the New York Times to Reuters, have gleefully though somewhat prematurely hyped stories of a “potential second Arab Spring” in Syria.

In August, demonstrations broke out in response to the lifting of fuel subsidies. The center of the protests has been in the southwestern Sweida province, where a majority of the Druze religious minority reside. The Western media is salivating because of reports that these protests have morphed into anti-Assad demonstrations with secessionist demands.

Behind-the-scenes discussions, not headlined in the press, have pointed out that the scope of the demonstrations has not yet reached a pivotal point either in size or in how widespread they are inside Syria. In addition, the Druze community is split. Many of its leaders still maintain support for President Bashar al-Assad and Syria’s central government.

More may lurk behind these protests. At the same time, Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a coalition of groups, organized protests in Idlib province, drawing parallels to the 2011 events leading to the Syrian war. In addition, the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), representing the political arm of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), overtly endorsed the protests.

Hardship in Syria, made in USA

There is nothing more deceitful than for the U.S. media and ruling-class warmakers to blame the Syrian government and President Assad for conditions that they themselves have created.

U.S. sanctions and ongoing direct military intervention continue to crush the Syrian economy, creating deep hardship for its people.

Even during the devastating Syria-Turkey earthquake, the U.S. lifted only a mere token number of the sanctions for just 180 days, after widespread international

pressure. In fact, deadly sanctions were tightened under the Trump administration's Caesar Act, which made rebuilding even more difficult. The Caesar Act continues under Biden.

Here are the facts:

- The U.S. and its proxy settler state of Israel have conducted hundreds of illegal airstrikes since 2011;
- U.S. troops and the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces occupy close to one-third of the country;
- The West continues to fund Syrian Al-Qaeda enclaves, rebranded as Jahbat al-Nusra. As Jake Sullivan, national security advisor to President Joe Biden, said in an email to Hillary Clinton, "AQ (Al Qaeda) is on our side in Syria";
- The CIA spent \$1 billion a year during the earlier part of the war, primarily funding insurgent and terrorist training camps – the largest amount of its budget;
- The Pentagon has looted 80% of the country's oil in eastern Syria, bordering Iraq, creating electric outages and strangling the economy.

At the same time the Sweida protests are being trumpeted, the U.S. is worried about the growing conflict and continuing instability in Syria's northern and eastern area between the SDF, Turkey, and Arab groupings.

It's reported that during this same period, the U.S. has illegally sent representatives to the area to broker agreements between the different parties. More is behind all of this.

The independent Syrian news source North Press reported, "Former U.S. Secretary of Defense, Christopher Miller, (who visited the northern and eastern regions of Syria on Aug. 16), called on the U.S. to support the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) and to preserve the 'unique experience.'"

On May 7, the Arab League re-admitted Syria after 12 years of exclusion. This realignment was in defiance of U.S. wishes.

Regardless of the millions of displaced people and suffering that the war has caused, U.S. imperialism continues to look for ways to dismember and divide Syria in its effort to control Southwest Asia (Middle East) resources.



Florida's 200-year war against oppressed people: DeSantis vs Black and Indigenous history

written by Struggle - La Lucha
September 10, 2023

For Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, the road to the Republican presidential nomination is being seen as an even bigger bigot than Donald Trump. When DeSantis says Florida is "where woke goes to die," he means kicking Black History out of the schools.

DeSantis narrowly defeated Andrew Gillum, a Black man, in the 2018 governor's

race with a [race-baiting campaign](#) that warned voters not to “monkey this up” by voting for Gillum.

Transgender people are a special target for Governor Bigot and his flunkies in the Florida legislature. So are reproductive rights.

Trans children are [prohibited from receiving gender-affirming medical care](#) and can be [kidnapped from their parents](#). Abortions were made illegal after six weeks of pregnancy.

The racist demagoguery of DeSantis was part of the background of hate for a neo-Nazi gunman to murder three Black people in Jacksonville, Florida, on Aug. 26. They were Angela Michelle Carr, 52; Jerrald Gallion, 29; and Anolt Joseph Laguerre Jr., 19.

A week later, Nazis carrying swastika flags [paraded in Orlando](#), Florida. Unlike Black Lives Matter protests, there was no interference by the police.

The Sunshine State’s union-busting “right-to-work” law is a big reason why [only 1 in 18 Florida workers](#) have union protection. [Seventy-eight billionaires](#) live in Florida, while [753,000 children](#) live under the miserably low federal poverty level.

Governor Bigot is also a war criminal. As a Navy lawyer at the Guantánamo concentration camp, DeSantis [oversaw the forced feeding](#) of prisoners, which is torture. The U.S. naval base is on territory stolen from Cuba.

As a member of Congress, Super Scrooge DeSantis [voted against aid to survivors](#) of Hurricane Sandy.

DeSantis didn’t come out of nowhere. A previous Florida governor, Jeb Bush, abolished affirmative action in state colleges and helped his brother George W. Bush steal the 2000 presidential election.

The [United States Civil Rights Commission](#) determined that one out of seven “Black voters cast ballots that were rejected” in the Sunshine State. That was nine times the rejection rate of all other voters.

It’s shameful there was no organized opposition to the U.S. Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision stopping ballot counting in Florida, throwing the election to Bush. The court acted after John Bolton — who became a national security advisor to Trump — led the “Brooks Brothers riot” of well-dressed thugs who stopped vote counting in Miami.

Lynchings and massacres

Florida is now the third most populous U.S. state, with over 22 million people. Its blood-drenched history is filled with racist violence. At least 311 Black people were lynched there.

Thirty-three Black people were [murdered by lynch mobs](#) in Florida’s Orange County, home to Orlando and most of Walt Disney World. The actual figure may be higher.

People are coming to Orlando on Saturday, Oct. 7, for a National March to Protect Trans Youth and Speakout for Trans Rights. At least [32 trans people](#) were killed in the United States in 2022.

“Stop Racist Attacks” is one of the Oct. 7th protest’s demands. So is defending Black history; stopping voter disenfranchisement; expanding Medicaid and SNAP (food stamps); and free, legal, and accessible abortions on demand.

People will be demanding that charges be dropped against the Tampa 5, activists who were arrested protesting DeSantis. For more information about Oct. 7, see [ProtectTransKidsMarch.org](#).

Nina Simone composed the classic song “Mississippi Goddam,” but Black people

were murdered at an even higher rate in Florida.

Measured per the number of Black people in the state, Black people in Florida were [over 40% more likely](#) to be lynched than in Mississippi. Racist massacres drove entire Black communities out of towns.

A dozen miles from Orlando, a Ku Klux Klan-led mob [burned down the Black community](#) in Ocoee, Florida, on election day, Nov. 2, 1920. Children were among the [30 to 40 people killed](#) because Black people wanted to vote.

On Jan. 5, 1923, a white mob, hundreds in number, attacked the Black community in Rosewood, Florida. Between 30 and 40 Black people were killed. According to the [Equal Justice Initiative](#), “Black residents hid in the woods and fled by train to Gainesville, Florida, never to return.”

War against Seminole Nation and Africans

Florida had been a Spanish colony that was annexed by the United States in 1819. The genocidal slave-owning rapist and future U.S. President Andrew Jackson became the territory’s first governor.

The U.S. grabbed Florida largely because it was a refuge for enslaved Africans. They escaped from bordering Georgia and Alabama, as well as from the Carolinas and even Virginia.

The U.S. waged three wars against the Seminole Indigenous Nation from 1816 to 1858. Washington sought to remove the Seminoles and prevent Florida from becoming a liberated maroon territory for Africans.

During the first Seminole War, a main U.S. target was the “Negro Fort,” which was a center for runaway Africans. A leader of the Seminoles during the second war starting in 1835 was John Horse, who was of both Indigenous and African descent.

During that conflict, the Black Seminoles [John Caesar and John Philip led raids](#) along Florida's east coast. Twenty-one sugar plantations were destroyed. [Hundreds of enslaved Africans](#) joined the Seminoles.

There was so much resistance that the U.S. lost 2,000 soldiers in these wars. Since the U.S. population in 1830 was a little less than 13 million, these losses would be equivalent to between 40,000 to 50,000 GIs being killed today.

Around 4,400 Seminoles were [forcibly removed to Oklahoma](#), while between 300 to 500 managed to stay in Florida.

Florida had the smallest population of the 11 states that formed the slave master's confederacy. Of the 140,424 people counted by the 1860 census in Florida, 44% were enslaved Africans.

The too-short period of Reconstruction following the Civil War brought hope. The Black man Josiah T. Walls served six years as one of Florida's two members in the House of Representatives.

The Black minister Jonathan C. Gibbs became Florida's secretary of state. Between 1872 and 1874, Gibbs was the state's superintendent of public instruction.

In the words of W.E.B. DuBois, "He virtually established the public schools of the state as an orderly system" that benefited both Black and white. (Black Reconstruction in America.)

But by 1876, Reconstruction was overthrown in Florida. Decades of Jim Crow hell followed.

Slave labor for Flagler

As late as 1880, just 269,493 people lived in Florida. Forty-seven percent of them

were Black.

Railroads were key to the state's development, bringing wealthy tourists in and shipping fruit out. Particularly important were Henry Plant's rail system serving Florida's west coast (now part of CSX), and the Florida East Coast railway, owned by Henry Flagler.

Flagler was a partner of John D. Rockefeller — the world's first billionaire — in the Standard Oil trust. Among its Big Oil descendants are ExxonMobil and Chevron.

The oil money financed the Florida East Coast Railway and a string of hotels extending from Jacksonville to Miami. An extension was even built to Key West, although the line was swept away by a 1935 hurricane.

It was the enslaved labor of largely Black convicts that built this empire. Black and immigrant workers held in debt peonage built the line to Key West.

It's outrageous that Flagler College, Flagler County, Flagler Memorial Bridge, and Flagler Beach are [named after this criminal](#).

War profiteer Alfred I. duPont later took control of the Florida East Coast railway. After he died, his estate was administered by Edward Ball, a diehard segregationist.

Ball instigated a strike on the Florida East Coast that started on Jan. 22, 1963, and lasted over 11 years. The strike was broken, a defeat for all labor in the South.

One of the strikebreakers Ball hired was William Calley. Later, as a U.S. Army second lieutenant, Calley carried out the My Lai massacre in which hundreds of Vietnamese people were murdered.

In 1964, Dr. King helped lead demonstrations against segregation in St. Augustine, Florida, home to Flagler College. The terrorist National States Rights Party violently

opposed the human rights protests.

When Black people swam in the Jim Crow Monson Motor Lodge pool, motel manager James Brock poured acid into the pool.

Twenty-seven thousand teachers across Florida went on strike on Feb. 19, 1968, demanding increased school funding. It was the [first state-wide teachers' strike](#) in U.S. history. Although an agreement was reached on March 8, 1968, school boards refused to rehire thousands of teachers.

The singer Anita Bryant led a 1977 homophobic campaign to repeal a Dade County ordinance banning discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. Forty-six years ago, the target was lesbian teachers; now, the bigots want to ban Drag Queen Story Hours and deny medical care for trans children.

In 1998, the Miami-Dade County Commission reinstated the anti-discrimination law. Poor and working people can defeat DeSantis and all the bigots.



Cuban soldiers in the Russian Army?

written by Struggle - La Lucha

September 10, 2023

Havana, Sept. 7 — The “news” that Cuban troops are participating in combat actions on the Russian side in Ukraine, which comes well seasoned with melodramatic stagings, is grabbing headlines in the main counterrevolutionary media and their affinities in the world.

There is nothing complex about this new farce. The main objectives, as usual, are aimed at undermining Cuba’s support and contributing to the barbaric campaign by the U.S. government to discredit the island.

The Cuban Foreign Ministry’s (MINREX) statement issued a couple of days ago, sets out Havana’s position on the issue and clarifies some of the false matrices that the U.S. special services, the media conglomerates and mercenaries in their service are trying to sow.

It was not for nothing that they sent their star operator, Orlando Gutiérrez Boronat, to Ukraine on a tour financed by the State Department. There is no one quite like him to act in front of the cameras and tell outlandish and fallacious stories, without the slightest embarrassment, against the land where he was born.

First of all, the Russian government, using its sovereign right, made public an appeal for foreign citizens who are in the territory of that country to join the Armed Forces for a period of one year in exchange for which they could receive Russian citizenship.

Such a proposal is not an “invention” of Moscow; it is made by many governments in

the world, including that of the U.S., which, by the way, does not always fulfill its commitment.

It is possible that some Cubans residing in Russia have chosen that possibility; after all, the Cuban community in that country is not small.

Another variant is that, as denounced by the Cuban Foreign Ministry, groups of human traffickers are taking citizens of the island to the war front in Ukraine by means of deceitful proposals or, frankly, through an offer of payment for services.

The third “vision of the issue” is the farce staged by the operators of the anti-Cuban ultra-right, the Miami counterrevolutionary mafia, and the CIA, which has invented that there are secret flights, even from the Varadero airport, to take Cuban troops to combat territory.

It is highly offensive, and it is clear that they do it motivated by the hatred they feel for the Cuban Revolution and to deceive and denigrate, to claim that the island is sending soldiers in exchange for material benefits.

Those who know the trajectory of the revolutionary government know perfectly well how our nation acts in these matters; Cuban internationalist soldiers have fought in Africa against colonialism and apartheid, but the only thing that Cuba has taken back, with the victorious departure of its troops, is the glorious bones of those who have fallen in combat.

This smear campaign, like so many others, will end in the dustbin of history.

Raúl Antonio Capote is a Cuban writer, professor, researcher, and journalist.

Source: [Cuba en Resumen](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2023/page/25/)



After Ta’Kiya Young shooting: What will it take to stop racist police terror?

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Police in Ohio released bodycam footage of 21-year-old Ta’Kiya Young on Sept. 1, seven days after she was fatally shot by police on Aug. 24. Young, a pregnant mother of two, was killed while inside her car outside a grocery store in the suburbs of Columbus.

Officers who were at the scene for another reason responded to allegations from a store employee that multiple people, including Young, were fleeing the store with stolen items.



The bodycam video begins with one officer telling Young to get out of the car. A second officer, with gun drawn, moved in front of the vehicle. Both officers were yelling, demanding Young get out of the car. Young refused.

The car began moving, the video went dark, and the officer in front of the car fired one shot into the windshield. Within 15 seconds, She was dead.

[The Associated Press](#) spoke with Sean Walton, an attorney representing the family of Ta’Kiya Young. Walton said his firm found a witness who saw Young put down bottles of alcohol as she left the store. So Young was right in saying she committed no crime when she refused to get out of the car.

Police Chief John Belford called the shooting a tragedy, but refused to release the names, race, or rank of the two cops. The officer who killed Young is on paid administrative leave, and the second has already returned to active duty.

AP reports that “Young’s death is one of numerous deaths of Black adults and children at the hands of the police across the nation that have drawn protests and demands for more accountability.” The report listed the most prominent cases in Ohio – 20-year-old Donovan Lewis, 16-year-old Ma’Khai Bryant, 23-year-old Casey Goodson, Jr. – as well as George Floyd in Minneapolis.

In fact, the list is endless, because the police continue to shoot first and check the facts later, without being held accountable.

Litany of racist terror

Here are a few more incidents that involve shootings, senseless murders and frame-ups by the police:

Jan. 4, 2008: Tarika Wilson, a 26-year-old mother of six, was fatally shot by an Ohio police officer during a raid on her home targeting her boyfriend. Wison was unarmed and hiding in her bedroom with her children when one of the officers fired blindly, killing her instantly and injuring the one-year-old baby she had in her arms. The cop was acquitted of criminal charges and returned to the force. Two years later the city of Lima settled a wrongful death lawsuit with Wilson's family for \$2.5 million.

Nov. 19, 2011: Police in White Plains, New York, shot and killed 68-year-old Kenneth Chamberlain Sr., a veteran suffering from bipolar illness and a heart condition. Chamberlain accidentally triggered a medical alert device. Police were the first to arrive at the scene. What started as a welfare check became a standoff that lasted for over an hour, with police demanding Chamberlain open the door. It ended with police breaking into his home. He was then tased, shot with a bean bag shotgun, and with live ammunition. Police claimed he came at them with a knife.

Chamberlain repeatedly told the police that he was okay and didn't need or want them to come in. The officers were never charged criminally, and the Justice Department declined to file civil rights charges. The family of Kenneth Chamberlain sued the Justice Department. Twelve years later, in 2023, [White Plains agreed](#) to pay the family \$5 million, the largest settlement in the city's history. Kenneth Chamberlain Jr. said about monetary compensation, "No way should it be considered a substitute for justice and accountability in these types of issues."

Sept. 28, 2012: A U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent shot 32-year-old Valeria Tachiquin in San Diego. Border Patrol agents were serving a felony warrant

in the area when Tachiquin allegedly tried to run over an agent with her car. The agent was on the hood of the car before he fired his weapon through the windshield. Tachiquin was shot in the middle of the street in a residential area. Witnesses in the area saw Tachiquin slowly driving in reverse as the agent opened fire, shooting his gun at least 10 times.

Oct. 3, 2013: In Washington, D.C., [Mariam Carey](#), a 34-year-old Black woman, was shot and killed by police after attempting to drive through a White House security checkpoint. She was chased by the Secret Service to the U.S. Capitol, where she was shot five times in the back. Carey's one-year-old daughter was physically unharmed in the back seat of the car, but witnessed her mother's brutal death.

Feb. 16, 2023: [Porcha Woodruff](#), a 32-year-old Black woman, eight months pregnant, was preparing her two children for school when six Detroit police officers showed up at her door with an arrest warrant for robbery and carjacking. Woodruff told police that she did not rob or carjack anyone, but cooperated with the police and was handcuffed and arrested in front of her children, who were crying as she was taken away into custody.

Woodruff was misidentified by the city's facial recognition technology. She filed a lawsuit against the Detroit Police Department hoping this will change how police used the technology to ensure "this doesn't happen to someone else."

Protect and serve?

If the U.S. criminal justice system really wanted to change how the police relate to the people they are supposedly hired to "protect and serve," it would listen to what the people say and hold the police accountable for what they do.

Let the people in our communities control who "protects and serves" them!

The people have been demanding an immediate end to police brutality and murder

for decades. Ending police brutality was number seven on the [Black Panther Party's 10-point program](#) in 1966.

The BPP believed ending police brutality can be achieved “by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality.”

Today, people in cities across the U.S. are voicing their concerns and demanding community control of the police, defunding the police, and abolishing the police. The criminal justice system is saying “NO” to all these demands as police terror continues to rise. Instead it pushes forward with toothless reforms that include body cameras, “independent” investigations, civilian review boards, and de-escalation.

Until we mobilize and work together towards a new society, we will continue to go back and forth with this capitalist system that values profits over people.

We know the solution, the only solution, is a socialist revolution.



Maui fires: Biden's request to Congress shows priorities

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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On Aug. 10 – two days after the Maui fires – [President Biden asked Congress](#) for another \$21 billion in aid to the Ukrainian government as Washington's proxy-war with Russia drags on; if approved, this will be added to the \$113 billion already given.

The same package includes \$10 billion to undermine Chinese and Russian "influence" abroad, via the World Bank and other imperialist-dominated institutions. That's separate from the \$1 billion Washington has given to Taiwan this year, including a \$345 million weapons package announced on Sept. 1.

By contrast, the Aug. 8 request includes only \$12 billion for domestic disaster relief, with another \$60 million added on specifically for wildfires.

Maui recovery

[According to WhiteHouse.gov](#), "the Biden-Harris Administration has approved more than \$16 million in assistance to 4,200 households" for Maui fire victims as of Sept. 4. Another \$95 million is going to be used to improve Hawai'i's power grid.

However, Hawai'i Gov. Josh Green estimates that the Maui fires caused [\\$5-\\$6 billion in damages](#). Even if this estimate is conservative, it is far more than what has been provided by the federal government so far. On the other hand, it is only about 5% of the \$113 billion given to Ukraine – or 0.7% of the 2022 U.S. military budget (\$877 billion). A small fraction of the military budget could cover those damages.

If we just consider that \$16 million given to households, that comes to only \$3,809 per household, assuming that the money is distributed evenly among the 4,200. Hawai'i is the most expensive state to live in [according to a recent study](#) by online-bill-payment-service Doxo. Monthly expenses for an average Hawai'i resident are \$3,070. If survivors are able to access the money, it is barely enough to cover expenses for one month.

People on the ground have told news outlets that aid has been inadequate. Lāhainā resident Ana Carolina Penedo is staying in an Airbnb with her five-year-old son and mother. She got a measly \$700 in aid. FEMA denied her request for housing assistance.

[She told the Guardian](#): “We don’t feel like outside help, massive outside help from the government, is coming. ...I don’t have income, I don’t have a place. It would be amazing to have a place, so I can start long-term rebuilding, but how can I get a place if I don’t have income? ... I will have to go back to work, but I’m having panic attacks. I am grieving, I am in a really deep sadness.”

Propaganda win for right-wing

The right wing is taking the opportunity to point out the obvious, awful fact that the U.S. federal government is spending almost nothing to help Hawai'i, while pouring many billions into overseas wars. This is, of course, a standard aspect of the way that U.S. imperialism functions, and is bipartisan. Congressional Republicans approve the military budget along with the Democrats, while continually attacking even modest social spending.

Almost daily, this New-Orleans-area writer hears about people still struggling to get recovery funds for hurricanes like Isaac (2017) and Ida (2021). On New Orleans buses you can see lawyers' advertisements with lines like, “Still battling Ida? Call...” Frankly, people are still battling Katrina (2005).

The right's approach here is not unlike the way that they tapped into justified outrage about the 2023 train derailments and pollution disaster in East Palestine, Ohio. They use it to attack Democrats in power, while redirecting away from discussion of climate change, deregulation, and so on.

Some on the left are buying into the right's narrative manipulations, and see the Republican Party – and especially Donald Trump – as somehow less imperialist than the Democrats. This is a dangerous delusion that will do nothing but disarm people's movements, as do conspiracy theories.

All of the right's rhetoric specifically thwarts any recognition of the problems of imperialism. They appeal to nativism, for example – prejudices against foreigners – while painting the “real danger” as China (as the Democrats also do).

They claim that Biden is controlled by China, that U.S. school curricula is being dictated by the Communist Party of China through secret funding, and all manner of preposterous things that build up war fervor in the interest of U.S. imperialism.

Republicans are not anti-war, even if some have been critical of the handling of the war in Ukraine.

MLK said it better

In his “[Beyond Vietnam](#)” speech, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” That was in 1967. Fifty-six years later, this truth is still being borne out. The rot today is far more advanced.

When we look at Lāhainā – or the homeless people dying from heat-related illnesses during record-breaking heat waves across the U.S. – we see the truth of King's words.

Right-wing propagandists are using people's justified anger, in a sleight-of-hand, to present themselves as if they were the contemporary truth-tellers, in a mockery of Dr. King.

When Fox News points out the hypocrisy of the Democrats, or right-wing social media influencers post graphics comparing the government's response to Ukraine vs. Hawai'i, they do not mean what King meant. They are appealing only to nativist tendencies and have no intention of carrying out domestic social uplift - quite the opposite.

Case study of a Louisiana congressman

Republican Mike Johnson is the U.S. representative of Louisiana's 4th congressional district. In 2022, he voted against aid to the Ukrainian government. [He said](#), "We should not be sending another \$40 billion abroad when our own border is in chaos, American mothers are struggling to find baby formula, gas prices are at record highs, and American families are struggling to make ends meet, without sufficient oversight over where the money will go."

The suffering that is happening at the border is the result of U.S. imperialist policies, which Johnson and his party support. But more broadly, there is nothing anti-imperialist or pro-working-class in the above statement, nor are there any such things in Johnson's actions.

He [supported and praised](#) the House's passage of the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act - that bloated military budget. The budget includes over a quarter billion dollars for military development in his congressional district, "which is home to Barksdale Air Force Base and Air Force Global Strike Command, Fort Polk and the Joint Readiness Training Center, and Camp Minden," as explained in the Bossier Press Tribune.

The same article explains that the bill provides \$125 million for Barksdale Air Force Base, for “the construction of a Weapons Generation Facility (WGF). Building upon the \$40 million secured last year for this project, the WGF will enable Barksdale to once again become a nuclear weapons Air Force Base. Currently, B-52s stationed at Barksdale must fly to North Dakota to be armed with nuclear weapons.”

That’s right. The plan is to put nukes at Barksdale – not very anti-war. Perhaps not incidentally, [20.1% of the population](#) lives below the poverty line in Bossier City, which is contiguous with the base. The disparity between military spending and spending for social uplift is stark there.

It is unclear what Johson has done to help “American families struggling to make ends meet” in his district. As former chair of the Republican Study Committee – an ultra-right grouping in the U.S. House focused on slashing spending on social programs – he is unlikely to do much for his working-class constituents.

Neo-fascist movement must be combatted

In sum, neither the Democratic nor Republican parties have any solutions on offer to help domestic disaster victims, and neither are anti-imperialist. The right uses the obvious treachery of the Democratic Party leadership to push its own agenda. The right wants to stop any assistance to the poor and prevent solidarity from emerging between the U.S. working class and international and internal victims of U.S. imperialism.

When the left says, “there is money for war but we can’t feed the poor,” part of the point is that workers here and victims of U.S. imperialism abroad (as in the NATO-provoked war in Ukraine) share common enemies: the capitalist class. The right seeks to obscure who the enemies are.

The fact that the right can make inroads among some anti-imperialist forces –

sowing confusion – speaks to the current weakness of the left.

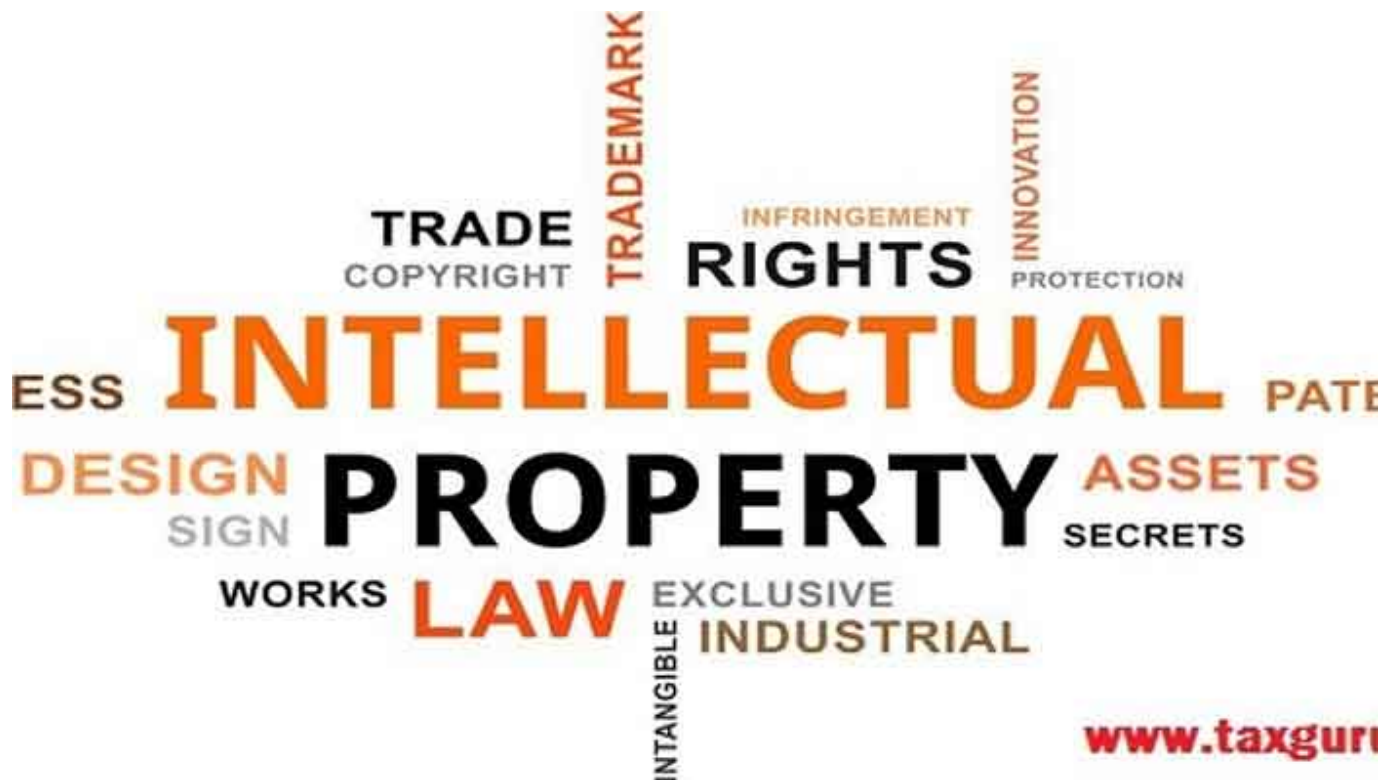
These inroads indicate the growing strength of the neo-fascist movement. This type of confusion also occurred with historical fascism in Italy, Germany, and other places, where the fascists' populist language was dressed up with working-class and anti-imperialist phrases. But this was done in the service of capitalist rule and imperialism to shore up the rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie in a time of crisis.

We cannot allow ourselves to be taken in by these old tricks.



Is intellectual property turning into a knowledge monopoly?

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The twentieth century saw the emergence of public funded universities and technical institutions, while technology development was concentrated in the R&D laboratories of large corporations. The age of the lone inventor—Edison, Siemens, Westinghouse, Graham Bell—had ended with the nineteenth century. The twentieth century was more about industry-based R&D laboratories, where corporations gathered together leading scientists and technologists to create the technologies of the future. In this phase, capital was still expanding production. Even though finance capital was already dominant over productive capital, the

major capitalist countries still had a strong manufacturing base. In this phase of development, science was regarded as a public good and its development was largely concentrated in the university system or publicly funded research institutions. Technology development was largely regarded as a private enterprise. Science was supposed to produce new knowledge, which could then be mined by

technology to produce artifacts. The role of innovation was to convert ideas into artifacts. The system of intellectual property—patents and other rights—arose to provide protection to the useful ideas embodied in artifacts. From the beginning, patents also had a public purpose—the state-granted monopoly for a certain period was meant to ensure the eventual public disclosure of the invention: the quid pro quo being full public disclosure in lieu of a limited-term monopoly.

The transformation of this system that had existed for several centuries came about as a result of two major changes in the production of knowledge. The first relates to the way in which, under the neoliberal order, the university system of knowledge production has been transformed into a [profit-making commercial enterprise](#). Secondly, the distinction between science and technology has blurred considerably and the two are more closely integrated than before. For example, an advance in genetics can almost seamlessly lead to an artifact—a drug, a diagnostic tool or a seed—that is both patentable and marketable. Similar is the case of innovations in the field of electronics and communications. Many disciplines of science and also research output in universities, are, in consequence, driven closer to the systems of production. The conversion of the university system into a system producing knowledge directly for commercial purposes has happened in tandem with the destruction of the R&D laboratories that were so much a part of the industrial landscape of the twentieth century. Finance capital controls university science, not just through “investment” in R&D, but also the purchase of “knowledge”. Its monopoly is exercised through buying the patents that university research produces. This monopoly in turn allows finance capital to dominate over industrial capital.

The end of the twentieth century revealed the rupture of finance capital and productive capital. Today, global capital operates far more as disembodied finance capital, controlling production at one end with its control over technology and markets at the other. In this phase, where capital increasingly lives off speculation and rent, there is also a marked separation of knowledge as capital from productive

or physical capital—plant and machinery. Foxconn/Hon Hai Precision Industries manufactures Apple products but cannot claim a major share in the profits from their sale, since Apple holds the intellectual knowledge and property rights. Roughly, Apple gets 31 percent of the profits from an iPhone sale, Foxconn less than two percent.

The transformation of capital to rent seeking, by using its monopoly over knowledge—patents, copyrights, industrial designs, etc.—characterizes the current phase of capital. With this, the advanced capitalist countries have increasingly become rentier and “service” economies. In essence, they dominate the world by virtue of controlling the global financial structure, new knowledge required for production, and distribution through retail and global brands.

Even as universities are captured by capital and turned into what is termed as [University Inc](#), the new knowledge they produce is still publicly funded. This is true alike of advanced capitalist countries and those like India. The direction of scientific research is dictated by private capital, which takes over any successful outcome, and yet this transformation of science did not come about through being privately funded. The cost of fundamental research is high and only a few of its research outputs may have immediate benefits in terms of advancing technology. This is where the state, whether in electronics or in genetics, takes care of the costs while the patents are handed over to private capital. A hallmark of the neoliberal system is the socialization of risk and privatization of rewards.

The understanding that science needs to be restored as an open and collaborative exercise has given birth to the commons movement. By a curious sleight of hand, capitalism sees the finite commons—the atmosphere and large water bodies such as lakes, rivers and oceans—as infinite, and demands the right to dump waste in these commons. Yet it regards knowledge, capable of being copied infinite number of times without loss, as finite and demands monopoly rights over it!

Never before has society had the ability it does today to bring together different communities and resources in order to produce new knowledge. It is social, universal labor, and its private appropriation as intellectual property under capitalism stands in the way of liberating the enormous power of the collective to generate new knowledge and benefit people.

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