

U.S. is stirring up Syrian cauldron

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 1, 2023



A convoy of U.S. armored vehicles patrolling the occupied territories of northeastern Syria bordering Turkey.

The circumstances surrounding the flare-up in Syria between the U.S. occupation forces and pro-Iranian militia groups remain murky. President Biden [claims that the U.S. is reacting](#), but there are signs that it is likely being proactive to create new facts on the ground.

The [U.S. Central Command claims](#) that following a drone attack on March 23 afternoon on an American base near Hasakah, at the direction of President Biden, retaliatory air strikes were undertaken later that night against “facilities used by

groups affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps."

However, this version has been disputed by the spokesman of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, who accused Washington of "creating artificial crises and lying." The [Iranian official has alleged](#) that "Over the past two days, American helicopters have carried out several sorties with the aim of increasing instability in Syria and transferred Daesh (Islamic State) terrorists in the territory of this country."

He said Washington must be held accountable for such activities. The official warned that Tehran will give a prompt response to any U.S. attack on whatever false pretext against Iranian bases that exist on Syrian soil at the request of Damascus for fighting terrorism.

Is the U.S. deliberately ratcheting up tensions in Syria even as the China-brokered Saudi-Iranian rapprochement is radically changing the security scenario in the West Asian region in a positive direction?

There is optimism that Syria stands to gain out of Saudi-Iranian rapprochement. Already, the [Saudi Foreign Ministry revealed](#) on Thursday that talks are going on with Syria for resuming consular services between the two countries, which will pave the way for the resumption of diplomatic relations and, in turn, make it possible to reinstate Syria's membership of the Arab League.

Saudi Arabia has established an air bridge with Syria to send relief supplies for those affected by the devastating earthquake in February.

The backdrop is that the normalization of relations between Syria and its estranged Arab neighbors has accelerated. It must be particularly galling for Washington that these regional states used to be active participants in the U.S.-led regime change project to overthrow the government of President Bashar al-Assad. The Saudi-

Iranian rapprochement badly isolates the U.S. and Israel.

From such a perspective, it stands to reason that the U.S. is once again stirring up the Syrian cauldron. Lately, Russian aircraft have been reported as [frequently flying over the U.S.'s military base At Tanf](#) on the Syrian-Iraqi border, where training camps for militant groups are known to exist.

Israel, too, is a stakeholder in keeping Syria unstable and weak. In the Israeli narrative, Iran-backed militia groups are increasing their capability in Syria in the last two years, and the continued U.S. occupation of Syria is vital for balancing these groups. Israel is paranoid that a strong government in Damascus will inevitably start challenging its illegal occupation of Golan Heights.

A key factor in this matrix is the nascent process of Russian mediation between Turkey and Syria. With an eye on the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary election in Turkey in May, President Recep Erdoan is keen to achieve some visible progress in improving the ties with Syria.

Erdoan senses that the Turkish public opinion strongly favors normalization with Syria. Polls in December showed that 59% of Turks would like an early repatriation of Syrian refugees who are a burden on the Turkish economy, which has an inflation rate of 90%.

Evidently, Turkey is ending up as a straggler when the West Asian countries, on the whole, are coasting ahead to normalize their relations with Damascus. But the catch is Assad is demanding the vacation of Turkish occupation of Syrian territory first for resuming ties with Ankara.

Now, there are growing signs that Erdoan may be willing to bite the bullet. The consummate pragmatist in him estimates that he must act in sync with the public mood. Besides, the main opposition party CHP always maintained that an end to the

Syrian conflict needs to be anchored firmly on the principles of Syria's unity and territorial integrity.

The influential Beirut newspaper *Al-Akhbar* has reported citing sources close to Damascus, that Erdoğan is weighing options that would meet Assad's demand with a view to restore relations. The daily reported that one possibility is that Turkey may propose a timetable for the withdrawal of its troops in Syria.

Significantly, Erdoğan telephoned Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday, and the [Kremlin readout](#) mentioned that amongst "topics concerning Russian-Turkish partnership in various fields," during the conversation, "the Syrian issue was touched upon, and the importance of continuing the normalization of Turkish-Syrian relations was underlined. In this regard the President of Türkiye highlighted the constructive mediatory role Russia has played in this process."

Earlier, on Wednesday, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar held telephone talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu to discuss developments in Syria, [where he underscored](#) that the "sole purpose" of its deployment in northern Syria is to secure its borders and fight terrorism.

It is entirely conceivable that Erdoğan has sought Putin's help and intervention to reach a *modus vivendi* with Assad quickly. Of course, this is a spectacular success story for Russian diplomacy—and for Putin personally—that the Kremlin is called upon to broker the Turkish-Syrian normalization.

The China-brokered Saudi-Iranian normalization hit Washington where it hurts. But if Putin now brokers peace between two other rival West Asian states, Biden will be exposed as hopelessly incompetent.

And, if Turkey ends its military presence in Syria, the limelight will fall on the U.S.' illegal occupation of one-third of Syrian territory and the [massive smuggling of](#)

[oil](#) and other resources from Syria in American military convoys.

Furthermore, the Syrian government forces are sure to return to the territories vacated by Turkish forces in the northern border regions, which would have consequences for the Kurdish groups operating in the border region who are aligned with the Pentagon.

In sum, continued U.S. occupation of Syria may become untenable. To be sure, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and Syria are on the same page in seeking the vacation of U.S. occupation of Syria.

Thus, an alibi is needed for the U.S. to justify that although dialogue and reconciliation is in ascendance in West Asian politics, Syria is an exception as a battleground against “terrorism.” The U.S. is vastly experienced in using extremist groups as geopolitical tools.

The U.S.’ real intention could be to confront Iran on Syrian soil—something that Israel has been espousing—taking advantage of Russia’s preoccupations in Ukraine. The Russian-Iranian axis annoys Washington profoundly.

The specter that is haunting Washington is that the stabilization of Syria following Assad’s normalization with the Arab countries and with Turkey will inexorably coalesce into a Syrian settlement that completely marginalizes the “collective West.”

In retrospect, the unannounced visit by General Mark Milley, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to northern Syria, in early March falls into perspective. Milley told reporters traveling with him that the nearly eight-year-old U.S. deployment to Syria is still worth the risk!

The time may have come for the militants, including ex-Islamic State fighters, who were trained in the U.S.’s remote At Tanf military base to return to the killing fields for “active duty.”

[Tass reported](#) that on Friday, the terrorist group known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham tried to break into the Aleppo region, which has been under Syrian government control and relatively stable in recent years.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



International Transport Workers Union calls for Mumia's release

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 1, 2023

International Transport Workers Union General Secretary Stephen Cotton wrote a letter of support for “the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal” to Judge Lucretia Clemons of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County on March 27 in London.

Cotton’s letter read: “I am writing in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s petition for a new trial based on the discovery of previously undisclosed material relating to his trial in 1982. Alongside our affiliates National Mine Workers Union of South Africa (NUMSA) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), the ITWU

wishes to add its voice to the call for Abu-Jamal's case to receive the fair hearing and true justice that has so far eluded him.

"The evidence found in 2018 indicates, at the very least, misconduct by the prosecution, and this discovery is on top of a damning assessment of the original trial by Amnesty International in 2000, whose report determined that "numerous aspects of this case clearly failed to meet minimum international standards safeguarding the fairness of legal proceedings. Amnesty International, therefore, believes that the interests of justice would best be served by the granting of a new trial to Mumia Abu-Jamal."

"It is our collective and strongly held belief that the 2018 discovery shows the prosecution withheld significant material evidence and suggests it allowed racial bias to influence the jury selection. It is, therefore, crucial for the integrity of the Philadelphia County Court System that Mumia Abu-Jamal be granted a new trial, and we trust in your Honour's own integrity and sense of justice that this historic wrong will be rectified."

Widespread vigilance on Mumia's case is being observed around the globe, while Judge Clemons's decision stalls in indecision. Mumia was on death row until international outrage brought about a change in the sentence.

U.S. political prisoner Abu-Jamal has suffered 42 years of racist imprisonment. In all that time, the courageous journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless" has never been silent. New letters of support from around the world flood the Philadelphia court - voices calling for Mumia's freedom.



D19: LIBRE salutes Honduran President Xiomara Castro

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 1, 2023

Congratulations and thank you, compañera President Xiomara Castro de Zelaya!

The Official Coordination of D19: LIBRE, USA-Canada, and Costa Rica, extends its most sincere congratulations and appreciation to our Government of Democratic Socialism, worthily represented by our compañera President Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, for the following reasons:

1. For having initiated the Refoundation of the State of Honduras since she assumed the presidency in January 2022 after having defeated, together with the people one of the bloodiest drug dictatorships in the history of Honduras and the continent.
2. For having opened diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.
3. For maintaining a position of NO interference in the internal affairs of any sovereign country.

4. For being part of the integration process of the Latin American and Caribbean region and fighting for unrestricted respect for human rights, sovereignty and self-determination of our country, Honduras.
5. For maintaining a firm and forceful anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti-neoliberal, anti-capitalist, and anti-patriarchal stance, especially in the international forums in which she has participated since taking office: United Nations, Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and most recently, the Ibero-American Summit held in the Dominican Republic.
6. For representing with brilliance and courage the dignity of the revolutionary women and men of Honduras, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the world.



Women in Struggle proposes National March to Protect Trans

Youth

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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**TRANS PEOPLE
WON'T BE ERASED**

**BIGOTS SAY GET BACK
WE SAY FIGHT BACK!**

***Women in Struggle /
Mujeres en Lucha***



Proposal to the movement from Women in Struggle - Mujeres en Lucha:

**NATIONAL MARCH TO PROTECT TRANS YOUTH
Florida, Autumn 2023**

**& SPEAKOUT FOR TRANS RIGHTS
Build a People's Tribunal to put anti-trans bigots on trial**

Transgender, nonbinary, gender-nonconforming, and intersex people are under siege. So far this year, more than 400 anti-trans bills have been introduced at the state and national levels. Fourteen states have banned or severely restricted life-saving gender-affirming care for trans youth. Attacks, both legislative and

violent, are growing by the day, while national elected officials who claim to support LGBTQ+ community remain silent and do nothing.

We can't wait for the next election in hopes that things might improve. Measures are being enacted NOW that will do irreparable harm to trans youth and all trans people. The thousands of youth around the country walking out of schools and rallying at state capitols have shown us the way. Now we need to take the movement national.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who wants to be president, is one of the most vicious abusers of trans youth and the rights of all people. Behind politicians like DeSantis are rich bosses who profit from divide-and-rule tactics.

Join us to build a broad national coalition in partnership with organizations and communities on the ground in Florida and with allies in the Black Lives and immigrant rights struggles, the women's movement, educators, labor, the unemployed, and antiwar movements.

GET READY for the first planning meeting on Zoom in April.

SPREAD THE WORD. Think about what you can do!

ADD YOUR NAME & ORGANIZATION to the list of initiators and endorsers.

REACH OUT to info@womeninstruggle.org for updates and to get involved.

Bigots say get back - we say fight back!

WomeninStruggle.org

Facebook.com/womenmujeresinstruggle



Activist speaks on worst California snowstorm in four decades

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 1, 2023

Pawel Chmielewski is a retired engineer and a long-time progressive activist who lives in the San Bernardino mountains of California. He spoke with Struggle-La Lucha about the massive snowstorms that slammed the mountain range. The freak weather was caused by global warming and killed 13 people, destroyed 41 homes and damaged 550 others.

Struggle-La Lucha: When we first reached you by cellphone, it was breaking up so badly that the only thing I was able to get from the conversation was that you definitely couldn't get out and that electricity was out. What was going on at that point?

Pawel Chmielewski: Yes, I had no internet and so I was relying on my cell phone's network. But it was just cutting in and out so badly that it was almost useless. I also had no electricity. It was finally restored, but then there were blackouts up to a

couple days ago.

I have a generator that runs on natural gas and I had it hooked up so that it would come on if the electricity failed like the generators in commercial buildings do. But it was covered with about three feet of snow and couldn't get enough air, so it didn't work until I was finally able to get out of my house and dig it out.

SLL: How bad was the snow? How deep was it?

PC: I've never seen anything like it. My car was buried - you couldn't see it. The snow was five feet deep in the first storm, but the drifts were sometimes 10 feet deep. A lot of people's roofs caved in from the weight.

SLL: Another snowfall happened in the last few days. How is it now?

PC: With the first storm, no one could get out throughout the area. This latest snowfall is bad in places, but many can drive. I'm snowed in - like a lot of people - because the snowplows bury your driveway. It's still pretty hard to get food but it's not as perilous now.

SLL: Did people come around offering to get you out of there?

PC: Yes, and most people in my area did evacuate. Having a generator and food, I decided to stay. I was one of the few that did. There were some shelters in churches and other places. But it was hard for them to get to people. It's not like they could just go evacuate everyone and it's done - it took days just to get to some people. They were using helicopters to try to assess everything but then still had to get to them somehow, which could take a long time.

SLL: How long was it before you were able to go out and get food and other supplies?

PC: It was about 10 days total. For me personally it was not a problem. But a lot of people really did suffer without food. Because of health issues I'm a vegan and my diet is mostly from dry food that I normally keep on hand. I had enough to last. And I had enough of my medications too. But the food situation for others that couldn't evacuate right away was pretty bad.

Even for those who could drive, getting any place for food was far for most people. For instance, the store that's closest to me is about five miles away and the weight of the snow collapsed its roof. Stores are scarce throughout the area, so it was a big problem for a lot of people. I don't know if that contributed to the number of people who died. There were 13 deaths in the San Bernardino area.

SLL: From what I gather, the deaths were mostly attributed to lack of access for people who needed medical attention, maybe with lack of food being a cause in some cases, or vehicle accidents as people tried to drive out, and to heart attacks from trying to shovel snow. Did people come to check on you?

PC: Yes. I have to say, I thought the emergency response people tried their best. Not only in getting people evacuated, but also knocking on doors for welfare checks and helping in other ways. There were 800 people involved in trying to deal with the situation, including many prisoners who are usually firefighters when there are wildfires. I hope they get rewarded somehow for that. They helped a lot with the work of digging people out of the snow and in other ways.

Even right now with this second snow, there was all the rain between the two snowstorms, so because of freezing and thawing, it's hard to walk much less drive. I think it's still hard for them to safely say that everyone is okay.

SLL: Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. We're so glad that you're safe. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

PC: Yes. Thank you for all your hard work. I think every day, people hate rich capitalists and greedy oil executives more and more. They deserve our hatred. I hope we can have huge protests all over the place and finally force some real action. They'll never do it without that.



Strike action by public service employees and transport workers paralyzes Germany

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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For over a year, trade unions in Germany have been demanding a fair increase in wages to combat inflation and compensate for the continuous fall in real wages

In Germany, municipal and federal level public service workers in the transport sector joined a massive strike action on Monday, March 27, with demonstrations

held in several cities protesting the fall in real wages and demanding a fair increase in wages to combat inflation.

The call for the strike was given by trade union ver.di and the Railway and Transport Union (EVG). It was timed to coincide with the third round of negotiations between municipal and federal employers and unions, taking place in Potsdam on the same day. Trade unionists also marched to the hotel hosting the wage negotiations.

Ver.di has reiterated its demand for a 10.5% wage increase of at least 500 Euros (USD 539.25) for 2.5 million public sector workers, while EVG has called for an increase of 650 Euros (USD 703.63) per month. The second round of talks between EVG and railway and transport companies is also scheduled for this week.

On Monday, ver.di [stated](#) that “the wage offer proposed by the employers has clearly shown that they did not understand the situation of the employees. You’ve worked hard to keep public infrastructure going during recent years of crisis—and as a reward, you’re supposed to accept losses in real wages?!—That’s not possible, especially since the price increases and the many employees in the lower income groups are crushing the minimum wage.”

Junge Welt [reported](#) that strikes by transport workers affected local public transport in seven federal States, as well as airports, working areas of Autobahn GmbH, parts of municipal ports, the water and shipping administration, and long distance rail traffic.

It was also reported that the industrial action by workers is supported by 55% of the population. Workers have been protesting for over a year, demanding a rise in their wages to combat the cost of living crisis. However, unions allege that the federal government led by Chancellor Olaf Scolz has been prioritizing the war efforts in Ukraine rather than seeing to the workers’ demands.

German left party Die Linke [stated](#) that “according to a recent survey, the majority of Germans understand the labor struggle of ver.di & EVG. No surprise, because inflation and falling real wages have long arrived at the center of society. We won’t let ourselves be divided.”

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



Thousands march against U.S. war drive: People say NO to war with Russia and China

written by Struggle - La Lucha
April 1, 2023

Thousands of people demonstrated across the United States on March 18 on the 20th anniversary of the second U.S. war against Iraq. Protesters denounced the U.S./NATO war against Donbass and the Russian Federation.

Biden can find over \$100 billion for a puppet regime in Ukraine but refuses to stop

the cuts in SNAP benefits (food stamps) that will spread hunger to millions. Just as depleted uranium munitions poisoned thousands in Iraq, Biden is now planning to ship the deadly uranium shells to Ukraine.

Over 2,500 people came to the White House to tell President Biden and Congress to stop the war with Russia. They gathered in Lafayette Park, where three years ago Trump ordered a tear gas and pepper spray attack on demonstrators demanding Black Lives Matter!

Demonstrations were also called in other cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and Detroit.

Speakers in Lafayette Park included Eugene Puryear of the ANSWER Coalition, Rev. Annie Chambers of the Peoples Power Assembly, Margaret Kimberley of the Black Alliance for Peace, and Jill Stein of the Green Party.

“I have déjà vu...remembering how we marched 20 years ago to try to stop the invasion of Iraq,” said Margaret Kimberley. Attacking the U.S. wars and occupations of Haiti, Syria, and Yemen, Kimberley declared, “You can’t have human rights when you have a gigantic war machine.”

Rev. Annie Chambers asked: “How can the U.S. government talk about peace and justice when our own people are starving in the streets? When people are being cut off from food stamps and social assistance? And these are the very people they want to go out and fight for them.

“Only a handful of people have control of this country,” said Chambers. “But we have the power to take it back. As a Black Panther, I tell you – we know how to take it back. We’re going to stand up and fight back!”

People marched to the pro-war Washington Post, owned by the union-busting billionaire Jeff Bezos. Marchers then went to the historic New York Avenue

Presbyterian Church for a rally.

People brought hundreds of colorful signs and banners. Balloons were carried that mocked the pro-war freezy against the People's Republic of China. Coffins were held bearing the flags of countries that the U.S. has invaded.

Initiated by the ANSWER coalition, the action was endorsed by over 300 organizations and individuals, including the United National Antiwar Coalition, Black Alliance for Peace, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, The People's Forum, Peoples Power Assembly, Socialist Unity Party, and CODEPINK.

The anti-war movement is back!

Watch on [Facebook](#)



Los Angeles protests U.S. proxy war,

media censorship

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 1, 2023

Soaring utility rates, rising food costs, and other inflationary prices are impoverishing many in Los Angeles. And it's been brewing more and more anger against war spending and escalation in Ukraine.

Some of that anger was expressed March 18 at the CNN building, with about 200 people demanding an end to the U.S. proxy war on Russia and an end to NATO.

The rally was organized by a coalition including the ANSWER coalition and CODEPINK. Many of those who attended feel that CNN is a co-conspirator with the U.S. in escalating this war. Like other corporate media outlets, CNN censors stories that contradict the U.S. narrative.

John Parker of the Socialist Unity Party was present at a table shared by the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and the Black Alliance For Peace. Parker was one of the voices censored by CNN and other corporate media, which refused to publicize his eyewitness account from Ukraine and the Donbass region that was reported by Struggle-La Lucha, CovertAction Magazine and Black Agenda Report.

Najeeb Jones, who was also staffing the table, spoke at the rally, representing the Black Alliance for Peace. Najeeb is also a member of the All-African People's Revolutionary Party.

Many people who found out about the rally from the postings and emails of the Harriet Tubman Center stopped at the table. Others were attracted by the banner for the campaign to "Roll Back Prices - No to Inflation and War."

People signed up for future actions, like tabling at grocery stores and marching

against SoCalGas, which has raised utility rates, sometimes by eight times the previous month's rate. They also signed up for activities of the Black Alliance for Peace.

Organizers are hopeful that these contacts will help in building even larger actions against the war, reaching further into the working class of Los Angeles.



France burns as millions protest to defend pensions

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 1, 2023

March 23 was a national day of action, a [general strike](#) organized by the labor unions in France.

According to [union estimates](#), around 3.5 million people hit the streets in more than 250 locations across France that day.

Workers have continued work stoppages in critical areas, including energy,

transportation, railways, seaports, airports, industries, schools, colleges and universities, municipal services including waste management, and tightened blockades of major roads, bridges, and roundabouts in major cities.

The day before, on March 22, President Emmanuel Macron [went on national TV](#) to reiterate his decision to force pension cuts through the National Assembly without a vote, using Article 49.3, a part of the French constitution that enables the government to pass a law without a vote by parliament.

Macron defied the opposition of nearly 80% of the population, who all opposed the pension cuts. According to the labor unions, people marched across France from Marseille to Toulouse to Lyon. In Paris, there were nearly a million.

The largest demonstrations in years have included thousands of street actions, with over a thousand fires set around Paris and hundreds of arrests.

Tensions ran high in the cities of [Bordeaux and Lyon](#). Besides setting fire to Bordeaux's town hall, protesters targeted banks and threw bottles at police in Lyon.

At Roissy-Charles De Gaulle Airport and across the country, [wildcat actions](#) by protesters blocked roads and school access while people gathered with banners reading "No to the pension reform."

Near Toulouse, in the southwest, plumes of smoke were seen rising from burning piles of debris blocking traffic on a highway. Unions also stopped the train tracks at Paris' Gare de Lyon station.

"There may be tougher action ahead, more serious and further-reaching," warned Fabrice Coudour, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) labor union's leading energy sector representative. The CGT is France's biggest union federation and is historically linked with the French Communist Party (PCF).

The CGT announced that it would force the shutdown of energy giant TotalEnergies' refinery in Normandy in France's northwest as of this weekend.

Picket lines at power utility Electricite de France would also be extended, the CGT said. And early on Friday, CGT activists blocked Paris's busy ring road, the Boulevard Peripherique.

The unions have already put the responsibility for any future trouble at the government's doorstep.

French Communist Party National Secretary [Fabien Roussel](#) said: "We are going through an exceptional social, economic and democratic crisis. This movement is historic."

Roussel urged building unity between the left and the labor union organizations "to work hand in hand."

The class struggle burning in France is closely tied to the U.S.-NATO proxy war launched in Ukraine against Russia.

Before putting through the pension cuts by diktat, Macron told the council of ministers that the cuts were necessary in response to the mounting capitalist financial crisis, including fears of European bank failures, as well as France's skyrocketing military budget.

[In January](#), Macron announced a \$445-billion boost to the military budget, including expanded participation in the U.S.-NATO war against Russia.

Under Macron, France has become the world's second-biggest arms exporter after the U.S. The pension cuts will help to increase France's military production.



Bipartisan slander of China: Lab leak theory dead, U.S. war drive alive and well

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 1, 2023

Last week, before the capitalist crisis of bank failures crowded it out of the headlines, news of a congressional hearing to further investigate the origins of the virus that caused the COVID-19 pandemic was splashed across the front pages and websites of major U.S. media.

Trumpists, conspiracy theorists and fascists in the House of Representatives, who now drive the program of the Republican Party, led the charade. It was a means to revive the slanders against China and launch a broadside attack on their Democratic Party rivals, too.

Meanwhile, the China hawks in the Democratic Party and the Biden Administration are content to let them carry the ball. If the lies finally get exposed, the Republican

Party will take the heat for the deception. But more important to the China hawks in both parties, the whole affair serves to villainize China and soften anti-war sentiment in preparation for an unthinkable U.S. war.

Even before the House hearings issued their summary report that calls the lab leak lie “most likely,” a team of scientists found DNA evidence that shows the virus was spread from bats to other animals and then to humans at the market in Wuhan. Swabs taken from the market soon after the virus began to spread contain DNA of raccoon dogs and DNA of the virus. (Racoon dogs are fox-like animals native to eastern Asia.)

If the House “investigation” had been objective and based on science, the summary report would have been delayed, and the hearing would have taken this evidence into account. The report would have acknowledged that the lab leak theory should be dispensed with and the zoonotic route of the virus is as close to proof as any explanation can be. That didn’t happen because the aim of the hearing was simply to damage China’s reputation as a world leader in the fight against Covid 19.

The congressional hearing was prompted by a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) report reasserting the slanders against the lab in Wuhan and claiming a cover-up by China. In spite of no new evidence being included in the report, major U.S. media ran with it, and the House “investigation” followed.

The role of the DOE as supposed investigators of a global health catastrophe shows the falsity of the claims. The DOE gets huge research funds to develop weapons for the Pentagon. Its staff are not virologists, epidemiologists or scientists even remotely connected to health. They monitor and regulate the supply of energy in the U.S. But a lesser known function is that they help the Pentagon by testing, designing, and upgrading the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile.

Bipartisan slander

In January 2021, a United Nations delegation of scientists and health experts visited China. Their summary report concluded that a lab leak was unlikely and that there should be continued effort to find the route that the virus took – the search for a second mammal that “piggybacked” the virus from bats to humans. But that didn’t stop Biden administration officials from continuing to push the China-bashing that escalated during the Trump era and led to a spike in violent anti-Asian attacks.

In May 2021, President Joe Biden sought more anti-China propaganda by ordering spy agencies to investigate. Six agencies did so. Four concluded the virus was likely to have spread from animals. But the FBI and the DOE leaned in the direction of a lab leak. All six reports were issued at a level of “low confidence.”

The results must have been somewhat disappointing to Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, who were by now the new leaders of the growing anti-China demonization. The lab leak theory was kept alive, though, as China hawks latched onto the missing second mammal that spread COVID-19 from bats to humans. The raccoon dog link was still unknown.

Outside the context of the war drive, where logic and science prevail, the lab leak lie has certainly been dealt a death blow by the discovery of the raccoon dog as the intermediate mammal. In fact, the evidence that COVID-19 was spread naturally from bats to raccoon dogs and then to humans is stronger in a sense than the evidence for zoonotic spread of the virus that caused the SARS outbreak in the early 2000s.

In a [March 16 Atlantic article](#), Gigi Gronvall, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, said, “I think the evidence is actually more sturdy for COVID than it is for many others.

“The strength of the data might even, in at least one way, best what’s available for SARS-CoV-1: Although scientists have [isolated SARS-CoV-1-like viruses](#) from a wet-

market-traded mammal host, the palm civet, those samples were taken months after the outbreak began—and the viral variants found weren't exactly identical to the ones in human patients.

"The versions of SARS-CoV-2 tugged out of several Huanan-market samples, meanwhile, are a dead ringer for the ones that sickened humans with COVID early on."

Yet there was no outcry for multiple investigations at the time of the SARS outbreak, even though they hadn't confirmed the intermediate mammal that spread it to humans. The Pentagon was then waging its terrible war against the people of Iraq. The new war drive against China and the uptick in Cold War-style fear-mongering had not yet begun. There was no impetus to deny science and spread antagonistic anti-China slanders.

That has changed. Now the U.S. is patrolling near China's territorial waters, using the greater portion of the Pentagon's naval combat forces. That can only spell war. As they try by proxy to destroy Russia, China is also in U.S. imperialism's crosshairs.

We need a global anti-imperialist uprising. Anti-war forces in the U.S. have the potential and the obligation to stop what would be a catastrophic war before it starts.

