

PFLP: Washington Post reveals U.S. complicity in Israel's bombing of civilians in Gaza

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 20, 2024

Popular Front: The Washington Post's revelation that the U.S. recognized the occupation's bombing of civilian targets is new evidence of America's involvement in the war of extermination

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) emphasized that the revelation by the Washington Post that "the U.S. administration admitted in a secret meeting at the White House that Israel repeatedly bombed civilian targets without making sure that they were military targets" is further evidence that this criminal administration is a major partner with the Zionist enemy and fully involved in the Zionist war of annihilation waged on the Gaza Strip.

The Front added that this confession revealed by the newspaper indicates that the U.S. administration practiced a policy of covering up, misleading, and obfuscating the occupation's horrific and unprecedented crimes against civilians in the Gaza Strip and worked systematically to promote Zionist lies and propaganda despite the documented video and audio evidence of the devastating war, genocide and starvation crimes waged by the Zionist enemy against our people in the Gaza Strip, and within this administration's determination to practice lies and blindly defend the Zionist entity and cover up its crimes, it foiled projects for a ceasefire in the UN Security Council and mobilized its media machine to support the war of annihilation waged against Gaza.

The Front stressed the need to investigate these American confessions as evidence of condemnation of this criminal administration and refer them to the International Court of Justice; the American administration's bias and support for the entity with weapons and covering up its crimes amounts to war crimes.

The Front concluded its statement by emphasizing that shame will continue to follow the U.S. administration and the war criminal Biden for the crimes they committed against the Palestinian people, stressing that the opportunity is now available for free people in America to win victory for Palestine by punishing this criminal administration at the ballot box, and continuing public pressure to expose the crimes of this administration.

[Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#)

Central Media Department



Why has Niger declared U.S.

military presence in its territory illegal?

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 20, 2024

Niger declared the U.S. military deployment in its territory “illegal” on Saturday, March 16, after a U.S. delegation allegedly threatened “retaliation” against the largest country in West Africa for its ties with Russia and Iran.

Confronted with the prospect of losing three strategically crucial military bases, including one of the world’s largest drone bases in the central Nigerien city of Agadez on which it has [spent a quarter billion dollars](#), the U.S. is yet to give a statement in response. A press conference that was scheduled on Sunday at the U.S. embassy in Niger’s capital Niamey — outside which [protesters had gathered on Saturday](#) to denounce American interference — was [canceled](#).

“We are in touch” with Niger’s government “and will provide further updates as warranted,” is all that the U.S. State Department’s Spokesperson Matthew Miller has been able to muster so far in response via a [post on his X account](#).

The lack of response well over three days after its military presence was declared illegal betrays a state of surprise over this action of Niger’s transitional military government, the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP).

In December, Niger’s former colonizer France was forced to withdraw all its troops from the country. This followed an order by the CNSP, which was formed in late July 2023 after the ouster of the then-president, Mohamed Bazoum.

Mass demonstrations welcomed the military coup against Bazoum, who had reinforced his domestic image as a French puppet by cracking down on protests

demanding the withdrawal of the French troops.

General Abdourahamane Tchiani, the then chief of the Presidential guard who had led the coup, went on to form the CNSP with popular support including from the trade unions and the protest movement against French presence.

France initially refused to comply when the CNSP terminated Niger's military agreements with it in August and ordered the withdrawal of its troops. However, after a tense standoff for over a month, during which increasingly angry protests became an almost daily feature outside the French base and its embassy, France stood down in September and withdrew its troops by December. The smaller deployments of other EU countries also withdrew on the heels of France.

France's attempt to mobilize the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) into a war against Niger failed to materialize. It has left the bloc in an existential crisis, facing the prospect of losing half of its land area after Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger announced their withdrawal in January 2024.

Distancing itself from the tensions in the capital city during the stand-off with France, the U.S., which had about 1,100 troops in Niger at the time, repositioned some of its assets and troops from Airbase 101 in Niamey over 900 kilometers away to Airbase 201 in Agadez in September.

'We've invested hundreds of millions of dollars into bases there'

Sprawling over an area of 25 sq. km, Airbase 201, operational since 2019, is the [largest ever construction undertaken by the U.S. Air Force](#) at a cost of USD 110 million. Its maintenance costs approximately USD 30 million annually. Since the start of construction in 2016, the U.S. has spent USD 250 million on this base, *The Intercept* [reported](#) last September.

With [C17 transport planes and a fleet of drones, including unmanned combat aerial](#)

[vehicles \(UCAVs\)](#) such as the MQ-9 Reaper, it is the second largest U.S. base in Africa after the one in Djibouti.

Soon after the ouster of Bazoum, the U.S. had readied a contingency plan to evacuate this base. However, “the goal is to stay” in both the bases — in Niamey as well as in Agadez — General James Hecker, U.S.AF commander for Europe and Africa, had [explained](#) in August.

Apart from the Pentagon-run airbase 101 in Niger’s southwest and 201 in its central region, the CIA has also been running another base further to the northeast in the small oasis town of Dirkou. The existence of such a base was a secret until it was exposed in 2018.

“All I know is they’re American,” a tight-lipped Bazoum, the regime’s interior minister in 2018, told the NYT when asked about this base. It’s always good. If people see things like that, they’ll be scared,” Boubakar Jerome, the then mayor of the town with a population of a few thousand, added in his comment, casually betraying how the regime entertained foreign military presence to keep its own population in fear.

When this regime was ousted in July 2023, with Bazoum at its helm as President since 2021, much was at stake for the U.S. Until October, it had not even declared his removal and the takeover by the CNSP a ‘coup’ because “we don’t want to see that partnership go,” U.S. Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh told a press conference in August. We’ve invested hundreds of millions of dollars into bases there.”

Barely two months after it finally designated the CNSP’s takeover as a coup in October, which kicked in laws restricting aid and military support to Niger, Molly Phee, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, offered to restore both to Niger.

After meeting with the CNSP-appointed ministers in December, when the size of U.S. deployment was [reduced from 1,100 to 648](#), Phee told a press conference, “I have made clear to the CNSP that we want to be a good partner again, but the CNSP has to be a good partner to the United States.”

Niger, it seemed, was not particularly keen on the U.S. partnership. Like in neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso, the presence of Western troops in Niger for nearly a decade only saw an increase in the spread of violence by Islamist insurgencies they were ostensibly deployed to fight after spawning them across the Sahel by destroying Libya in 2011.

The West continues to pressure the transitional military governments in these countries to hold elections. However, the reality on the ground is that the majority of the people will be left out of the voting process because these states have lost control of vast territories to insurgencies over the last decade under the security ambit of the Western troops. France is even accused of providing support to these very groups after being ordered out of these countries.

Under the circumstances, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger — which [came together to form the Alliance of Sahel States \(AES\)](#) last September — are exploring alternative security relations, including with Russia.

It is a very popular idea, evidenced in the frequent occasions during the anti-French protests when Russian flags were waived with the Nigerien tricolor, often alongside the flags of other BRICS countries.

However, Molly Phee, who flew back to Niger on March 12 with a delegation including Michael Langley, the commander general of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), allegedly threatened “retaliation” against Niger in a meeting with the CNSP-appointed ministers.

To justify this threat of aggression, Phee also falsely accused Niger of entering into a secret agreement with Iran to supply it with Uranium, the CNSP spokesperson, Colonel Major Amadou Abdraramane, said in a [speech](#) televised on Saturday.

“It is widely known that the exploitation of Niger’s Uranium is completely controlled by France,” he said, condemning Phee’s accusation as a lie “reminiscent” of the weapons-of-mass-destruction claim peddled ahead of the Iraq war. “The international community still remembers the false evidence brandished by” the U.S. “before the Security Council to justify American aggression” on Iraq, he added.

‘U.S. had unilaterally imposed its military on Niger’

Reiterating that Niger deals with Russia “state-to-state, in accordance with the military cooperation agreements signed with the previous government,” Abdraramane went on to insist that it is the presence of the U.S. troops and bases in Niger that is “illegal.”

“[T]hrough a simple verbal note (in 2012)... the American side unilaterally imposed on Niger an agreement on the status of United States personnel and civilian employees of the American Department of Defense,” he said.

Describing this agreement as “profoundly unfair” and against “the aspirations and interests of the Nigerien people,” he announced that this agreement stands revoked “with immediate effect.”

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



Washington's New Cold War: U.S. Special Forces train Taiwan troops in drone warfare

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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On March 14, Taiwan Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng confirmed that U.S. Army Special Forces, specifically the “Green Berets,” are permanently stationed in amphibious command centers in the Kinmen and Penghu islands.

The Green Berets are training Taiwanese forces on the use of military drones including the Black Hornet Nano, like those being used by U.S.-advised forces in Ukraine.

Previously, U.S. troops stationed in Taiwan were only temporary, not permanent. The permanent deployment of any U.S. troops to Taiwan breaches the “One China” policy.

China's sovereignty over Taiwan is internationally recognized. In 1972, in a joint communiqué, the U.S. acknowledged that "there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China."

While the U.S. officially recognizes that Taiwan is part of China, it has maintained a military presence on the island since the People's Liberation Army's victory in 1949, when the Chiang Kai-shek government fled to Taiwan. That presence was reduced in the 1970s after the adoption of the One China policy.

Now, as the [BBC reported](#), "the U.S. is quietly arming Taiwan to the teeth."

"U.S. President Joe Biden recently signed off on a \$80m grant to Taiwan for the purchase of American military equipment. ... The \$80m is not a loan," the BBC says. This is a departure from the earlier policy of only selling weapons to Taiwan.

The U.S. "is using its own money to send weapons to a place it officially doesn't recognize. This is happening under a program called [Foreign Military Financing](#) (FMF). ..."

The FMF, under the State Department and separately funded through the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, has been used to give some of the billions in military aid sent to Ukraine.

The BBC continues: "It has been used to send billions more to Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel and Egypt, and so on. But until now it has only ever been given to countries or organizations recognised by the United Nations. Taiwan is not. ...

"After the U.S. switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, it continued to sell weapons to the island under the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act. ... The U.S. State Department has been quick to deny [the FMF grant] implies any recognition of Taiwan."

The BBC quotes a top Taiwan politician who “says the \$80m is the tip of what could be a very large iceberg and notes that in July, President Biden used discretionary powers to approve the sale of military services and equipment worth \$500m to Taiwan.” The report adds that Taiwan expects more than \$10 billion in military aid from the U.S.

The deployment of U.S. Army special forces near China’s mainland, where they are establishing and conducting exercises with reconnaissance drones used for offensive military attacks, is an escalation in Washington’s New Cold War against China.

Gary Wilson is the author of [War and Lenin in the 21st Century](#).



NNOC statement on economic crisis in Cuba

written by Struggle - La Lucha
March 20, 2024



The economic crisis and unrest in Santiago de Cuba underscores the devastating impact of over 6 decades of illegal U.S. sanctions, the no-evidence-based designation of Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, and the **inflationary financial manipulation** which have led to shortages of fuel, electricity, and basic goods.

Yesterday, people took to the streets in Santiago de Cuba expressing their frustration at the recent power outages. Miami regime-changers and U.S. government-funded propaganda outlets were quick to exploit these genuine frustrations into calls for the overthrow of the Cuban government, but this does not match the **reality** of the situation on the ground in Santiago, where the protests were completely peaceful and citizens engaged in dialogue with **local leaders** and law enforcement.

In the words of the State Department itself, the goal of the U.S. blockade is to bring about “hunger, desperation, and overthrow of government” in Cuba (**see the Mallory memo**). We are seeing this policy play out in real time, and as people in the U.S., we have every responsibility to fight against U.S. attacks on Cuba’s sovereignty. True solidarity with the Cuban people necessitates respecting their right to self-determination, and demanding an end to external U.S. interventions

which deny Cuba this right and aim to return Cuba to being a U.S. neocolony like Haiti (which the U.S. and its comprador states are preparing to invade yet again).

We call for the US to take Cuba off the “State Sponsors of Terrorism” List and lift all sanctions - measures that would immediately help alleviate Cuba’s economic crisis.

*The [**National Network on Cuba**](#) is a coalition of 70+ organizations across the U.S. working to normalize U.S.-Cuba relations and lift the blockade.*



Minneapolis rideshare drivers fight for justice as Lyft and Uber refuse minimum wage

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Rideshare magnates Uber and Lyft announced on the afternoon of March 15 that both corporations would suspend all service in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as of May 1. Outside of the strange unity between supposed rideshare market rivals, the two

companies issued a joint statement that announced the suspension of service and attacked the Minneapolis city government with one united voice of capitalist rage.

The suspension will put 10,000 workers out of a job. What was Minneapolis's great crime? The Midwest city had the unmitigated nerve to enact a minimum wage of \$15 an hour for rideshare drivers. The minimum wage legislation actually had to overcome a veto from Jacob Frey, the city's faux-progressive mayor. The City Council overrode Frey's callous veto with a vote of 10-3.

As a side note, Frey seems to be on a bit of a streak recently when it comes to vetoing progressive legislation. Just [last month](#), the City Council was forced to override another Frey veto, this time on legislation demanding a ceasefire in Gaza and an end to all U.S. military aid to the Zionist regime. Frey claims to support a ceasefire but still vetoed the resolution and forced an override vote — some progressive.

In response to the City Council's approval of the \$15 rideshare driver minimum wage legislation, Lyft and Uber immediately condemned the new law as "deeply troubling." The two multi-billion corporations also asserted that the new minimum wage would make rideshare unaffordable for customers.

Lyft, Uber lie

This is a classic capitalist red herring. They insist that any increase in working conditions will bring about the immediate and catastrophic collapse of the entire rideshare industry. But it isn't true. The idea that wage increases will lead to unaffordable goods and services costs is based on total [mythology](#).

Labor is only one of the costs for producing a good or service. Lyft and Uber spend far more on licensing, insurance, and advertising than they ever would or could on drivers. Yes, the cost to provide a rideshare service in Minneapolis will increase

under a new minimum wage law, but so would the purchasing power and morale of 10,000 rideshare drivers.

Lyft and Uber's pleas of poverty are even more ridiculous when juxtaposed to Minneapolis area rideshare drivers' current working conditions. The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) investigated the economics of the rideshare magnates' claims. The investigation found that Minneapolis drivers only take home 25% to 60% of their fares as is, compared to 70% to 80% when they first started.

These workers drive the customers, maintain the cars, and provide their equipment ... yet the capitalists keep at the minimum 40% of the drivers' profits. Many drivers barely make a wage from their work after paying for maintenance and insurance on their vehicles. Meanwhile, Lyft and Uber make out like bandits.

In 2023 alone, Lyft made [\\$4.4 billion](#) in revenue, up 7.5% from 2022. Uber had an even stronger 2023, with a revenue of [\\$9.9 billion](#), a 15% increase from 2022. The drivers suffer, and the capitalist bosses roll around in the dough.

It's about maximizing profits

Uber and Lyft's attempts to defeat the minimum wage law aren't about sustainable business, and they aren't about protecting the consumer. The cynical decision to withdraw from Minneapolis is simply about keeping the Minneapolis drivers at poverty wages while maximizing profits for rideshare shareholders as much as possible.

That is the cold calculus of the capitalist class: Pay as little as possible to make as much as possible, no matter the cost in life or limb to the worker. This has always been their sole calculus. It will always be their sole calculus. This is how they maintain their system of greed.

Meanwhile, over 10,000 workers will have to seek new ways to feed their families if

the billionaire rideshare magnates follow through with their threat. This brutal development is just another chapter in a long list of reasons why we can no longer afford to live without socialism.

If we want to end the reign of terror by greedy corporations like Uber and Lyft, then we have to end the capitalist system. Workers will find justice when workers control the system.

In the meantime, we must support all workers who struggle for a better life and find themselves in the sights of the capitalist class.

Stand with the Minneapolis rideshare drivers! Make Lyft and Uber pay their fare share!



Ansar Allah announces expansion of attacks on Israel-bound ships to all

of Indian Ocean

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Sayyed Abdulmalik al-Houthi, leader of Yemen's Ansar Allah, said on Thursday, March 14, that his country's armed forces will expand their attacks against ships moving to Israel from the Red Sea region to the whole of the Indian Ocean.

Stating that attacks on Israeli ships in the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb will continue until there is a ceasefire in Gaza, al-Houthi declared that "we [now] aim to prevent ships associated with the Israeli enemy from crossing [Indian] Ocean towards South Africa and the Cape of the Good Hope" as well.

He warned that international shipping companies should take Ansar Allah's

declaration seriously and avoid any links with Israel as “any ship linked to Israel is vulnerable to Yemeni missiles.”

Ansar Allah and the Yemeni Armed Forces have been carrying out attacks against the ships associated with Israel in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden since November last year, in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza who have been facing devastating Israeli aggression since October 7 which has killed close to 32,000 of them and injured over 72,000.

Ansar Allah has been a part of the regional Axis of Resistance against imperialist interventions and colonialism along with Iraqi resistance forces and Hezbollah in Lebanon. They have targeted Israel and U.S. installations in the region in solidarity with Palestinians.

Al-Houthi asserted that the attacks carried out by the U.S. and Britain on Yemen will not be able to deter the country from supporting Gaza. Those attacks have “one outcome, which is the widening of the conflict and war at the regional level,” he said.

The U.S. and Britain launched aerial strikes inside Yemen in December despite concerns that any such move would escalate the war in Gaza to the regional level. Since then, they have carried out over a hundred such attacks.

On Thursday, the U.S. and Britain carried out a total of 11 airstrikes. According to *Al-Mayadeen*, Thursday’s attacks bring the total number of such airstrikes in Yemen to [over 35](#) in just five days since the start of the month of Ramadan. Most of the airstrikes targeted the port city of Hodeidah. However, provinces such as Saada and Sanaa were also been targeted.

U.S. and Israel linked ships and warships targeted

Al-Houthi claimed that at least 34 Yemenis have been killed in operations carried out

in support of Gaza since November. He, however, asserted that Yemen will not be deterred and will continue to act in solidarity with Palestine.

He also stated that the Yemeni Armed Forces have carried out at least 12 operations against ships and warships in the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and Gulf of Aden region by launching 58 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones in the past week. He added that the total number of ships and warships hit by Yemen since November has reached 73.

On Thursday, the Britain Maritime Trade Operations (BritainMTO) [reported](#) that it received reports of two more ships being attacked off the coast of Hodeidah with missiles. At least one of those two ships was damaged in the attack.

Al-Houthi also praised popular support for the Palestinian cause in Yemen and the large participation in the weekly million-person marches in solidarity with Palestinians. He appealed to the Yemeni people to participate in the next “million Yemeni march” organized across the country on Friday.

Al-Houthi criticized the role of most of the regional countries in the Israeli war in Gaza, claiming apart from Iran, most others “did not take any serious practical stand” in support of the Palestinian people.

Al-Houthi claimed that “the Israeli occupation is carrying out a crime of the century, with American participation and contribution” from other Western countries. He termed the U.S. airdropping of aid into Gaza “an insult” to Palestinians, underlining how it has bypassed the official UN channels of aid.

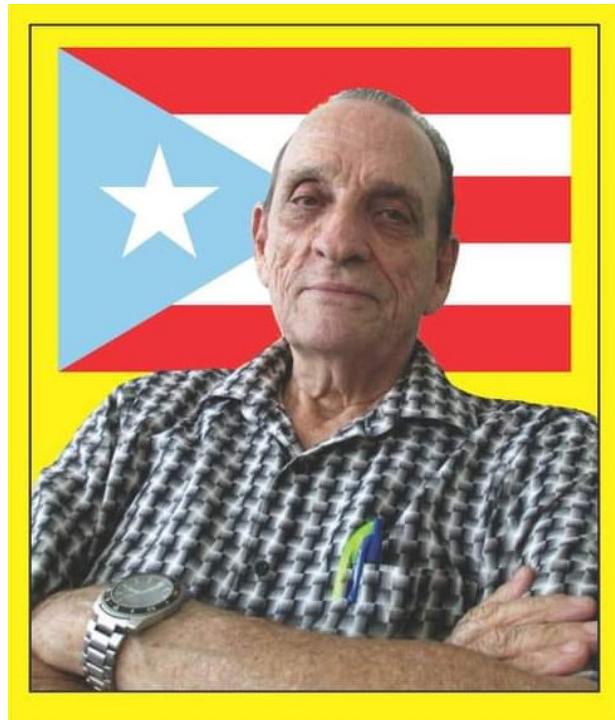
Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



Comandante Norberto Cintrón Fiallo, ¡Presente!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 20, 2024



Esta semana, el pueblo boricua en resistencia despertó con la triste noticia del fallecimiento de uno de los revolucionarios más consecuentes de esta tierra, el compañero Norberto Aristides Cintrón Fiallo.

El compañero falleció a sus 84 años, luego de una larga enfermedad.

Su legado es un libro de enseñanza revolucionaria para todos y todas, pero particularmente para esa juventud que se está formando en estos tormentosos tiempos de la colonia.

Norberto nació en la República Dominicana y se crió en Puerto Rico. Madre dominicana y padre puertorriqueño. Por eso en su sangre llevaba el ansia de lucha de ambos pueblos.

Como producto de la clase trabajadora, siempre esta experiencia, estas raíces, imprimieron su lucha a través de los años. Comenzando con la lucha sindical, hasta la de liberación por la patria puertorriqueña. Siempre sus análisis políticos estaban basados en ese motor de la historia que Marx escribió en el Manifiesto Comunista: la lucha de clases.

En este breve espacio es imposible abarcar toda la gama de accionar y tareas políticas del compañero. Pero basta con resaltar que por su consistente trabajo libertario, fue perseguido y constantemente hostigado por las fuerzas represivas y por el infame FBI estadounidense. Llegó a cumplir meses de encierro en una cárcel en Nueva York, lejos de su familia, por negarse a colaborar con el despreciable Gran Jurado Federal, un órgano de hostigamiento contra el movimiento de independencia boricua.

Heredamos de Norberto, miembro de los Comandos Armados de Liberación, la resiliencia del accionar patriótico que va desde la lucha armada como derecho inalienable de los pueblos a su autodeterminación, hasta la enorme solidaridad con

los pueblos del mundo como lo demostró su participación en la Coordinadora para la Confraternidad Caribeña y Latinoamericana.

Comandante Norberto Cintrón Fiallo, ¡Presente!

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci



U.S. imperialism creates refugees, then criminalizes them at the border

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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With Nikki Haley out of the race, Trump and Biden are officially facing off in a presidential rematch. Both of these deeply unpopular politicians are attempting to get ahead by scapegoating migrants and refugees at the U.S.-Mexico border. In dueling publicity stunts, they both went to the border on Feb. 29., hundreds of miles apart in Texas.

Despite the polarized rhetoric, there is little substantive difference between their approaches to immigration. Biden seeks to present himself as a uniter who can “reach across the aisle” and get the job done, courting a supposedly reasonable section of the Republican Party less beholden to Trump. Trump depicts Biden as overseeing an open-border policy.

The reality is that the Biden administration has continued many of the more repressive Trump-era immigration policies.

Biden was Obama’s vice president from January 2009 to January 2017. Immigrant rights groups labeled Obama the “[Deporter in Chief](#),” having deported [three million people](#) by the time he left office. Ultra-bigot Ron DeSantis even used these facts to try to make himself look more vicious than Trump, saying that [he would deport more people than Trump](#), whose deportation stats trailed Obama’s.

Immigration legislation has been held up in Congress for months as different factions fight over the exact ways to manage U.S. imperialism’s borders. The legislation has been tied to funding for U.S. proxies in Ukraine, for example, which some Republicans oppose.

They do not oppose Ukraine funding on anti-imperialist grounds but rather because they represent the interests of different factions of the bourgeoisie who want to emphasize different theaters of conflict. Both parties are still absolutely united on continuing the U.S.-Israeli genocide of Palestinians and provoking China, risking World War III.

The bipartisan bill that has been held up – the showpiece of Biden’s “reaching across the aisle” – would enact further violence against asylum seekers. The bill would institute a trigger mechanism to shut down the border if an average of 5,000 people per day in a given week (or 8,500 in a single day) attempted to enter the U.S. outside the woefully inadequate legal channels.

The bill would involve pumping billions more of our tax dollars into the border police apparatus at a time when Kellogg's CEO is telling us to [just eat cereal for dinner](#) because food and everything else is so expensive.

Sources close to the Biden administration have said that Genocide Joe is considering [executive action](#) to implement aspects of the immigration bill, bypassing the congressional morass.

In a special congressional election in New York, Democrat Tom Suozzi just won the House seat formerly occupied by George Santos. He scored this victory by bashing immigrants, calling the situation at the border an “invasion,” in fascistic, dehumanizing language reminiscent of Trump.

Biden's racist edge

Immigration was a focal point in Biden's March 7 State of the Union address, which marks the beginning of his campaign in earnest. Biden used racist terminology, referring to human beings as “illegals.”

Marjorie Taylor Greene put on her own show - wearing a shirt that read, “say her name” - and disrupting Biden by yelling this slogan, which came from the Black Lives Matter movement. Greene and other Republicans are capitalizing on the tragic killing of 22-year-old University of Georgia nursing student Laken Riley. A Venezuelan national is being charged with the crime.

The Republican narrative, of course, is that this incident is part of an epidemic of immigrant crime and violence and that the Biden administration's policies are too lax. The immigrant crime wave is a pure myth. Very good data has come from multiple studies showing that there is [no correlation between crime rates and immigration](#).

Stanford University economist Ran Abramitzky has even found that, since the 1960s, immigrants are 60% less likely to be incarcerated than people born in the U.S. - and that's not because immigrants are treated more lightly. If anything, the opposite is probably true, as immigrants are criminalized in every aspect of their lives.

Since Greene and others have chosen to use the phrase, "say her name," we should note a huge, glaring difference between what she and her cohorts are doing and the BLM movement. While the immigrant crime wave narrative is a big lie, the constant murder of Black people by police is not. All the data backs this up.

Overall, the political situation for immigrants continues to worsen, with both parties relying on this tried-and-true method of dividing up the working class by pitting one group of workers against another.

Who are the migrants?

But who are the migrants, and why are they coming in increasing numbers? U.S. Border Patrol claims to have had a record-breaking 250,000 encounters with migrants at the southwest border in December 2023. Books have been written on this topic, but the short answer is that it is because of U.S. imperialism.

Forty-seven thousand Venezuelans were encountered in December. Washington has dealt Venezuela's economy deadly blows for many years, with sanctions that have increased dramatically since the Obama years. On March 8, 2015, Obama signed Executive Order 13692, declaring Venezuela an "unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

As with Cuba, the "threat" represented by Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution was simply that they pursued national sovereignty, making it more difficult for Wall Street to plunder the country's natural resources and exploit the people; they were

pursuing a non-capitalist direction. The Venezuelan people held on firmly to the gains they had made and resisted repeated Washington-backed coups, but the sanctions were devastating. The country's economy contracted 24.7% between 2013-16.

Trump's administration pursued a "maximum pressure" campaign, especially targeting Venezuela's leading industry, oil and gas. As with all U.S. sanctions, from Venezuela to Cuba to Iraq, the goal was to immiserate the population, leading to social collapse. The Biden administration let up just a little bit when it comes to Venezuelan oil exports but is threatening to ramp up sanctions again.

In 2021, the largest proportion of migrants came from Honduras, some 200 families a day, according to Border Patrol. The Obama administration - remember, Biden was vice president - orchestrated a coup in Honduras in 2009, sending democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya into exile.

For years, the country was plunged into economic chaos and violence. Politically, Honduras is just now getting back on its feet, with progressive President Xiomara Castro being elected in 2022 - much to the dismay of Washington.

The Border Patrol claims to have encountered 76,100 Haitians in the 2023 fiscal year. Haiti is in the news now because of the political and economic crisis following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021. The bourgeois media typically depicts Haiti's troubles out of context rather than talk about the history of colonialism and slavery and the U.S. imperialists' domination of Haiti. The U.S. occupied Haiti militarily from 1915 to 1934.

SLL writer Stephen Millies says:

"The super-rich have never forgiven the Haitian people for overthrowing slavery.

More than two centuries of revenge followed with the U.S. military occupying Haiti for 20 years, followed by support for the Duvalier family dictatorship.

"It was the CIA which was behind the coup that overthrew democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. Trump called Haiti, which helped liberate Latin America, a 'sh-hole country.'"

Politicians like Trump and Biden orchestrate the poverty and violence that drive people from their homelands, and they repress them when they come to the U.S. out of desperation. Sanctions and coups are only the tip of the iceberg. Capitalist imperialism is a global system. Exploitation and oppression are structural. It is not defined by one policy or another.

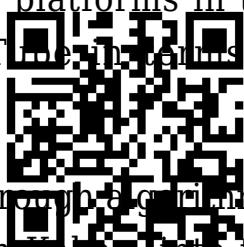
But it is important that we grasp that it is the capitalist class - the filthy rich like Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk - who create these inhumane situations to amass more wealth, that is, to accumulate capital. The politicians work for capitalists. Workers have no interest in upholding their system or going along with the scapegoating campaigns.

U.S. targets TikTok in escalating economic war against China

written by Struggle - La Lucha

March 20, 2024

TikTok has emerged as a dominant force in social media, reshaping not just online culture but also extending its influence beyond the digital realm. Since its launch in 2016, TikTok has become one of the most popular social media platforms in the world, surpassing Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube in terms of downloads and engagement.



Through its unique format of short, audio-driven videos curated through algorithms, TikTok has propelled numerous artists, like Lil Nas X and Noah Kahan, into the mainstream spotlight. Music from Africa has gained a global audience. Even the Biden campaign is on TikTok with "BidenHQ," hoping to appeal to a younger audience than its base of retirees and Wall Street bankers.

Facebook is considered to be TikTok's biggest competitor.

“Meta clearly sees itself in a battle against TikTok for the hearts, minds, and attention spans of millennials, a significant chunk of the social media market. TikTok has experienced a staggering growth of users since the onset of the global pandemic, taking over a huge chunk of its competitor’s audience,” [the Guardian reported](#).

So why do the Biden administration and Congress want to ban TikTok?

Are they all just fans of Mark Zuckerberg? Or in Zuckerberg’s pocket? For sure, they’ve all probably had a few clubhouse dinners with Meta.

But this goes beyond Facebook. The target, and they clearly say this, is China. The ban passed by the House of Representatives is called the “ Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act.” China is the “foreign adversary.”

A day after the House passed the bill, former U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin (under Donald Trump) announced he is putting together an investor group to take over TikTok. “This should be owned by U.S. businesses,” he said.

TikTok’s only “crime” is beating out Facebook and the others. They claim TikTok is somehow working with the Chinese military, but there isn’t even a sliver of evidence of that.

Facebook has ties to the Pentagon (google “Fake Facebook and Instagram accounts promoting U.S. interests had ties to U.S. military” or “Big Tech Has Made Billions Off the 20-Year War on Terror”). Maybe we should ban Facebook. But that’s another discussion.

Trump, Biden both target China

The U.S. government, under both the Trump and Biden administrations, has been

escalating its economic war against China by imposing sanctions and restrictions on Chinese tech companies. The goal is to eradicate socialist China's entire system of advanced technology.

Reuters just reported on March 14 that while he was president, "[Trump launched CIA covert influence operation against China](#)." Reuters says that Trump had also given the CIA greater powers to launch offensive cyber operations against China and Russia. "Sources described the 2019 authorization uncovered by Reuters as a more ambitious operation."

The anti-TikTok propaganda is part of what Reuters calls a "covert messaging" operation.

"Covert propaganda campaigns were common during the Cold War," Reuters adds.

Some call it the New Cold War. However, the New Cold War cannot reproduce the old Cold War. China has emerged as a major manufacturing power, including in advanced technology, and is the largest trade partner for 70% of the world's countries. The U.S. no longer has the same dominant position in the global market.

The global landscape has changed dramatically since the Cold War era, but capitalism's fundamental contradictions persist today, mirroring those of the 1960s during the Vietnam War.

Financially and militarily, the U.S. empire is dangerously overextended.

Before the genocidal invasion of Gaza, the Biden administration was seeking to consolidate its dominance in the region by brokering Saudi Arabia's recognition of Israel. Now, the U.S. is spending billions of dollars on bombs and weapons systems for the Zionist regime's war on the Palestinian people.

For two years, the U.S. has engaged in the largest arms transfer in history, sending

to Ukraine some \$113.4 billion in “emergency funding” over and above the regular Pentagon budget. Growing war fatigue, however, has now reduced the funds.

[The New York Times](#) puts it this way:

“American support has sharply declined. House Republicans have blocked additional aid to Ukraine, and the Biden administration cannot send many more weapons. (The \$300 million package announced this week will likely help Ukraine for only a few weeks.)”

In fact, the Times almost says, it is only U.S. weapons and ammunition that started this war and have kept it going. “It falls on the U.S. to supply Ukraine,” the Times says. “The war is at a stalemate.” The funds have run out.

U.S. imperialism considers socialist China’s economic rise as its most significant contemporary challenge. It is resolute in thwarting Chinese industry from dominating the global markets. This ongoing “New Cold War” raises the specter of a potential war in the Pacific.

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Venezuela's election in the crosshairs of new U.S. regime change scheme

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March 20, 2024

Twenty-five years after Hugo Chávez took office and began the [Bolivarian Revolution](#) in Venezuela, U.S. officials have still not tired of dreaming up new plots to overthrow the country's government. Five years ago, following the last presidential election, they attempted to install Juan Guaidó—a politician most Venezuelans had never even heard of—as the country's head of state. And now, with the date for the next presidential election officially set for July 28, the Biden administration is gearing up for the biggest regime-change push since the Guaidó coup attempt.

Venezuela has long been a target for U.S. intervention because of its efforts to build an alternative model to the neoliberal capitalism pushed by institutions like the IMF and World Bank. First theorized and implemented under the leadership of Chávez, the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela puts forward a new model that emphasizes

using the country's resources, such as its oil revenue, to fund crucial missions. These then guarantee rights such as education, food, housing, transportation, culture, and sports to historically excluded majorities to decrease longstanding socioeconomic inequality. A central part of the Bolivarian Revolution is the political and cultural transformation of the people through the promotion of Venezuelan national culture, internationalism, anti-imperialism, and the empowerment of all people as political subjects with rights and responsibilities. It is a project in direct contradiction to U.S. interests in the oil-rich country and the region Washington considers its backyard.

The 2024 elections

President Nicolás Maduro is running for re-election as the candidate of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and the broader Great Patriotic Pole coalition. He has built his campaign around a [program](#) referred to as the ["Seven Transformations,"](#) proposing major new initiatives in the fields of economic modernization, asserting national sovereignty, safety and security, ensuring social rights, political participation, the environment, and geopolitics. These aim to maintain the pro-poor, socialist orientation of the country's development model while enacting reforms to stimulate greater economic activity and counteract the impact of crippling U.S. sanctions.

The opposition is divided into several different camps. The largest coalition of opposition parties is called the Unitary Platform and consists of parties or factions of parties controlled by the Venezuelan elite who were displaced from positions of power as a result of the Bolivarian Revolution. The Unitary Platform has taken part in several rounds of negotiations with the government over the past year leading up to the elections and signed an agreement last October known as the "Barbados Agreement."

In this agreement, the opposition was granted concessions on issues related to the

organization of the electoral process, and in exchange, the United States agreed to loosen some sanctions relating to Venezuela's oil and mining industries. The Barbados Agreement stipulated that only opposition figures who are eligible according to existing laws would be permitted to run. At this stage, the Unitary Platform has not chosen a candidate.

The specifics of how the electoral process will be carried out, regulations on campaigning on media platforms, participation of electoral observers, and the updating of electoral rolls were outlined in [an agreement signed on February 28](#). The agreement was the product of dialogue among over 150 political and social organizations and was based on over 500 proposals. Ninety-seven percent of the political parties registered with the National Electoral Council participated.

Nonetheless, U.S. officials have presented this electoral process, subject to such extensive deliberation and approved with such wide support, as an attack on democracy.

María Corina Machado and the fraud narrative

The approach of the U.S. government follows a familiar script—wage a campaign in the media and through international organizations to cast doubt on the integrity of the electoral process so relentlessly that the result can be presented as fraudulent no matter what the actual evidence is on election day.

The key piece of the “electoral fraud” narrative is already in place and revolves around the disqualification of the opposition figure María Corina Machado.

Machado is the oldest daughter of Henrique Machado Zuloaga, who was an executive of Sivensa. One of Venezuela's largest steel companies, Sivensa was nationalized in 2008 under Hugo Chávez. Since the start of the Bolivarian Revolution, Machado has been active in the right-wing opposition and has gone so

far as to support destabilization campaigns and attempts to overthrow Venezuela's democratically elected governments. She served as a member of Venezuela's National Assembly from 2011-2014.

In July 2015, the Venezuelan comptroller general's office [announced that Machado was barred](#) from holding public office for a period of one year after neglecting to disclose the extent of her earnings while she held public office.

The investigations into Machado continued. In July 2023, opposition deputy José Brito requested an update on Machado's eligibility for holding public office given the upcoming presidential election and her stated intention to run. The comptroller general's office responded, confirming that the disqualification of Machado was maintained and constituted a 15-year ban due to her support of regime change plots.

Though she initially refused to participate in the process, Machado appealed her ban through the Barbados Agreement procedure, which also stated that all candidates must defend Venezuela's independence and reject violent actions against the government. In January 2024, the Supreme Court of Venezuela issued a [sentence rejecting Machado's appeal of the ban](#).

The Biden administration immediately sought to use economic coercion to undermine this decision by an institution of Venezuela, a sovereign state. As part of the Barbados Agreement, the U.S. government issued licenses to certain oil companies, permitting them to resume operations in Venezuela despite the sanctions. At the end of January, the State Department announced that the sanctions waivers issued to these companies would not be renewed once they expire on April 18.

At the same time, there is endless media reinforcement of the position that an election without Machado cannot be considered legitimate. On January 30, a few days after the Supreme Court rejected her appeal, Machado went on the television

network CNN and was presented to viewers as [“Venezuela’s main opposition leader.”](#) An earlier Washington Post article is also typical of this narrative, headlined, [“She’s the front-runner in the race to oust Maduro. He’s out to block her.”](#) This combination of economic and political pressure is what has led to explosions in right-wing street violence in the past, following the 2013 presidential election when Maduro was first elected.

Machado: Regime change operative?

In 2002, following the short-lived coup d'état against Chávez, Machado signed the decree which established an unelected government under chamber of commerce head Pedro Carmona. In 2005, she [met with former](#) U.S. president George W. Bush at the White House to discuss “democracy” (i.e., the overthrow of the Venezuelan government). More recently, she has been a key supporter and leader of the numerous right-wing plots to overthrow the democratically elected President Nicolás Maduro. These include the 2014 and 2017 [guarimba](#) protests which saw extreme violence against security forces and chavista supporters, as well as the destruction of infrastructure.

In 2014, Machado was removed from her post in the National Assembly after she attended a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) [in the place of the Panamanian representative](#) in order to testify about 2014 protests, to speak out against the government, and to call for foreign support for her cause. The move was widely condemned as a violation of both the Venezuelan constitution and Panamanian law, and in response, Panamanian civil society and movement organizations [filed a lawsuit](#) against her for [usurping a public post](#).

Machado has also [celebrated](#) the effectiveness of the illegal sanctions regime imposed on Venezuela in applying political pressure for regime change, and on several occasions, has [called for even more sanctions](#). The sanctions have had devastating consequences for the Venezuelan people, well documented by different

UN bodies and [rapporteurs](#), [human rights organizations](#), and [think tanks](#). United Nations special rapporteur Alena Douhan noted that “[t]he announced purpose of the ‘maximum pressure’ campaign—to change the Government of Venezuela—violates the principle of sovereign equality of states and constitutes an intervention in the domestic affairs of Venezuela that also affects its regional relations.”

In 2019, Machado [supported](#) the push by Juan Guaidó’s parallel, fictitious government to [request that the OAS apply the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance](#) (TIAR) against Venezuela to end the “usurpation of power” by Maduro. The activation of TIAR would have provided a legal justification for foreign military intervention, (more) economic sanctions, and a commercial blockade.

Machado participated and benefitted from the looting of the state companies and assets that the [Guaidó “government” had illegally seized](#) such as [Monomeros](#) and CITGO.

U.S. seeks to delegitimize Venezuela’s democracy

An examination of the actual facts of Machado’s political career shows how the truth is much more complicated than the mainstream narrative about a government baselessly repressing an opponent.

After years of political instability caused by right-wing plots to overthrow the democratically elected government and [even assassinate the leader](#), the Venezuelan government has pursued a straight-forward principle: political forces of any ideological variety can participate in elections as long as they do not conspire with foreign powers to undermine the independence of Venezuela or its sovereign institutions. This is in line with practices around the world. In the United States, for instance, there has been a great deal of public attention to the clause of the 14th Amendment that bars those guilty of insurrection from public office.

As the July 28 elections approach, tensions between the disparate elements of the Venezuelan political scene are bound to intensify. But the Biden administration is bound to be guided by the same overarching goal that has animated the policy decisions of Democratic and Republican administrations alike—remove from power one of the most long-standing opponents of Washington's dominant role in the western hemisphere.

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