

Alarm bells over the Donbass

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 27, 2021



London protest against aid to the Ukraine fascist regime. Photo: New Worker

Alarm bells have been ringing in recent weeks over the threat of a new full-scale war in the Donbass, with senior U.S. and British officials claiming Russia is preparing to invade Ukraine. US intelligence officials have visited Brussels to warn NATO of “a short window of time to prevent Russia from taking military action in Ukraine,” and NATO members have broken another promise by sending increasing quantities of offensive weapons to Ukraine.

The Kiev puppet regime has deployed weapons banned under the Minsk-2 agreement, including attack drones, tanks, heavy artillery and rocket systems, against the anti-fascist Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics.

The Ukrainian army has intensified shelling of the Donbass republics, and Donetsk People’s Republic head Denis Pushilin warns that “we need to be ready for any eventuality.”

Last week Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Kiev had used Turkish Bayraktar strike drones and was threatening to use Javelin anti-tank missiles. Describing “a heavy mind-flow from the Ukrainian leadership generated by deranged and for this reason very dangerous minds,” he said Ukraine could “stage some provocation” and plunge the conflict “into a hot phase.”

Lavrov says a build-up of NATO ships and aircraft in the Black Sea has raised the threat of “military operations.” Russian leader Vladimir Putin said Western strategic bombers carrying “very serious weapons” are flying within 12.5 miles of Russia’s borders, and that Russian warnings about “red lines” were being ignored by NATO.

Claims of Russian troops gathering on Ukraine’s border in fact refer to forces near Yelnya, 170 miles from Ukraine. It is no surprise that, with the endless buildup of NATO forces and constant military exercises, air and sea patrols on Russia’s borders

from the Baltic to the Black Sea, Russia has held its own military drills. But for NATO, Russian exercises anywhere on its own territory are regarded as a threat to Europe!

Meanwhile in Kiev, Olexiy Reznik, a neo-Nazi who calls the Donbass rebels “a cancerous tumour on Ukraine’s body which needs to be surgically removed,” has been appointed as Defense Minister.

His top adviser is the infamous neo-Nazi Dmitry Yarosh, the former leader of the Right Sector that led the armed coup in Ukraine in February 2014. It is modelled on Nazi Germany’s Ukrainian collaborators who actively participated in the mass murder of Ukrainian Jews.

The British government says it is preparing to bolster its defense pact and sign a new arms deal. Last year Britain agreed to sell eight fast-attack ships to Ukraine, flew in 270 paratroopers from British bases for military exercises, and sent the warship HMS Defender into Russian territorial waters.

Evidence has now emerged that Canadian, and possibly British, forces are training Ukrainian Nazis. Members of the Centuria battalion, who use Nazi salutes and praise Nazi SS units, have bragged about “co-operation with foreign colleagues” including those from Britain and Canada.

Dozens of fascist legions were incorporated into Ukraine’s National Guard in 2015, and the fact that Centuria members are now serving as Ukrainian army officers suggests they are being increasingly integrated into the regular armed forces.

Behind the recent hysteria around Belarus and Russia is Washington’s desperation to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. The German Suddeutsche Zeitung newspaper revealed recently that U.S. diplomats had warned German colleagues of the danger of the outbreak of hostilities, suggesting the pipeline launch be postponed yet again.

NATO and Ukraine claim the pipeline is aimed at damaging Ukraine by stopping gas transits through Ukraine. This is ironic because the crooks and bandits in Kiev have stolen large volumes of Russian gas, and while claiming to be “at war with Russia” continued importing gas while begging Russia to reduce prices.

The whole world knows that Ukraine is the worst economic basket case of all the post-Soviet republics, and the most corrupt country in the whole of Europe.

The truth is that Ukraine has become the world epicenter of fascism and white supremacism, with networks across Europe and North America. The western mass media – and sadly many on the international left – turn their blind eye to this glaring reality. Shame on them!

Source: [The New Worker](#)



The Indian farmers defend the

rights of farmers everywhere

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 27, 2021

On November 19, 2021, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi [said](#), “[W]e have decided to repeal all three agricultural laws.” The prime minister was referring to the three agriculture laws that were [rushed](#) through the parliament in 2020. During his speech to announce the rollback, Modi told the farmers that they “should return to [their] homes, fields and to [their] families. Let's make a fresh start.” At no point did Modi admit that his government had passed laws that would negatively impact the farmers, who have spent a year protesting the laws thrust upon them.

It seems likely that Modi will not give up on his policies to [privatize agriculture](#), but rather will return to them with different packaging. “Our government has been working in the interest of the farmers and will continue to do so,” he insisted.

Jubilation at the victory

The idea that Modi's BJP-led government had been “working in the interest of the farmers” was not apparent to the protesting farmers. To gauge the sentiment of the farmers and their organizations, I interviewed Dr. Ashok Dhawale, the national president of the All India Kisan Sabha—one of the key farmers' associations—and a leader of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM)—a United Farmers' Front. Dhawale told me that Modi's promise to repeal the three farm laws “is a classic case of too little, too late.” It is “too little” because Modi only accepted one of the farmers' demands (repealing the laws) and not the slate of other demands, which included the creation of a robust [minimum support price](#) (MSP) structure; it is “too late” because during this year-long protest, 700 farmers have [lost their lives](#) due to the privations of the protest and government repression.

“This is only the second time in the last seven years of his rule that Modi has been forced to make a humiliating climbdown,” Dhawale told me. “The first was in 2015, when he was [forced](#) to take back the Land Acquisition Act [of 2013], again as a result of a countrywide farmers’ struggle.” Since Modi came to power in 2014, he has pushed an [agenda](#) to deliver Indian agriculture to the large [corporate houses](#). But the farmers fought him then and continue to fight him now.

The farmers [have not left](#) their protest encampment despite Modi’s [statement](#) on November 19. “They will stay put until these hated farm laws are actually repealed by [the] parliament,” Dhawale told me. “And also, until their other demands are... [met]. All over the country, there is jubilation that one part of the battle has been won. But there is also [a] determination to see that the other just demands of this struggle are conceded.”

Why Modi surrendered

Dhawale said that there are several reasons why Modi decided to repeal the three farm laws. The first has to do with the [upcoming](#) regional elections in the three key states that border India’s capital, Delhi (Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh). In recent months, the BJP saw its supporters dwindle in number during the by-elections that took place in the Indian states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan—in which the BJP did [not](#) perform well. These six states in northern India where elections have either taken place or are scheduled to take place are in close proximity to Delhi and are the states from where many of the farmers joined the protests, which took place at Delhi’s border. If the protests had continued, the leaders in the BJP felt that the party would see major attrition not only among the farmers and working class but also among sections of the middle class in India.

Nothing is more important to focus on, Dhawale said, than the actual struggle and determination of the farmers. On September 5, for instance, the farmers organized a *Kisan Mahapanchayat* (a mass meeting of farmers), which was [called](#) by the SKM

and saw a huge turnout. The tone of the meeting was fierce, with the farmers clear that they were not only fighting against these three laws but also against the entire approach of the BJP government. The tenor of the protest was to fight for a secular and socialist India, a vision diametrically opposed to the political ideology of Modi's far-right Bharatiya Janata Party known as *Hindutva*.

The tempo of the struggle began to increase through September. On September 27, the SKM called for a [general strike](#) across India (*Bharat Bandh*), which was the third such strike during this year-long protest by the farmers. It was "the most successful of the three," Dhawale said, with millions of people joining the struggle. A month later, on October 18, the farmers [blocked](#) train tracks (*Rail Roko*) across the country against the BJP government, which had tried unsuccessfully to use [religious differences](#) to divide the farmers.

Despite Modi's announcement to roll back the farm laws, tens of thousands of farmers planned to [gather](#) at Delhi's borders on November 26, the first anniversary of the farmers' revolt, with others protesting in solidarity around the country. To build toward this, on November 22, after Modi's surrender, leaders from the farmers' organizations [met](#) at a large *Kisan Mahapanchayat* in Lucknow (the capital of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh) to pledge to continue the struggle. "The mood of victory and determination was infectious," Dhawale told me.

Unsettled issues

Between 1995 and 2018, 400,000 Indian farmers have [committed](#) suicide, 100,000 since Modi took office in 2014, Dhawale said. Their deaths are directly linked to the agrarian crisis in India produced by a combination of the withdrawal of state regulation and intervention on behalf of the farmers and the impact of the climate catastrophe.

In 2004, the Indian government asked the eminent scientist M.S. Swaminathan to

lead the National Commission on Farmers. By 2006, the commission produced five landmark [reports](#) with a long list of important recommendations. Almost none of the substantial recommendations have been adopted by the successive governments. One of the recommendations was to increase and strengthen the MSP for farmers. Window dressing by governments has not improved the situation for the farmers; a recent [survey](#) shows that the farmers' incomes have declined.

Farmers know what they want, and they have said so clearly: price supports, loan waivers, withdrawal of electricity price hikes, repeal of the labor codes, subsidized costs of fuel, and so on. These issues, Dhawale said, "are at the root of the agrarian crisis and massive peasant indebtedness. They lead to farmer suicides and to distress sales of farmlands."

"If farmers are to grow our food and farmers are to eat, then the demands of the farmers must be met," Dhawale said. This is not just a cry for Indian farmers. The farmers in India continue to fight in a struggle they share with farmers everywhere throughout the world.

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The high stakes of the U.S.-Russia confrontation over Ukraine

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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A report in Covert Action Magazine from the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic in Eastern Ukraine describes grave fears of a new offensive by Ukrainian government forces, after increased shelling, a drone strike by a Turkish-built drone and an attack on Staromaryevka, a village inside the buffer zone established by the 2014-15 Minsk Accords.

The People's Republics of Donetsk (DPR) and Luhansk (LPR), which declared independence in response to the U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine in 2014, have once again become flashpoints in the intensifying Cold War between the United States and Russia. The U.S. and NATO appear to be fully supporting a new government offensive against these Russian-backed enclaves, which could quickly escalate into a full-blown international military conflict.

The last time this area became an international tinderbox was in April, when the

anti-Russian government of Ukraine threatened an offensive against Donetsk and Luhansk, and Russia assembled [thousands of troops](#) along Ukraine's eastern border.

On that occasion, Ukraine and NATO blinked and called off [the offensive](#). This time around, Russia has again assembled an estimated [90,000 troops](#) near its border with Ukraine. Will Russia once more deter an escalation of the war, or are Ukraine, the United States and NATO seriously preparing to press ahead at the risk of war with Russia?

Since April, the U.S. and its allies have been stepping up their military support for Ukraine. After a March announcement of \$125 million in military aid, including armed coastal patrol boats and radar equipment, the U.S. then [gave Ukraine](#) another \$150 million package in June. This included radar, communications and electronic warfare equipment for the Ukrainian Air Force, bringing total military aid to Ukraine since the U.S.-backed coup in 2014 to \$2.5 billion. This latest package appears to include deploying U.S. training personnel to Ukrainian air bases.

Turkey is supplying Ukraine with the same drones it provided to Azerbaijan for its war with Armenia over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020. That war killed at least 6,000 people and has recently flared up again, one year after a Russian-brokered ceasefire. Turkish drones [wreaked havoc](#) on Armenian troops and civilians alike in Nagorno-Karabakh, and their use in Ukraine would be a horrific escalation of violence against the people of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The ratcheting up of U.S. and NATO support for government forces in Ukraine's civil war is having ever-worsening diplomatic consequences. At the beginning of October, NATO expelled eight Russian liaison officers from NATO Headquarters in Brussels, accusing them of spying. Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, the manager of the 2014 coup in Ukraine, [was dispatched](#) to Moscow in October, ostensibly to calm tensions. Nuland failed so spectacularly that, only a week later, Russia ended 30 years of [engagement](#) with NATO, and ordered NATO's office in Moscow closed.

Nuland reportedly tried to reassure Moscow that the United States and NATO were still committed to the 2014 and 2015 [Minsk Accords](#) on Ukraine, which include a ban on offensive military operations and a promise of greater autonomy for Donetsk and Luhansk within Ukraine. But her assurances were belied by Defense Secretary Austin when he met with Ukraine's President Zelensky in Kiev on October 18, reiterating [U.S. support](#) for Ukraine's future membership in NATO, promising further military support and blaming Russia for "perpetuating the war in Eastern Ukraine."

More extraordinary, but hopefully more successful, was CIA Director William Burns's [visit to Moscow](#) on November 2nd and 3rd, during which he met with senior Russian military and intelligence officials and spoke by phone with President Putin.

A mission like this is not usually part of the CIA Director's duties. But after Biden promised a new era of American diplomacy, his foreign policy team is now widely acknowledged to have instead brought U.S. relations with Russia and China to all-time lows.

Judging from the March [meeting](#) of Secretary of State Blinken and National Security Advisor Sullivan with Chinese officials in Alaska, [Biden's meeting](#) with Putin in Vienna in June, and Under Secretary Nuland's recent visit to Moscow, U.S. officials have reduced their encounters with Russian and Chinese officials to mutual recriminations designed for domestic consumption instead of seriously trying to resolve policy differences. In Nuland's case, she also misled the Russians about the U.S. commitment, or lack of it, to the Minsk Accords. So who could Biden send to Moscow for a serious diplomatic dialogue with the Russians about Ukraine?

In 2002, as Under Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, William Burns wrote a prescient but unheeded [10-page memo](#) to Secretary of State Powell, warning him of the many ways that a U.S. invasion of Iraq could "unravel" and create a "perfect storm" for American interests. Burns is a career diplomat and a former U.S.

ambassador to Moscow, and may be the only member of this administration with the diplomatic skills and experience to actually listen to the Russians and engage seriously with them.

The Russians presumably told Burns what they have said in public: that U.S. policy is in danger of crossing [“red lines”](#) that would trigger decisive and irrevocable Russian responses. Russia has [long warned](#) that one red line would be NATO membership for Ukraine and/or Georgia.

But there are clearly other red lines in the creeping U.S. and NATO military presence in and around Ukraine and in the increasing U.S. military support for the Ukrainian government forces assaulting Donetsk and Luhansk. Putin [has warned](#) against the build-up of NATO’s military infrastructure in Ukraine and has accused both Ukraine and NATO of destabilizing actions, including in the Black Sea.

With Russian troops amassed at Ukraine’s border for a second time this year, a new Ukrainian offensive that threatens the existence of the DPR and LPR would surely cross another red line, while increasing U.S. and NATO military support for Ukraine may be dangerously close to crossing yet another one.

So did Burns come back from Moscow with a clearer picture of exactly what Russia’s red lines are? We had better hope so. Even U.S. [military websites](#) acknowledge that U.S. policy in Ukraine is “backfiring.”

[Russia expert](#) Andrew Weiss, who worked under William Burns at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, acknowledged to Michael Crowley of *The New York Times* that Russia has “escalation dominance” in Ukraine and that, if push comes to shove, Ukraine is simply more important to Russia than to the United States. It therefore makes no sense for the United States to risk triggering World War III over Ukraine, unless it actually wants to trigger World War III.

During the Cold War, both sides developed clear understandings of each other's "red lines." Along with a large helping of dumb luck, we can thank those understandings for our continued existence. What makes today's world even more dangerous than the world of the 1950s or the 1980s is that recent U.S. leaders have cavalierly jettisoned the bilateral nuclear treaties and vital diplomatic relationships that their grandparents forged to stop the Cold War from turning into a hot one.

Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, with the help of Under Secretary of State Averell Harriman and others, conducted negotiations that spanned two administrations, between 1958 and 1963, to achieve a partial [Nuclear Test Ban Treaty](#) that was the first of a series of bilateral arms control treaties. By contrast, the only continuity between Trump, Biden and Under Secretary Victoria Nuland seems to be a startling lack of imagination that blinds them to any possible future beyond a zero-sum, non-negotiable, and yet still unattainable "U.S. Uber Alles" global hegemony.

But Americans should beware of romanticizing the "old" Cold War as a time of peace, simply because we somehow managed to dodge a world-ending nuclear holocaust. U.S. Korean and Vietnam War veterans know better, as do the people in countries across the global South that became [bloody battlefields](#) in the ideological struggle between the United States and the U.S.S.R.

Three decades after declaring victory in the Cold War, and after the self-inflicted chaos of the U.S. "Global War on Terror," U.S. military planners have settled on a [new Cold War](#) as the most persuasive pretext to perpetuate their trillion dollar war machine and their unattainable ambition to dominate the entire planet. Instead of asking the U.S. military to adapt to more new challenges it is clearly not up for, U.S. leaders decided to revert to their old conflict with Russia and China to justify the existence and ridiculous expense of their ineffective but profitable war machine.

But the very nature of a Cold War is that it involves the threat and use of force, overt

and covert, to contest the political allegiances and economic structures of countries across the world. In our relief at the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, which both Trump and Biden have used to symbolize the “end of endless war,” we should have no illusions that either of them is offering us a new age of peace.

Quite the contrary. What we are watching in Ukraine, Syria, Taiwan and the South China Sea are the opening salvos of an age of more ideological wars that may well be just as futile, deadly and self-defeating as the “war on terror,” and much more dangerous to the United States.

A war with Russia or China would risk escalating into World War III. As Andrew Weiss told the *Times* on Ukraine, Russia and China would have conventional “escalation dominance,” as well as simply more at stake in wars on their own borders than the United States does.

So what would the United States do if it were losing a major war with Russia or China? U.S. nuclear weapons policy has always kept a [“first strike”](#) option open in case of precisely this scenario.

The current U.S. [\\$1.7 trillion plan](#) for a whole range of new nuclear weapons therefore seems to be a response to the reality that the United States cannot expect to defeat Russia and China in conventional wars on their own borders.

But the paradox of nuclear weapons is that the most powerful weapons ever created have no practical value as actual weapons of war, since there can be no winner in a war that kills everybody. Any use of nuclear weapons would quickly trigger a massive use of them by one side or the other, and the war would soon be over for all of us. The only winners would be [a few species](#) of radiation-resistant insects and other very small creatures.

Neither Obama, Trump nor Biden has dared to present their reasons for risking

World War III over Ukraine or Taiwan to the American public, because there is no good reason. Risking a nuclear holocaust to appease the military-industrial complex is as insane as destroying the climate and the natural world to appease the fossil fuel industry.

So we had better hope that CIA Director Burns not only came back from Moscow with a clear picture of Russia's "red lines," but that President Biden and his colleagues understand what Burns told them and what is at stake in Ukraine. They must step back from the brink of a U.S.-Russia war, and then from the larger Cold War with China and Russia that they have so blindly and foolishly stumbled into.

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After a year of struggle by farmers, Indian government forced to withdraw farm laws

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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After fighting for almost a year, farmers in India finally won a victory against the three farms laws enacted by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government last year. Prime minister Narendra Modi announced on Friday, November 19, that the three laws would be repealed and all legal processes related to the matter will be completed during the upcoming session of parliament.

The news of the announcement led to celebrations all across the country. People hailed the victory of the farmers' movement and took to the streets and social media to express their joy, while recalling the sacrifices made by the farmers in their year-long agitation. Several called it a victory against the arrogance of power.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is spearheading the farmers' movement, issued a brief statement welcoming the prime minister's announcement. However, it also reiterated that some of its crucial demands are yet to be met and the fate of the ongoing agitation will only be decided after a detailed review later.

SKM also reminds the Prime Minister that the agitation of farmers is not just for the repeal of the three black laws, but also for a statutory guarantee of remunerative prices for all agricultural produce and for all farmers. This important demand of farmers is still pending.

— *Kisan Ekta Morcha (@kisanektamorcha) [November 19, 2021](#)*

The full statement of the SKM can be found [here](#).

Welcoming the announcement, Sitaram Yechury, general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), saluted the farmers and their brave struggle against the three farm laws. He called the over 750 farmers who had died during the agitation “our martyrs.”

Yechury also demanded that the prime minister apologize to the farmers for causing “hardships and troubles by his dictatorial step of farm law to benefit his crony business partners,” and fulfill the other demands of the farmers.

The All India Agricultural Workers Union (AI AWU) also hailed the announcement of the withdrawal of the three laws calling it a victory for the peasants and the patriotic people of India.

Rahul Gandhi, leader of the Congress, the main opposition party, congratulated the farmers in a tweet for defeating the government's arrogance with their struggle for truth.

— Rahul Gandhi (@RahulGandhi) November 19, 2021

Welcoming the announcement, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation tweeted that farmers will not leave the protest sites until all the formalities of the withdrawal are complete and other demands of the farmers are fulfilled.

"It is a big victory. The movement will continue till anti-farmer three laws are officially repealed in the upcoming parliament session, MSP guarantee law is passed & fabricated cases filed against leaders & members of various farmers' orgs are withdrawn." <https://t.co/ulp9caLjN5>

— CPIML Liberation (@cpimlliberation) [November 19, 2021](#)

Reacting to the farmers' victory, author and columnist Vijay Prashad [wrote](#) on Facebook, "first time in seven years the Man with the Saffron Beard had to admit defeat. Modi repealed the farm laws, not because he saw the light of their hideousness but because the farmers & the working-class would not budge.

Partial victory

Reacting to the prime minister's statement, Hannan Mollah, secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), [called](#) it a partial victory as some of the crucial demands of the farmers have not been met yet.

After failing for months to persuade the government to withdraw the three farm laws, the SKM, a platform of more than 500 farmers' unions from across India including the left-oriented AIKS, began its indefinite sit-in at all major border crossings to national capital Delhi on November 26 last year. The SKM argued that the three farm laws enacted promoted corporate interests at the cost of the farmers, and would eventually lead to the destruction of the farm sector in the country by endangering the livelihoods of millions and enabling the corporate takeover of agriculture.

The SKM had also demanded the enactment of a law on minimum support prices (MSP) and the withdrawal of the electricity amendment bill. MSP is a set of basic prices declared by the government in India based on which it procures certain farm

products. Though it is expected that the market price of farm produce will not fall below the MSP, it is hardly the case and most of the time, farmers are forced to sell their produce at prices less than the MSP or less than the basic cost of production.

The electricity amendment bill provides for private players in electricity distribution, which farmers think will lead to a rise in the price of electricity and the overall cost of production due to the withdrawal of government subsidies.

Following the protests at the Delhi border, India's Supreme Court had suspended the laws for a year and formed a three-member committee to examine them. The farmers rejected the Supreme Court's intervention and called the committee biased in favor of the government and the laws. Following this rejection by the farmers, some members of the court-appointed committee withdrew from it. However, proving the farmer's apprehensions correct, on Friday, one of the members of the committee, Anil Ghanwat, called the prime minister's announcement "the most regressive step" and accused him of choosing "politics over farmers' betterment," *Press Trust of India* reported.

The SKM took out numerous protest actions through their year-long movement, including the march of tractors on the occasion of Republic Day in January. The farmers also faced numerous oppressive measures from the state, the arrest of several leaders on false charges, and a vilification campaign targeting the agitating farmers as terrorists and accusing them of destabilizing the country.

The BJP has maintained that the three farm laws were in the interest of the farmers and will benefit agriculture in India. In October, the son of one of the ministers in the BJP government was accused of ramming his car into five farmers protesting the farm laws in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri district. The SKM has asked for the sacking of the minister, Ajay Kumar Mishra, from the union government and punishment for all the culprits of the heinous crime.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



U.S. charges against Russia about space are the height of hypocrisy

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The U.S. charge that Russia is polluting space with orbital debris is the height of hypocrisy, according to political analyst [Bill Dores](#).

Dores, a writer for [Struggle-La Lucha](#) and longtime antiwar activist, made the remarks in an interview with Press TV on Nov. 18 after the United States called a recent Russian anti-satellite missile test “irresponsible” and “destructive,” claiming that it caused a debris field in space that forced astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS) to temporarily seek shelter.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters on Monday that Russia had “recklessly conducted a destructive satellite test of a direct ascent anti-satellite missile against one of its own satellites.”

He said the test “has so far generated over 1,500 pieces of trackable, orbital debris and hundreds of thousands of pieces of smaller orbital debris that now threaten the interests of all nations.”

Price warned the test “will significantly increase the risk to astronauts and cosmonauts on the International Space Station, as well as to other human spaceflight activities.”

“Russia’s dangerous and irresponsible behavior jeopardizes the long-term sustainability of our outer space and clearly demonstrates that Russia’s claims of opposing the weaponization of space are disingenuous and hypocritical,” Price said.

Russia on Nov. 16 rejected U.S. accusations that its missile test that struck a defunct space satellite potentially put astronauts aboard the ISS at risk.

The Russian Ministry of Defense confirmed that it had “successfully conducted a test” to hit an old Russian satellite launched into orbit by the Soviet Union in 1982, according to reports.

“Ned Price’s charges against Russia are the height of hypocrisy. Before he was with the State Department, Price spent 10 years at the CIA. That agency uses spy satellites to facilitate its covert wars and terrorist activity around the world. Lockheed Corporation, now Lockheed Martin, began building spy satellites under CIA direction in 1959,” Dores said.

“The USSR put the first satellite and the first man and woman in space. Washington was horrified at this advance for science. The U.S. also launched a space program, but its prime focus was military. The Pentagon created the National Reconnaissance Office in 1961,” he added.

“Since then the U.S. has filled space with spy satellites just as it has populated our planet’s oceans with war fleets, our skies with warplanes and the land with its

military bases. It has used its spies-in-the-sky to facilitate mass murder in its endless wars of aggression from Vietnam to Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. They give the U.S. a critical advantage when attacking and invading poorer countries," Dores said.

"A U.S. spy satellite targeted the Amariyeh air-raid shelter in Baghdad in February 1991. The Air Force hit it with two laser-guided bombs, murdering at least 408 children, women and men," he noted.

"Air Force Undersecretary Peter Teets, who headed the National Reconnaissance Office in 2003, claimed the use of satellites made the U.S. invasion of Iraq 'the most integrated and precise military engagement in history.' Much of the intelligence used in that war came from spy equipment the CIA installed on commercial satellites," he said.

"Iraq War Boosts Space Spending," Reuters reported on June 6, 2003."

'Pentagon seeks to turn space into a battlefield'

Dores said, "Of the 3,372 satellites now orbiting Earth, 1,897 belong to the United States. (China is second, with 412.) Of those 160 are officially military. But most of the commercial and weather satellites also carry spy equipment."

"The United States has also destroyed satellites in space. In February 2008, the U.S. Navy carried out Operation Burnt Frost, destroying a malfunctioning U.S. military satellite that threatened to unleash toxic debris onto our atmosphere," he noted.

"But the Pentagon seeks to go beyond spying. It aims to turn space into a battlefield. In 1984, they created the U.S. Space Defense Command with a view to weaponizing outer space," Dores said.

"In 2019, the Trump regime created the U.S. Space Force. The Pentagon also set up

the Space Development Agency that same year,” he said.

“Trump was rightly ridiculed for the Space Force. Yet the Biden White House has continued it, even as it battles Congress to fund badly needed infrastructure and social programs,” he said.

“On April 26 of this year, Space Force News — yes, there is such a publication — reported: ‘U.S., Israel expand cooperation to the space domain.’ The article quoted a Space Force colonel who said, ‘Israel is one of the U.S. Space Force’s strongest partners in the Middle East, and we look forward to increased collaboration with them in the space domain,’” Dores stated.

“The United States and the occupation regime in Palestine share satellite intelligence to direct airstrikes in Syria and Iraq,” he explained.

“The U.S. militarization of space is not only a massive theft of resources from human needs in the United States. It forces other countries to divert their own resources in self-defense. And as the Russian test showed, if the U.S. continues to pursue this dangerous course, it will be answered,” he said.

“Space exploration should be for the good of humanity and life on earth, not a means to destroy it. It should be an area of cooperation, not armed confrontation. The United States should shut down the Space Force and deactivate its military satellites before it’s too late,” Dores concluded.

Source: [Press TV](#)



Solidarity with refugees at Poland/Belarus border! Stop U.S.-NATO military threats and sanctions!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
November 27, 2021



The U.S. and its European allies are deliberately inflaming a dangerous situation on the border of Poland and Belarus. Thousands of refugees fleeing U.S./European-instigated wars in West Asia and North Africa have gathered at the border in Belarus demanding entry to the European Union and respect for their international human rights. But the far-right-wing government of Poland, backed by Washington and the EU, refuses to let them in.

NATO member Poland is building up its military and police forces on the border. Refugees attempting to cross have been gassed and beaten by Polish security forces. Western governments and media lay the blame on Belarus, which is struggling to provide humanitarian aid to the refugees despite suffering under Western sanctions.

Belarus and its ally Russia have called on Poland and the EU to hold high-level

consultations to peacefully resolve the growing humanitarian crisis. Instead, NATO — the U.S./West European-dominated military alliance — has launched snap war games in the Black Sea. British military advisors were dispatched to aid Polish troops at the border. Right-wing governments in Lithuania, Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia are further militarizing their borders.

What is the U.S. interest in this crisis? Besides its long-term military aims against Russia, Washington has an immediate interest in a regional war to disrupt the flow of Russian gas to Western Europe as cold weather sets in. This would drive up fuel prices and fatten the bottom line of U.S. Big Energy companies.

The U.S. and EU often brandish charges of “human rights violations” against any government that refuses to bend to their will, while they blatantly violate the human rights of refugees and migrants. This is true in Europe, just as it is in the U.S. with the racist Trump-Biden policies toward migrants and refugees from Central America, Haiti and elsewhere. The recent exposure of the horrific whippings of Haitian refugees by U.S. border agents show the depths of U.S. immigration policies.

Belarus, recently the target of a failed “color revolution,” is being demonized like Cuba, Venezuela and other governments under U.S.-EU sanctions. Yet the corporate media buries the Polish government’s horrendous attacks on women’s reproductive rights and the promotion of fascism by Poland and other regional regimes.

Sanctions are an act of war. Now the EU is using the threat of “secondary sanctions” against businesses and third countries, of the kind that have done so much damage to Cuba and Venezuela during the pandemic, to force airlines to ban residents of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and other countries from flying to Belarus.

The U.S. and EU are playing with the lives of refugees, the people of Belarus and the whole region, as well as working people in Europe who need access to affordable heat. A regional military conflict could quickly escalate into a full-blown

international war between the U.S./NATO and Russia and its allies.

We call on anti-war activists, advocates for refugees and migrant rights, and all progressive people to join us to demand:

- Solidarity with refugees!
- From the European Union to the U.S.: LET THEM ALL IN!
- U.S./NATO, stop playing with people's lives!
- Stop provocative NATO war games in the Black Sea!
- Hands off Belarus!

Initiated by Socialist Unity Party (U.S.) and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper

Signers (list in formation):

Prof. Jose Maria Sison, chairperson emeritus, International League of Peoples' Struggle

Berta Joubert-Ceci, initiator, International Tribunal on U.S. Colonial Crimes against Puerto Rico

Jesus Rodriguez-Espinoza, editor, Orinoco Tribune, Venezuela

Federico Guillermo Bonthuis Abogado, Coordinadora Revolucionaria Simon Bolivar, Argentina

Darya Mitina, secretary for international affairs, Central Committee of the United Communist Party, Russia

Massimiliano Ay, general secretary of the Communist Party (Switzerland) and MP of the Republic and Canton of Ticino, Switzerland

Jürgen Geppert, deputy chairman, Communist Party of Germany (KPD)

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Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Los Angeles

Peoples Power Assembly, Baltimore

Solidarity with Novorossiya & Antifascists in Ukraine

To sign the statement, email refugeesolidarityvsnato@gmail.com



NATO abuses refugees, threatens to ignite war on Poland/Belarus border

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 27, 2021

Nov. 11 — The U.S. and its European allies are staging a dangerous provocation at the border between Poland and Belarus, which threatens both a humanitarian catastrophe and a military conflict that could quickly explode into a wider war.

Thousands of refugees, fleeing imperialist-fueled wars in West Asia and beyond, have gathered on the Belarusian side of the border, demanding entry into the European Union. Poland's far-right government — a NATO member, acting on behalf of Germany and other EU powers where the refugees wish to go — has responded with a massive buildup of military forces.

Polish border guards and troops have violently abused refugees who attempted to cross into the country. In one case, on Nov. 10, four Kurdish men were found beaten

by Polish security forces. They were treated by Belarusian doctors. The same day, a young boy was pepper-sprayed by Polish border guards.

The Border Committee of Belarus stated: “All these people, including women and children, do not pose a threat to security and do not behave aggressively. According to the stories of the refugees themselves, they organized themselves into such a large group in order to prevent forcible displacement by the Polish side, as well as to draw the attention of the international community to the actions of Poland in terms of non-observance of human rights.

“Taking into account the statements of Polish officials about the concentration of armed forces and equipment near the border, we do not exclude provocative actions by the Polish side aimed at justifying the use of physical force and special equipment against refugees,” the statement concluded.

The government of Belarus has called for high-level consultations to defuse the situation and resolve the crisis. So far, Poland has refused — with strong backing from its powerful U.S. and European sponsors.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration, other Western governments and corporate media are spreading wild rumors about supposed Belarusian government “trafficking” of migrants and refugees, reporting this as fact.

They claim this is a plot by President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus to pressure Europe to lift brutal economic sanctions imposed by the West, rather than the all-too predictable outcome of Western military and economic interference in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and North Africa.

Polish gov't vs. the people

While presenting a one-sided, hostile view of the Belarusian government and the refugees, these same governments and media actively cover up the behavior of the

U.S. puppet regime in Poland, including its pro-fascist policies and its war on women's reproductive rights, [LGBTQ2S people](#), workers and [communists](#).

In fact, while Western media were completely focused on presenting the Polish side of the border crisis, on Nov. 6 [tens of thousands of women and supporters](#) were protesting in the streets of Poland's capital Warsaw after a woman died of pregnancy complications as a result of the country's Draconian abortion ban, similar to the one imposed recently in Texas. Last year millions of people across Poland protested the abortion ban.

And buried amidst the anti-Belarus propaganda, the Associated Press noted that Poland's government is [supporting a fascist demonstration](#) planned in Warsaw on Nov. 11, the country's independence day — much like those held annually in the neighboring Baltic republics.

The far-right regimes of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia — also NATO members that dance to Washington's tune — claim Belarus "posed serious threats to European security by deliberately escalating its 'hybrid attack; using migrants to retaliate for EU sanctions," [Reuters reported Nov. 11](#).

This latest U.S.-sponsored information war combines the crude racism of Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric with the vicious smear campaigns used against so many countries that suffer brutal U.S./European sanctions, like Venezuela and Cuba, into a toxic stew meant to justify acts of racist brutality and regime change.

Belarus aids refugees

Estimates of the number of refugees at the border vary widely, between 3,000 and 8,000. But the number continues to grow daily.

Correspondents for Minsk Pravda have been documenting the situation with interviews and photos. On [Nov. 8, Minsk Pravda reported](#): "Most of them, the

migrants said, are Kurds. ... There are many children in the crowd. They are not allowed into Poland.

“‘We are being sprayed with gas [by the Polish side]. See what happens,’ an elderly man shouts emotionally. His son was brought on an impromptu stretcher from the side of the border. In a mixture of languages, he explains: the young man’s legs are lost, he can no longer walk.

“‘Many of us are with families. I have six children. All are small. No food, no milk for them, no diapers. We have no firewood to keep warm, no tents to shelter from the rain, and we are not allowed into Europe,’ says another man. He says that he and his family have already made several unsuccessful attempts to get into the EU.”

Hard hit by Western sanctions, Belarus is ill-equipped to provide the necessary humanitarian support but is doing what it can. Border guards and soldiers are trying to maintain order and protect the refugees while attempts to negotiate with the Polish regime and the EU continue.

The government and people’s organizations, including the [Belarusian Women’s Union](#) and [Communist Party of Belarus](#), have expressed solidarity with the refugees and are helping to provide them with food, water, shelter and health care.

At a meeting of government ministers Nov. 10, Belarus declared that priority must be given to the needs of children and pregnant women at the border. [Education Minister Igor Karpenko](#) said Nov. 11 that children’s health camps and other facilities, established during Soviet times and still maintained in Belarus, would be organized to provide safe havens for them, including teachers for the children.

On Nov. 9, [dozens of people protested](#) outside the Polish Embassy in Minsk, the capital of Belarus. Signs and banners read: “Leopards [Polish tanks] against women and children?”, “Stop genocide at the border!”, and “Stop torturing women and

children."

Organized on just three hours' notice and in bitter cold, the action included members of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, Belya Rus and the Communist Party, and ordinary workers.

One woman interviewed on the picket line condemned the hypocrisy of the Western powers: "Those people who say that some human rights are being violated in the world are violating them themselves, not allowing migrants to enter the EU. We are ordinary peaceful Belarusians who came out in support of ordinary people who do not deserve such an attitude."

West escalates tensions

A new European Union threat to ban flights between West Asia and Belarus won't just harm those countries' economies, but may force thousands of refugees to make the dangerous [journey to Europe across the Mediterranean](#), which has already cost so many lives in recent years. It is also, of course, an egregious violation of those countries' independence, just like all U.S.-EU sanctions.

Responding to the threat of a fifth round of sanctions, [President Lukashenko pointed out](#) Nov. 11 that Europe's main transnational gas pipeline, Yamal-Europe, goes through Belarus, and recently Russia has significantly increased the volume of gas transit to the West.

"We provide heat to Europe, and they are threatening us with the border closure. What if we block natural gas transit? Therefore, I would recommend the leadership of Poland, Lithuanians and others to think hard before opening their mouths. But it is up to them. They are welcome to close the border. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should warn everyone in Europe that if they impose additional sanctions, 'indigestible' and 'unacceptable' for us, we will hit back."

Struggle-La Lucha spoke with Nadezhda Sablina, a Minsk Pravda journalist and Belarusian representative of the Anti-Imperialist Front. She explained: "We saw last year, against the background of protests in Belarus after the presidential elections, Poland brought soldiers and military equipment to its eastern borders. The troops stood ready to 'come to the rescue' of those who intended to overthrow Lukashenko here.

"The slightest manifestation of weakness by the Belarusian authorities could serve as a signal for NATO's military invasion of Belarus," Sablina warned. "The Belarusian authorities and Belarusian military survived, including by strengthening the concentration of troops on the western border. At that time, half of the armed forces of Belarus were transferred to the west.

"Now, against the background of the growing migration crisis, Poland is again bringing its troops and armored vehicles to the border. The formal reason for this, according to the Polish side, is the protection of the Polish border. However, the number of military personnel already exceeds the number of migrants at the border by 3-4 times!

"This suggests that Poland intends to fight not with migrants," Sablina said, "but with Belarus, as well as with Russia, since we are united in the Union State and the military bloc (CSTO). It is clear that Poland does not act independently, but is subordinate to the stronger countries in the EU and the United States. So it cannot be ruled out that the imperialist forces of the West may start an armed conflict with Belarus at the hands of the Poles, staging some kind of provocation as a pretext to start an attack."

Sablina added: "Poland is suitable for a military conflict with Belarus like no other country. After the counter-revolutionary coup in the late 1980s, the Poles were actively instilled with nationalism and Russophobia. And now a lot of Poles are hostile to Russia and sincerely believe that in 1939 it took away part of their

territory, which they call the East Cresses (Western Belarus). Therefore, if, for example, Poland invades Belarus and occupies its western cities (Grodno, Brest), then ordinary Poles may well consider this step to be fair, because, in their opinion, the lands taken from them will return to them.”

Both the anti-war and immigrant rights movements need to be on full alert and get ready to take to the streets to demand: “Let them all in! No war, no repression! Hands off Belarus!”



Philippines: Long live the memory of Ka Oris!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
November 27, 2021



Nov. 6 — Yet another hero of the oppressed, of the proletariat and peasantry, has been taken away from us by the class enemy. Ka Oris, Comrade Jorge Madlos, joins the ranks of Che Guevara, Patrice Lumumba, Fred Hampton, Martin Luther King, Malcom X and so many other fighters for the oppressed who have been murdered by the oppressor.

The Socialist Unity Party and Struggle-La Lucha send our deepest condolences and solidarity to our comrades of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front on the martyrdom of Ka Oris and his medical aide, Ka Pia, at the hands of the assassins of the bloody Duterte regime. We share your sorrow at his passing and your rage at his murder.

The reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) immediately spun the story and claimed that Ka Oris was killed in an armed encounter. Nothing could demonstrate more clearly the cowardice and corruption of the U.S.-armed AFP. Ka

Oris and Ka Pika were unarmed and traveling by motorbike.

The responsibility for this cowardly assassination lies not only with the AFP assassins and fascist mob boss Rodrigo Duterte. It lies with their imperialist paymasters in Washington D.C. It is the Pentagon that supplies, funds and trains the AFP for its so-called “counterinsurgency” operations, which are nothing but a terror campaign against the the workers, peasants and indigenous people of the Philippines on behalf of imperialist corporations. It is a continuation of the war the U.S. has waged against the Philippine people since the invasion of 1898.

Ka Oris loved the people, the workers, peasants and oppressed, and they loved him. He devoted his life to the people’s struggle and to building the New People’s Army, which fights for the rights of the Philippine people to life and land and justice and a future free of hunger and poverty.

This week we saw imperialist politicians gather in Glasgow to babble about defending the environment in words. Ka Oris led Red fighters in action against the imperialist corporations and their agents who ravaged the land in Mindanao. He fought to defend the Lumad people against imperialist logging and mining corporations.

His assassins and their paymasters, on the other hand, hate the people. They seek to keep the masses of the Philippines and the world living in hunger and poverty and environmental destruction while they grow richer on their backs. These criminals will not succeed.

It is fitting that Ka Oris will be honored and remembered on Nov. 7, the anniversary of the great Bolshevik Revolution that inaugurated the era of national liberation and proletarian revolution. Ka Oris lives in the hearts and minds of the people and in the deeds of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the thousands of Red fighters of the NPA. He lives in the ongoing People’s Democratic Revolution in the Philippines,

which will not be stopped by bullets or lies. We join you in honoring his memory.

Long live the memory of Ka Oris!

Long live the People's Democratic Revolution!

Long live the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front! Workers and oppressed people of all countries, unite!



The Haitian people need a true rupture

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 27, 2021

Most of Haiti's traditional politicians have taken completely erroneous positions on how to deal with the dramatic insecurity problem that now grips the nation. Their solutions all generally revolve around one sinister proposal: to strengthen the police, or even go so far as to build many more prisons.

This political class does not live in the real world. The privileged class position of Haiti's politicians means that their thinking aligns with imperialism's ruthless logic, which dismisses the plight of our citizens without any future. Instead of resorting to repressive solutions, which will only make matters worse, we must look at the root of the problem, touch the gaping wound to remove the infection, and ask precisely how we got to this stage of deterioration.

Just as they did in 2003 when working to destabilize the government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, certain Haitian politicians and intellectuals (many of whom are the same that we see holding forth today) accused the Lavalas government of creating the *chimères*, as the mobilized youths of Haiti's underclass were then called. Today, they have resorted to the same formula, the same charges without foundation, accusing the Jovenel Moïse government of federating the Revolutionary Forces of the G9 Family and Allies, Mess with One, You Mess with All. This slander just hides the real motive forces behind the lumpen-proletariat's mobilization, which is accelerating, and inflames the situation, fueling the total chaos in which we are now living.

The bourgeois opposition's demagogic statements, proposals, and actions cannot solve the problem. On the contrary, they make matters worse.

The "American Plan," as we used to call it in the 1980s when launched under the global right-wing offensive led by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, has almost reached its final objective: to completely destroy Haiti's economy and sovereignty. Washington has patiently orchestrated the monumental failure of our society. However, our political class, subservient to American interests and greedy for its bribes and rewards, has made no effort to recognize or denounce the structural adjustment policy that has brought about Haiti's complete destabilization today. From 2004 until today, almost two decades later, the Haitian political class has not changed its tactics. It uses the same tools of yesteryear to create confusion

and induce the naive into error. They don't denounce the current capitalist economic and political model, based on Washington's neoliberal policies, which has slowly destroyed Haiti's economy. These policies have crushed national production, uprooted the peasantry, driven millions off the land and into crowded slums, where they live in horrendous conditions without jobs, food, services, or hope. Instead of pointing their finger at our main enemy - the capitalist system and its subservient local bourgeoisie - our politicians, human rights groups, and some journalists point to the enemy's victims - millions of shantytown dwellers and their organizations - as the source of all our problems.

The percentage of unemployed poor and young executives looking for jobs has reached its dizzying zenith, and, as a result, the population is getting poorer every day. Imagine if Aristide had been able to prevent, as he tried, the privatization of the state enterprises, which were then often shut down completely. The state would have been able to hire thousands to make essential oils, cement, and flour, fix telephone lines, or repair electric plants around the country, creating jobs, goods, and services. Today, all these sectors are either smashed or in the hands of foreign corporations or our greedy bourgeoisie, who have no qualms at making millions off the backs of the impoverished.

With half of our population under the age of 25, most Haitians are able and anxious to work, but they can find nothing to do. There has never been a strong state policy to fight for workers' interests, either in salaries, benefits, unions, or work conditions. Even the timid attempts made under Aristide and Préval were largely beaten back by the U.S. State Department, as we revealed in the secret diplomatic cables which WikiLeaks gave *Haiti Liberté* in 2011.

Imagine if the Haitian state would simply raise taxes and duties on our super-rich bourgeoisie to pay to fix our decrepit roads, unclog our choked, overflowing canals, and provide schools, hospitals, sanitation, housing, and internet for the poor to live

decently. Instead, we see scenes like what just happened under the Del Rio bridge in Texas, and similar expressions of our nation's desperation will happen again somewhere soon.

Our comprador bourgeoisie no longer even engages in import-export. It is all import, with just a trickle going out from the ever-ailing assembly industries. Even there, only the labor comes from and stays in Haiti.

Agricultural production and development have shrunken dramatically. The anti-national bourgeoisie has only sold off entire sections of the economy and national resources to foreign capital, which only envisages destructive, polluting activities like gold-mining.

This somber tableau is the result of our politicians' allegiance to the "laboratory," as Aristide used to call it. The traditional political class serves capitalist interests, which are antithetical to workers' or peasants' interests and popular democracy. The suited delegations which file into certain embassies are only humiliating ceremonies of allegiance to the principle of imperialist interference against our national sovereignty.

The irony of today's situation was captured in a Nov. 1 tweet by Luis Moreno, the U.S. *chargé d'affaires* who orchestrated President Aristide's kidnapping in 2004.

"Haiti is literally being held hostage by a gang leader," he wrote, referring to Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier. "He has more 'soldiers,' better weapons, and controls a large swath of the capital. As distasteful as it is, the resulting humanitarian, security, and emigration crisis will force the International Community's hand."

Jimmy Cherizier is accused of holding Haiti "hostage" by the very U.S. officials and Haitian oligarchs, who are, in fact, holding the Haitian people by the throat. Photo: John Wesley Amady/Haiti Liberté

In other words, he is proposing that the U.S. and its vassals will have to invade Haiti for a seventh time to crush Cherizier and his FRG9 in order to resolve a “crisis” that threatens their interests and local allies.

Meanwhile, Washington is not threatened at all by the talk of “rupture” coming from certain sectors of Haiti’s liberal bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie.

What transitional “rupture” and “Haitian-led solution” are they talking about if the final decision about Haiti’s destiny rests in the hands of the United States of America? This is nonsense, but the bourgeoisie knowingly maintains the ambiguity of the “rupture,” which serves as a deceptive argument to hide its contempt for the Haitian cause.

We must put an end to this myth, which is very well maintained by capitalism’s supporters. The day that Haiti’s working-class fully understands that foreign capitalist power will not liberate us, but only further impoverish and enslave us, the victory will be near. The struggle for a new Haiti will then go through a true rupture, that of severing all allegiance to imperialism and its institutions. We will rebuild the nation with the force, resources, and genius of our 16 million compatriots, including the diaspora, just as our founding father Jean-Jacques Dessalines had envisaged.

Source: [Haiti Liberté](#)



Ecuador's neoliberal government announces state emergency to impose austerity

written by Struggle - La Lucha

November 27, 2021

On October 18, 2021, Ecuador's President Guillermo Lasso [declared](#) a state of emergency for 60 days. This declaration led to the constitutional rights of Ecuadorian nationals being suspended and heavily armed troops flooding the streets in Ecuador. The immediate reason for the declaration was the [murder](#) of an 11-year-old boy named Sebastián Obando, who was killed in a crossfire between "an armed robber and a police officer" on October 17 at a cafeteria and ice cream parlor in the Centenario neighborhood in Guayaquil.

The boy, who was shot three times, was shot in the heart, [right arm and his back](#), [said](#) his father Tomás Obando. Lasso's declaration of emergency built on the public outcry relating to this murder. The president said that he needed to suspend the constitutional rights of the people of Ecuador to confront the grip of the drug gangs

on the country.

On October 19, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [arrived](#) in Quito to provide U.S. support for Lasso. Blinken met with Lasso, [affirming](#) the close ties between the United States and Ecuador. At a press conference held by Ecuador's Foreign Minister Mauricio Montalvo and the U.S. Secretary of State, Blinken [said](#), "in democracies there are times when, with exceptional circumstances, measures are necessary to deal with urgencies and urgent situations like the one Ecuador is experiencing now."

Lasso, who was elected in April, has presided over one extraordinary moment after another. The economy of Ecuador splutters as the government struggles to respond to an increase in violent incidents in the country. In September, a prison riot in the Litoral Penitentiary (Guayaquil) [resulted](#) in the loss of 116 lives. Earlier, in February 2020, a coordinated series of riots in four prisons led to the death of 79 inmates in Ecuador. Responding to the recent incident in September, Lasso declared a state of emergency inside Ecuador's prisons, which was a precursor to the national emergency.

Structural problem, not extraordinary moment

Lasso's decree suggests that there is something pressing taking place in Ecuador that requires action. [Nela Cedeño](#), a youth leader of the Citizen Revolution of Ecuador, told us that Ecuador has been in a long-term crisis. Just this year, she says, there have been 1,213 murders, many of them unrelated to the drug trade. "The decree [state of emergency] is not justified," Cedeño said. The data shows an "increase in violence in the country over the past six years, which we understand as a structural problem and not an exceptional situation," Cedeño added.

Out of Ecuador's approximately 18 million people, 5.7 million [live](#) "in poverty," and out of "these 5.7 million people, about 2.6 million" Ecuadorians are living "in

extreme poverty,” according to the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses. UNICEF [calculates](#) that three out of every 10 children in Ecuador under the age of two suffer from chronic child malnutrition. “The country is the second with the highest proportion in Latin America and the Caribbean, after Guatemala,” according to UNICEF. Everyday life in Ecuador deteriorated sharply ever since the implementation of an International Monetary Fund-driven [austerity](#) program under the previous President Lenín Moreno. Moreno’s agreement with the IMF in March 2019 resulted in [widespread](#) protests across the country.

As part of Moreno’s deal with the IMF, he [cut](#) government funding for health care, including firing 3,680 health care workers. As a result, in Guayaquil—where the prison riot had taken place and where Sebastián was murdered—dead bodies were [left](#) on the streets during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic because the health care system was underfunded and overwhelmed. Guayaquil was the “epicenter of the outbreak” during April 2020 and Ecuador had one of the [highest rates](#) of COVID-19 in Latin America as a result of the broken health care system. Lasso, whose party only has 12 of 137 seats in the National Assembly, wishes to deepen the austerity program of Moreno; this [program](#) includes tax cuts for the wealthy and withdrawal of rights for workers as well as the allowance for foreign companies to continue to operate in Ecuador’s mining sector.

Lasso’s austerity agenda, Cedeño told us, does not solve the problems of the people. There is no agenda to tackle the precariousness of employment, the need for a minimum support price for farmers, the need for subsidies for fuel, the exploding social crisis in prisons, and the general problem of violence in society. The Lasso government is “politically incapable” of dealing with the real problems, so it takes refuge in the militarization of a social crisis, Cedeño said.

Militarization of a social crisis

Lasso’s emergency, Cedeño said, has not calmed a “terrified and worried citizenry.”

In fact, it was even more frightening when Lasso fired his Defense Minister Fernando Donoso and [replaced](#) him with a former general, Luis Hernández. Putting the military on the streets of Ecuador and pushing for laws to allow them to operate without scrutiny (and to give them immunity of action) creates the conditions for a military dictatorship with a civilian fig leaf of a government. Lasso's emergency decree gave amnesty to the security forces who, he [said](#), are "unjustly condemned for their work."

Since 2019, Ecuador's social movements, including the Indigenous movement, have frequently taken to the streets to demand an alternative path. This year, Cedeño said, "we have had several stoppages and protests against the various measures adopted by the government of Lasso. Farmers, teachers, and transportation workers have been in the lead. Teachers [even] went on hunger strike."

The decree by Lasso came, Cedeño pointed out, just when the people's movements gave a call for social mobilizations against the rise in fuel prices and Lasso's austerity proposals. "It is easy for us to assume that the state of exception [was] declared at the convenience of Lasso," to protect his policies, and "not because of the violence that plagues the country."

Protests against the emergency decree began on October 26. Led by the United Front of Workers (FUT), the National Union of Educators (UNE), the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), and the Citizen Revolution, the protests took off in earnest. While these protests were met with stiff resistance from the armed forces, they did not fade away. Roads were [blocked](#) in key areas in the Sierra and the Amazon and mass demonstrations gathered in front of the Carondelet Palace, the seat of the president in Quito. After a few days of protest, on October 28, CONAIE leader Leonidas Iza called for their suspension to honor the Day of the Dead holidays. Iza [said](#) that the protests will start-up again after the celebrations.

This article was produced by [Globetrotter](#).

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