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written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 6, 2023

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Tanks, jets and missiles to Ukraine U.S.-NATO threaten to unleash new world war

By Gary Wilson

Immediately after the United States and Germany announced that they were sending Abrams and Leopard battle tanks to Ukraine, Politico reported that the Pentagon is preparing to send F-16 fighter jets. "The campaign inside the Defense Department for fighter jets is gaining momentum," the report says.

"Ukraine has identified a list of up to 50 pilots who are ready now to start training on the F-16," says a Pentagon official. "Many of them have already trained with the U.S. military in major exercises before the invasion," starting in 2014, Politico reports.

'That's called World War III'

Almost a year ago, in March 2022, President Joe Biden said, "The idea that we're going to send in offensive equipment and have planes and tanks and trains going in with American pilots and American crews — just understand, don't kid yourself, no matter what y'all say, that's called World War III."

Since that statement, the U.S. and NATO have steadily expanded operations in Ukraine, from anti-tank javelins and portable air-defense systems such as Stingers, to HIMARS rocket launchers and, more recently, surface-to-air Patriot missiles, tanks, and armored vehicles.

On Jan. 24, the New York Times headlined the super-expansion of artillery production. "The Pentagon is racing to boost its production of artillery shells by 500% within two years, pushing conventional ammunition production to levels not seen since the Korean War ... The effort, which will involve expanding factories and bringing in new producers, is part of 'the most aggressive modernization effort in nearly 40 years' for the U.S. defense industrial base, according to an Army report."

The Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles the Pentagon is sending can be equipped with depleted uranium ammunition. Depleted uranium is a byproduct of manufacturing nuclear weapons. The shells can punch through the thick armor of a tank and ignite everything inside.

When asked if the Bradleys the U.S. is sending to Ukraine will be equipped with depleted uranium, a senior Biden administration official was slippery: "I'm not going to get into the technical specifics." The official also declined to answer if the Abrams tanks will be equipped with a depleted uranium cage.

The long-term consequences for the people in Ukraine and Donbass are dire. Depleted uranium

ammunition is radioactive, extremely toxic, and linked with a variety of birth defects, cancers, and other illnesses. In Iraq, doctors reported a spike in birth defects and cancers since the Gulf War, when the U.S. fired nearly a million depleted uranium rounds in the invasion of that country.

In 2022, Congress approved more than \$113 billion in U.S. "aid"

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"Today I am announcing that the United States will be sending 31 Abrams tanks to Ukraine," Joe Biden, Jan. 25.



Ellie McCrow speaks at protest demanding justice for Tyre Nichols in Baltimore, Jan. 28.

Baltimore demands justice for Tyre Nichols

By Lev Koufax

On Jan. 29, a cold but sunny Saturday, organizations and individuals from across Baltimore city gathered at the corner of North and Charles streets to protest the brutal murder of Tyre Nichols at the hands of the Memphis Police Department.

The protestors, numbered around 60, demanded justice for Tyre Nichols and the speedy conviction of his murderers. More broadly, the demonstration

demanding justice for all victims of racist police terror, community control of the police, and the abolition of mass incarceration.

Peoples Power Assembly and the Socialist Unity Party worked with community leaders like Rev. Annie Chambers, Marvin "Doc" Cheatham, and Towanda Jones to organize the emergency protest.

All three gave tremendous speeches. Towanda Jones told the story of her brother, Tyrone West,

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Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - January 23, 2023

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February 6, 2023

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Japan rearms at U.S. urging Threatens war vs. China, North Korea, Russia

By Gary Wilson

The radical new defense strategy announced on Dec. 16 by Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida doubles military spending – a five-year, \$320-billion military buildup to secure offensive strike capacity, which is forbidden in Japan's 1947 U.S.-created constitution.

The constitution says that Japan renounces war as a sovereign right and declares that "land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained."

The new defense strategy, intended to counter this constitutional provision directly, was initiated at the urging of Washington. The U.S. is actively militarizing the Pacific region – especially Japan – to target China.

The New York Times praised Japan's remilitarization, saying it met the need for a "more muscular military" aimed at China.

The U.S. ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, said in a statement that "the Prime Minister is making a clear, unambiguous strategic statement about Japan's role as a security provider in the Indo-Pacific."

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said, "We welcome the release of Japan's updated strategy documents ... which reflect Japan's staunch commitment to upholding the international rules-based order and a free and open Indo-Pacific," adding that "we support Japan's decision to acquire new capabilities that strengthen regional deterrence, including counterstrike capabilities."

Japan's Minister of Defense Nobuo Kishi, younger brother of the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, declared last year that Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) should have the right and capability to launch a "preemptive strike" against areas of some neighboring countries.

Salman Rafi Sheikh, a professor of politics at Lahore University in Pakistan, noted that the U.S. empire has instructed both of its two former World War II enemies, Germany and Japan, to rearm:

"Japan's drive to arm itself has an interesting parallel in Europe, where Germany, too, has decided to massively increase its total defense spending to 100 billion euros. With Washington actively supporting these critical changes to establish powerful militaries around its core rival states – Russia and China in Europe and Asia – new forms of conflict are likely to emerge, with prospects of major counter alliances on the horizon, too."

Salman Rafi Sheikh continues: "Japan's increasing defense budget comes on top of the full possibility of 'interoperability' between the U.S. and Japanese units, allowing the latter to 'practice its forward-deployed attack capabilities.' What is extremely important to note here is that the core purpose of the 'interoperability' is not defensive; it is offensive, which means that Japan's so-called 'pacifism' is nothing more than a rhetoric that Tokyo uses – and will continue to use – to mask its rapidly growing military preparedness against Russia and China."

"That this process is being actively supported by the U.S. is evident from Japanese Prime Minister



The Maritime Self-Defense Force ship JS Kuruma leads a formation with U.S. guided missile destroyers during a war exercise. The Japanese Self-Defense Force flies the imperial "rising sun" flag rather than the Japanese national flag which is only the red sun on a white field. The rising sun flag is associated with Japanese militarism and imperialism and is seen to be directed particularly at North Korea and China.

Photo: U.S. Navy

Fumio Kishida's announcement, on the sidelines of Biden's Tokyo visit, to 'drastically strengthen' its military capabilities.

"According to a new economic policy draft released by the Kishida administration, the decision is a response to 'attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by forces in East Asia, making regional security increasingly severe.' If this assessment sounds vague, it is by design to camouflage Japan's rise as a new military power that can rival Russia and China as a U.S. ally."

"In fact, it is already acting as a U.S. ally against Russia in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In April, Japanese officials announced that they will send defense equipment – drones and protective gear – to Ukraine to help the Ukrainian military fight the Russian forces."

"While Japan's Self-Defense Forces rules prohibit the transfer of defense products to other countries, Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi justified this transfer as 'commercial' and 'dis-used items.' More self-serving justifications will be invented to mask Japan's so-called 'pacifist militarization.'"

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Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - January 9, 2023

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Honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

Unite to fight racism, fascism and war

CHALLENGE
U.S. justification
for this WAR

See Centerfold

By Melinda Butterfield

As 2023 begins, it's undeniable that a dangerous, virulent fascist movement is spreading through U.S. society.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said in 1967, "The bombs dropped on Vietnam explode at home." Malcolm X expressed something similar when he said, "Chickens come home to roost."

Feeding the U.S. war machine boomerangs by increasing repression, decreasing rights, and robbing people of desperately needed resources here at home. Promoting fascism abroad facilitates its growth here.

It's seen in the spread of hate-ridden protests against drag story hours, sometimes attended by armed neo-Nazis, who threaten children, parents, and LGBTQ+ communities, and in the bomb threats targeting medical facilities that provide gender-affirming care to trans children and abortion services to people who can become pregnant.

It takes the form of mass shootings, like the massacre of 10 Black people at Tops grocery in Buffalo, New York, five queer people at Club Q in Colorado Springs, and 19 students and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. We recognize it in the targeting of electrical grids from North Carolina to Washington state to sow fear.

At the local level, the fascist influence is evident in the rash of attempts by astroturfed "parents' groups" to ban books that expose the racist history of the U.S. or validate the lives and experiences of LGBTQ+ people.

At the state level, we see it in the efforts by officials in Texas, Ohio, Florida, and elsewhere to eradicate trans health care, criminalize parents who support trans children, and create a lynch-mob atmosphere against women and others who choose to get an abortion.

At the national level, there is the far-right-controlled U.S. Supreme Court, which gutted voting rights, struck down the constitutional right to abortion, and seems poised to do the same to same-sex marriage.

Looming over it all is the shadow of Jan. 6, 2021, when an organized fascist mob attempted a coup d'état at the



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Capitol in Washington, D.C., to keep Donald Trump in power – aided and abetted by a faction of the Pentagon.

Fascist tendencies have existed in the U.S. since it began its rise as an imperialist power in the late 19th century – from the Ku Klux Klan to the John Birch Society to today's Proud Boys and Oath Keepers. Sometimes the ruling class of bosses, bankers, and landlords keep them on a tight leash.

But when times are tough, when they fear the masses of poor and working people could unite and fight back against their unjust capitalist system, the fascists are let off their leash to spread division and, if necessary, physically exterminate those the rich and powerful fear most.

U.S. spread fascism in Ukraine

As top dog of the world imperialist powers – including Britain, Japan, and the European Union – the U.S. has long upheld fascists in its efforts to wring the maximum profits out of the world's people.

Washington has abetted fascist dictatorships or those with strong fascist aspects, from the Shah of Iran to Suharto in Indonesia, from Pinochet in Chile to Añez in Bolivia.

During the Cold War against the USSR, the U.S. encouraged the growth of violent fascist movements like the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and its post-World War II successors. The U.S. and Canada harbored its leaders, gave them money and weapons, and encouraged their hate propaganda against multinational Soviet socialism.

The many neo-Nazi movements in Ukraine today, like Right Sector and Azov Brigade, are descendants of this lineage.

But that's not all. The destruction of the USSR and European socialist camp 30 years ago brought economic devastation and plummeting life expectancies. Washington stepped into the ideological vacuum to spread division and prevent a revolutionary

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U.S. PROXY WAR in UKRAINE and DONBASS

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MELINDA BUTTERFIELD



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Mumia Abu-Jamal and the passing of Wadiya Jamal.
tinyurl.com/mrx94k45

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'Challenge the U.S. justifications for this war'

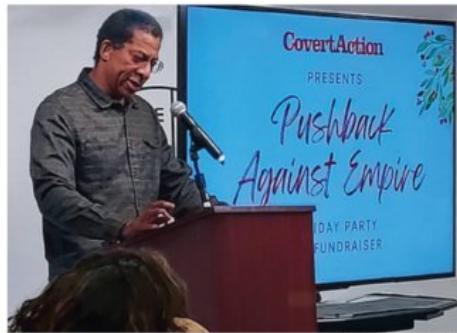
By John Parker

Talk given at "Pushback Against Empire", a holiday party and fundraiser for CovertAction Magazine in New York City on Dec. 1. CovertAction, founded by CIA whistleblower Phillip Agee in 1978, is one of the few publications that has published information exposing the U.S. proxy war in Ukraine, including John Parker's eyewitness reports from Donbass for Struggle-La-Lucha.

If you like horror stories, here's one for you. It's the 2022 National Defense Strategy document from the U.S. secretary of defense. This document was blessed by President Biden, who is quoted in the introduction.

Right out of the gate, it calls China, Russia, Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea threats to U.S. national security. And this threat must be met by making NATO even more powerful and nuclear-capable, especially surrounding Russia.

But in terms of priorities, China is the number one target. This will be done, the document declares, by provoking alterations in the Indo-Pacific region using Japan, South Korea, Australia, and any Southeast Asian countries Washington can recruit to launch a war from the South China Sea to the East China Sea. This week there was a very serious alter-



John Parker speaks at CovertAction event in New York City, Dec. 1.

cation in the South China Sea between the U.S. and China due to U.S. war games there.

As if that's not enough, the document says the U.S. should begin training and arming Taiwan in asymmetrical warfare (or guerrilla war) against China. So get your tax dollars ready to fund another war costing, this time, hundreds of billions of dollars. And unfortunately,

we may have to counter an anti-war movement in the U.S. that will probably blame China when that country is forced to respond to the provocations and threats to its security and sovereignty. That's what happened with Russia.

What should we learn from this document and the Rand Corporation strategy published three years ago

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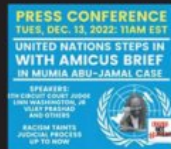
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PEOPLE SPEAK OUT to STOP RACISM, POVERTY & WORLD WAR III

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■ SHUT DOWN NATO, the Pentagon & the CIA

■ STOP racism, transphobia, union busting, and attacks on women's rights, LGBTQ people and immigrants

Sponsors include: Struggle-La-Lucha; Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice; Women in Struggle; Voices of Resistance; United National Anti-War Committee; Youth Against War & Racism; Socialist Unity Party; Peoples Power Assembly; Freedom Road Socialist Org; December 12 Movement; Shut Down the Pentagon & CIA

China Zero COVID ♦ No Haiti sanctions ♦ Palestine, 75 years ♦ Peru coup

♦ Free Venezuela's Alex Saab ♦ Ban U.S. cluster bombs to Ukraine

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As railroad workers fight for dignity and sick leave: Stop government strikebreaking!

By Stephen Millies

Every worker has the right to withhold their labor. Concerted action and collective bargaining by workers are supposed to be protected by law.

That hasn't stopped President Biden from demanding on Nov. 28 that Congress stop over 100,000 railroad workers from striking.

The man in the White House said he was "reluctant to override the ratification procedures and the views of those who voted against the agreement." Yet Biden insisted that Congress enforce a tentative deal "without any modifications or delay."

The House of Representatives promptly voted on Nov. 30 to impose an agreement by a vote of 290 to 137. The Senate agreed and Biden signed the bill forcing the contract on railroad workers without their consent on Dec. 2. So much for the democratic right of railroad workers to vote on their contracts.

This is the thanks the labor movement gets for helping to stop the expected Republican landslide in



A rally in support of railroad workers was organized by International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 at the Port of Oakland, California, on Oct. 27.



Railroad workers and supporters protest BNSF CEO Kathryn Farmer outside Alliance, Nebraska, Nov. 2.

the midterm elections. Forgotten were the volunteers dispatched from Black churches and union halls.

Railroad workers have been under attack for decades. Employment has fallen from 1.5 million workers in 1947 to just 147,000 today.

This 90% drop in employment was the reason that Warren Buffett told Bloomberg Businessweek that he had his Berkshire Hathaway conglomerate gobble up the BNSF railway.

BNSF has 32,000 miles of track in 28 states as well as British Columbia and Manitoba in Canada. Yet there are only 35,000 workers that make the system's trains operate from Chicago, Alabama and Texas to California and the Pacific Northwest.

It was the BNSF that imposed a harsh new attendance policy earlier this year. Workers will be punished for being absent no matter what the reason, including going to a doctor.

Railroad management imposed these rules during the COVID-19 pandemic that killed so many trans-

portation workers. At least 156 New York City area transit workers died of the coronavirus.

As noted in a statement from the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division-International Brotherhood of Teamsters, "the railroad is not a place to work while you're sick. It's dangerous. It requires full concentration, situational awareness, and decision-making."

BNSF employees can be fired for taking off just five holidays during their entire decades-long career. People get sick on holidays, too.

Most transportation workers don't have Monday through Friday work weeks. Neither do millions of workers in hospitals, restaurants and other 24/7 workplaces.

Job cuts kill

Railroad tycoon Warren Buffett doesn't have to worry about sick days. His fortune has ballooned to \$109.2 billion while over a million

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Fidel Castro Square, Moscow, Nov. 22. See page 9

Photo: United Communist Party



At New York City Hall, LGBTQ2S activists turned out to protest an anti-trans hate group Nov. 14.

Club Q terror attack

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- Twitter, Facebook mass layoffs: Demand worker-community control of social media
- National Day of Mourning 2022: From #LandBack to bodily autonomy, Indigenous leadership is key
- Message from Leonard Peltier: ‘ The world now faces the challenges our people foretold’
- Leonard Peltier Walk to Justice culminates in Washington, D.C.
- Democrats show true colors with allegiance to war and enabling of fascism
- Crocodile tears for Ukraine as millions of U.S. families suffer utility shutoffs
- Activists denounce FBI attacks on Black liberation group
- James Baldwin, corporate media and the red herring of ‘Black antisemitism’
- Biden, everyone knows Cuba is not a terrorist country!
- MOSCOW: United Communist Party activists attend opening of monument to Fidel Castro
- ‘Leaving no one and no place behind’: Zimbabwe is moving ahead
- In latest election, Nicaraguans decisively reject attempted U.S. subversion
- U.S. on hot seat at Sharm el-Sheikh climate meeting
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Struggle □ La Lucha PDF - November 7, 2022

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U.S. escalates war against Russia

By Gary Wilson

The Pentagon has confirmed reports by the Associated Press and the Washington Post that the U.S. has boots on the ground in Ukraine.

These troops are deployed to inspect and monitor U.S.-provided weapons in Ukraine, confirmed Pentagon press secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder in an official briefing on Nov. 1. The troops will be operating far from the U.S. Embassy in Kiev and are in no way involved with embassy security.

Travis Tritten of military.com asked Ryder, "I'm wondering what the rules of engagement for those personnel are if they are fired on by the Russians or they are targeted by the Russians."

In a long-winded reply, Ryder never answered Tritten's question about what the U.S. would do if the Russians fired on any active-duty U.S. troops.

Tritten then said, "This [is] different because they would be working outside the embassy. I would just ask if people should read this as an escalation."

The AP reported that a Pentagon official would not say where the military advisers are operating or how close to the battlefronts the U.S. troops are getting. The official said U.S. personnel are engaged in "inspections" where security conditions allow, not on the front lines.

On Feb. 24, when President Joe Biden announced sanctions on Rus-

sia, adding that the people of the U.S. must make a sacrifice and gas prices would rise, he said, "Our forces are not and will not be engaged in the conflict."

Since that statement by Biden, the U.S. has intervened militarily in Ukraine with U.S. mercenaries (called contractors in media reports) engaged in the fighting. In addition, U.S. military advisers have been deployed to the Ukrainian military command, supplying military intelligence in real-time and engaging in planning and executing operations against Russian forces. Also, the U.S. has sent some \$70 billion in aid to Ukraine, including tens of billions of dollars worth of weapons and ammunition.

While the White House says there are no "combat" troops, this is how U.S. military escalations are launched. The U.S. military invasion of Vietnam began in May 1961 when President John Kennedy sent 500 military "advisers," not combat troops, to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City).

With U.S. troops inspecting Ukrainian arms and ammunition at Ukrainian military bases, this puts U.S. troops directly into a war zone, with the possibility of direct engagement with Russia. That makes it possible that the U.S. would engage in a direct shooting war with Russia.

This is definitely an escalation. The U.S./NATO "proxy war" against Russia may be shifting into direct conflict. ■



Los Angeles

Photo: Walter Lippman

Demonstrations call for an end to U.S. blockade on Cuba

Large demonstrations on the East and West coasts of the U.S. took place Oct. 29 calling for the end of the blockade of Cuba just before the annual vote at the United Nations. Protests were held in New York; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Brunswick, Maine; Portland, Ore.; Duluth, Minn.; Laurel, Md.; and more than 20 other cities. ■

World stands with Cuba again!

By Alejandra Garcia

Once again, the United States has been left alone in its efforts to stifle Cuba. The General Assembly of the United Nations once again pronounced itself overwhelmingly against the economic blockade that Washington insists on maintaining against the island.

The UN member countries voted this Thursday on the Cuban resolution "Necessity of putting an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." On this occasion, the document had 185 votes in favor, two against (the United States and its

unconditional ally Israel), and two abstentions (Jair Bolsonaro's Brazil and Ukraine).

Today, the world is with Cuba, and it is no surprise. That U.S. policy is an outdated and ineffective measure that hasn't achieved and will not achieve its objective and has ended up discrediting and isolating the United States itself.

It has already been 30 years of continuous defeats. Since 1992, the Caribbean island, besieged and on the verge of economic asphyxiation, has presented this resolution before the UN in New York. Today, not even U.S. citizens themselves support this policy of hatred. Proof of this is

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RESIST U.S. WAR Solidarity with people of Donbass!

By Melinda Butterfield

Remarks given by Melinda Butterfield, Struggle-La Lucha co-editor, at the "No to NATO, War and Racism" protest in the Bronx, New York, on Oct. 15.

I think it's important to bring up the struggle of the people who are directly affected by the conflict in Ukraine – that is, the people of the Donbass region and Ukrainian anti-fascists who have been forced into exile for the last eight-and-a-half years.

This summer, the people in the city of Donetsk, who have lived under Ukrainian bombs for more than eight years, have faced their toughest stretch ever surviving. The attacks have been constant and getting worse because of the infusion of more advanced U.S. and NATO weapons.

This war didn't start last February, when Russia intervened. It started with a coup against the elected Ukrainian government, sponsored by the United States, in 2014. We know how that works – we've seen it many times in Latin America and other places around the world.

The people in the eastern part of Ukraine said "No – we don't want to live under a regime that's filled with fascists. We don't want to live under a regime that answers to Washington and NATO." And they had a big struggle.

Unfortunately, it was crushed in many parts of the country. But in Donetsk and Lugansk, in the Donbass region bordering Russia, they were able to declare independence, form a people's militia, and defend their independence for the last eight-and-a-half years.

When we talk about the struggle here, we use the slogan, "When people's rights are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!" When trans rights, Black people's rights, abortion rights, immigrant rights are under attack, we say: Stand up and fight back. In Donbass, they stood up and fought back! Just like they are doing now in Haiti. And in the same way, the people there have been demonized and discounted.

Unfortunately, here in the United States, even in the anti-war movement and the left, there's very little consciousness about the Donbass people's struggle. But they are the ones on the front lines. They are the ones who have been taking the brunt of the Ukrainian attacks for almost a decade.

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Protest in the Bronx, N.Y., Oct. 15.

S.L. photo: Melinda Butterfield

Pakistan's floods, China's heatwave The climate crisis

By Scott Scheffer

The next international climate change conference will start on November 4 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

Tens of millions are struggling to recover from extreme weather disasters that spanned the entire world in 2022. Just a little more than a month will have passed by the time the delegates gather since two of the worst-known weather catastrophes in human history happened in Pakistan and China.

Indeed, this will place more importance on the issue of climate finance at Sharm el-Sheikh, and the conference may become a flashpoint for a long-simmering international dispute. In 2009, at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-15) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Denmark, the developed industrialized countries were forced to commit to raising \$100 billion per year to assist the Global South in adapting to the effects of climate change.

They have not met the obligation. The website of the World Resources Institute reports that by October of 2021, "Three major economies – the United States, Australia, and Canada – provided less than half their share of the financial effort."

A fraction of the funds handed over to the Pentagon each year would cover the U.S.'s commitment. But solidarity with

the Global South is not on the imperialist agenda.

While the Western media was reporting every detail of Queen Elizabeth's funeral for weeks on end, they woefully neglected news of two of the most destructive climate change-related events in history that occurred in Pakistan and China almost concurrently.

Pakistan floods

Southern Pakistan was hit by rains that lasted for weeks beginning in June, killing 1,500 or more people. More than one-third of the deaths were children. Crops were destroyed; at least a million homes were damaged or washed away completely.

Farmers usually welcome the monsoon season. However, this year, melting glaciers from rising global temperatures turned it into a super-monsoon catastrophe. Some 33 million people were affected, most of them tenant farmers. It will take six months for the water to recede so agriculture can become viable again. Estimates of recovery costs are now at about \$30 billion.

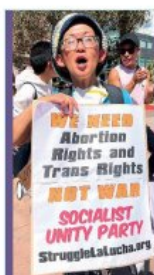
So far, international aid pledged is paltry compared to the need. The World Bank has pledged \$2 billion, and a few governments have pledged \$160 million via the United Nations.

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CUBA SAYS YES: 'Code of freedom' for families

By Melinda Butterfield

Sept. 27 – Two days after the historic referendum approving Cuba's new Code of Families, diplomats held a special briefing at the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York City.

The evening gathering was attended by about a hundred people, including progressive attorneys and judges, representatives of nonprofits dedicated to protecting children and LGBTQ2S people, U.N. diplomats from friendly countries, and U.S. solidarity activists. Cuba's Ambassador to the U.S., Lianys Torres Rivera, traveled from Washington, D.C., to attend.

Two things were immediately apparent: the immense pride of the Cuban representatives in the victory of the new Code of Families; and the hunger of people from the U.S. to learn from Cuba's experience in light of ongoing right-wing efforts to roll back people's rights here.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla opened the meeting. He explained that Cuba's revolutionary government and mass organizations were long committed to updating and strengthening the country's 1975 Family Code to reflect modern social realities.

Originally, Rodríguez explained, equality in marriage rights for same-sex couples and other updated provisions were to be included in the 2019 Constitution. But the democratic consultations throughout Cuban society at that time revealed there was no consensus on these questions.

It was decided to set the issues aside to permit more discussion and education, leading to the referendum on the Code of Families.

Rodríguez reviewed the enormous obstacles Cuba has faced in the last few years – from the COVID pandemic to climate-change-fueled disasters to last summer's terrible fuel fire – and of course, underlying all these problems, the tightest U.S. blockade and sabotage.

"We launched the referendum in these difficult conditions because we are committed to a family model based on social justice," Rodríguez said. The discussion in the leadup to the Sept. 25 vote "exposed differences, but that it was ratified showed progress."

'Expands rights'

Seventy-four percent of the electorate participated in the referendum. Of those who voted, over two-thirds of Cubans said "yes" to the updated code. This is despite a concerted "no" campaign by religious and social conservatives and foreign actors.

"The new code is "very progressive," said Rodríguez. "It expands rights; it doesn't take away from anybody. It is an act of justice for many people."

Diplomatic personnel then outlined some of the key points of the new Code of Families and how it was achieved.

They said Cuban and Latin American identity was central to the process of shaping the new code. Family laws throughout the hemisphere were reviewed and pulled from – even U.S. case law.

The guiding idea is that family plurality, diversity and human dignity are at the center of the Cuban Revolution. The code has an educational and pedagogical nature.

The definition of a family is now based on affection and emotional ties rather than blood relations, something new in the country's history.

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PHOTO: MISEN

In addition to expanding the definition of the family beyond the hetero-normative conception, the Code also enshrines the rights of women, promotes gender equality, protects the role of grandparents and much more.



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CHINA 7

OVER 50,000 HOMES WERE DESTROYED BY HURRICANE IAN. REBUILDING BEGINS NOW, BUT THE U.S. EMBARGO ON CUBA MAKES IT AN UPHILL BATTLE. LET'S HELP OUR NEIGHBORS!

Reprint of the full-page ad that appeared in the Sunday, Oct. 2, New York Times

LET CUBA REBUILD: AN URGENT APPEAL

The U.S. sanctions and embargo are preventing Cuba from rebuilding after Hurricane Ian.

The Biden Administration needs to act right now to help the Cuban people. Hurricane Ian caused great devastation. The power grid was damaged, and the electrical system collapsed. Over four thousand homes have been completely destroyed or badly damaged.

Cuba must be allowed, even if just for the next six months, to purchase the necessary construction materials to rebuild. Cubans are facing a major setback because of Hurricane Ian.

Despite Cuba's well-known preparedness for natural disasters, the damage from this hurricane has been immense. In the western province of Pinar del Rio, famous for its tobacco production, over 5,000 farms were destroyed. In small towns like San Luis, 80% of all homes were left damaged.

Despite previous assurances by the U.S. Embassy in Havana that the law authorizes U.S. entities and organizations to provide disaster relief and response, it's proven not so easy. For many organizations wanting to send aid to the island urgently, there are long, complex processes to receive licenses that often

require expensive lawyers. Also, Cuba's inclusion in the State Sponsors of Terrorism List means that banks in both the United States and abroad are reluctant to process any transactions, including humanitarian donations. The Trump administration absurdly placed Cuba on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list simply for hosting the internationally recognized peace talks for Colombia.

It is unconscionable at this critical hour to maintain the embargo and engage in collective punishment against an entire people by preventing Cuba from purchasing construction materials or receiving aid.

President Biden, put Cold War politics aside – even for six months!

The people of Cuba are part of our family – the human family. Don't let outdated Cold War politics prevent peace-loving people from helping the Cubans to rebuild and return to their homes, rebuild the electrical grid, and have clean drinking water and access to food. The time to act is now!

Cuba is our neighbor. The U.S. loses nothing by being a good neighbor and allowing Cuba to recover fully from this tragic moment.

LetCubaLive.info

- Cuba says yes: 'Code of freedom' for families
- Let Cuba rebuild: An urgent appeal
- Marcos Jr. displays hypocrisy on political prisoners
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Protesters challenge war profiteers' summit

Ukrainian generals meet the warbucks

By John Parker

Austin, Sept. 21 — We gathered last night, coming from Baltimore, Los Angeles and Denver, at the hotel in Austin, Texas — 12 minutes away from the Austin Convention Center where the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) was holding its "Future Forces" conference.

The NDIA gathered merchants of death like Lockheed, General Dynamics, Raytheon and other weapons manufacturers salivating over the prospect of billions more additional dollars to add to the \$70 billion already promised for war in Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials and military officers, including President Volodymyr Zelensky himself, were scheduled to attend this conference — some in person, some virtually — to push for more weapons to be manufactured to make up for those already being used to target the Russian, Lugansk and Donetsk militaries and to target civilians, especially in the Donbass region.

However, as could be seen on the faces of Ukrainian military officers entering and exiting the conference, the last thing they expected to see were activists chanting: "Hey hey, ho ho, war profiteers have got to go!" and "Biden, Biden, can't you see — we don't want a World War III."

The protest was initiated by the Socialist Unity Party. Many activists from SUP, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Dallas Anti-War Committee, Austin Students for a Democratic Society and other unaffiliated activists were also surprised at the overwhelmingly positive reception from residents and those working near the Austin Convention Center.

Paul Tardie, who decided to come over after seeing the protest from across the street, said, "Thanks for doing this!" He said that he was frustrated by the one-sided reporting on what he knew was a U.S. proxy war against Russia.

Nicole Rogers and Jacob Rogers from Round Rock drove 20 miles in traffic to get to the demonstration. They had very unique signs reading "Draft beer, not people" and "War money, blood money," with its own comic strip within the sign explaining how the military-industrial complex profits off of war.

Nicole led chants highlighting the need for peace and not death from the bombs being sold during this convention. A veteran who was walking by and wanted to know more about our protest spoke to her and walked away saying he was with us.

Two members of the Dallas Anti-War Committee



From Buffalo, N.Y., massacre to Ukraine's war crimes 6-7



ILL PHOTO JOHN PARKER



ILL PHOTO MICHAEL WALKER

tee joined the protest with their banner, leading the picket line and chants. Members Dan and Cassandra drove three-and-a-half hours to get to the protest.

Baltimore community activists drove 24 hours to get to the protest. That East Coast city is another area victimized by infrastructure neglect, which recently manifested in the presence of E. coli in its drinking water.

Said Sharon Black of the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly: "We need money for food, housing and infrastructure to rebuild our cities. We need to be fighting for abortion rights and trans rights, not for U.S./NATO proxy wars. Biden needs to stop the Starbucks and Amazon union busters, not spend billions on war."

What we found out today is that there are a lot of people who now remain quiet, due to the perceived backlash for challenging the lies from the Pentagon and the corporate media about the U.S. war on Russia. They remain quiet because they have a different view.

From the conversations we had with some of them today, we learned that many more than we realized do understand what is really going on — from the Nazi infiltration of the military and government of Ukraine, to the war's billions of dollars in profits for the military-industrial complex.

More importantly, we discovered that when we mobilize and make our rejection of these lies and this war visible through protest — people will find their voices and join us.

The Donbass referendum and blood on Biden's hands

By Melinda Butterfield

On Sept. 21, U.S. President Joe Biden stood before the 77th United Nations General Assembly and said with a straight face: "If nations can pursue their imperial ambitions without consequences, then we put at risk everything this very institution stands for... You cannot seize a nation's territory by force."

The Oxford English Dictionary defines projection as "the unconscious transfer of one's own desires or emotions to another." Or, in this case, one's own actions.

Biden's remarks were subject to widespread ridicule on social media.

But many people who recognize the hypocrisy of a U.S. president condemning others' alleged "imperial ambitions" may not fully understand how this slander was directed at the embattled people of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR) of the Donbass region, who have been subject to eight and half years of unrelenting war since the 2014 U.S.-sponsored coup in Ukraine.

While Biden was in New York gracing world leaders with his comedy stylings and attempting to whip up a new wave of war frenzy against Russia and China, activists from around the U.S. gathered in Austin, Texas, to protest a conference of the biggest U.S. military-industrial corporations, including Raytheon Technologies, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics.

Ukrainian president, U.S. tool, and war criminal Volodymyr Zelensky was the invited guest of honor of the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA). He only appeared virtually, but Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Volodymyr Havrylov was in Austin. Havrylov joined the chorus of U.S. officials and billionaire war profiteers, encouraging an unprecedented speedup of weapons production (and profits).

The Biden administration and Congress have committed \$70 billion in war aid to Ukraine so far this year.

Thanks to these esteemed folks, on Monday, Sept. 19, another awful massacre occurred in Donetsk, the capital city of the Donetsk People's Republic. At least nine people were killed and five more wounded when a Ukrainian shell hit a bus stop and destroyed a nearby market. As usual, the target was an entirely civilian area.

At first, rescue workers thought more people had been killed, Donetsk News Agency reported, "due to the large number of body fragments."

On Tuesday, Sept. 20, a school and several residential buildings in Donetsk were damaged by Ukrainian fire. A civilian was wounded. The next day, a hospital was hit, wounding three.

Now it's Thursday, Sept. 22. Another mass

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FACT FINDING IN DONBASS

Battle line drawn with Nazi forces after 2014

Part 3

John Parker, Socialist Unity Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket. This is part 3 of his report on his fact-finding trip observing the U.S./NATO proxy war on Donbass and Russia.

By John Parker

From May 1 to May 12, I traveled to both Russia and the Lugansk People's Republic, an independent republic in the Donbass region, formerly part of eastern Ukraine. The purpose of this fact-finding mission initiated by the Socialist Unity Party and Struggle-La-Lucha.org was to report the suppressed information challenging the narrative of NATO and its member states, led by the U.S., in this proxy war in Ukraine against Russia.

My visit to Lugansk was made possible with the assistance of Borotba (Struggle), a socialist political organization in Ukraine and Donbass which we have worked with for many years. Alexey Albu, one of the leaders of Borotba, also provided translation for me during interviews. This is the third part of my report.

On May 8, two days after we visited the Rubizhne shelter, we made our way from Lugansk city to the villages of Sokilnyky and Krymske. Both had recently been taken over by the joint forces of the Lugansk People's Militia (LPM) and the Russian military.

After the 2014 U.S.-sponsored coup in Ukraine that brought to power a pro-Washington, anti-Moscow regime partnering with fascist forces, the majority Russian-speaking people of the Donbass region decided they didn't want any part of this backsliding of history.

Dramatic evidence of the new coup government's fascist leanings came in its support for the neo-Nazis who burned alive activists at Odessa's House of Trade Unions on May 2, 2014. To this day, none of the perpetrators have been charged with any crime. Given that incident, the people of the Donbass region declared themselves the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR). They voted by 89% in Donetsk and 96% in Lugansk for that change.

Instead of honoring the wishes of the people of Donbass, Kiev labeled them terrorists and sent armed forces with heavy artillery and aircraft against civilians, threatening to wipe out the population. The Lugansk People's Militia was organized to defend the area.

When the Minsk II cease-fire agreements took effect in 2015, the opposing sides' positions were drawn. Sokilnyky was controlled by the Lugansk People's Republic. Krymske was occu-



From left: Alexey Albu of Borotba; John Parker of Socialist Unity Party; and Evgeniy Miroschnichenko, member of the Youth Parliament, State Duma of Russia.

ried and controlled by the Ukrainian military.

If the cease-fire stipulations under the Minsk II agreements were adhered to by the Ukrainian military, it would have protected this community. Instead, the agreement was used by Ukraine to create a one-sided shooting range against civilians in Sokilnyky. Today no one lives there and the homes and buildings have been destroyed.

The road that runs between Sokilnyky and Krymske is called Vulytsya Horkoho, named for the great Russian writer Maxim Gorky. Google also translates it as "Bitter Street." The name is fitting, since less than a quarter-mile north runs the Siverskyi Donets River – the border between two conflicting sides in a war.

When you travel along this road towards Sokilnyky, you see idle and broken down Ukrainian tanks that were used against the villagers after 2014, when no military force was there to protect those communities.

Ukraine continued war after Minsk II

122-mm shells from the Ukrainian government's arsenal rained down on villagers from the north of the river's edge and west of Sokilnyky, aimed at anyone driving along this road or just relaxing at home. These shells are capable of stopping tanks, penetrating bunkers and taking down aircraft. And as we could see along the way, many homes were blown to bits or

barely left standing.

The 2015 Minsk II agreements were negotiated by Russia, Ukraine, Germany, France and the Donetsk and Lugansk republics, allowing for some self-determination of the Donbass regions and the right to be protected by their own military forces – the Lugansk People's Militia and the Donetsk People's Militia.

By 2017, however, most residents on this road east of Krymske who survived left the area since it was too dangerous.

Although the Minsk agreements forbade attacks within this area, our guide told us that after 2015 the Lugansk militia forces began calling this street the "Road of Life," where LPR forces had to travel fast to keep from being shot at. "For seven years Nazis violated the Minsk agreements... They attacked peaceful people who lived in this village during those Minsk violations," explained our LPM guide, who led us to our next location further west towards Krymske.

We saw further evidence of houses resembling Swiss cheese rather than safe spaces for families. We stopped on the edge of Zynamyanka village, where a monument commemorating fallen World War II soldiers was located. We had to follow the steps of the person in front since the area was filled with unexploded shells dropped by the Ukrainian forces.

We reached an administrative build-

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