

THE PENTAGON'S ACHILLES HEEL

# WAR

WITHOUT  
VICTORY



**SARA FLOUNDERS**

A revolutionary perspective by a veteran anti-war organizer

## What people are saying about *War Without Victory*

By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

**Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann**, President of the U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009, Foreign Minister of Nicaragua’s Sandinista government 1979- 1990

“Sara Flounders and I worked together in 2011 to bring the truth to people across the U.S. about the criminal war against Libya. Her book continues the work of bringing truth to confront the Big Lie pushed in the corporate media.”

**Cynthia McKinney**, Former member of U.S. Congress, Green Party Presidential Candidate in 2008

“This valuable sampler from Flounders’ reports over the last nine years should be in the home of all who seek peace, on the desk of every news media editor and commentator who dares to be reminded about the truth and in the knapsack of every war correspondent who wants to report what he actually sees.”

**Ramsey Clark**, Human rights attorney, former U.S. Attorney General, founder of International Action Center

“This important and brave work by Sara Flounders, who has been at the forefront of the fight for truth, freedom, and justice in the U.S., gives real meaning to the worldwide struggles of all pro-peace and anti-war activists.”

**Professor Sami Al-Arian**, Palestinian Political Prisoner and Activist

“Flounders provides the working class a much needed perspective to better understand U.S. imperialism, the military industrial complex and its relationship to declining U.S. capitalism. It is a must read.”

**Clarence Thomas**, International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 10 Coastwide Caucus & Convention delegate

“No observer can match Flounders for her sustained critical examination of American war history in the past half century. Flounders points out what many realize but will not admit: That America’s military might is in fact a huge liability in economic, in political, in moral, and yes, in military terms.”

**Barbara Nimri Aziz**, author of *Swimming Up the Tigris: Real Life Encounters with Iraq*

“Flounders shows how the rising specter of militarism in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Latin America have not only damaged the peoples of these geo-political regions but is driving millions into austerity and poverty in the U.S.”

**Abayomi Azikwe**, Editor of Pan African News Wire, Pan-African Research and Documentation Project

“A terrific (and terrifying) work. Flounders writes of facts that speak to the urgent necessity of coming together in a powerful united resistance to the U.S. military/corporate plutocracy.”

**Judy Deutsch**, President, Science for Peace 2008-2012,  
Editorial Collective of Canadian Dimension Magazine

“Flounders offers an objective assessment on the dangers driving from the aggressive strength of the American Empire while highlighting at the same time the Empire’s deadly weaknesses. The fighter then suggests mass mobilization as the only reliable strategy to win the fight.”

**Hamid Shahrabi**, Research Director at the House of Latin America  
(HOLA) and co-founder of Solidarity with Iran – SI, Tehran

“Flounders sets the record straight when never previously has there been such urgent need for truth to prevail over the lies which unless properly challenged could have the most profound consequences for what is, after all, collectively Our World.”

**June Kelly**, People Against War Network, Ireland

“The essays are not just academic works but are written from the perspective of one who is deeply involved in the day-to-day struggle to bring about a better world.

**Joe Lombardo**, Co-coordinator, United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)

“Flounders gives an insightful analysis of the U.S. war machine and is a must read for all progressive and antiwar activists.”

**Mick Kelly**, editor of Fight Back! News

“Endless war and plunder are not only pillars of monopoly capitalism, but the foundation of the U.S. economy for over a century. The Philippines-- site of the first U.S. imperialist war of aggression overseas, For every anti-war, anti-interventionist activist in the U.S., this book is a must read.”

**Bernadette Ellorin**, Chairperson, BAYAN USA - Filipino-American Alliance

“This book lays out the contradictions of empire and offers hope that collective human action can intervene before it is too late.”

**Peter Phillips**, Professor Sociology Sonoma State University,  
President Media Freedom Foundation/Project Censored

“Pretty intense little book!

This valuable primer on “the converging crises of the capitalist system and its military” is an important source book for any activist looking to be re-charged in these days of numbing American totalitarianism.”

**Walt Nygard**, VP of Chapter 021, Veterans For Peace

**WAR**  
**Without Victory**  
**The Pentagon's Achilles Heel**

**By Sara Flounders**

WORLD VIEW FORUM  
2012

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**The Pentagon's Achilles Heel**

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## About the Author

Sara Flounders has been active in progressive and anti-war organizing since the 1960s. She is co-director of the International Action Center and co-authored and/or edited 10 books the IAC published on U.S. wars and sanctions against Iraq and Yugoslavia, on U.S. use of depleted uranium weapons, on Haiti and Colombia, and on opposing military recruiters. She writes regularly for the Marxist Workers World newspaper, and speaks on U.S. imperialist aggression on alternative and corporate media outlets. She helped coordinate major International War Crimes Tribunals to document the U.S. planned destruction of Iraq and Yugoslavia and a Tribunal on earlier U.S. crimes in Korea.

Many dedicated activists know Flounders from her organizing of mass meetings, major antiwar rallies, and international campaigns and via internet and videos. She says, "My goal is to build confidence in the potential of powerful grassroots movements as I help build a revolutionary struggle for change within the U.S."

Flounders organized delegations to Iraq during the years when rigorous sanctions starved Iraq's people following the massive destruction of the 1991 U.S. war. She participated in mass outpourings against U.S. occupation in the Philippines and South Korea. She traveled to Sudan after a U.S. missile barrage destroyed a pharmaceutical complex, to Yugoslavia during 78 days of NATO bombing to expose the hospitals, schools and market places destroyed. She has visited Syria and Iran and organized delegations to Lebanon, to expose Israel's destruction of entire villages with U.S. supplied weapons. She traveled several times to Gaza where the population stands steadfast through decades of displacement and occupation.

In the U.S. she has built solidarity with many political prisoners and focused attention on the growing racism, mass incarceration, political repression and austerity that is linked to the ever expanding encroachment of militarism into all aspects of U.S. society.



## Decline and Danger

The largest U.S. embassy in world, in Baghdad, Iraq, was just drastically downsized. Official troop withdrawal ended in December 2011. The plan even six months ago was for 14 permanent U.S. bases. Tens of thousands of U.S. military forces, renamed “trainers,” were to remain in Iraq as a continuing presence for decades, as in other U.S. bases worldwide.

The Iraqi Parliament dashed those grand plans when, despite pressure, threat and bribes, it refused to sign a Status of Forces Agreement — SOFA — guaranteeing immunity to U.S. troops. Every effort of the U.S. to handpick a government of collaborators, every effort at positioning a loyal puppet regime, ended in failure. Even the most corrupt forces were more fearful of the anger from below than lured by the promises of a departing imperialist army.

Now the 16,000 contractors and mercenaries left in Iraq to guard 2,000 U.S. personnel, labeled “diplomats” and housed at the giant embassy, find that they can’t securely leave the grounds, “train” Iraqi units or meet with Iraqi officials. Contractors can’t get their weapons or even vehicles registered and can’t enter and leave the country at will. Truckloads of equipment needed to feed these personnel are now routinely denied entry at the border. The “diplomats” are reduced to eating stockpiled Meals Ready to Eat.

The scale of U.S. defeat in Iraq can no longer be hidden, nor can the level of animosity towards the U.S. by the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi population. After the U.S. war and eight-year

occupation of Iraq, the plans to dominate the region for the next generation are in complete retreat.

Imperialism's position in Afghanistan is even worse. U.S.-NATO forces face more danger from the Afghan soldiers they are training than from Taliban guerrillas. According to a classified coalition report, it is a "rapidly growing systemic homicide threat, a magnitude of which may be unprecedented between 'allies' in modern history." (New York Times, Jan. 20, 2012)

The animosity — from Afghan officials and warlords, once considered loyal collaborators, to Afghan soldiers in the field and civilians in isolated villages or major cities like Kabul and Kandahar — runs so deep that it raises serious questions regarding any future U.S. role in the country.

According to the classified report, the U.S. and its NATO allies are dependent on an Afghan army that is permeated with anti-Western sentiments and incapable of fighting the Taliban when NATO's combat mission ends in 2014. The imperialist mission might even end sooner. Britain, France and Germany are under intense domestic pressure to withdraw troops. France suspended its military training of Afghan forces after a series of attacks in which Afghan soldiers fired on French soldiers. German troops already avoid all ground fighting.

### **Mercenaries, outsourcing and high-tech weapons**

More than half of the more than 200,000 foreign forces in Afghanistan today are notoriously unreliable paid contractors — mercenaries. They suffer more than half the casualties.

U.S. strategists were confident of their ability to occupy and dominate both Iraq and Afghanistan for future decades. Neither country had any weapons of defense or infrastructure to organize a resistance. In Iraq, massive U.S. bombardment in 1991 had laid waste to the entire country and systematically destroyed water, sanitation, sewage, food processing and basic infrastructure. This was followed by 13 years of harrowing sanc-

tions that left the population emaciated and impoverished, and, U.S. planners assumed, incapable of resistance. Already impoverished Afghanistan had been ground down by 20 years of civil war. Despite these weaknesses, the Pentagon, CIA and State Department failed to secure U.S. domination of either country.

Confronted with the impossibility that even tens of thousands of troops in a highly coordinated “surge” could end resistance in Iraq or Afghanistan, the newest Pentagon solution is drones. Thousands of pilotless drones now hover over battlefields and rural villages.

The drones are seen as a spectacular new advance in military technology. They enable the Pentagon to wage war anywhere on the globe without significant domestic casualties and without arousing domestic opposition. Military planners brag that targeted assassinations against totally defenseless populations are the wars of the future.

Technicians behind a screen in Utah or Syracuse, N.Y., can evaluate suspicious activity, such as a large gathering in a village, and launch a Hell Fire missile from an unmanned Predator drone. These “soldiers” have no way of knowing if the missile is striking a “terrorist” gathering or a wedding party, nor of confirming if it is hitting a peasant planting a field or planting a bomb. It is open season on these “targets.”

Drone attacks, the newest high-tech tactic of choice, has turned a key U.S. ally — Pakistan — into an unstable, unreliable opponent. Polls measure mass hatred of the U.S. by the Pakistani population at more than 90 percent. Anti-U.S. sentiment runs through all social strata and all national and religious groups in Pakistan. It impacts every level of the military and every political group.

The clearest sign of just how pervasive this resistance to U.S. dictates has become is the Pakistani government’s announcement that it will refuse to abandon construction of a pipeline to transport Iranian natural gas into Pakistan and in the future

even into India, despite new U.S. sanctions on all trade with Iran, especially oil and gas.

Outrage at the drone attacks has unhinged U.S. plans not only in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also most recently in Yemen. There the drone attacks added fuel to the mass opposition demanding the overthrow of the 33-year U.S.-supported dictator Ali Saleh.

### **U.S. militarism grows more reckless**

Each of these disasters for U.S. imperialism actually increases the danger of far more reckless and expanding war policies.

Special Operations Forces are also seen as the agile new solution. The commander of the Special Operations Command, Admiral William H. McRaven, is seeking and is expected to receive new authority to move elite Special Op forces around the world faster and outside normal Pentagon deployment channels. These Special Op forces will operate with greater autonomy throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The U.S. State Department has voiced concern that commando units carrying out targeted assassinations and other clandestine Special Ops missions, treating the whole world as a free-fire zone with open season hunting for anyone branded as a “terrorist,” will arouse greater anger at this affront to sovereignty. Since September 2011 Special Op Units have acted in 70 countries.

These units are especially active in the Middle East, focused on Syria, Iran, Turkey, Libya, Egypt and Pakistan. Special Op Units escalate instability without securing new hegemony.

The growing danger exists that U.S. corporate power, seeing its ability to ram through its dictates decline on every side, is increasingly driven to military solutions. The more the U.S. loses its grip on the region, the more desperate imperialism may become to risk all in a wild adventure to recoup its past domination.

An attack on Iran is more likely not because of anything that Iran has done, but because Iran's continued influence in the region is a direct threat to U.S. hegemony. And Iran is not the only target.

The Pentagon is planning for World War III against China. Ominous announcements have been made of a growing U.S. military presence in the Asia Pacific, 2,500 Marines in northern Australia, combat ships stationed in Singapore, increased military presence in the Philippines, a deal to provide Taiwan with Patriot missiles and a dangerous plan to surround China with missile defense systems in South Korea and Japan, along with new advanced weapons sales to India.

### **U.S. capitalism in irrevocable decline**

The Pentagon has weapons that can destroy the world, but it has come up against the limits of the capitalist system it serves. This is a system that is today in decline and decay.

The U.S. global position at the end of World War II, following the massive destruction of industry in Europe, Japan and the Soviet Union, was based on the undisputed fact that with 5 percent of the world's population it produced half the world's marketable commodities. The U.S. economy was a powerhouse. The dollar was the dominant currency. Its political position was based on its economic strength.

Today U.S. imperialism's desperate attempt to maintain global hegemony is expressed entirely through its ruthless projection of military muscle. Increasingly, new weapons function in secret and in total violation of the national sovereignty of every other country. The U.S.'s economic position continues to decline, but Wall Street's corporate power is determined to reconfigure its military into speedier, more secretive, more destructive and unchallenged light units able to leap the globe. Today's corporate rulers, however, no longer operate in a world where they alone have access to and understanding of technology.

The capitalist system is long past the time when it could play any progressive role with respect to more archaic, feudal forms of society. Now imperialism blocks with every and any reactionary force in a desperate attempt to stop any effort by workers, peasants or other oppressed peoples to assert their rights or gain a larger share of their labor or resources.

The monstrous U.S. military budget is larger than that of the rest of the world combined, but it can no longer solve problems caused by domestic capitalist overproduction. The guaranteed superprofits of military contracts and conquest are no longer sufficient to revive the capitalist economy.

The present crisis of capitalism is far more serious than the cyclical crises of the past. It is an unsolvable crisis because technology is so fantastically productive, with production taking place on a global scale at the cheapest possible wage. The system has no solution to the growing mass unemployment.

Unlike the pre-WWII period, when billions of dollars in orders of everything from life vests and uniforms to tanks and ships could get the stagnant U.S. economy humming again, the past 70 years of military contracts have left the economy awash in every type of weapon.

Now, the sophisticated, high-tech weapons systems, guided missiles, Trident submarines, nuclear weapons, drones, satellites and aircraft carriers the Pentagon orders no longer provide enough new jobs to revive the U.S. economy and boost it back to its former pre-eminent position. It is not enough to spur a new cycle of expansion.

U.S. imperialism is totally dependent on this giant continued subsidy of military production, yet it is not enough to stave off recession, depression and the crisis of capitalist glut.

Surprisingly, it is not enough to defeat the poorest countries in the world. It is not even enough to keep its imperialist NATO allies and even U.S. puppet forces in line.

## **Military production won't resolve capitalist crisis**

In the past, bloody imperialist expansion and giant military subsidies were the way out of capitalist crisis. Now, big-budget military contracts, the historic stimulant used to artificially jump-start the capitalist economy, can no longer revive it.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are a net loss for imperialism. They cost trillions of dollars but have been unable to secure new markets, new sources of super profits or guaranteed sustainable profits.

Today there is no end in sight to U.S. wars. This militarism will only exacerbate the struggle at the center, the fierce contention over the federal budget and the distribution of tax dollars. This battle will increasingly be between the ever-growing military budget, the billions and now trillions used to bail out the banks, and the drastically shrinking funds for every other social need and expenditure. Understanding this unsolvable contradiction will provide us with a fighting materialist approach to the struggle against imperialist war and bank bailouts.

In a period when hospitals and schools are being closed, tens of thousands of state and city workers are losing their jobs, entire cities are being gutted of industries and millions of homes are foreclosed, the growing share of resources going to the capitalist war economy will become increasingly intolerable to the masses at home.

Capitalism is a ruthless economic system that has always been dependent on an ever-expanding market. It produces only what can be sold at a profit. But now, no matter how much money from the U.S. taxpayers is handed over to banks and to giant military corporations, it is no longer enough to bail out the capitalist system.

But even if it is not enough to reverse the overall economy, that will not stop the military corporations from demanding more and more as their private pillage. New wars must be projected

and existing wars dragged out. Getting government money is state-guaranteed profits.

### **Battle over budget is inevitable**

The proponents of ever-expanding militarism overwhelm other voices among the very top ranks of U.S. corporate, political and media power. To continue to bail out banks and fund military contracts, they will loot every pool of accumulated funds, especially Social Security and Medicare.

The relentless increases in the military budget during a time of such draconian cuts both demand a mass fight back and open real possibilities for that fight back, linked to the struggle over the budget. Actively challenging the war profiteers that are guaranteed billions on contracts can help to politicize the fight and teach valuable lessons. Exposing major corporations that are receiving billions of dollars while millions of workers are facing life-threatening cuts and linking these campaigns would build class-consciousness and class anger.

The money and resources do exist to more than solve the problems of the 99%. But without a clear explanation and a mobilized response, workers can fall prey to the endless corporate propaganda that there is no money.

Today's military machine is less and less able to promote the interests of a ruling class that is shrinking, consolidating and merging into a tiny elite. Two hundred multi-billionaires own more wealth than 2 billion of the poorest people on the planet. The ruling class is driven to sow division, racism, fear and increased repression at every level. It is their only way to hold this corrupt and decaying system together, when millions are facing ruin.

The days are long past that any progressive ideology emanated from any sector of the capitalist class. The very inability of the 1% to revive the economy, the constant increases in military spending and the relentless cuts in every essential program

sow the seeds of the rulers' own demise. But it will take an enormous mobilized class-conscious force to bring them down. The more we are able to take militant actions that link the movement against the endless wars and the giant subsidies of the military to the fight against deadly cuts in social services, the more the anti-war movement will take on the working class character that it needs to succeed.

### **Solidarity is the answer**

The vicious and unpredictable character of a dying system makes solidarity and class-consciousness more important today than at any time in human history. To remain vital and relevant, any movement against the horrific cutbacks that are on the agenda, and against the Pentagon's ever increasing costs, must consciously oppose the growing racist repression at home, the increase in attacks on people of color, the demonization of Muslims and the criminalization of youth.

The raids against immigrant workers have intensified in the past four years. The racism of the police, using endless stop and frisk tactics, drug raids, and street sweeps of Black and Latino youths criminalizes a whole generation of youth and means that the prison population, already the largest in the world, continues to grow. This climate of repression and growing racism must be challenged.

New means of communication are linking people together in ways that were never even conceived of earlier. The more that revolutionary forces reach out to each other and consciously combat racism, sexism, and bigotry against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people, the more it is possible to build a combative and fighting spirit.

To justify imperialist wars, endless new terror threats are hyped in a media blitz, supposedly coming from Somalia, Yemen, Iran, Pakistan or Palestine. Standing up to a media frenzy of fear and bigotry, and refusing to join in the chorus of political

attacks on an oppressed country is the only possible response.

Without a doubt the Pentagon has the weaponry to destroy the planet and all of its inhabitants many times over. But the generals are not all-powerful. While staying aware of their enormous destructive capacity, we will gain perspective and maintain our morale if we also examine their weaknesses. They have an Achilles' heel — it lies within the contradictions of the very system that created this monstrosity.

By examining the converging crises of the capitalist system and its military, this small book aims at mobilizing the forces that can stop the war machine.

Sara Flounders

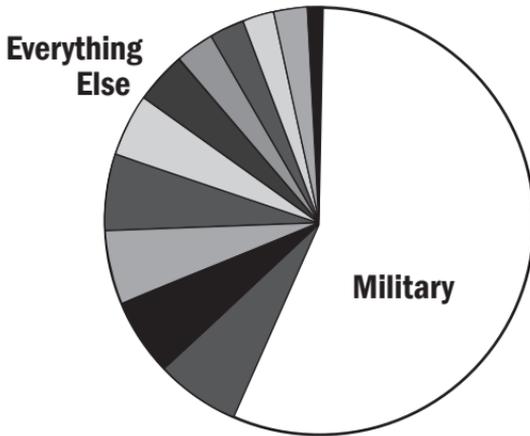
*February 12, 2012*



Section I

# **Mass Murderer with a Weakness**

## 2013 Federal Discretionary Spending



Credit: National Priorities Project

## **Pentagon Contradictions and Imperialist Decline**

The U.S. military budget is larger than those of the rest of the world put together. This is a superprofit subsidy to the wealthiest CEOs and stockholders of the military corporations.

At the same time, twenty million people a year in the U.S. get sick from contaminated water. Forty percent of the water is dangerously polluted. This is a sign of infrastructure decay reaching life-threatening proportions.

Boiling our drinking water is the real cost of the Pentagon budget, along with the millions who were unemployed, even before the global capitalist crisis. Now, since the global crash, there is more than 20 percent unemployment and over 50 percent for Black and Latino/a youth.

**Half of all our federal taxes go to the Pentagon.**

**The total amount and the military proportion of the budget go up, up and up every year. Yet no serious debate, discussion or challenge is allowed.**

The largest prison population in the world is a byproduct of the Pentagon budget. And so is the one-third of youth who don't graduate from high school. As Hurricane Katrina exposed, in a natural disaster tens of thousands of people have nowhere to turn and racism is intensified. All of these social catastrophes while 1 trillion dollars this year alone is spent on U.S. wars — past, present and future.

## **U.S. war — profitable but unwinnable**

This is supposedly the richest country in the world. U.S. workers have the highest rate of productivity and yet the workers are becoming paupers. They are getting a smaller and smaller share of what they produce.

**Every year while the Pentagon gets more, in order to balance the budget, there are cuts of 10 to 15 percent a year in what goes to states and cities as block grants. This creates crises in health clinics, homeless shelters, schools, transit systems.**

Congress or the White House, regardless of who is in office, won't challenge funds to the largest corporations, or their fraudulent cost overruns — hundreds of billions a year in government handouts or super-profits — without producing anything of value or use.

Corporate power is addicted to it. This is an unsolvable contradiction of imperialism today.

If it doesn't get this giant subsidy, the entire capitalist system will go into crisis. It can't do without it, but it is killing them. The sheer weight of the military is dragging the capitalist system down.

Decades of handing billions of dollars to the military-industrial complex has gone from being a stimulant to the capitalist economy to a sick addiction.

The giant funds to the military are no longer enough to soak up capitalist overproduction, to sponge up huge surpluses. They are no longer enough to restart the capitalist economy the way they once were able to.

Military spending does not create jobs. It destroys millions of jobs in the civilian economy.

When the global capitalist crisis hit in October 2008, the system needed a direct infusion of an additional \$700 billion just to provide immediate life-support to the biggest banks.

As the Marxist theoretician Sam Marcy explained, this huge military apparatus and the corporations dependent on it overwhelm all civilian institutions and endlessly press toward military solutions.

The Pentagon is the largest military machine on the planet. There are over 1,000 bases and fantastic high-tech weapon systems that can destroy the earth.

But they can't defeat the poorest country in world — Afghanistan. Why can't they pull it off?

They are incapable of improving any of the conditions of life, or bringing any progressive social change. It is impossible to win hearts and minds if you can only destroy. The think tanks and planners can't solve it or change it.

**The imperialist military is built to serve the profit system, to provide super-profits and to enforce exploitation. Now it is so thoroughly corrupt and bloated that it can no longer function effectively to defend the system.**

There are more contractors and mercenaries in Iraq and Afghanistan than there are U.S. military forces. A recent Congressional committee couldn't find out how many contractors there were or where they were or what they were doing, except getting paid.

The Pentagon militarizes the very air we breathe, increasing repression many-fold. Police and military units are everywhere. They intentionally create fear.

The targeting of Muslims in the U.S. and the charges of terrorism and manufactured government stings are all to justify a climate of war, racism and demonization.

On Nov. 13, 2009, the big news story was the seizure of four mosques, Islamic schools and an Islamic charity. Federal prosecutors claimed they were secretly controlled by the Iranian government. They bragged it was the biggest collection of counterterrorism seizures in U.S. history. This attack was timed to coincide with new sanctions on Iran.

This is ominously part of the continuing danger of a massive strike against Iran. There are continuing drone attacks on Paki-stan that are widening the war. Along with continuing massive military aid to Israel is an effort to stamp out the heroic Palestinian resistance.

But it is not succeeding anywhere. It is igniting more resistance everywhere.

**The future of their global system of imperialist domination is unraveling. That makes them more dangerous, desperate and unpredictable. But the Pentagon does not have enough soldiers, and they don't have enough collaborators or "allies" to fight their wars.**

We have to link the fight against endless war and militarism with the fight for jobs, against foreclosures, for health care and the struggle for everything we need and have a right to.

*Published November 19, 2009*



## **Why U.S. Occupation Cannot Transform Afghanistan or Iraq**

Just how powerful is the U.S. military today?

Why in 2009 is the largest military machine on the planet unable to defeat the resistance in Afghanistan, in a war that has lasted longer than World War II or Vietnam?

Afghanistan ranks among the poorest and most underdeveloped countries in the world today. It has one of the shortest life expectancy rates, highest infant mortality rates and lowest rates of literacy.

The total U.S. military budget has more than doubled from the beginning of this war in 2001 to the \$680 billion budget signed by President Barack Obama on Oct. 28, 2009. The U.S. military budget today is larger than the military budgets of the rest of the world combined. The U.S. arsenal has the most advanced high-tech weapons.

The funds and troop commitment to Afghanistan have grown with every year of occupation. In January 2009, another 20,000 troops were sent; now there is intense pressure on President Obama to add an additional 40,000 troops. But that is only the tip of the iceberg. More than three times as many forces are currently in Afghanistan when NATO forces and military contractors are counted.

Eight years ago [following 9/11/01], after an initial massive air bombardment and a quick, brutal invasion, every voice in the media was effusive with assurances that Afghanistan would be quickly transformed and modernized, and the women of

Afghanistan liberated. There were assurances of schools, roads, potable water, health care, thriving industry and Western-style “democracy.” A new Marshall Plan was in store.

Was it only due to racist and callous disregard that none of this happened?

In Iraq, how could conditions be worse than during the 13 years of starvation sanctions the U.S. imposed after the 1991 war? Today more than a third of the population has died, is disabled, internally displaced and/or refugees. Fear, violence against women, and sectarian divisions have shredded the fabric of society.

Previously a broad current in Pakistan looked to the West for development funds and modernization. Now they are embittered and outraged at U.S. arrogance after whole provinces were forcibly evacuated and bombarded in the hunt for Al Qaeda.

**U.S. occupation forces are actually incapable of carrying out a modernization program. They are capable only of massive destruction, daily insults and atrocities. That is why the U.S. is unable to win “hearts and minds” in Afghanistan or Iraq. That is what fuels the resistance.**

Today every effort meant to demonstrate the power and strength of U.S. imperialism instead confirms its growing weakness and its systemic inability to be a force for human progress on any level.

### **Collaborators and warlords**

Part of the problem for U.S. imperialism is that its occupation forces are required to rely on the most corrupt, venal and discredited warlords. The only interest these competing military thugs have is in pocketing funds for reconstruction and development. Entire government ministries, their payrolls and their projects have been found to be total fiction. Billions allocated for schools, water and road construction have gone directly into the warlords’ pockets. Hundreds of news articles, congressional

inquiries and U.N. reports have exposed just how all-pervasive corruption is.

In Iraq the U.S. occupation depends on the same type of corrupt collaborators. For example, a BBC investigation reported that \$23 billion in western aid funds had been lost, stolen or “not properly accounted for” in Iraq. A U.S. gag order prevented discussion of the allegations. (June 10, 2008)

Part of the BBC search for the missing billions focused on Hazem Shalaan, who lived in London until he was appointed Iraqi Minister of Defense in 2004. He and his associates siphoned an estimated \$1.2 billion out of the Iraqi defense ministry.

But the deeper and more intractable problem is not the local corrupt collaborators. It is the very structure of the Pentagon and the U.S. government. It is a problem that neither Stanley McChrystal, the commanding general in Afghanistan, nor General Petraeus, nor President Obama can change or solve.

It is the problem of an imperialist military built solely to serve the profit system.

**All U.S. aid, both military and what is labeled “civilian,” is funneled through thousands and thousands of contractors, subcontractors and sub-subcontractors.**

### **Contractor industrial complex**

None of these U.S. corporate middlemen are even slightly interested in the development of Afghanistan or Iraq. Their only immediate aim is to turn a hefty super-profit as quickly as possible, with as much skimming and double billing as possible. For a fee they will provide everything from hired guns, such as Blackwater mercenaries, to food service workers, mechanics, maintenance workers and long-distance truck drivers.

These hired hands also do jobs not connected to servicing the occupation. All reconstruction and infrastructure projects of water purification, sewage treatment, electrical generation,

health clinics and road clearance are parceled out piecemeal. Whether these projects ever open or function properly is of little interest or concern. Billing is all that counts.

**The ratio of contractors to active-duty troops is now more than 1-to-1 in both Iraq and Afghanistan. During the Vietnam War it was 1-to-6.**

In 2007 the Associated Press put the number in Iraq alone at 180,000: “The United States has assembled an imposing industrial army in Iraq that’s larger than its uniformed fighting force and is responsible for such a broad swath of responsibilities that the military might not be able to operate without its private-sector partners.” (Sept. 20, 2007)

The total was 190,000 by August 2008. (Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 18, 2008)

Some corporations have become synonymous with war profiteering, such as Halliburton, Bechtel and Blackwater in Iraq, and Louis Berger Group, BearingPoint and DynCorp International in Afghanistan.

Every part of the U.S. occupation has been contracted out at the highest rate of profit, with no coordination, no oversight, almost no public bids. Few of the desperately needed supplies reach the dislocated population traumatized by the occupation.

There are now so many pigs at the trough that U.S. forces are no longer able to carry out the broader policy objectives of the U.S. ruling class. The U.S. military has even lost count, by tens of thousands, of the numbers of contractors, where they are or what they are doing — except being paid.

### **Losing count of the mercenaries**

The danger of an empire becoming dependent on mercenary forces to fight unpopular wars has been understood since the days of the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago.

A bipartisan Congressional Commission on Wartime Con-

tracting was created last year to examine government contracting for reconstruction, logistics and security operations and to recommend reforms. However, Michael Thibault, cochair of the commission, explained at a Nov. 2, 2009, hearing that “there is no single source for a clear, complete and accurate picture of contractor numbers, locations, contracts and cost.” (AFP, Nov. 2, 2009)

“[Thibault said] the Pentagon in April counted about 160,000 contractors mainly in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, but Central Command recorded more than 242,000 contractors a month earlier.” The stunning difference of 82,000 contractors was based on very different counts in Afghanistan. The difference alone is far greater than the 60,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Thibault continued: “How can contractors be properly managed if we aren’t sure how many there are, where they are and what are they doing?” The lack of an accurate count “invites waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer money and undermines the achievement of U.S. mission objectives.” The Nov. 2, 2009, Federal Times reported that Thibault also asked: “How can we assure taxpayers that they aren’t paying for ‘ghost’ employees?”

This has become an unsolvable contradiction in imperialist wars for profit, markets and imperialist domination. Bourgeois academics, think tanks and policy analysts are becoming increasingly concerned.

Thomas Friedman, syndicated columnist and multimillionaire who is deeply committed to the long-term interests of U.S. imperialism, describes the dangers of a “contractor-industrial-complex in Washington that has an economic interest in foreign expeditions.” (New York Times, Nov. 4, 2009)

### **Outsourcing war**

Friedman hastens to explain that he is not against outsourcing. His concern is the pattern of outsourcing key tasks, with money and instructions changing hands multiple times in a foreign country. That only invites abuse and corruption. Friedman

quoted Allison Stanger, author of *One Nation Under Contract: The Outsourcing of American Power and the Future of Foreign Policy*, who told him:

“Contractors provide security for key personnel and sites, including our embassies; feed, clothe and house our troops; train army and police units; and even oversee other contractors. *Without a multinational contractor force to fill the gap, we would need a draft to execute these twin interventions.*” (Emphasis added.)

That is the real reason for the contracted military forces. The Pentagon does not have enough soldiers, and they don't have enough collaborators or “allies” to fight their wars.

**According to the Congressional Research Service, contractors in 2009 account for 48 percent of the Department of Defense workforce in Iraq and 57 percent in Afghanistan.**

Thousands of other contractors work for corporate-funded “charities” and numerous government agencies. The U.S. State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development make even more extensive use of them; 80 percent of the State Department budget is for contractors and grants.

Contractors are supposedly not combat troops, although almost 1,800 U.S. contractors have been killed since 9/11. (U.S. News & World Report, Oct. 30, 2009) Of course there are no records on the thousands of Afghans and Iraqis killed working for U.S. corporate contractors, or the many thousands of people from other oppressed nations who are shipped in to handle the most dangerous jobs.

Contracting is a way of hiding not only the casualties, but also the actual size of the U.S. occupation force. Fearful of domestic opposition, the government intentionally lists the figures for the total number of forces in Afghanistan and Iraq as far less than the real numbers.

## **A system run on cost overruns**

Cost overruns and war profiteering are hardly limited to Iraq, Afghanistan or active theaters of war. They are the very fabric of the U.S. war machine and the underpinning of the U.S. economy.

When President Obama signed the largest military budget in history Oct. 28, 2009, he stated: “The Government Accountability Office, the GAO, has looked into 96 major defense projects from the last year, and found cost overruns that totaled \$296 billion.” This was on a total 2009 military budget of \$651 billion. So almost half of the billions of dollars handed over to military corporations are cost overruns!

This is at a time when millions of workers face long-term systemic unemployment and massive foreclosures.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have now cost more than \$1 trillion. The feeble health care reform bill that squeaked through the House, and might not survive Senate revisions next year, is scheduled to cost \$1.1 trillion over a 10-year period.

The bloated, increasingly dysfunctional, for-profit U.S. military machine is unable to solve the problems or rebuild the infrastructure in Afghanistan or Iraq, and it is unable to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure in the U.S. It is unable to meet the needs of people anywhere.

It is absorbing the greatest share of the planet’s resources and a majority of the U.S. national budget. This unsustainable combination will sooner or later give rise to new resistance here and around the world.

*Published November 15, 2009*



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Unity Rally, Sept. 11, 2010.

## Rifts in NATO Complicate U.S. Military Occupations

On the eve of the 2008 NATO summit, Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said an additional 7,500 soldiers and 3,000 military trainers needed to be sent immediately to Afghanistan.

Some 59,000 troops from 39 countries are occupying Afghanistan at the present, including 19,000 U.S. soldiers. Of this number, 47,500 are under NATO command.

As their mission has faltered and Afghan resistance has grown, internal rifts in the NATO alliance are being aired publicly. Disagreements over burden sharing, coordination and strategic direction are plaguing the alliance. Canada threatened to pull out of Afghanistan if other countries did not send substantially more troops. Germany has refused to expand its existing force of 3,200.

The Bush administration had no realistic hope of getting the NATO allies to send large additional numbers. Yet the Pentagon is so over-stretched in Iraq that it cannot provide them itself. Bush's message — "We expect our NATO allies to shoulder the burden necessary to succeed" — was hardly popular or winning.

Under pressure during the meetings, President Nicholas Sarkozy grandly said France would deploy an additional 1,000 troops. The French Parliament immediately cut this number down to 700. Poland agreed to send another 400 troops. Romania, Spain and Britain pledged to boost their numbers by a

few hundred each. But the immediate goal of 10,000 additional troops was not even close.

### **Shrinking coalition in Iraq**

Former prime ministers Tony Blair of Britain, John Howard of Australia, Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, and Silvio Berlusconi of Italy lost their elected positions due to the enormously unpopular commitment of troops to Iraq and their support of the war. It is now considered political suicide in Western Europe for politicians to increase their troop commitment in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Every battle in both Iraq and Afghanistan confirms that while the U.S./NATO forces may prevail over local resistance forces by the use of overwhelming military power and indiscriminate bombing, they succeed only in increasing the size of the resistance and recruiting more insurgents. Sending more troops only exacerbates the problem.

The small, dependent new members of NATO, being pressed on every side to send ever more soldiers as cannon fodder to Afghanistan, Iraq and other missions, get confused on the command structures. Romanian President Traian Basescu referred to his country's troops in Iraq as NATO forces at a press conference on April 8, 2008. He was publicly corrected with the explanation that NATO does not have a mission in Iraq, where Romanian troops are part of the "International Coalition." The mission is the same — securing an imperialist occupation. Only the name is different.

As other imperialist forces — such as Britain, Spain, Italy, Australia, and Japan — withdraw from Iraq, the shrinking "International Coalition" is carried by ground forces from poorer countries like El Salvador and Tonga, as well as many once part of or allied to the Soviet Union, like Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

The number of non-U.S. troops in Iraq was down from 23,000 in 2003 to less than 10,000 in 2008, and shrinking.

The costs incurred by 20 of the poorer countries are paid by U.S. taxpayers. The cost of more than 160,000 U.S. troops and 100,000 private contractors in Iraq is also paid by the taxes and budget cuts plaguing poor and working people in the U.S.

### **Seeds of NATO's defeat**

NATO is first and foremost a military alliance. Therein lie the seeds of its defeat. Every battle in both Iraq and Afghanistan confirms that while the U.S./NATO forces may prevail over local resistance forces by the use of overwhelming military power and indiscriminate bombing, they succeed only in increasing the size of the resistance and recruiting more insurgents. Sending more troops only exacerbates the problem.

U.S. imperialism is facing an unsolvable contradiction. The political movement must be on the alert. These contradictions can make the billionaire rulers more desperate and more dangerous. As their world economic position slips, along with the almighty U.S. dollar, they are increasingly attracted to military solutions. But maintaining the weapons, bases and troops sucks up an ever-greater share of resources.

### **Militarism is both a life-sustaining corporate subsidy and an endless drain on the economy as a whole.**

With each passing day the cost of endless wars of occupation is becoming clearer and less acceptable to millions of poor and working people in the U.S. and across Europe.

### **U.S. War – Profitable But Unwinnable**

Increasing economic hardships, budget cuts and military casualties are undermining this grand military alliance. NATO is crumbling from below, even as it expands numerically and geographically.

*Published April 20, 2008*



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

**Banner of the U.S. Chapter of the International League of Peoples Struggle. Chicago, May 20, 2012.**

## **Popular Resistance to U.S. Military Base Expansion in the Philippines**

A category of semi-secret U.S. bases is vastly extending the Pentagon's military presence around the globe. Innocuously called CSLs, for Cooperative Security Locations, these bases are a new, covert form of intervention.

The Cooperative Security Locations (CSLs) and other loose security agreements allow the Pentagon to set up facilities and structures, lease warehouses, and maintain roads, airstrips and seaports using a combination of private contractors and local forces.

The Pentagon maintains a network of military bases in about 70 countries. But the new Collective Security Locations are being established in up to 100 other countries.

Senior Editor Adam J. Hebert wrote an article in the August 2006 Air Force Magazine online entitled "Presence, Not Permanence" that described the Pentagon's changing approach to its worldwide bases and its need, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, to reorganize and break out of its "strategically obsolete Cold War straitjacket."

Hebert described how, with the closing of bases, such as in Iceland, the Air Force didn't bring home large numbers of airmen but instead updated its basing structure with a series of new locations and temporary bases.

Hebert further described the world network of military installations as reported in an earlier background briefing by a senior

official of the Defense Department. This official explained that the U.S. had been operating from “5,458 distinct and discrete military installations around the world. ... We don’t need those little pieces of property anymore.”

The Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the U.S., also known as Overseas Basing Commission, was established by Congress to conduct a thorough study on the global realignment of U.S. bases. The commission defined a series of new basing arrangements.

**The CSLs were supposedly envisioned as facilities with little or no permanent U.S. presence, maintained with contractor and/or host nation support.**

They contain prepositioned equipment and are rapidly scalable and expandable. The Overseas Basing Commission also defines Forward Operating Sites as places with prepositioned equipment that can host rotational forces and be a focus for bilateral and regional training.

Other categories, such as Forward Support Location, Preposition Site, and En Route Infrastructure, are defined as new base arrangements beyond the traditional Main Operating Base that has permanently stationed combat forces and command and control structures.

The expanding U.S. military presence throughout East, South and Central Asia appears to be focused on surrounding and attempting to isolate the growing influence of China.

The Pentagon also uses joint military exercises to exert overwhelming influence over the militaries of many smaller and developing nations. Former U.S. Pacific Command head Admiral Thomas Fargo explained in March 2003 that relationships built through exercises and training are “our biggest guarantor of access in time of need.”

There are CSLs in Thailand, throughout South and Central Asia, and in Senegal in West Africa.

Growing popular struggles against the joint military exercises and the CSL bases in the Philippines may have an impact on anti-base struggles around the world.

For over 110 years the Philippines has been U.S. imperialism's prime military outpost and stepping stone to China and the Asian mainland. U.S. bases in the Philippines enabled the U.S. military to control strategic sea lanes.

**Philippine law has banned U.S. bases since a mass movement forced them out in 1992. Yet, as of March 2008, some 30,000 to 50,000 U.S. troops are stationed there and are in constant operation.**

Under the Balikatan joint war exercises, the Pentagon is bringing in logistical equipment and building installations.

According to a Feb. 26, 2008, report from Foreign Policy in Focus, the number of troops, ships, equipment and infrastructure grows each year. The year 2005 saw 24 joint military exercises involving U.S. and Philippine troops. This grew to 37 scheduled exercises in 2006 — or one U.S. military exercise every 10 days.

“Training missions” and military exercises mean a continuing presence of U.S. troops in the Philippines. It also comes with a special name: the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines. The JSOTF-P has been based in the Philippines for more than six years on an ongoing “temporary training mission.” The U.S. stay has become open-ended and, as with the “temporary” CSL bases, its permanence is unofficial and unacknowledged.

Immediately after 9/11 Washington used as an excuse for the re-entry of its forces that the Philippines needed help in fighting a “terrorist threat” from a small, secretive armed group known as Abu Sayyaf. The Manila Times of Aug. 27, 2007, reported that,

“Even as the United States denies plans to set up a military base in the Philippines, the American military is reportedly building a host of projects across Mindanao.”

A Rand Corporation report prepared for the U.S. Air Force entitled “Ungoverned Territories” and available online summarizes U.S. military presence globally. It highlights the Pakistan/Afghanistan border area, East Africa, West Africa, the Caucasus, the Venezuela/Colombia border and Mindanao Island in the Philippines. The U.S. “area of operations” in the Philippines presently covers 8,000 square miles, including the entire island of Mindanao and surrounding islands.

**In the Philippines and many other underdeveloped countries drowning in debt, the “host” country must pay for the U.S. military presence.**

### **Paying for occupation**

According to a Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (available online) that the Philippines signed with the U.S. in November 2002, the Philippine government must supply the Pentagon with all the logistical support needed during the endless military and training “exercises” and “other U.S. military deployments” to maintain their forces in the region. This Support Agreement lists everything from food and water to ammunition, spare parts and components, billeting, transportation, communication, medical services, operation support, training services, repair and maintenance, storage services, port services and construction of “temporary structures.”

Everything the U.S. used to supply for its own use at its former bases in the region, such as the giant Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base, is now to be provided by the impoverished Philippine government on an as-need basis.

The newsletter U.S. Intervention Watch, published by Initiatives for Peace in Mindanao in coordination with U.S. Troops

Out Now! Mindanao Coalition, explains that the widely publicized U.S. humanitarian missions are really military operations and a cover for a permanent military presence.

“The objective is not to provide health care to peasant farmers, but to secure U.S. economic interests in the Asia-Pacific by turning the Philippines into a base of operation. This base will serve to protect U.S. multi-billion dollar investments and promote prospective commerce in the Philippines in oil, energy, minerals and plantations, keep an eye on the Malacca Straits where 25 percent of all globally traded oil passes, and threaten nearby China as its rise to global power continues,” says the newsletter.

**U.S. occupation troops bring attacks, massacres and rapes of the local civilian population.**

**Massacre made in USA**

According to a news article in *Bulatlat*, a weekly Philippine online news magazine, “U.S. troops were present during the February 4, 2008, assault by combined Army and Navy elite forces on Barangay, (village) Ipil, Maimbung, Sulu, that killed eight non-combatants, including an Army soldier home on vacation.”

Sulu’s Governor Abdulsakur Tan said: “This is not the first time that the U.S. troops were reported to have taken part in Philippine military operations in Sulu.” He corroborated the U.S. role in an attack in early 2007, when U.S. troops were supposedly doing “road construction” in the village of Barangay Bato-Bato, Indanan.

Temogen Tulawie, convener of the Concerned Citizens of Sulu and former Jolo councilor, said the latest massacre is part of a larger picture. Starting in 2003, Balikatan military exercises were held in Sulu. This provoked waves of protest from the people, who still remember an historic massacre committed in 1906 when hundreds of Moro resistance fighters were gunned down by U.S. occupation forces.

Kawagib Moro Human Rights Organization and Suara Bangsamoro have filed a case before the U.N. Human Rights Council on the latest massacre.

The U.S. military presence is no longer covert in the Philippines. A mass movement is paying growing attention and mobilizing against this new form of U.S. occupation. As Initiatives for Peace and U.S. Troops Out Now! Mindanao Coalition explained: “Mindanao has a long history of resistance to colonization.”

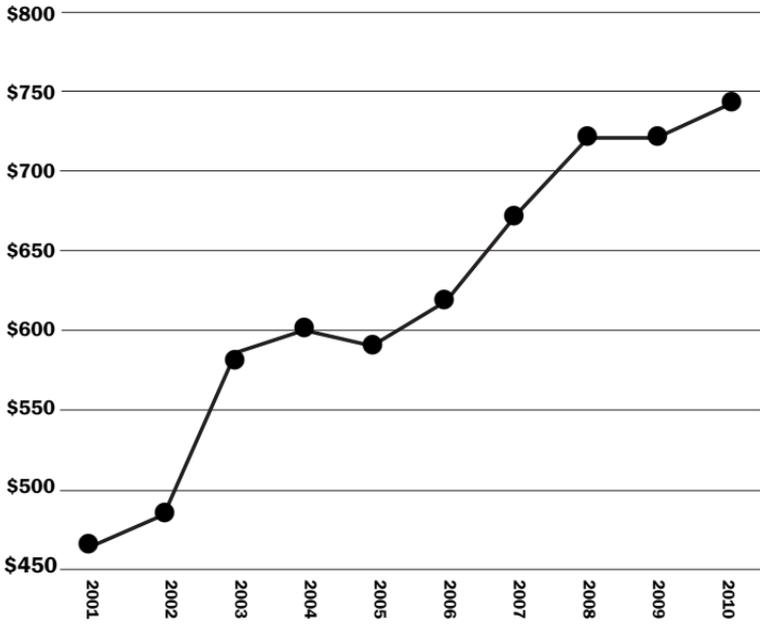
*Published March 29, 2008*

## SECTION II

# **The High Costs of the War Machine**

# Defense Budget

Defense Budget in Billions



## **2010 Pentagon Budget: Largest Yet and Growing**

On Oct. 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the 2010 Defense Authorization Act, the largest military budget in U.S. history.

It is not only the world's largest military budget but is larger than the military expenditures of the whole rest of the world combined. And it is growing nonstop. The 2010 military budget — which doesn't even cover many war-related expenditures — is listed as \$680 billion. In 2009 it was \$651 billion and in 2000 was \$280 billion. It has more than doubled in 10 years.

### **What a contrast to the issue of health care**

The U.S. Congress has been debating a basic health care plan — which every other industrialized country in the world has in some form — for more than six months. There has been intense insurance company lobbying, right-wing threats, and dire warnings that a health care plan must not add one dime to the deficit.

Yet in the midst of this life-and-death debate on medical care for millions of working and poor people who have no health coverage, a gargantuan subsidy to the largest U.S. corporations for military contracts and weapons systems — a real deficit-breaker — is passed with barely any discussion and hardly a news article.

Physicians for a National Health Program estimates that a universal, comprehensive single-payer health plan would cost \$350 billion a year, which would actually be the amount saved through the elimination of all the administrative costs in the

current private health care system — a system that leaves out almost 50 million people.

Compare this to just the cost overruns each year in the military budget. Even President Obama on signing the Pentagon budget said, “The Government Accountability Office, the GAO, has looked into 96 major defense projects from the last year, and found cost overruns that totaled \$296 billion.” (whitehouse.gov, Oct. 28, 2009)

Bernard Madoff’s \$50-billion Ponzi scheme, supposedly the biggest rip-off in history, pales in comparison. Why is there no criminal inquiry into this multibillion-dollar theft? Where are the congressional hearings or media hysteria about \$296 billion in cost overruns? Why are the CEOs of the corporations not brought into court in handcuffs?

The cost overruns are an integral part of the military subsidy to the largest U.S. corporations. They are treated as business as usual. Regardless of the party in office, the Pentagon budget grows, the cost overruns grow and the proportion of domestic spending shrinks.

### **Addicted to war**

This year’s military budget is only the latest example of how the U.S. economy is kept afloat by artificial means. Decades of constantly reviving the capitalist economy through the stimulus of war spending has created an addiction to militarism that U.S. corporations can’t do without. But it is no longer large enough to solve the capitalist problem of overproduction.

The justification given for this annual multibillion-dollar shot in the arm was that it would help to cushion or totally avoid a capitalist recession and could curb unemployment. But as Marxist theoretician Sam Marcy warned in 1980 in *Generals Over the White House*, over a protracted period more and more of this stimulant is needed. Eventually it turns into its opposite

and becomes a massive depressant that sickens and rots the entire society.

The root of the problem is that as technology becomes more productive, workers get a smaller and smaller share of what they produce. The U.S. economy is more and more dependent on the stimulant of super-profits and multibillion-dollar military cost overruns to soak up a larger and larger share of what is produced. This is an essential part of the constant redistribution of wealth away from the workers and into the pockets of the super-rich.

According to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, U.S. military spending is now significantly more, in 2009 inflation-adjusted dollars, than it was during the peak years of the Korean War (1952: \$604 billion), the Vietnam War (1968: \$513 billion) or the 1980s Reagan-era military buildup (1985: \$556 billion). Yet it is no longer enough to keep the U.S. economy afloat.

Even forcing oil-rich countries dependent on the U.S. to become debtor nations with endless weapons purchases can't solve the problem. More than two-thirds of all weapons sold globally in 2008 were from U.S. military companies. (Reuters, Sept. 6, 2009)

While a huge military program was able in the 1930s to pull the U.S. economy out of a devastating collapse, over a long period this artificial stimulus undermines capitalist processes.

Economist Seymour Melman, in books such as *Pentagon Capitalism, Profits without Production* and *The Permanent War Economy: American Capitalism in Decline*, warned of the deterioration of the U.S. economy and the living standards of millions.

Melman and other progressive economists argued for a rational "economic conversion" or the transition from military to civilian production by military industries. They explained how one B-1 bomber or Trident submarine could pay the salaries of thousands of teachers, provide scholarships or day care or rebuild roads. Charts and graphs showed that the military budget employs far fewer workers than the same funds spent on civilian needs.

These were all good and reasonable ideas, except that capitalism is not rational. In its insatiable drive to maximize profits it will always choose immediate super-profit handouts over even the best interests of its own long-term survival.

### **No “peace dividend”**

The high expectations, after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, that billions of dollars could now be turned toward a “peace dividend” crashed against the continued astronomical growth of the Pentagon budget. This grim reality has so demoralized and overwhelmed progressive economists that today almost no attention is paid to “economic conversion” or the role of militarism in the capitalist economy, even though it is far larger today than at the highest levels of the Cold War.

**The multibillion-dollar annual military subsidy that bourgeois economists have relied on since the Great Depression to prime the pump and begin again the cycle of capitalist expansion is no longer enough.**

Once corporations became dependent on multibillion-dollar handouts, their appetite became insatiable. In 2009, in an effort to stave off a meltdown of the global capitalist economy, more than \$700 billion was handed over to the largest banks. And that was just the beginning. The bailout of the banks is now in the trillions of dollars.

Even \$600 billion to \$700 billion a year in military spending can no longer restart the capitalist economy or generate prosperity. Yet corporate America can't do without it.

### **Military budget threatens to devour all social funding**

The military budget has grown so large that it now threatens to overwhelm and devour all social funding. Its sheer weight is squeezing out funding for every human need. U.S. cities are collapsing. The infrastructure of bridges, roads, dams, canals and

tunnels is disintegrating. Twenty-five percent of U.S. drinking water is considered “poor.” Unemployment is officially reaching 10 percent and in reality is double that. Black and Latino/a youth unemployment is more than 50 percent. Fourteen million children in the U.S. are living in households below the poverty level.

The announced 2010 military budget of \$680 billion is really only about half of the annual cost of U.S. military expenditures.

These expenditures are so large that there is a concerted effort to hide many military expenses in other budget items. The War Resisters League annual analysis listed the real 2009 U.S. military expenses at \$1,449 billion, not the official budget of \$651 billion. Wikipedia, citing several different sources, came up with a total military budget of \$1,144 billion. Regardless of who is counting, it is beyond dispute that the military budget actually exceeds \$1 trillion a year.

The National Priorities Project, the Center for Defense Information and the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation analyze and expose many hidden military expenses tucked into other parts of the total U.S. budget.

For example, veterans’ benefits totaling \$91 billion are not included in the Pentagon budget. Military pensions totaling \$48 billion are stuck into the Treasury Department budget. The Energy Department hides \$18 billion in nuclear weapons programs in its budget. The \$38 billion financing of foreign arms sales is included in the State Department budget. One of the largest hidden items is the interest on debt incurred in past wars, which totals between \$237 billion and \$390 billion. This is really an endless subsidy to the banks, which are intimately linked to the military industries.

**Every part of these bloated budgets is expected to grow by 5 percent to 10 percent a year, while federal funding to states and cities is shrinking by 10 percent to 15 percent annually, leading to deficit crises.**

According to the Office of Management and Budget, 55 percent of the total 2010 U.S. budget will go to the military. More than half! Meanwhile, federal block grants to states and cities for vital human services — schools, teacher training, home-care programs, school lunches, basic infrastructure maintenance for drinking water, sewage treatment, bridges, tunnels and roads — are shrinking.

### **Militarism breeds repression**

The most dangerous aspect of the growth of the military is the insidious penetration of its political influence into all areas of society. It is the institution that is the most removed from popular control and the most driven to military adventure and repression. Retired generals rotate into corporate boardrooms, become talking heads in major media outlets, and high-paid lobbyists, consultants and politicians.

It is not a coincidence that along with having the world's largest military machine, the U.S. has the world's largest prison population. The prison-industrial complex is the only growth industry. According to the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than 7.3 million adults were on probation or parole or incarcerated in 2007. More than 70 percent of the incarcerated are Black, Latino/a, Native and other people of color. Black adults are four times as likely as whites to be imprisoned.

Just as in the military, with its hundreds of thousands of contractors and mercenaries, the drive to maximize profits has led to the growing privatization of the prison system.

The number of prisoners has grown relentlessly. There are 2.5 times more people in the prison system today than 25 years ago. As U.S. capitalism is less and less able to provide jobs, job training or education, the only solutions offered are prisons or the military, wreaking havoc on individuals, families and communities.

*Published November 7, 2009*

## **The Deficit, Budget Cuts and the 2011 Pentagon Budget**

The money the U.S. government will spend this year on the Pentagon and its wars, past and present, is approaching the total of the budgets of all 50 U.S. states combined.

Even as funding for education, health care, parks and recreation, senior centers, environmental protection, and all the other vital services provided by federal, state and local governments is being cut, the Pentagon budget is continuing to grow.

In the current fiscal year (FY2011), the budget for the Department of Defense, including what is to be spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, comes to \$876 billion including supplemental funds for Iraq and Afghanistan — a big increase over last year.

However, this is only part of the enormous cost of U.S. militarism. Add to that the \$522 billion being spent this year to cover the cost of past wars, including veterans' benefits and interest on the debts incurred to pay for war, and the total amount becomes \$1.39 trillion. (War Resisters League)

The money that all 50 state governments spend for everything they do is expected to add up to \$1.43 trillion this year. It may not get that high. State budgets are being drastically shrunk as federal monies and tax revenues dry up; new cuts are being announced every week.

Increasingly the billions wasted on war are aggravating the deteriorating conditions for tens of millions of workers and their families. It is up to the most determined political activists to connect the dots and make the connections widely known.

When protesters at the closing of a hospital, school or library chant: “Health care, not war!” “Education, not war!” “Jobs, not war!” or “Feed the people, not the Pentagon!” these are more than just slogans. They reflect the reality of every state and city facing an unsolvable budget crisis and cuts at a time when the only authorized funding increases are for the military budget and repression at home.

The script is the same everywhere. Workers are told that due to a sharp decline in tax revenue, there is no money for state, county and city projects. What isn’t said is that the decline in taxes is caused by a capitalist economic crisis, where the bosses deal with the collapse of the markets by throwing workers out of their jobs.

Hospitals, schools, libraries, recreation centers, after-school programs and health clinics are forced to close or dramatically cut their staffs, hours and programs for lack of funding, not for lack of need. But there are no moves to freeze interest payments on tax-exempt bonds held by banks and multi-millionaires.

Of course, a dramatic increase in funds from the federal government could immediately ease this crisis that the working class is facing. A massive federal jobs program and an emergency moratorium on housing foreclosures and evictions are needed.

The federal government has instead committed \$10.5 trillion to bailing out the banks. And on Feb. 1, 2010, President Barack Obama announced that this year’s federal budget contained a three-year hard freeze on all nonmilitary discretionary funding.

The announcement drew scant media attention at the time. But the impact is being felt now and the pain of the drastic freeze will be increasingly felt. Because of inflation and population increases, the three-year freeze is actually an annual and cumulative cut in funds to states and cities.

**With a decline of 10 percent in revenue from state and local taxes, every governor, mayor and city council is claiming that it is impossible to solve their budget**

**gaps except by attacking the living standards of working people and the poor. Union contracts are being shredded and public workers illegally furloughed in total violation of these legal documents.**

Social programs will face further cuts than just those caused by inflation because almost half of military spending is hidden in discretionary funding. President Obama's announcement made it clear that there would be no freeze in military funding. Protected multibillion-dollar programs include foreign arms sales, nuclear weapons maintenance and policy-driven foreign assistance programs.

### **Capitalism and militarism**

This budget freeze, announced as a measure to rein in the deficit, will supposedly save \$250 billion over 10 years. That is less than 3 percent of the \$9 trillion that is projected to be added to the national debt during this period.

Despite all the promises and all the hype, this freeze in discretionary funding confirms that there are no plans to create millions of jobs, halt millions of scheduled foreclosures or reconstruct the deteriorating infrastructure.

The only planned increases are in the trillions of dollars for high-tech weapons systems that generate superprofits for the giant military corporations. The military budget is projected to grow by at least 5 percent a year. There was no congressional or corporate media opposition to this multibillion-dollar deficit buster.

The \$250 billion saved over 10 years in the freeze of discretionary funding will be quickly squandered. The Pentagon plans to spend \$240 billion on 2,400 new Joint Strike Fighter planes, at \$100 million a plane.

And it will be gobbled up in one year in military cost overruns. President Obama on signing the 2010 Pentagon budget said, "The Government Accountability Office, the GAO, has looked into 96

major defense projects from the last year, and found cost overruns that totaled \$296 billion.” (whitehouse.gov, Oct. 28, 2009)

A big chunk of every state and city budget is interest payments to banks and bondholders for past projects. These interest payments must be made on time and in full or the bankers threaten their credit rating and all future loans, creating a worse financial crisis.

**The federal budget deficit is caused by the hundreds of billions handed out annually over decades to the military corporations and the trillions of dollars handed to the banks to guarantee their profits. The debt also ballooned when the government drastically cut taxes on the rich.**

In the face of this crisis for the working class, it is essential that Marxists explain in all of their literature and campaigns some basic facts of capitalism. The workers create all the fabulous wealth of the capitalist system. The economic crisis is not caused by giving the workers too much. It is caused by the unplanned overproduction of goods that are too numerous to be sold at a profit by the capitalist owners. Even spending trillions of dollars on military expenditures is no longer enough to sop up this overproduction.

Another part of federal, state and city budgets that the capitalist decision makers will not cut is expenses for police, prisons and courts. This repressive role of the capitalist state functions at every level, from 1,000 military bases around the world to police and cameras on every corner. It is an indispensable part of protecting profits, not human lives.

### **Federal budget freeze**

It is essential for political activists to look closely at what drastic cuts are being projected to begin to plan counteroffensives with the workers who will be most directly impacted.

The federal budget freeze will cause immediate and continuing reductions in agencies such as Health and Human Services, which funds low-income preschool Head Start programs; aid to pregnant women, infants and seniors; food and drug safety; and disease prevention. It will impact Housing and Urban Development, which provides funds for affordable housing, antipoverty programs and infrastructure development. These two departments, along with transportation, agriculture and energy, receive a combined \$250 billion in federal funding.

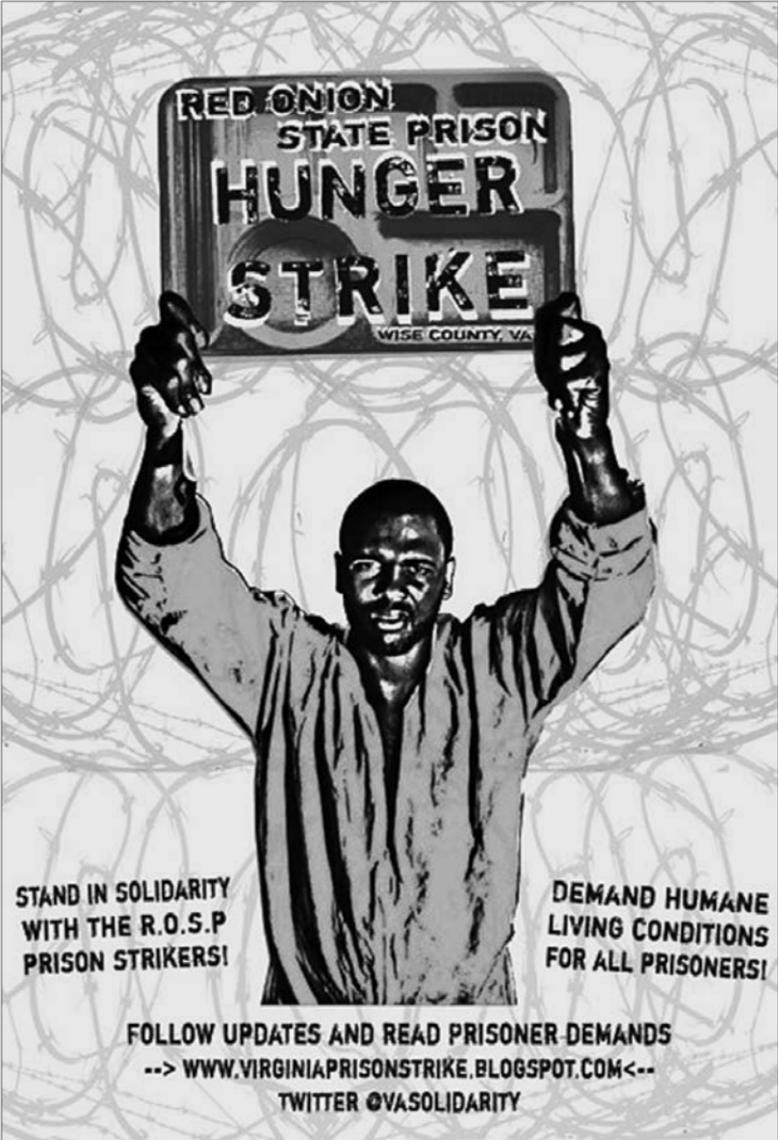
A freeze in the Department of Agriculture immediately impacts food stamp programs and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Department of Transportation will have even fewer funds for infrastructure maintenance of bridges, roads, airports, pipelines and hazardous waste systems.

Also targeted by the federal funds freeze are the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks Service, the National Science Foundation and the Army Corps of Engineers flood control programs.

The Pentagon budget is not only an enormous waste of the resources of the planet. It also funds the slaughter of peoples struggling to control their own destiny and its doomsday weapons systems pollute the whole environment.

Military expenditures cannot save the capitalist system. But they can ruin millions of lives.

*Published June 10, 2010*



**RED OXION  
STATE PRISON  
HUNGER  
STRIKE  
WISE COUNTY, VA**

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WITH THE R.O.S.P  
PRISON STRIKERS!**

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## **The Pentagon and Slave Labor in U.S. Prisons**

Prisoners earning 23 cents an hour in U.S. federal prisons are manufacturing high-tech electronic components for Patriot Advanced Capability 3 missiles, launchers for TOW (Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided) anti-tank missiles, and other guided missile systems. A March 2011 article by journalist and financial researcher Justin Rohrlich of World in Review is worth a closer look at the full implications of this ominous development. ([www.minyanville.com](http://www.minyanville.com))

**The expanding use of prison industries, which pay slave wages as a way to increase profits for giant military corporations, is a frontal attack on the rights of all workers.**

Prison labor — with no union protection, overtime pay, vacation days, pensions, benefits, health and safety protection, or Social Security withholding — also makes complex components for McDonnell Douglas/Boeing's F-15 fighter aircraft, the General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin , and Bell/Textron's Cobra helicopter. Prison labor produces night-vision goggles, body armor, camouflage uniforms, radio and communication devices, and lighting systems and components for 30-mm to 300-mm battleship anti-aircraft guns, along with land mine sweepers and electro-optical equipment for the BAE Systems Bradley Fighting Vehicle's laser rangefinder. Prisoners recycle toxic electronic equipment and overhaul military vehicles.

Labor in federal prisons is contracted out by UNICOR, previously known as Federal Prison Industries, a quasi-public, for-profit corporation run by the Bureau of Prisons. In 14 prison factories, more than 3,000 prisoners manufacture electronic equipment for land, sea and airborne communication. UNICOR is now the U.S. government's 39th largest contractor, with 110 factories at 79 federal penitentiaries.

The majority of UNICOR's products and services are on contract to orders from the Department of Defense. Giant multinational corporations purchase parts assembled at some of the lowest labor rates in the world, then resell the finished weapons components at the highest rates of profit. For example, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Corporation subcontract components, then assemble and sell advanced weapons systems to the Pentagon.

### **Increased profits, unhealthy workplaces**

However, the Pentagon is not the only buyer. U.S. corporations are the world's largest arms dealers, while weapons and aircraft are the largest U.S. export. The U.S. State Department, Department of Defense and diplomats pressure NATO members and dependent countries around the world into multibillion-dollar weapons purchases that generate further corporate profits, often leaving many countries mired in enormous debt.

**But the fact that the capitalist state has found yet another way to drastically undercut union workers' wages and ensure still higher profits to military corporations — whose weapons wreak such havoc around the world — is an ominous development.**

According to CNN Money, the U.S. highly skilled and well-paid "aerospace workforce has shrunk by 40 percent in the past 20 years. Like many other industries, the defense sector has been quietly outsourcing production (and jobs) to cheaper labor markets overseas." (Feb. 24, 2011) It seems that with prison labor,

these jobs are also being outsourced domestically.

Meanwhile, dividends and options to a handful of top stockholders and CEO compensation packages at top military corporations exceed the total payment of wages to the more than 23,000 imprisoned workers who produce UNICOR parts.

The prison work is often dangerous, toxic and unprotected. At FCC Victorville, a federal prison located at an old U.S. airbase, prisoners clean, overhaul and reassemble tanks and military vehicles returned from combat and coated in toxic spent ammunition, depleted uranium dust and chemicals.

A federal lawsuit by prisoners, food service workers and family members at FCI Marianna, a minimum security women's prison in Florida, cited that toxic dust containing lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic poisoned those who worked at UNICOR's computer and electronic recycling factory.

Prisoners there worked covered in dust, without safety equipment, protective gear, air filtration or masks. The suit explained that the toxic dust caused severe damage to nervous and reproductive systems, lung damage, bone disease, kidney failure, blood clots, cancers, anxiety, headaches, fatigue, memory lapses, skin lesions, and circulatory and respiratory problems. This is one of eight federal prison recycling facilities — employing 1,200 prisoners — run by UNICOR.

After years of complaints the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Occupational Health Service concurred in October 2008 that UNICOR has jeopardized the lives and safety of untold numbers of prisoners and staff. (Prison Legal News, January 2009)

### **Racism & U.S. prisons**

The U.S. imprisons more people per capita than any country in the world. With less than 5 percent of the world population, the U.S. imprisons more than 25 percent of all people imprisoned in the world.

There are more than 2.3 million prisoners in federal, state and local prisons in the U.S. Twice as many people are under probation and parole. Many tens of thousands of other prisoners include undocumented immigrants facing deportation, prisoners awaiting sentencing and youthful offenders in categories considered reform or detention.

The racism that pervades every aspect of life in capitalist society — from jobs, income and housing to education and opportunity — is most brutally reflected by who is caught up in the U.S. prison system.

More than 60 percent of U.S. prisoners are people of color. Seventy percent of those being sentenced under the three strikes law in California — which requires mandatory sentences of 25 years to life after three felony convictions — are people of color. Nationally, 39 percent of African-American men in their 20s are in prison, on probation or on parole. The U.S. imprisons more people than South Africa did under apartheid. (Linn Washington, *Incarceration Nation*)

The U.S. prison population is not only the largest in the world — it is relentlessly growing. The U.S. prison population is more than five times what it was 30 years ago.

In 1980, when Ronald Reagan became president, there were 400,000 prisoners in the U.S. Today the number exceeds 2.3 million. In California the prison population soared from 23,264 in 1980 to 170,000 in 2010. The Pennsylvania prison population climbed from 8,243 to 51,487 in those same years. There are now more African-American men in prison, on probation or on parole than were enslaved in 1850, before the Civil War began, according to Law Professor Michelle Alexander in the book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

Today a staggering 1-in-100 adults in the U.S. are living behind bars. But this crime, which breaks families and destroys lives, is not evenly distributed. In major urban areas one-half of

Black men have criminal records. This means life-long, legalized discrimination in student loans, financial assistance, access to public housing, mortgages, the right to vote and, of course, the possibility of being hired for a job.

It is not only federal prisons that contract out prison labor to top corporations. State prisons that used forced prison labor in plantations, laundries and highway chain gangs increasingly seek to sell prison labor to corporations trolling the globe in search of the cheapest possible labor.

One agency advertises its services: “Thousands of offenders gain work experience and training as they produce high quality, competitively-priced products. This translates into enormous benefits for taxpayers, the offenders who work and learn in CI, and for you, our customers.” (From Correctional Institute at [www.washington.cci.com](http://www.washington.cci.com))

IBM, Texas Instruments and Dell get circuit boards made by Texas prisoners. Tennessee inmates sew jeans for Kmart and JCPenney. Tens of thousands of youth flipping hamburgers for minimum wages at McDonald’s wear uniforms sewn by prison workers, who are forced to work for much less.

**Major corporations profiting from the slave labor of prisoners include Motorola, Compaq, Honeywell, Microsoft, Boeing, Revlon, Chevron, TWA, Victoria’s Secret and Eddie Bauer.**

In California, as in many states, prisoners who refuse to work are moved to disciplinary housing and lose canteen privileges as well as “good time” credit, which slices hard time off their sentences.

Systematic abuse, beatings, prolonged isolation and sensory deprivation, and lack of medical care make U.S. prison conditions among the worst in the world. Ironically, working under grueling conditions for pennies an hour is treated as a “perk” for good behavior.

In December 2010, Georgia inmates went on strike and refused to leave their cells at six prisons for more than a week. In one of the largest prison protests in U.S. history, prisoners spoke of being forced to work seven days a week for no pay. Prisoners were beaten if they refused to work.

In cities and states across the U.S., hospitals, medical care facilities, schools, cafeterias, road maintenance, water supply services, sewage departments, sanitation, airports and tens of thousands of social programs that receive public funding are being contracted out to for-profit corporations. Anything publicly owned and paid for by generations of past workers' taxes — from libraries to concert halls and parks — is being sold or leased at fire sale prices.

**In the ruthless search to maximize profits and grab hold of every possible source of income, almost every public agency and social service is being outsourced to private for-profit contractors.**

All this is motivated and lobbied for by right-wing think tanks like that set up by Koch Industries and their owners, Charles and David Koch, as a way to cut costs, lower wages and pensions, and undercut public service unions.

The most gruesome privatizations are the hundreds of for-profit prisons being established.

The inmate population in private for-profit prisons tripled between 1987 and 2007. By 2007 there were 264 such prison facilities, housing almost 99,000 adult prisoners. ([www.aclu-ohio.org/issues/criminaljustice/PrisonsforProfit2011\\_04.pdf](http://www.aclu-ohio.org/issues/criminaljustice/PrisonsforProfit2011_04.pdf)) Companies operating such facilities include the Corrections Corporation of America, the GEO Group Inc. and Community Education Centers.

Prison bonds provide a lucrative return for capitalist investors such as Merrill-Lynch, Shearson Lehman, American Express and Allstate. Prisoners are traded from one state to another based on the most profitable arrangements.

## **Militarism and prisons**

Hand in hand with the military-industrial complex, U.S. imperialism has created a massive prison-industrial complex that generates billions of dollars annually for businesses and industries profiting from mass incarceration.

For decades workers in the U.S. have been assured that they also benefit from imperialist looting by the giant multinational corporations. But today more than half the federal budget is absorbed by the costs of maintaining the military machine and the corporations who are guaranteed profits for equipping the Pentagon. That is the only budget category in federal spending that is guaranteed to increase by at least 5 percent a year — at a time when every social program is being cut to the bone.

The sheer economic weight of militarism seeps into the fabric of society at every level. It fuels racism and reaction. The political influence of the Pentagon and the giant military and oil corporations — with their thousands of high-paid lobbyists, media pundits and network of links into every police force in the country — fuels growing repression and an expanding prison population.

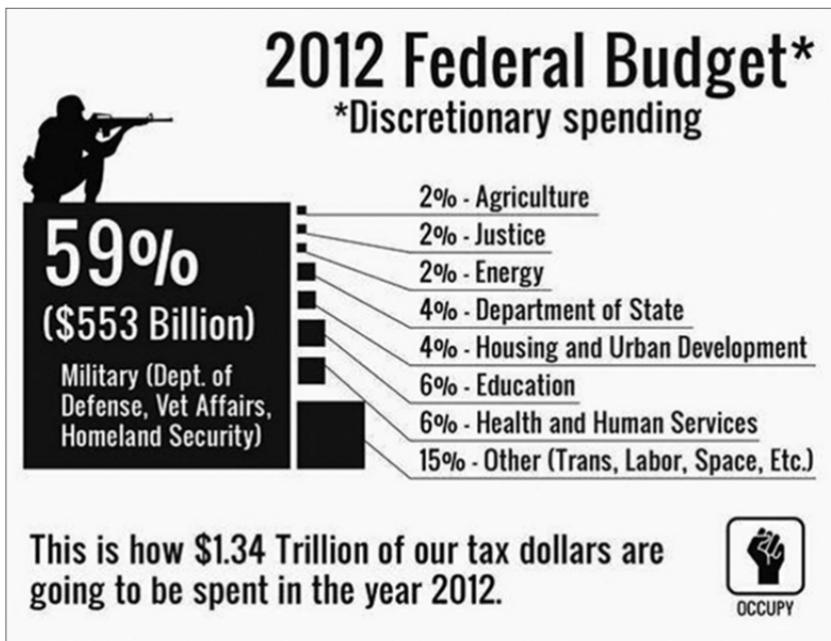
The military, oil and banking conglomerates, interlinked with the police and prisons, have a stranglehold on the U.S. capitalist economy and reins of political power, regardless of who is president or what political party is in office. The very survival of these global corporations is based on immediate maximization of profits. They are driven to seize every resource and source of potential profits.

Thoroughly rational solutions are proposed whenever the human and economic cost of militarism and repression is discussed. The billions spent for war and fantastically destructive weapons systems could provide five to seven times more jobs if spent on desperately needed social services, education and rebuilding essential infrastructure. Or it could provide free university education, considering the fact that it costs far more to imprison people than to educate them.

Why aren't such reasonable solutions ever chosen? Military contracts generate far larger guaranteed profits to the military and the oil industries, which have a decisive influence on the U.S. economy.

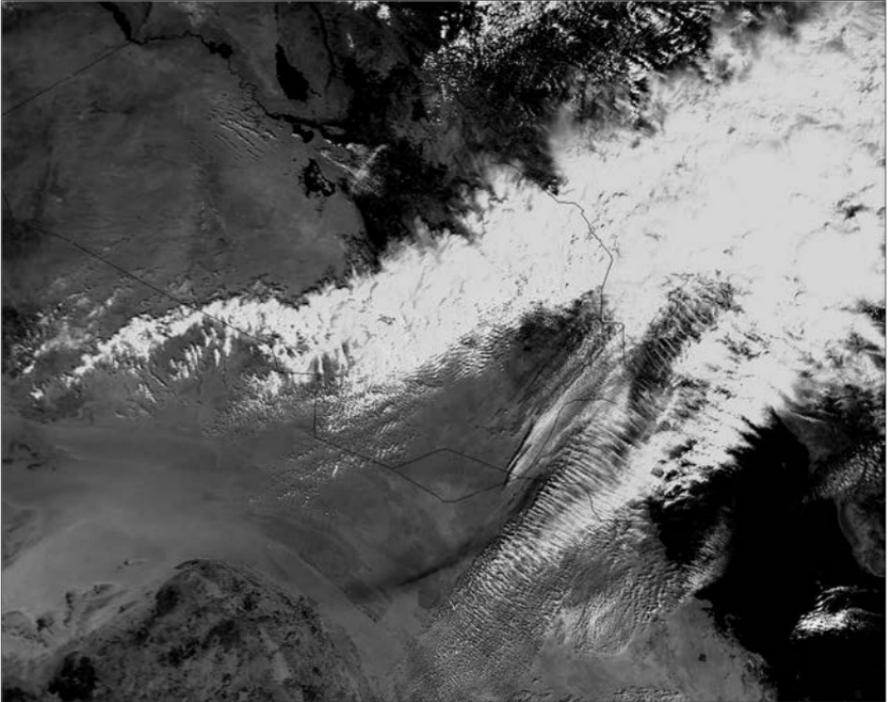
The prison-industrial complex — including the prison system, prison labor, private prisons, police and repressive apparatus, and their continuing expansion — are an increasing source of profit and are reinforced by the climate of racism and reaction. Most rational and socially useful solutions are not considered viable options.

*Published June 6 and 11, 2011*



## SECTION III

# **The Pentagon's War on the Environment**



NOAA

**March 22, 2003 — NOAA polar-orbiting satellites continue to detect oil well fires in Iraq. The plumes visible in the NOAA satellite imagery are consistent with NOAA's experience in detecting oil fires in the past from satellites in space.**

## **The Pentagon's Role in Environmental Catastrophe**

In evaluating the 2009 U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen — with more than 15,000 participants from 192 countries, including more than 100 heads of state, as well as 100,000 demonstrators in the streets — it is important to ask: How is it possible that the worst polluter of carbon dioxide and other toxic emissions on the planet is not a focus of any conference discussion or proposed restrictions?

By every measure, the Pentagon is the largest institutional user of petroleum products and energy in general. Yet the Pentagon has a blanket exemption in all international climate agreements.

The Pentagon wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; its secret operations in Pakistan; its equipment on more than 1,000 U.S. bases around the world; its 6,000 facilities in the U.S.; all NATO operations; its aircraft carriers, jet aircraft, weapons testing, training and sales will not be counted against U.S. greenhouse gas limits or included in any count.

The Feb. 17, 2007, Energy Bulletin detailed the oil consumption just for the Pentagon's aircraft, ships, ground vehicles and facilities that made it the single-largest oil consumer in the world. At the time, the U.S. Navy had 285 combat and support ships and around 4,000 operational aircraft. The U.S. Army had 28,000 armored vehicles, 140,000 High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles, more than 4,000 combat helicopters, several hundred fixed-wing aircraft and 187,493 fleet vehicles. Except

for 80 nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers, which spread radioactive pollution, all their other vehicles run on oil.

Even according to rankings in the 2006 CIA World Factbook, only 35 countries (out of 210 in the world) consume more oil per day than the Pentagon.

The U.S. military officially uses 320,000 barrels of oil a day. However, this total does not include fuel consumed by contractors or fuel consumed in leased and privatized facilities. Nor does it include the enormous energy and resources used to produce and maintain their death-dealing equipment or the bombs, grenades or missiles they fire.

Steve Kretzmann, director of Oil Change International, reports: “The Iraq war was responsible for at least 141 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2e</sub>) from March 2003 through December 2007. ... [T]he war emits more than 60 percent of all countries. ... [T]his information is not readily available ... because military emissions abroad are exempt from national reporting requirements under U.S. law and the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change.” (www.naomiklein.org, Dec. 10, 2009) Most scientists blame carbon dioxide emissions for greenhouse gases and climate change.

Barry Sanders in his new book *The Green Zone: The Environmental Costs of Militarism* says that “the greatest single assault on the environment, on all of us around the globe, comes from one agency ... the Armed Forces of the United States.”

**Just how did the Pentagon come to be exempt from climate agreements? At the time of the Kyoto Accords negotiations, the U.S. demanded as a provision of signing that all of its military operations worldwide and all operations it participates in with the U.N. and/or NATO be completely exempted from measurement or reductions.**

After securing this gigantic concession, the Bush administration then refused to sign the accords.

In a May 18, 1998, article entitled “National security and military policy issues involved in the Kyoto treaty,” Dr. Jeffrey Salmon described the Pentagon’s position. He quotes then-Secretary of Defense William Cohen’s 1997 annual report to Congress: “DoD strongly recommends that the United States insist on a national security provision in the climate change Protocol now being negotiated.” ([www.marshall.org](http://www.marshall.org))

According to Salmon, this national security provision was put forth in a draft calling for “complete military exemption from greenhouse gas emissions limits. The draft includes multilateral operations such as NATO- and U.N.-sanctioned activities, but it also includes actions related very broadly to national security, which would appear to comprehend all forms of unilateral military actions and training for such actions.”

Salmon also quoted Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat, who headed the U.S. delegation in Kyoto. Eizenstat reported that “every requirement the Defense Department and uniformed military who were at Kyoto by my side said they wanted, they got. This is self-defense, peacekeeping, humanitarian relief.”

Although the U.S. had already received these assurances in the negotiations, the U.S. Congress passed an explicit provision guaranteeing U.S. military exemption. Inter Press Service reported on May 20, 1998: “U.S. law makers, in the latest blow to international efforts to halt global warming, today exempted U.S. military operations from the Kyoto agreement which lays out binding commitments to reduce ‘greenhouse gas’ emissions. The House of Representatives passed an amendment to next year’s military authorization bill that ‘prohibits the restriction of armed forces under the Kyoto Protocol.’ ”

In 2009 in Copenhagen the same agreements and guidelines on greenhouse gases still hold. Yet it is extremely difficult to find even a mention of this glaring omission.

According to environmental journalist Johanna Peace, military activities will continue to be exempt from an executive order

signed by President Barack Obama that calls for federal agencies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. Peace states, “The military accounts for a full 80 percent of the federal government’s energy demand.” ([www.insideclimateneeds.org](http://www.insideclimateneeds.org), Sept. 1, 2009)

### **More than emissions**

Besides emitting carbon dioxide, U.S. military operations release other highly toxic and radioactive materials into the air, water and soil.

U.S. weapons made with depleted uranium have spread tens of thousands of pounds of microparticles of radioactive and highly toxic waste throughout the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans.

The U.S. sells land mines and cluster bombs that are a major cause of delayed explosions, maiming and disabling especially peasant farmers and rural peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For example, Israel dropped more than 1 million U.S.-provided cluster bombs on Lebanon during its 2006 invasion.

The U.S. war in Vietnam left large areas so contaminated with the Agent Orange herbicide that today, more than 35 years later, dioxin contamination is 300 to 400 times higher than “safe” levels. Severe birth defects and high rates of cancer resulting from environmental contamination are continuing into a third generation.

**The 1991 U.S. war in Iraq, followed by 13 years of starvation sanctions, the 2003 U.S. invasion and continuing occupation, has transformed the region — which has a 5,000-year history as a Middle East breadbasket — into an environmental catastrophe.**

Iraq’s arable and fertile land has become a desert wasteland where the slightest wind whips up a dust storm. A former food exporter, Iraq now imports 80 percent of its food. The Iraqi Agriculture Ministry estimates that 90 percent of the land suffers from severe desertification.

## **Environmental war at home**

Moreover, the Defense Department has routinely resisted orders from the Environmental Protection Agency to clean up contaminated U.S. bases. (Washington Post, June 30, 2008) Pentagon military bases top the Superfund list of the most polluted places, as contaminants seep into drinking water aquifers and soil.

The Pentagon has also fought EPA efforts to set new pollution standards on two toxic chemicals widely found on military sites: perchlorate, found in propellant for rockets and missiles; and trichloroethylene, a degreaser for metal parts.

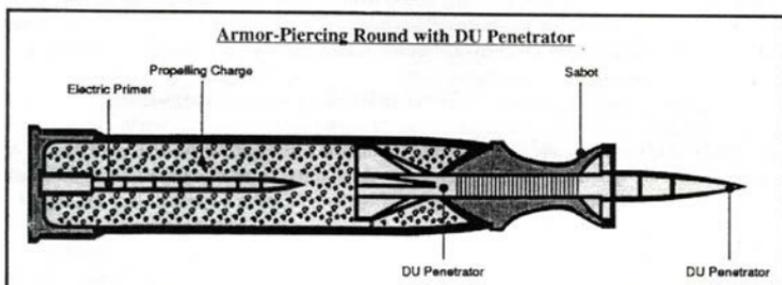
Trichloroethylene is the most widespread water contaminant in the country, seeping into aquifers across California, New York, Texas, Florida and elsewhere. More than 1,000 military sites in the U.S. are contaminated with the chemical. The poorest communities, especially communities of color, are the most severely impacted by this poisoning.

U.S. testing of nuclear weapons in the U.S. Southwest and on South Pacific islands has contaminated millions of acres of land and water with radiation. Mountains of radioactive and toxic uranium tailings have been left on Indigenous land in the Southwest. More than 1,000 uranium mines have been abandoned on Navajo reservations in Arizona and New Mexico.

Around the world, on past and currently operating bases in Puerto Rico, the Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Japan, Nicaragua, Panama and the former Yugoslavia, rusting barrels of chemicals and solvents and millions of rounds of ammunition are criminally abandoned by the Pentagon.

The best way to dramatically clean up the environment is to shut down the Pentagon. What is needed to combat climate change is a thoroughgoing system change.

*Published December 16, 2009*



**Basra, Iraq, 2005**

**Iraqi woman holds  
photo of child.  
May 25, 2007.**



## **U.S. Invasion Turned Iraqi Cities Hot with Depleted Uranium**

Has the U.S. use of depleted-uranium weapons turned Iraq into a radioactive danger area for both Iraqis and occupation troops?

This question has already had serious consequences. In hot spots in downtown Baghdad months after the March 2003 invasion, reporters have measured radiation levels that are 1,000 to 1,900 times higher than normal background radiation levels.

It has also opened a debate in the Netherlands parliament and media as 1,100 Dutch troops in Kuwait prepare to enter Iraq as part of the U.S./British-led occupation forces. The Dutch are concerned about the danger of radioactive poisoning and radiation sickness in Iraq.

Washington has assured the Dutch government that it used no DU weapons near Al-Samawah, the town where Dutch troops will be stationed. But Dutch journalists and anti-war forces have already found holes in the U.S. stories, according to an article on the Radio Free Europe website.

DU-caused radiation had already raised alarms in Europe after studies showed increased rates of cancers, respiratory ailments and other disabilities of occupation troops from NATO countries stationed in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

In general, the health and environmental dangers of weapons made with DU radioactive waste have received far more attention in Europe than in the U.S.

In this year's war on Iraq, the Pentagon used its radioactive arsenal mainly in the urban centers, rather than in desert battle-

fields as in 1991. Many hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people and U.S. soldiers, along with British, Polish, Japanese and Dutch soldiers sent to join the occupation, will suffer the consequences. The real extent of injuries, chronic illness, long-term disabilities and genetic birth defects won't be apparent for five to 10 years.

**By now, half of all the 697,000 U.S. soldiers involved in the 1991 war have reported serious illnesses.**

According to the American Gulf War Veterans Association, more than 30 percent of these soldiers are chronically ill and are receiving disability benefits from the Veterans Administration. Such a high occurrence of various symptoms has led to the illnesses being named Gulf War Syndrome.

This number of disabled veterans is shockingly high. Most are in their mid-thirties and should be in the prime of health. Before sending troops to the Gulf region, the military had already sifted out those with disabilities or chronic health problems from asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, cancers and birth defects.

### **A long-term problem**

The impact of tons of radioactive waste polluting major urban centers may seem a distant problem to Iraqis now trying to survive in the chaos of military occupation. They must cope with power outages during the intense heat of summer, door-to-door searches, arbitrary arrests, civilians routinely shot at roadblocks, outbreaks of cholera and dysentery from untreated water, untreated sewage and uncollected garbage, more than half the work force unemployed, and a lack of food — which before the war was distributed by the Baathist regime.

But along with these current threats are long-range problems. Around the world a growing number of scientific organizations and studies have linked Gulf War Syndrome and the high rate of assorted and mysterious sicknesses to radiation poisoning from weapons made with depleted uranium.

Scott Peterson, a staff writer for the Christian Science Monitor, reported on May 15 about taking Geiger counter readings at several sites in Baghdad. Near the Republican Palace where U.S. troops stood guard and over 1,000 employees walked in and out of the building, his radiation readings were the “hottest” in Iraq, at nearly 1,900 times background radiation levels. Spent shell casings still littered the ground.

At a roadside vegetable stand selling fresh bunches of parsley, mint and onions outside Baghdad, children played on a burnt-out Iraqi tank. The reporter’s Geiger counter registered nearly 1,000 times normal background radiation. The U.S. uses armor-piercing shells coated with DU to destroy tanks.

The Aug. 4, 2003, the Seattle Post Intelligencer reported elevated radiation levels at six sites from Basra to Baghdad. One destroyed tank near Baghdad had 1,500 times the normal background radiation. “The Pentagon and the United Nations estimate that the U.S. and Britain used 1,100 to 2,200 tons of armor-piercing shells made of depleted uranium during attacks on Iraq in March and April — far more than the 375 tons used in the 1991 Gulf War,” wrote the Post Intelligencer.

The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle analyzed swabs from bullet holes in Iraqi tanks and confirmed elevated radiation levels.

### **Radioactive and toxic**

The extremely dense DU shells easily penetrate steel armor and burn on impact. The fire releases microscopic, radioactive and toxic dust particles of uranium oxide that travel with the wind and can be inhaled or ingested. They also spread contamination by seeping into the land and water.

**In the human body, DU may cause harm to the internal organs due both to its chemical toxicity as a heavy metal and its release of radiation.**

An otherwise useless by-product of the uranium-enrichment process, DU is attractive to military contractors because it is so cheap, often offered for free by the government.

According to the Uranium Medical Research Center, the toxic and radiological effects of uranium contamination may weaken the immune system. They may cause acute respiratory conditions like pneumonia, flu-like symptoms and severe coughs, renal or gastrointestinal illnesses.

Dr. Asaf Durakovic of UMRC explains that the initial symptoms will be mostly neurological, showing up as headaches, weakness, dizziness and muscle fatigue. The long-term effects are cancers and other radiation-related illnesses, such as chronic fatigue syndrome, joint and muscle pain, rashes, neurological and/or nerve damage, mood disturbances, infections, lung and kidney damage, vision problems, auto-immune deficiencies and severe skin conditions. It also causes increases in miscarriages, maternal mortality and genetic birth defects.

For years the government described Gulf War Syndrome as a post-traumatic stress disorder. It was labeled a psychological problem or simply dismissed as mysterious unrelated ailments. In this same way the Pentagon and the Veterans Administration treated the health problems of Vietnam vets suffering from Agent Orange poisoning.

### **The coverup**

The U.S. government denies that DU weapons can cause sickness. But before the first Gulf War, where DU weapons were used extensively, the Pentagon's own internal reports warned that the radiation and heavy metal of DU weapons could cause kidney, lung and liver damage and increased rates of cancer.

**Ignoring these dangers, the Pentagon went on to use these weapons, which gave it a big advantage in tank battles. But it denied publicly that DU use was related to**

**the enormously high rate of sicknesses among GIs following the war.**

Today the Pentagon plays an even more duplicitous role. It continues to assert that there are no “known” health problems associated with DU. But Army training manuals require anyone who comes within 75 feet of any DU-contaminated equipment or terrain to wear respiratory and skin protection.

The manuals say that “contamination will make food and water unsafe for consumption.” According to the Army Environmental Policy Institute, holding a spent DU round exposes a person to about 200 rems per hour, or twice the annual radiation exposure limit.

In March and April 2003, U.S. and British forces fired hundreds of thousands of DU rounds in dense urban areas. Superfine uranium oxide particles were blown about in dust storms. Yet the Pentagon refuses to track, report or mark off where DU was fired. There is no way Iraqis or the occupying soldiers can keep 75 feet away or use respiratory and skin protection in 120-degree heat.

The American Gulf War Veterans Association (AGWVA) reports that suffering veterans are receiving little, if any, medical treatment for their illnesses. “Whenever veterans become ill, the term ‘mystery illness’ seems to be the first and often the only diagnosis that is ever made. Veterans are then left to fend for themselves, sick and unable to work, with little hope of a normal life again.”

Iraq’s National Ministry of Health organized two international conferences to present data on the relationship between the high incidence of cancer and the use of DU weapons. It produced detailed epidemiological reports and statistical studies. This data showed a six-fold increase in breast cancer, a five-fold increase in lung cancer and a 16-fold increase in ovarian cancer.

Because of the U.S.-imposed sanctions, Iraqi doctors and scientists were barred from presenting their research papers in most of the world.

Doug Rokke of AGWVA, former head of the U.S. Army DU Project, who is seriously ill with respiratory problems, has been campaigning against the use of DU. Rokke reports that U.S. troops presently in Iraq are already falling sick with a series of Gulf War Syndrome symptoms.

The AGWVA says the Department of Defense has information regarding “mystery” deaths of soldiers in this latest war and the emergence of a mysterious pneumonia that has sickened at least 100 men and women.

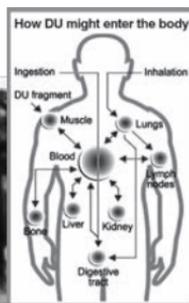
### **U.S. position: no clean-up**

While the U.K. has admitted that British Challenger tanks expended some 1.9 tons of DU ammunition during major combat operations in Iraq in 2003, the U.S. has refused to disclose specific information about whether and where it used DU during the 2003 campaign. It also is refusing to let a team from the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) study the environmental impact of DU contamination in Iraq.

Despite this refusal, it is public knowledge that the U.S. made extensive use of weapons that can fire DU shells. These include the A-10 Warthog tank-buster aircraft with 30-mm cannons that can fire up to 4,200 DU rounds per minute; the AC-130 gunship; the “Apache” helicopter; and Bradley fighting vehicles that fire anti-armor 105-mm to 120-mm tank rounds containing DU.

The U.S. followed the same tactics in the wars in the Balkans. While claiming full cooperation with UNEP’s Balkans studies, the Pentagon delayed releasing target locations for 16 months. It gave misleading map information. Then bomb, missile and cluster-bomb targets were excluded. NATO allowed 10 other teams to visit or clean up sites before UNEP inspections started.

Washington refuses to acknowledge DU use anywhere or that it poses any danger. To acknowledge radiation poisoning would immediately raise demands for a cleanup.



According to Alex Kirby, BBC News Online environment correspondent: “The U.S. says it has no plans to remove the debris left over from depleted uranium weapons it is using in Iraq. It says no cleanup is needed, because research shows DU has no long-term effects.”

### Evidence of DU use

But in the information age, the Pentagon can't suppress all the evidence. The Dutch example shows this. Though the U.S. government specifically denied any firing of DU weapons near the city of Al-Samawah, where Dutch troops were to be stationed, a simple Internet search by journalists undid this lie.

The Dutch government, to get a resolution through the parliament to authorize sending troops to Iraq, depicted the Al-Samawah region as a remote, barely inhabited desert where no noteworthy events had occurred.

In actual fact, Al-Samawah is strategically located on the road from Basra to Baghdad, providing access to a bridge over the Euphrates River. On its march to Baghdad, the U.S. Army encountered fierce resistance from Iraqi forces there, according to Amer-



ican officers. This was well covered by their embedded media.

It was more than a week before the town and the road were cleared of all pockets of resistance. Some 112 civilians, most of them inhabitants of Al-Samawah, were killed in battle.

DU ammunition was extensively used during this operation. In a widely distributed field message, Sergeant First Class Cooper reported that the weapons systems used by the 3rd Infantry, 7th Cavalry, en route to Al-Samawah and on to Najaf, were performing well, especially the 25-mm DU and 7.62 munitions.



Of greater interest to Internet researchers was a letter a young soldier sent home to his parents, which they posted in their church bulletin on the Internet. In the letter E. Pennell, a crew member on a Bradley Fighting Vehicle of the 1st Infantry Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, described how his crew fired a 25-mm DU round as they encountered seven Iraqi troops in the town of Al-Samawah.

Pennell's letter has raised concern among groups like the United Federation of Military Personnel, a kind of labor union for Dutch troops. It fears that its members might be at risk of contracting cancer or other diseases because of exposure to DU ammunition.

### **Resistance: the only solution**

Officers and politicians in imperialist countries have always treated rank-and-file soldiers as cannon fodder. These lives are totally expendable. The occupied or colonized people are not counted at all.

As a global movement against imperialist wars grew over the past century, military planners made great efforts to hide the true costs of war, especially the human cost. The nearly 60,000 U.S. combat deaths in the Vietnam War provoked a mighty mass anti-war movement. This time, long before U.S. casualties reached 100 soldiers, the movement to "Bring the Troops Home" had gained momentum.

This new movement must demand a true accounting of the enormous human costs of the war. The impact on the health and future of not only U.S. troops but the millions of people in Iraq must be part of the demand.

A growing international movement must demand full reparations for the Iraqi people. A cleanup of the toxic, radioactive waste is in the interests of all the people of the region. The cost of the war must be calculated in terms of bankrupt social programs

here in the U.S. and the health of all the people who were in the region during the war and will be in the years to come.

*Published August 21, 2003*

## **Update 2012**

Since this 2003 article and since the International Action Center's 1997 book: *Metal of Dishonor — Depleted Uranium* was published, far more material and scientific studies have confirmed the long-term disastrous impact of the U.S. toxic and radioactive depleted uranium weapons.

The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, based in Basle, Switzerland in several reports based on a 5-year study- (July 6, 2010 and Dec. 31, 2010) reported that 15 percent of babies born at Fallujah General Hospital in Iraq had cleft palates, spinal cord deformities and other serious birth defects; 14 percent spontaneously aborted, 11 percent were premature. Even these figures, researchers believe, understate an epidemic of abnormalities, because a large number of babies born in Fallujah are born at home with parents reluctant to seek help from authorities. The same journal reported 12-fold increases in childhood cancer in those aged 0-14.

The IJERPH Journal also reported cancers and infant mortality significantly greater than those recorded for survivors of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and Fallujah infected by a chronic environmental contaminant. It focused on depleted uranium, used in weaponry during two U.S. assaults in 2004, as a possible contaminant. The Guardian UK, Dec 31, 2010 and Nov. 13, 2011 reported that defects in newborns are 11 times higher than normal. The British Independent and CounterPunch, April 25, 2012 by Robert Fisk titled: "The Children of Fallujah," provided some of the human impact behind these frightening statistics.

## **U.S. Militarism and Pakistan's Floods**

Even in a time of global climate change, the immense suffering of the Pakistani people due to vast floods did not have to happen. Investment in infrastructure and a timely emergency response program could have minimized what has become one of the world's worst disasters. But decades of U.S. intervention to keep corrupt and reactionary military regimes in power against the will of the people have left this country one of the poorest and least developed in the region.

The United Nations rated the floods in Pakistan in mid-August 2010 as the greatest humanitarian crisis in recent history, with more people affected than by the Southeast Asian tsunami and the recent earthquakes in Kashmir and Haiti combined.

In the week since the Aug. 9, 2010, estimate, the number of people affected has doubled to more than 20 million left homeless and utterly destitute.

The floods will grow far worse in the coming week as record high waters move further downstream toward larger population centers in south Pakistan.

U.N. emergency relief coordinator John Holmes said the numbers would reach 40 to 50 million people in need of immediate assistance, out of a population of 170 million.

Millions of people are stranded without access to potable drinking water, basic food or shelter. Millions are on the move seeking higher ground or are packed onto the roofs of buildings or small hills on the wide floodplains of the Swat and Indus rivers.

Floodwaters cover all the cultivated land in Pakistan. Every major food and cash crop is lost. The agricultural heartland, the breadbasket of Pakistan, is wiped out.

Floodwaters have knocked out electricity and communication in large parts of the country.

Although this year there were record monsoon rains, this massive widespread flooding is no natural disaster. Angry commentators in Pakistan are calling it “a man-made catastrophe.”

The floods are not just an accident of nature. Dire warnings of the massive scope of this flood were predicted in late July, weeks in advance, when unusually heavy rain hit the upper reaches of the Swat River and the highlands in the north. It was the heaviest rain in 35 years.

Months before, flooding and heavy monsoon rains had been predicted. But even after 10 days of early floods had impacted 5 million people in a large area of the north, after the news media had given daily coverage of families clinging to tree branches, fields inundated and houses collapsing, no government organizations had even begun to prepare for emergencies or for the evacuation of large numbers of people.

This includes the Pakistani military, the dominant force in Pakistan.

An earthquake, whether in Haiti, China, Chile or Kashmir, usually strikes with little warning. A tsunami prediction after an undersea earthquake gives people only a few hours' notice. There might be just a few days' notice that a hurricane or typhoon of great magnitude is brewing.

But the fact that massive floods would inundate vast areas downstream in Pakistan was known well in advance. Yet Pakistani officials took no steps to notify the population at risk or move emergency equipment into the region, from boats to portable bridges, potable water, emergency tents and medicines.

All the words of concern from humanitarian agencies are starting to pour forth. But so far the amount of aid reaching Pak-

istan from the U.S., NATO countries and U.N. agencies is among the smallest ever for disaster relief.

Washington has promised \$55 million for emergency aid and the use of six helicopters. What an insult! Just this year Congress allocated to the Pentagon more than 1,000 times this paltry amount to continue to fight its wars in the region.

**Those disastrous floods are a graphic example of how Pakistan's unequal, dependent relationship with the U.S. has left it totally unprepared to deal with unusually heavy rainfall at a time of global climate change.**

### **Partnership with U.S.**

The alliance with the U.S. has been of absolutely no help in the country's hour of greatest need. The corrupt feudal officials and even more corrupt repressive military, all kept in power by enormous amounts of U.S. military aid, have proved totally unable to even notify the millions of people who were clearly at risk or to move into place the most basic emergency equipment.

Washington is more than willing to sell Pakistan F-16 jets, hundreds of surface-to-air missiles and surveillance planes. This is enormously profitable to U.S. military contractors and Pakistan ends up ever further in debt.

Meanwhile, Pakistan today lacks the most basic flood control system. There is a total lack of investment funds or foreign aid for flood control. A basic system of dams, reservoirs, containment basins, embankments and levees could have contained the water and prevented out-of-control flooding in the vulnerable region.

Major rivers throughout the U.S., Europe, Japan and now China have well-organized flood control.

The lack of flood control in Pakistan has destroyed hundreds of miles of roads and railroad lines, bridges, schools, hospitals and electric generators. More than 6,000 villages have been swept away. Towns and now even cities are submerged.

For decades Washington has made generous funds available to Pakistan for police and intelligence agencies, but infrastructure development, education, health and other social needs have been neglected. Pakistan is more than \$40 billion in debt, much of it for U.S. military equipment.

According to figures of the United Nations Children's Fund, even before the flood devastation 30 percent of Pakistani children were chronically malnourished; only half of the 19 million children of primary school age were enrolled in school; and two-thirds of the women are illiterate.

There has been a heavy presence of the Pakistani military in the Swat region and the Northwest Frontier Province, where the flooding began. But their role was entirely focused on the most brutal repression, not emergency relief.

Last summer, under enormous political pressure from the U.S., Pakistan's military launched intensely destructive counter-insurgency campaigns against the Taliban in northern Pakistan, Bajaur, the Swat Valley and South Waziristan.

In the Swat Valley, which has many cities, the Pakistani military faced resistance from an urban population of 4 million people. Two million refugees were forced to flee their homes during the battles there. Millions rushed for cover from the intense bombardment, yet the government had no relief plans for these desperate war refugees.

None of the U.S.-supplied heavy equipment in the region was used to build one bridge or one dam. It was used only to lay waste to the region.

The very Islamic organizations that have been able to provide emergency relief for the refugees, both then and now during the flooding, are what the U.S. and Pakistani military are trying to destroy.

As floodwaters were roaring on Aug. 14, 2010, U.S. drones struck again, killing at least 13 people in Pakistan's North Waziristan district, close to the Afghan border.

U.S. and NATO forces are an overwhelming presence in Afghanistan, just across the border. Their technology is so sophisticated that the Pentagon can maneuver a pilotless drone from the other side of the planet and have it fire a missile into Afghanistan or Pakistan.

But it does not even take complicated technology to measure rainfall or communicate weather threats to millions of people. The equipment to do this has been around for decades.

However, this simple task appears to be impossible because the U.S., the most powerful of the exploiting capitalist countries, subverts popular governments while promoting those who collaborate with its system based on maximizing profit, where technology is at the service of imperialist military oppression.

To respond to natural and human-made emergencies, what is needed is the uprooting of this capitalist system of exploitation and national oppression so every country can establish planning to meet its people's needs.

*Published August 18, 2010*



WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

**Occupy Syracuse, Nov. 2011.**

Section IV

# **Tasks of an Anti-imperialist Movement**

27 May 2012 Last updated at 04:40 GMT

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## Syria massacre in Houla condemned as outrage grows



This image - which cannot be independently verified - is believed to show the bodies of children in Houla awaiting burial

**This photo was published by the BBC. Syrian anti-government forces said it showed the bodies from the Houla massacre, with a child leaping over them. It was soon discovered it was a photo from Iraq in 2003, being used for anti-government propaganda against Syria.**

## **Demonization, War Crimes and the Task of the Antiwar Movement**

Currently, the corporate media in the U.S. and its allies can demonize the leader of a country targeted by the Pentagon to the point that the consequences of using the most deadly weapons against a totally defenseless population are hidden and dismissed. How does this monopoly of ideas impact the antiwar movement in the United States regarding intervention in Syria, and the war against Libya?

Some supposedly antiwar groups and even usually liberal and progressive media unfortunately spend more time cataloguing the real, or alleged, shortcomings of the demonized leader, at the moment the cases of Bashar al-Assad and Muammar Gadhafi, than rallying people to respond to a criminal intervention and attacks by the U.S. and NATO “great” powers. The influence of this kind of critic coincides with the opinions of U.S. ruling powers. They are like the voices who said “neither NATO nor Milosevic” in 1999, “neither Bush nor Saddam” in 1991 and 2003, and “neither Israel nor Hezbollah” in 2006. This approach played into the warmongers’ motives and weakened the antiwar forces.

Thus, it is important to thoroughly answer their arguments and point to the antiwar movement’s main tasks.

Since March, NATO forces have carried out approximately 20,000 sorties in Libya, hitting 8,000 targets selected by U.S. military intelligence and the CIA, killing many civilians, in what is described as implementing a “no-fly zone.” No other armed

force in history has had the capacity to wreak such havoc, using cruise missiles, bunker busters, drones, depleted uranium and dense inert metal explosive bombs, antipersonnel razor shredding bomblets, and antipersonnel mines.

### **What should be the response to this terror?**

Whatever one's evaluation of the leadership of a small, underdeveloped country facing U.S. sanctions, sabotage, and assassination attempts, these leaders are not the reason the U.S. is hell-bent on intervening to try to overthrow the Syrian government and is destroying Libya today.

**The U.S. and all the old regimes tied to it in the region are trying desperately to manage and contain the social explosion that is shaking the mostly Arab countries from Morocco to Saudi Arabia, highlighted by the tremendous popular revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt.**

They want to hold this still unfolding mass upheaval in channels where it doesn't threaten neocolonial domination of the region. Replacing the Ba'athist government in Syria with a client regime and gaining military bases in Libya — which lies between Egypt and Tunisia — would serve this purpose.

What is also at stake in Libya is that U.S., French, British, and Italian regimes are determined to lay hold of Libya's now well-developed infrastructure of oil refineries, pumping stations, gas lines, ports, and pipelines directly into Europe, as well as billions of dollars in gold reserves, oil reserves — the largest in Africa — and Libya's other rich assets. All of this has been built up over the four decades since the Libyans expelled colonial and neocolonial domination by the Britain and the U.S.

These imperial powers are especially determined to stop Libya's assistance in the development of other African countries. Libya planned a United Federation of Africa and backed it with

\$90 billion in investment funds. This move toward independence deeply threatens the continued multinational corporate looting of the continent.

### **Corporate media sells the war**

In preparation for a war of conquest, the role of the corporate media is to endlessly repeat every charge and statement made by the institutions of U.S. power. An almost frenzied level of lies, wild fabrications, racist stereotyping, and ugly caricatures saturates all political discussion.

The corporate media spread the demands that the Pentagon death machine must act in the name of “humanity” in order to “save lives.” The war itself is cloaked in neutral terms. Demonization is meant to disorient and put the massive, criminal destruction planned by the U.S. and NATO beyond debate. Enormous pressure is placed on every level of the U.S. population to accept the premise that the targeted country and its leadership are to blame. The attacks are presented as if Assad is the only person who lives in Syria and Gadhafi is the only one who lives in Libya.

As the Libyan people continue to resist, Western media continues to distort this reality. The Libyans endured more than five months of nonstop aerial assault. The bombing united the population and their cohesion grew. More than one million people have held pro-government, anti-NATO rallies in Tripoli. Libya’s government has distributed more than three million weapons in a country of 6.5 million people to enable them to resist occupation, something no government does if it considers its citizens to be hostile.

### **What antiwar forces should do**

The response to colonial wars of aggression should be the same as the response to a racist mobilization, a racist lynch mob or a police attack on an oppressed community: Mobilize all pos-

sible forces to stand up to the crime and say “no!” Refuse to take part in the orchestrated campaign of vilification that blames the victims.

However difficult it may be, it is essential to reject the racist political onslaught that accompanies the military onslaught on Libya and intervention in Syria. The responsibility of progressive intellectuals and groups in the United States is to explain the corporate interests behind the latest “humanitarian” war, and never to echo in left terminology the charges made in the corporate media. The antiwar movement must counter media demonization in the midst of a war mobilization and must focus on the outrageous crimes being committed, refusing to accept or give weight to any justification for them.

The good news is that despite an ocean of propaganda, poll after poll has confirmed that from 60 percent to 65 percent of the U.S. population is against the U.S. war on Libya.

### **The Cynthia McKinney tour**

People were able to begin to build resistance to aggression toward Syria and Libya, as former U.S. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney engaged them on a 17-city national speaking tour, sponsored by International Action Center. More than 500 people packed the historic Shrine of the Black Madonna in Atlanta’s West End community on July 24.

McKinney had risked her life to visit Libya with a U.S. delegation in the midst of the U.S./NATO bombing. She deserves nothing but respect from the movement.

McKinney was first a target of national media condemnation as a young, first-term state representative in the Georgia Assembly, when she dared to speak out against the U.S. war on Iraq. The entire chamber of representatives stood up, turned their backs on her and walked out.

When she was elected to the U.S. Congress, her outspoken opposition to and questioning of the orchestrated national frenzy surrounding the Sept. 11, 2001, attack; her clear opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement; her defense of political prisoners; and her support of the Palestinian people generated reactionary campaigns that poured funds into opposing candidates in her small Georgia congressional district. Again and again the district lines were redrawn in an attempt to disqualify McKinney from the U.S. Congress. But she has earned international acclaim for her candidacy for president on the Green Party ticket, for her participation in humanitarian convoys to Gaza, and for being jailed by Israel.

It was expected that McKinney's tour would be attacked politically by reactionaries and militarists. What was unfortunate was that some of the "neither Gadhafi nor NATO" people have also criticized her, some saying she must echo the imperialist demand that Gadhafi "must go." Even more arrogant and insensitive are their attacks on the Nation of Islam and Pan-African voices opposing the war, simply because these forces for more than three decades have followed developments in Libya with great interest and enthusiasm.

Whatever one's attitude toward the Libyan or Syrian governments, the worst thing would be for the U.S. and NATO countries to increase their influence in these countries and in the region. Leave it to African, Arab, and especially Syrian and Libyan people to discuss, debate, and decide their own future, without outside interference and U.S./NATO bombs.

The slogans of the antiwar movement should be: No intervention in Syria! Stop the U.S./NATO war on Libya!

*Published October 2011*



While on tour in Libya  
Cynthia McKinney vis-  
its a hospital of people  
wounded by NATO  
shelling June 5, 2011.



New York, June 27, 2011.

WW PHOTO: ELLEN CATALINOTTO



2011



2007

Misrata - (tripole St.)

## Why Any U.S. Intervention in Libya Is Harmful to All Africa

*This article was written three weeks before the United Nations Security Council decision to set up a “no-fly zone” over Libya that opened the door to NATO’s massive bombing campaign.*

The worst thing that could happen to the people of Libya is U.S. intervention.

The worst thing that could happen to the revolutionary upsurge shaking the Arab world is U.S. intervention in Libya.

The White House is meeting with its allies among the European imperialist NATO countries to discuss imposing a no-fly zone over Libya, jamming all communications of President Muammar Gadhafi inside Libya, and carving military corridors into Libya from Egypt and Tunisia, supposedly to “assist refugees.” (New York Times, Feb. 28, 2011)

This means positioning U.S./NATO troops in Egypt and Tunisia close to Libya’s two richest oil fields, in both the east and west. It means the Pentagon coordinating maneuvers with the Egyptian and Tunisian militaries. What could be more dangerous to the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions?

Italy, once the colonizer of Libya, has suspended a 2008 treaty with Libya that includes a nonaggression clause, a move that could allow it to take part in future “peacekeeping” operations there and enable the use of its military bases in any possible intervention. Several U.S. and NATO bases in Italy, including the U.S. Sixth Fleet base near Naples, could be staging areas for action against Libya.

President Barack Obama has announced that “the full range of options” is under consideration. This is Washington-speak for military operations.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met in Geneva on Feb. 28 with foreign ministers at the U.N. Human Rights Council to discuss possible multilateral actions.

Meanwhile, adding to the drumbeat for military intervention is the release of a public letter from the Foreign Policy Initiative, a right-wing think tank seen as the successor to the Project for the New American Century, calling for the U.S. and NATO to “immediately” prepare military action to help bring down the Gadhafi regime.

The public appeal’s signers include William Kristol, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliott Abrams and more than a dozen former senior officials from the Bush administration, plus several prominent liberal Democrats, such as Neil Hicks of Human Rights First and Bill Clinton’s “human rights” chief, John Shattuck.

The letter called for economic sanctions and military action: deploying NATO warplanes and a naval armada to enforce no-fly zones and have the capability to disable Libyan naval vessels.

Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman while in Tel Aviv on Feb. 25, 2011, called for Washington to supply Libyan rebels with arms and establish a no-fly zone over the country.

Not to be overlooked are calls for U.N. contingents of medical and humanitarian workers, human rights monitors and investigators from the International Criminal Court to be sent to Libya with an “armed escort.”

Providing humanitarian aid doesn’t have to include the military. Turkey has evacuated 7,000 of its nationals on ferries and chartered flights. Some 29,000 Chinese workers have left via ferries, chartered flights and ground transportation.

However, the way in which the European powers are evacuating their nationals from Libya during the crisis includes a mili-

tary threat and is part of the imperialist jockeying for position regarding Libya's future.

Germany sent three warships, carrying 600 troops, and two military planes to bring 200 German employees of the oil exploration company Wintershall out of a desert camp 600 miles southeast of Tripoli. The British sent the HMS Cumberland warship to evacuate 200 British nationals and announced that the destroyer York was on its way from Gibraltar.

The U.S. announced on Feb. 28 that it was sending the huge aircraft carrier USS Enterprise and the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge from the Red Sea to the waters off Libya, where it will join the USS Mount Whitney and other battleships from the Sixth Fleet. U.S. officials called this a "pre-positioning of military assets."

### **U.N. vote on sanctions**

The U.N. Security Council — under U.S. pressure — on Feb. 26 voted to impose sanctions on Libya. According to studies by the U.N.'s own agencies, more than 1 million Iraqi children died as a result of U.S./U.N.-imposed sanctions on that country that paved the way for an actual U.S. invasion. Sanctions are criminal and confirm that this intervention is not due to humanitarian concern.

**The sheer hypocrisy of the resolution on Libya expressing concern for "human rights" is hard to match. Just four days before the vote, the U.S. used its veto to block a mildly worded resolution criticizing Israeli settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank.**

The U.S. government blocked the Security Council from taking any action during the 2008 Israeli massacre in Gaza, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 Palestinians. These international bodies, as well as the International Criminal Court, have been silent on Israeli massacres, on U.S. drone attacks on defenseless civilians in Pakistan, and on the criminal invasions and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The fact that China went along with the sanctions vote is an unfortunate example of the government in Beijing letting its interest in trade and continued oil shipments take precedence over its past opposition to sanctions that clearly impact civilian populations.

### **Who leads the opposition?**

It is important to look at the opposition movement, especially those being so widely quoted in all the international media. We must assume that people with genuine grievances and wrongs have been caught up in it. But who is actually leading the movement?

A front-page New York Times article of Feb. 25, 2011, described just how different Libya is from other struggles breaking out across the Arab world. “Unlike those Facebook enabled youth rebellions, the insurrection here has been led by people who are more mature and who have been actively opposing the government for some time.” The article describes how arms had been smuggled across the border with Egypt for weeks, allowing the rebellion to “escalate quickly and violently in little more than a week.”

The opposition group most widely quoted is the National Front for the Salvation of Libya. The NFSL, founded in 1981, is known to be a CIA-funded organization, with offices in Washington, D.C. It has maintained a military force, called the Libyan National Army, in Egypt near the Libyan border. A Google search of National Front for the Salvation of Libya and CIA will quickly confirm hundreds of references.

Also widely quoted is the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition. This is a coalition formed by the NFSL that also includes the Libyan Constitutional Union, led by Muhammad el-Senussi, a pretender to the Libyan throne. The web site of the LCU calls upon the Libyan people to reiterate a pledge of allegiance to King Idris el-Senussi as historical leader of the Libyan

people. The flag used by the coalition is the flag of the former Kingdom of Libya.

Clearly these CIA-financed forces and old monarchists are politically and socially different from the disenfranchised youth and workers who have marched by the millions against U.S.-backed dictators in Egypt and Tunisia and are today demonstrating in Bahrain, Yemen and Oman.

According to the Times article, the military wing of the NFSL, using smuggled arms, quickly seized police and military posts in the Mediterranean port city of Benghazi and nearby areas that are north of Libya's richest oil fields and are where most of its oil and gas pipelines, refineries and its liquefied natural gas port are located. The Times and other Western media claim that this area, now under "opposition control," includes 80 percent of Libya's oil facilities.

**The Libyan opposition, unlike the movements elsewhere in the Arab world, from the beginning appealed for international assistance. And the imperialists quickly responded.**

For example, Mohammed Ali Abdallah, deputy secretary general of the NFSL, sent out a desperate appeal: "We are expecting a massacre... We are sending an SOS to the international community to step in." Without international efforts to restrain Gadhafi, "there will be a bloodbath in Libya in the next 48 hours."

The Wall Street Journal, the voice of big business, in a Feb. 23, 2011, editorial wrote that "The U.S. and Europe should help the Libyans overthrow the Gadhafi regime."

### **U.S. interests — oil**

Why are Washington and the European powers willing and anxious to act on Libya?

When a new development arises it is important to review what we know of the past and to always ask, what are the interests of U.S. corporations in the region?

Libya is an oil-rich country — one of the world's 10 richest. Libya has the largest proven oil reserves in Africa, at least 44 billion barrels. It has been producing 1.8 million barrels of oil a day — light crude that is considered top quality and needs less refining than most other oil. Libya also has large deposits of natural gas that is easy to pipe directly to European markets. It is a large country in area with a small population — 6.4 million people.

That is how the powerful U.S. oil and military corporations, banks and financial institutions who dominate global markets see Libya.

**Oil and gas are today the most valuable commodities and the largest source of profits in the world. Gaining control of oil fields, pipelines, refineries and markets drives a great part of U.S. imperialist policy.**

During two decades of U.S. sanctions on Libya, which Washington had calculated would bring down the regime, European corporate interests invested heavily in pipeline and infrastructure development there. Some 85 percent of Libya's energy exports go to Europe.

European transnationals — in particular BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Total, Eni, BASF, Statoil and Rapsol — have dominated Libya's oil market. The giant U.S. oil corporations were left out of these lucrative deals. China has been buying a growing amount of oil produced by Libya's National Oil Corp. and has built a short oil pipeline in Libya.

The huge profits that could be made by controlling Libya's oil and natural gas are what is behind the drum roll of the U.S. corporate media's call for "humanitarian intervention to save lives."

Manlio Dinucci, an Italian journalist writing for Italy's *Il Manifesto*, explained on Feb. 25, 2011, that "If Gadhafi is overthrown, the U.S. would be able to topple the entire framework of economic relations with Libya, opening the way to U.S.-based multinationals, so far almost entirely excluded from exploitation

of energy reserves in Libya. The United States could thus control the tap for energy sources upon which Europe largely depends and which also supply China.”

### **Libya background**

Libya was a colony of Italy from 1911 until Italy’s defeat in World War II. The Western imperialist powers after the war set up regimes across the region that were called independent states but were headed by appointed monarchs with no democratic vote for the people. Libya became a sovereign country in name, but was firmly tied to the U.S. and Britain under a new monarch — King Idris.

In 1969 as a wave of anti-colonial struggles swept the colonized world, revolutionary-minded Pan-Arab nationalist junior military officers overthrew Idris, who was vacationing in Europe. The leader of the coup was 27-year old Muammar Gadhafi.

Libya changed its name from the Kingdom of Libya to the Libyan Arab Republic and later to the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The young officers ordered the U.S. and British bases in Libya closed, including the Pentagon’s large Wheelus Air Base. They nationalized the oil industry and many commercial interests that had been under U.S. and British imperialist control.

These military officers did not come to power in a revolutionary upheaval of the masses. It was not a socialist revolution. It was still a class society. But Libya was no longer under foreign domination.

Many progressive changes were carried out. New Libya made many economic and social gains. The conditions of life for the masses radically improved. Most basic necessities — food, housing, fuel, health care and education — were either heavily subsidized or became entirely free. Subsidies were used as the best way to redistribute the national wealth. Conditions for women changed dramatically. Within 20 years Libya had the highest Hu-

man Development Index ranking in Africa — a U.N. measurement of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income. Through the 1970s and 1980s, Libya was internationally known for taking strong anti-imperialist positions and supporting other revolutionary struggles, from the African National Congress in South Africa to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Irish Republican Army.

The U.S. carried out numerous assassination and coup attempts against the Gadhafi regime and financed armed opposition groups, such as the NFSL. Some U.S. attacks were blatant and open. For example, without warning 66 U.S. jets bombed the Libyan capital of Tripoli and its second-largest city, Benghazi, on April 15, 1986. Gadhafi's home was bombed and his infant daughter killed in the attack, along with hundreds of others.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the U.S. succeeded in isolating Libya through severe economic sanctions. Every effort was made to sabotage the economy and to destabilize the government.

### **Demonization of Gadhafi**

It is up to the people of Libya, of Africa and of the Arab World to evaluate the contradictory role of Gadhafi, the chair of Libya's Revolutionary Command Council. People here, in the center of an empire built on global exploitation, should not join in the racist characterizations, ridicule and demonization of Gadhafi that saturate the corporate media.

Even if Gadhafi were as quiet and austere as a monk and as careful as a diplomat, as president of an oil-rich, previously underdeveloped African country he still would have been hated, ridiculed and demonized by U.S. imperialism if he resisted U.S. corporate domination. That was his real crime and for that he has never been forgiven.

It is important to note that degrading and racist terms are never used against reliable U.S. pawns or dictators, regardless of how corrupt or ruthless they may be to their own people.

## **U.S. threats force concessions**

It was after the U.S. war crime billed as “shock and awe,” with its massive aerial bombardment of Iraq followed by a ground invasion and occupation, that Libya finally succumbed to U.S. demands. After decades of militant, anti-imperialist solidarity, Libya dramatically changed course. Gadhafi offered to assist the U.S. in its “war on terror.”

Washington’s demands were onerous and humiliating. Libya was forced to accept full responsibility for the downing of the Lockerbie aircraft and pay \$2.7 billion in indemnities. That was just the beginning. In order for U.S. sanctions to be lifted, Libya had to open its markets and “restructure” its economy. It was all part of the package.

Regardless of Gadhafi’s many concessions and the subsequent grand receptions for him by European heads of state, U.S. imperialism was planning his complete humiliation and downfall. U.S. think tanks engaged in numerous studies of how to undermine and weaken Gadhafi’s popular support.

IMF strategists descended on Libya with programs. The new economic advisors prescribed the same measures they impose on every developing country. But Libya did not have a foreign debt; it has a positive trade balance of \$27 billion a year. The only reason the IMF demanded an end to subsidies of basic necessities was to undercut the social basis of support for the regime.

Libya’s “market liberalization” meant a cut in \$5 billion worth of subsidies annually. For decades, the state had been subsidizing 93 percent of the value of several basic commodities, notably fuel. After accepting the IMF program, the government doubled the price of electricity for consumers. There was a sudden 30 percent hike in fuel prices. This touched off price increases in many other goods and services as well.

Libya was told to privatize 360 state-owned companies and enterprises, including steel mills, cement plants, engineering

firms, food factories, truck and bus assembly lines and state farms. This left thousands of workers jobless.

Libya had to sell a 60-percent stake in the state-owned oil company Tamoil Group and privatize its General National Company for Flour Mills and Fodder.

The Carnegie Endowment Fund was already charting the impact of economic reforms. 2008 report titled *Economic Reforms Anger Libyan Citizens* by Eman Wahby said that “Another aspect of economic reform has been the easing of restrictions on imports and recently foreign companies were granted licenses to export to Libya through local agents. As a result, products from all over the world have flooded the previously isolated Libyan market.” This was a disaster for workers in Libya’s factories, which are unequipped to face competition.

More than \$4 billion poured into Libya, which became Africa’s top recipient of foreign investment. As the bankers and their think tanks knew so well, this did not benefit the Libyan masses, it impoverished them.

But no matter what Gadhafi did, it was never enough for U.S. corporate power. The bankers and financiers wanted more. There was no trust. Gadhafi had opposed the U.S. for decades and was still considered highly “unreliable.”

The magazine *U.S. Banker* in May 2005 ran an article titled “Emerging Markets: Is Libya the Next Frontier for U.S. Banks?” It said that “As the nation passes reforms, profits beckon. But chaos abounds.” It interviewed Robert Armao, president of the New York City-based U.S.-Libya Trade and Economic Council: “All the big Western banks are now exploring opportunities there,” said Armao. “The political situation with [Gadhafi] is still very suspect.” Peter McFerran, a senior bank analyst for an international credit rating agency, said that the potential “looks wonderful for banks. Libya is a country untouched and a land of opportunity. It will happen, but it may take a little time.”

Libya has never been a socialist country. There has always been extensive inherited wealth and old privileges. It is a class society with millions of workers, many of them immigrants.

Restructuring the economy to maximize profits for Western bankers destabilized relations, even in the ruling circles. Who gets in on the deals to privatize key industries, which families, which tribes? Who is left out? Old rivalries and competitions surfaced.

Just how carefully the U.S. government was monitoring these imposed changes can be seen in recently released Wikileaks cables from the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, reprinted in the London newspaper Telegraph of Jan. 31, 2011. A cable titled “Inflation on the Rise in Libya,” and sent on Jan. 4, 2009, described the impact of “a radical program of privatization and government restructuring.”

“Particular increases were seen,” the cable said, “in prices for foodstuffs — the price of previously subsidized goods such as sugar, rice, and flour increased by 85 percent in the two years since subsidies were lifted. Construction materials have also increased markedly: prices for cement, aggregate, and bricks have increased by 65 percent in the past year. Cement has gone from 5 Libyan dinars for a 50-kilogram bag to 17 dinars in one year; the price of steel bars has increased by a factor of ten. ...

“The [Libyan government’s] termination of subsidies and price controls as part of a broader program of economic reform and privatization has certainly contributed to inflationary pressures and prompted some grumbling. ...

“[T]he combination of high inflation and diminishing subsidies and price controls is worrying for a Libyan public accustomed to greater government cushioning from market forces.”

These U.S. Embassy cables confirm that while continuing to maintain and finance Libyan opposition groups in Egypt, Washington and London were also constantly taking the temperature of the mass discontent caused by their policies.

Today millions of people in the U.S. and around the world are deeply inspired by the actions of millions of youth in the streets of Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen and now Oman. The impact is felt even in the sit-in in Wisconsin.

It is vital for the U.S. political and class-conscious movement to resist the enormous pressure of a U.S.-orchestrated campaign for military intervention in Libya. A new imperialist adventure must be challenged. Solidarity with the peoples' movements! U.S. hands off!

*Published March 2, 2011*



**Los Angeles, June 2012.**

## Behind the Events in Syria

When U.S. imperialism engages in an attack on any government or movement, it is cowardly to be neutral and rank betrayal to stand on the same side as the imperialist octopus, which seeks to dominate the world. This has been an ABC for workers' movements through 150 years of class-conscious struggles. It is the very basis of Marxism.

It's the year 2011. A social explosion is shaking the Arab world. U.S. imperialism and all the old regimes tied to it in the region are trying desperately to manage and contain this still unfolding mass upheaval into channels that do not threaten imperialist domination of the region.

The U.S. and its collaborators are also trying to divide and undermine the two wings of the resistance — the Islamic forces and the secular nationalist forces — which together overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorships in Egypt and Tunisia. There is now a concerted U.S. effort to turn these same political forces against two regimes in the region that have opposed U.S. domination in the past — Libya and Syria.

Both Libya and Syria have their own development problems, which are exacerbated by the general global capitalist crisis and decades of compromise imposed on them as they tried to survive in a hostile environment of unrelenting attacks — political, sometimes military and including economic sanctions.

The U.S./NATO bombing of Libya has clarified where imperialism stands regarding that country. Syria is also targeted by imperialism — because of its refusal to recognize the Zionist oc-

cupation, its assistance to Hezbollah in their struggle to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and its strategic alliance with Iran.

Syria's internal situation may be difficult to understand, but in this unfolding struggle clear statements of support for the Syrian government and against U.S. destabilization efforts have come from Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon and several exiled leaders of Hamas, the Palestinian organization that was elected by the people of Gaza. These political leaders have experienced first-hand U.S. destabilization campaigns that used corporate media fabrications, externally financed opposition groups, targeted assassinations, "special operations" sabotage and well-trained Internet operatives.

On the side of the supposedly "democratic opposition" are such reactionaries as Sen. Joseph Lieberman, chair of the powerful Senate Homeland Security Committee, who called on the U.S. to bomb Syria next, after Libya. Outspoken supporters of the opposition in Syria include James Woolsey, former CIA director and adviser to Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign.

### **Wikileaks exposes U.S. role**

An article entitled "U.S. Provides Secret Backing to Syrian Opposition" in the April 18, 2011, Washington Post described the Wikileaks report on U.S. diplomatic cables. The article summarizes what these State Department cables reveal about the secret funding of Syrian political opposition groups, including the beaming of anti-government programming into the country via satellite television.

The article describes the U.S.-funded efforts as part of a "long-standing campaign to overthrow the country's autocratic leader, Bashar al-Assad," which began under President George W. Bush and continued under President Barack Obama, even though Obama claimed to be rebuilding relations with Syria and posted an ambassador to Damascus for the first time in six years.

According to an April 2009 cable signed by the top-ranking U.S. diplomat in Damascus at the time, Syrian authorities “would undoubtedly view any U.S. funds going to illegal political groups as tantamount to supporting regime change.” The Post article describes the links between the U.S.-funded opposition Barada TV and the role of Malik al-Abdeh, who is on its board and distributes videos and protest updates. Malik Al-Abdeh is also on the board of the Movement for Justice and Development which his brother, Anas Al-Abdeh, chairs. The secret cables “report persistent fears among U.S. diplomats that Syrian state security agents had uncovered the money trail from Washington.”

### **Role of Al-Jazeera**

Perhaps the most revealing challenge to and exposé of the destabilization campaign in Syria came with the resignation of Ghassan Ben Jeddo, the best-known journalist with Al-Jazeera’s television news programs and chief of its Beirut bureau. Ben Jeddo resigned in protest of Al-Jazeera’s biased coverage, especially noting a “smear campaign against the Syrian government” that has turned Al-Jazeera into a “propaganda outlet.”

Al-Jazeera favorably covered the unstoppable mass upsurge of millions in Egypt and Tunisia. However, this satellite news channel has also extensively reported every claim and political charge, regardless of how unsubstantiated, made by the political opposition in both Syria and Libya. It called for U.S. “humanitarian” intervention, no-fly zones and the bombing of Libya. It is important to understand Al-Jazeera’s position as a news corporation, especially when it claims to speak for the oppressed.

Al-Jazeera, which is based in Qatar, never reports that 94 percent of the workforce in Qatar is made up of immigrants who have absolutely no rights at all and exist in conditions of near slavery. Al-Jazeera gives little coverage to the brutal repression of the mass movement in the absolute monarchy of Bahrain, which is just next door to Qatar and is now occupied by Saudi troops.

Is this censorship because Al-Jazeera TV News is funded by the absolute monarch of Qatar, the Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani? Al-Jazeera never mentions the huge U.S. Central Command military air base right there in Qatar. Drones on secret missions throughout the region regularly take off from this base. Qatar has also sent planes to participate in the U.S./NATO bombing of Libya, and it works closely with the U.S. State Department in supporting U.S. intervention in the area.

**The CIA and the National Endowment for Democracy have become expert at utilizing a barrage of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to overwhelm targeted governments with millions of fabricated messages, wild rumors and images.**

### **Facebook and counterrevolution**

Fabricated alerts about struggles and splits among rival factions in Syria's military leading to resignations turned out to be false. For example, Major Gen. al-Rifai (Ret.) denied as baseless news broadcasts over satellite television that he was leading a split in the military. He added that he had retired 10 years ago.

Izzat al-Rashek of the Hamas Politburo and Ali Baraka, Hamas representative in Lebanon, denied published claims that the leadership of this Palestinian resistance organization was relocating to Qatar from Damascus. Ali Baraka explained that this was a U.S. fabrication to pressure Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah and obstruct Palestinian reconciliation while raising conflict between resistance movements and Syria.

The Syrian government has charged that snipers fired into demonstrations, shooting army and police in an effort to have police open fire on demonstrators.

Rumors, anonymous Internet postings and satellite television reports aimed at heightening sectarian differences are part of the destabilization campaign.

## **Dual character of Syria**

It is not difficult to see why U.S. imperialism and its pawns in the region, including Israel and the corrupt dependent monarchies of Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, would want to see “regime change” in Syria.

Syria is one of the few Arab states that have no relations with Israel. Several Palestinian resistance organizations have offices-in-exile in Syria, including Hamas. Syria is allied closely with Iran and with the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon.

Syria today is not socialist nor a revolutionary country. Capitalism with its resulting inequality has not been overturned. There is a capitalist class in Syria. Many within it have benefited from “reforms” that sold formerly state-owned industries to private capital. Thus, the Syrian state represents contradictory forces.

Years of U.S. sanctions and past destabilization efforts have also had a cumulative effect. The state apparatus, ever fearful of continuing outside intervention, has become fearful of change.

## **Impact of Iraq war**

The massive U.S. invasion and destruction of neighboring Iraq, the Bush-Blair discussion of a similar attack on Syria in 2003, and the harsh new sanctions on Syria have added intense pressure.

But the most dislocating factor is never discussed in the corporate media: To escape the last eight years of U.S. occupation, more than 1.5 million Iraqis have flooded into Syria, whose population in 2006 was 18 million. According to a 2007 report by the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, this influx impacted all facets of life in Syria, particularly the services offered by the state to all citizens and refugees.

The unexpected arrival of these Iraqi refugees has strained Syria's infrastructure, including guaranteed free elementary and high schools, free health care, housing availability and other areas of the economy and has increased costs across the board. The prices of foodstuffs and basic goods have gone up by 30 percent,



## **Iran's Social Gains Arouse Washington's Hostility**

Why is Iran increasingly a target of U.S. threats? Who in Iran will be affected if the Pentagon implements plans, already drawn up, to strike more than 10,000 targets in the first hours of a U.S. air barrage on Iran?

What changes in policy is Washington demanding of the Iranian government?

In the face of the debacle U.S. imperialism is facing in Iraq, U.S. threats against Iran are discussed daily. This is not a secret operation. They can't be considered idle threats.

Two aircraft carriers — USS Eisenhower and USS Stennis — are still off the coast of Iran, each one accompanied by a carrier strike group containing Hornet and Superhornet fighter-bombers, electronic warfare aircraft, anti-submarine and refueler planes, and airborne command-and-control planes. Six guided-missile destroyers are also part of the armada.

Besides this vast array of firepower, the Pentagon has bases throughout the Middle East able to attack Iran with cruise missiles and hundreds of warplanes.

In fact, the U.S. is already engaged in a war on Iran. Ever-tightening sanctions, from both the U.S. and U.N., restrict trade and the ordering of equipment, spare parts and supplies.

Seymour Hersh reported in the New Yorker magazine a year ago that U.S. special operations forces were already operating inside Iran in preparation for a possible attack. U.S.-backed covert operatives had entered Iran to organize sabotage, car bombings,

kidnappings and attacks on civilians, to collect targeting data and to foment anti-government ethnic-minority groups.

**News articles have reported in recent months that the Pentagon has drawn up plans for a military blitz that would strike 10,000 targets in the first day of attacks.**

The aim is to destroy not just military targets but also airports, rail lines, highways, bridges, ports, communication centers, power grids, industrial centers, hospitals and public buildings.

It is important to understand internal developments in Iran today in order to understand why this country is the focus of such continued hatred by U.S. corporate power.

Every leading U.S. political figure has weighed in on the issue, from George W. Bush, who in 2007 has the power to order strikes, to Hillary Clinton, who has made her support for an attack on Iran clear, to John McCain, who answered a reporter's question on policy toward Iran by chanting "Bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" to the tune of the Beach Boys' song, "Barbara Ann." The media — from the New York Times to the Washington Post to banner headlines in the tabloid press to right-wing radio talk shows — are playing a role in preparing the public for an attack.

The significance of oil production and oil reserves in Iran is well known. Every news article, analysis or politician's threat makes mention of Iran's oil. But the impact of Iran's nationalization of its oil resources is not well known.

The corporate owners in the U.S. want to keep it a secret from the people here. They use all the power of their media to demonize the Iranian leadership and caricature and ridicule the entire population, their culture and religion.

### **What's been achieved?**

The focus of media coverage here is to describe Iran as medieval, backward and feudal while somehow becoming a nuclear power.

It is never mentioned that more than half the university students in Iran are women, or that more than a third of the doctors, 60 percent of civil servants and 80 percent of all teachers in Iran are women. At the time of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, 90 percent of rural women were illiterate; in towns the figure was over 45 percent.

Also ignored is the stunning achievement of full literacy for Iranian youth.

Even the World Bank, now headed by Bush's neocon appointee Paul Wolfowitz, in its development report on countries admits that Iran has exceeded the social gains of other countries in the Middle East.

According to that report, Iran has made the most progress in eliminating gender disparities in education. Large numbers of increasingly well-educated women have entered the work force.

Iran's comprehensive social protection system includes the highest level of pensions, disability insurance, job training programs, unemployment insurance and disaster-relief programs. National subsidies make basic food, housing and energy affordable to all.

An extensive national network going from primary health and preventive care to sophisticated hospital care covers the entire population, both urban and rural. More than 16,000 "health houses" are the cornerstone of the health care system. Using simple technology, they provide vaccines, preventive care, care for respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, family planning and contraceptive information, and pre-natal care. And they monitor children's nutrition and general health.

Since 1990, Iran nearly halved the infant mortality rate and increased life expectancy by 10 years.

### **Iran sets record in family planning**

A national family planning program, delivered through the

primary health care facilities and accompanied by a dramatic increase in contraceptive use, which is approved by Islamic law, has led to a world record demographic change in family size and maternal and child health. All forms of contraception are now available for free.

In addition, promoting women's education and employment while extending social security and retirement benefits has alleviated the pressure to have many children to protect security as parents grow older. The fertility rate between 1976 and 2000 declined from 8.1 births per woman to 2.4 births in rural areas and 1.8 births in urban areas.

**These social programs, which cover the entire population of almost 70 million people, should be compared to conditions in countries in the region that remain under U.S. military and economic domination.**

In Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, only a tiny part of the population has benefited from the vast profits generated by oil and gas resources. In each of these countries the bulk of the people are not even considered citizens. Millions are immigrant workers, usually the overwhelming majority of the population, who have no rights to any representation, participation or any social, health or educational programs or union protection.

Women in these countries face much more than religious restrictions on clothing. They are barred from jobs, equal education and the right to control their own bodies or their own funds. They cannot vote or even drive a car.

In Iraq, which before U.S. attacks began in 1991 had some of the best conditions in the region for women, plus a high level of education, health, nutrition and social services, the conditions of life have now deteriorated to the level of the very poorest countries in the world. Legislation passed by the U.S.-installed puppet government has stripped women of rights that were guaranteed earlier.

## **Revolution made it all possible**

The social gains of millions of Iranians are based on the upsurge of the Iranian masses in the 1979 revolution. The overthrow of the U.S.-backed Shah and the Pahlavi dynasty broke the hold of U.S. corporate power in Iran.

The Iranian Revolution was not a socialist revolution. Bourgeois rights to own businesses, land, wealth and inheritance are still protected by law and by the state apparatus.

But the greatest source of wealth — Iran's oil and gas — was nationalized. Nationalization means the transfer of privately owned assets and operations into public ownership. The exploration, drilling, maintenance, transport, refining and shipping of oil and gas became the national property of the Iranian people. Formerly this entire process was controlled at every step by Western imperialists, particularly U.S. and British corporations.

Most of the administrators, executives, technicians and engineers who controlled the process used to be from the West. Through hundreds of thousands of contracts and sub-contracts, U.S. and British firms extracted a profit not just through the sale of oil on the world markets but at every step of its extraction and refining. The small portion of profit the Shah's government received, as in the Gulf States today, was spent on luxury items imported from Western corporations for the small ruling elite and on infrastructure and weapons systems purchased from U.S. military corporations, again at an enormous profit.

The 1979 Iranian revolution, even though it brought a religious group to power, was a profoundly radical and anti-imperialist revolution. Demonstrations of millions openly confronted the brutally repressive police apparatus called the Savak, who protected the small handful of corrupt U.S. collaborators. Religious fervor, demands for social justice and militant anti-imperialism were bound together in opposition to the U.S.-imposed Shah and the Pahlavi royal family, which was hated for its program

of a glitzy modernization of the urban infrastructure alongside the growing impoverishment of both urban and rural workers, farmers and much of the middle class.

All classes of society were profoundly shaken as millions of revolutionary workers took to the streets. This was reflected not only in laws passed in Parliament but in the Iranian constitution itself. The constitution states that the government is required to provide every citizen with access to social security for retirement, unemployment, old age, disability, accidents, health and medical treatment — out of public revenue.

Prior to the revolution Iran had a shortage of medical staff and of trained personnel of every kind. During the upheaval of the revolution and the years of the Iran-Iraq war, many physicians, scientific and skilled personnel emigrated.

Having broken free of U.S. corporate domination and control of its resources, Iran was able to develop education, industry and infrastructure with unprecedented speed. By 2004 the number of university students had increased by six times over 1979. There are currently 2.2 million college students. The largest and most prestigious programs encompass 54 state universities and 42 state medical schools where tuition, room and board are totally free. In addition, 289 major private universities also receive substantial funding.

Millions of scientists, engineers, technicians, administrators, military officers, teachers, civil servants and doctors have been trained.

Today Iran boasts modern cities, a large auto industry, and miles of new roads, railroads and subways. Currently 55 Iranian pharmaceutical companies produce 96 percent of the medicines on the market in Iran. This allows a national insurance system to reimburse drug expenses.

Soon to become operational is the largest pharmaceutical complex in southwest Asia, which will produce compound drugs, making Iran a pioneer in biotechnology.

Years of U.S. sanctions and pressure on international financial institutions have had an unexpected result: Iran is free of the crippling debt that has strangled so many developing countries. According to World Bank figures, Iran's external debt is one of the lowest for its size: \$11.9 billion, or 8.8 percent of the GDP. From the point of view of the imperialist world bankers, this means the loss of many billions each year in interest payments to them.

### **Different approaches**

Since 1979 there have been deep struggles inside Iran over how to deal with the unrelenting pressure of the imperialist powers. There are differing approaches on development plans and who is favored or benefits most from these plans. But all of the present forces are committed to maintaining Iran's control of its resources.

Iran is not a monolithic state. No state is or could be. There are contending groups even within the Muslim clergy that reflect different economic interests and class forces. This is true also in the Iranian Parliament and among various political parties and leaders.

Under President Mohammed Khatami, from 1997 to 2005, a "Reform Movement" eased religious and social restrictions. But it also allowed the introduction of neo-liberal economic policies, structural reforms and the de-nationalizing or privatizing of some social programs along with the cutting of subsidies. More joint ventures were initiated with European and Japanese capital. Programs that benefited the "private sector" or the wealthy and the middle class grew. This was the core of Khatami's base.

The current leader, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's first non-clerical president in 24 years, was elected in 2005 in a landslide victory after promising to extend social security and pensions, improve the subsidies for food and housing, deal with rising unemployment and guarantee a monthly stipend.

The Iranian people are determined to protect the substantial gains they have made since the revolution. They are not interested in any effort that turns the clock back.

A Wall Street Journal Commentary by Francis Fukuyama on Feb. 1, 2007, was unusually frank in explaining the growing problem faced by U.S. corporate power on a global scale:

“What is it that leaders like Iran’s Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hezbollah’s Hassan Nasrallah and Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez have in common that vastly increases their local appeal? A foreign policy built around anti-Americanism is, of course, a core component. But what has allowed them to win elections and build support in their societies is less their foreign-policy stances than their ability to promise, and to a certain extent deliver on, social policy — things like education, health and other social services, particularly for the poor. ...

“The U.S. and the political groups that it tends to support around the world, by contrast, have relatively little to offer in this regard.”

### **Past and new threats**

Iran’s program for nuclear power was actually initiated by the U.S. when the Shah held dictatorial power. Nuclear energy is an important part of modern industrial development. It is important in science, medicine and research. Only after the overthrow of the Shah was Iran’s continued development of the same program branded a threat by Washington.

The U.S. government has made every effort to sabotage all Iranian infrastructure and industrial development, not only nuclear energy. Modern technology — from elevators to cars, ships, jet aircraft and oil refineries — needs constant upkeep. Parts for the resupply and maintenance of equipment the Iranians had purchased over decades from U.S. corporations were halted.

The most onerous sanctions were imposed in 1995 during the Clinton administration.

The Iranian people, despite many different political currents, are united in their determination not to lose their national sovereignty again. Washington's past use of sanctions, economic sabotage, political destabilization and regime change is well remembered in Iran today.

Sanctions, the freezing of assets and an embargo on the export of Iranian oil and all trade with Iran were first imposed in March 1951, after Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Iran was the first country in the Middle East to take the bold step of reclaiming its national wealth in the post-colonial era.

In 1953 using internal destabilization and massive external pressure, the CIA orchestrated the overthrow of Mossadegh's popularly elected government and placed the Shah on the Peacock Throne. Oil was back under the control of the U.S. and Britain, and 26 years of brutal repression followed.

**Ever since the 1979 revolution and the decisive overthrow of the U.S.-supported pro-imperialist dictatorship, Iran has had not a moment of peace from the Pentagon or Wall Street.**

As Iran continues to grow and develop, U.S. imperialism is becoming increasingly desperate to reverse this revolutionary process, whether through sanctions, sabotage or bombing. But today it faces a population that is stronger, more conscious and more skilled. On a world scale U.S. imperialism is more isolated. Its hated occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has left it overextended.

But the Pentagon is still capable of massive destruction. Its bases surround Iran and it has sent an armada of ships to the Gulf. U.S. government threats against Iran today must be taken as seriously as their devastating occupation of Iraq.

The forces opposing Washington's policy of endless war — whether waged through sanctions, coups, invasions, bombings

or sabotage — should stand with Iran, recognize its accomplishments, defend its gains and oppose imperialism's efforts to recolonize the country.

*Sources of information about Iran's social development include: "Iran's Family Planning Program: Responding to a Nation's Needs," by Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C., June 2002; "Tehran University Official Describes Iran Health Care System to Harvard School of Public Health," HSPH NOW, Jan. 24, 2003; worldbank.org, Iran Country Brief; UNICEF, Info by Country; Food & Agriculture Organization of U.N., Nutrition: Country Profiles; "Biggest Pharmaceutical Plant to Open Soon," Iran Daily, Feb. 4, 2007.*

*Published May 5, 2007*



**Ramsey Clark, June 26, 2012.**

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

## **U.S. Threats to Iran Put World in Danger**

There is growing apprehension that through miscalculation, deliberate provocation or a staged false flag operation, a U.S. war with Iran is imminent.

The dangerous combination of top U.S. officials' public threats, the Pentagon's massive military deployment, continued drone flights and industrial sabotage against Iran provides an ominous warning. The corporate media have been more than willing to cheer industrial sabotage, computer viruses and targeted assassinations. War maneuvers with Israel scheduled for mid-January were suddenly postponed Jan. 15, 2012, until May or later.

The U.S. Congress overwhelmingly voted to include binding provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act, and President Obama signed the legislation Dec. 31, 2011, ordering Iran's economic strangulation. These NDAA provisions demand that every other country in the world joins this economic blockade of Iran or face U.S. sanctions themselves. This itself is an act of war.

Iran has directly charged the CIA for the Jan. 11, 2012, assassination of physicist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, which has outraged Iranians. Roshan is the fourth scientist killed in five targeted assassination in two years.

Whether or not a war will actually erupt, it is essential to look at the powerful forces that lay the groundwork for such a conflagration.

A U.S. war would kill hundreds of thousands of Iranians and create regionwide destabilization. It would cause a wild, specu-

lative hike in oil and gas prices, devastating fragile economies of the poorest countries and unhinging the increasingly shaky Eurozone.

Revolutionary Marxists like Fidel Castro, political leaders in China and Russia, and even a hardened Israeli general have joined many political commentators to warn that a U.S. or U.S.-supported Israeli attack on Iran could quickly become a far wider war.

While defending its sovereign right to develop energy self-sufficiency, Tehran has made every effort to deflect U.S. threats and charges. Iran has submitted to years of intrusive inspections of its research and industrial facilities to confirm its compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

But Washington insists on stopping Iran's development — and not only its nuclear energy development to assure its future as oil production declines. For decades Iran was forced to import refined oil. Washington has tried to stop Iran from importing parts to build oil refineries, as it has tried to stop all of Iran's development since the 1979 revolution.

### **The myth of stimulus from war**

David Broder, Washington Post political correspondent for 40 years and news show pundit, described in an Oct. 31, 2010, article how Obama could deal with his weakened situation when the Republicans swept Congress. He argued that to fix the economy and regain popularity, the solution is obvious and unavoidable: "War with Iran."

Broder had more than 400 appearances on "Meet the Press." He even won a Pulitzer Prize. Broder could be counted on to reflect political thinking and planning in Washington. Only the war machine can pull the U.S. out of economic stagnation, Broder argued.

"Look back at FDR and the Great Depression," wrote Broder. "What finally resolved that economic crisis? World War II. [A

showdown with the mullahs] will help [Obama] politically because the opposition party will be urging him on. And as tensions rise and we accelerate preparations for war, the economy will improve.”

Upon Broder’s death in March, 2011, Obama called him “the most respected and incisive political commentator of his generation.” (New York Times, March 10, 2011)

Broder’s statement shows an absolutely criminal mindset. It also shows a dangerous illusion. Broder calmly proposed the murder of tens of thousands of people, the devastation of entire cities, the destruction of a whole culture as a temporary economic fix to win a U.S. election.

Other commentators just as coldly argued with Broder that war with Iran would not be large enough, because all the weapons needed already exist and are in place. So no surge of military orders would follow. A larger war would be needed to give a big enough push!

In 1939 reviving shuttered U.S. steel, rubber and textile clothing plants with government orders for tanks, ships, jeeps, helmets, uniforms and life vests for sale to Europe was a big stimulus. The entry of the U.S. into World War II in 1941 provided an enormous surge of productive capacity that pulled the U.S. economy out of a 10-year economic depression.

**What worked as an economic stimulus 70 years ago, before the existence of the gargantuan, bloated, high-tech military-industrial complex, is long past.**

Today the U.S. has a military machine and a military budget larger than that of the rest of the world combined, exceeding \$1 trillion a year in stated and hidden costs, even without another war. It is guaranteed to grow at a rate of 5 percent to 10 percent a year. This is built into the Pentagon’s budget projections even without cost overruns.

## **World won't bow to U.S. dictates**

Washington's plans to easily conquer Afghanistan and Iraq and set up stable puppet regimes were frustrated. The U.S. plan for economic war on Iran has also exposed U.S. weaknesses.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner launched a tour of East Asian nations in early January 2012 to convince south Korea, China, India and Japan to cut their massive Iranian oil imports and abide by the sanctions.

China and India — both major economies — refused directly. China buys a third of Iran's oil exports.

The Obama administration said that the U.S. would offer countries that applied for a temporary waiver to continue oil purchases from Iran while they made other arrangements. An Indian cabinet minister said India will continue to do business with Iran. South Korea said it would apply for a U.S. waiver because it planned to increase oil purchases from Iran.

Japanese officials, when meeting with Geithner, seemed to agree. But after his departure Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba backtracked, saying, "The United States would like to impose sanctions. We believe it is necessary to be extremely circumspect about this matter." (AFP, Jan. 13, 2012)

Russia announced its refusal to comply with sanctions. So did NATO-member Turkey. The European Union insisted on a six-month delay, due to fears of the economic consequences to debt-ridden Italy, Spain and Greece. The Greek government said it needs at least a year. Saudi Arabia's crude oil contains more sulfur than lighter Iranian oil and requires substantially higher refining costs. In a time of global capitalist recession, this added cost is no easy sell.

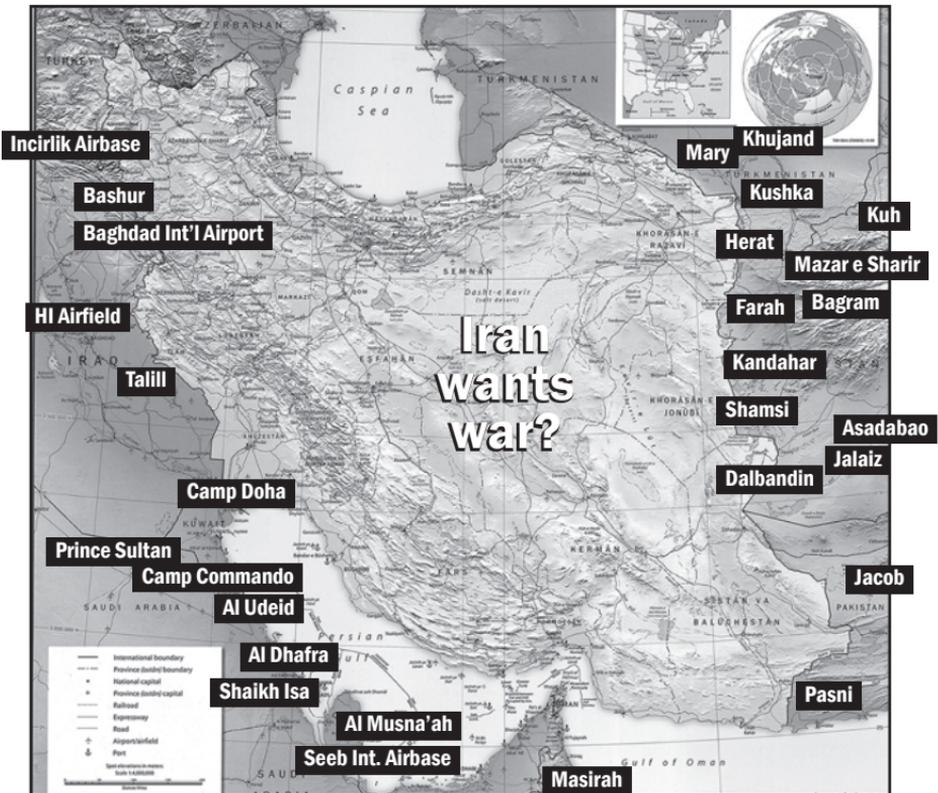
Even outright U.S. collaborators are refusing Washington's demands. Pakistan, for example, refused to abandon a pipeline to transport Iranian natural gas into Pakistan and in the future even into India.

All of this would be good news. But the danger is that U.S. corporate power, seeing on every side its declining ability to ram through its dictates, is increasingly driven to military solutions.

This is exacerbated by U.S. setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan that have weakened the U.S. superpower's dominance of South-west Asia relative to Iran. The more the U.S. loses its grip on the region, the more desperate imperialism may become to risk all in a mad adventure to recoup its past position.

Every voice must be raised at this urgent hour against sanctions and war.

*Published January 18, 2012*



**Look how close they put their country to our military bases.**



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

**Temple University Students for Justice in Palestine erected a mock "apartheid wall." Philadelphia, April 16, 2011.**



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

**Palestine Land Day, Boston, March 30, 2012.**

## Palestine Stands for Global Resistance

*The following is from a talk given by Sara Flounders in Beirut at the time of the Israeli three week bombardment of Gaza at the Palestine Plenary Session of the Jan. 16-18, 2009, International Forum for Resistance, Anti-Imperialism, Peoples' Solidarity and Alternatives.*

The United Nations just stands by, the European Union is in full support of the Zionist state and the whole war is paid for and equipped by U.S. imperialism. From Saudi Arabia to Egypt to India, nations who were once considered friends of Palestine stand by and watch Gaza burn — day after day after day!

The Zionists' use of bunker busters, F-16 jets, cluster bombs, white phosphorus bombs and the systematic destruction of food warehouses and emergency relief provisions is all well publicized throughout the entire region, but absolutely nothing is done in the face of the most serious war crimes.

Why, why is this? The global inaction is because the rich and powerful are terrified of, and desperately want to destroy, resistance in their own countries. They want to destroy the glorious example of resistance — which Palestine represents to the whole world.

Every one of the great powers and their collaborators hope that by attacking Heroic Gaza they can push back and demoralize the struggle in the whole region.

Gaza is a harbinger of wider war against oppressed people of the world. We are on the eve of a global capitalist crisis. This

means massive insecurity, cutbacks in all social programs, unemployment for millions.

Millions of working people will seek to fight back against a system of endless war and greater and greater divide of enormous wealth for a handful and poverty for the over-whelming majority. Increasingly they will identify with and take heart from the many forms of resistance they see around them.

We need to militantly support Hamas, the democratically elected choice of the people, which is being demonized, hunted and assassinated by the Zionists, as is every heroic fighter.

We need to make it clear that we support the right to resist, the right to fire rockets, the right to dig tunnels, the right to organize the people against sure starvation and the blockade that Israel has criminally imposed.

**For decades the Palestinian struggle has been the shining example to all the world of a people who refuse to submit to colonial domination, apartheid conditions, the most brutal forms of segregation and subjugation.**

At this forum we salute the powerful resistance of Iraq and the struggle waged by all of the different forces opposing U.S. occupation.

We salute the resistance in Afghanistan, a resistance that the U.S. never expected.

We salute the heroic forces in Lebanon, led by Hezbollah, which organized such a devastating setback to Israel in 2006.

We stand with the people of Syria and with Iran, who, in the face of U.S./Israeli threats, have been steadfast.

We applaud the people of Venezuela and Bolivia, who have shown such great solidarity with the struggle in Gaza as they organize to build a more just society.

We must intensify the struggle against NATO, the U.S./European Union military arm. Now we need to connect the criminal role of NATO in Afghanistan, NATO in the Balkans, in Georgia

— to the phony Israeli ceasefire in Gaza. Washington now wants NATO military forces in Palestine and Egypt! NATO is the U.S. shield to do what Israel alone can no longer do. It is an effort to impose greater U.S. control in the region. But there is greater and greater resistance everywhere to these plans.

Organizers represented at this forum are involved in the most practical work of mobilizing opposition at the grass roots. Collectively we have brought millions into the streets in public demonstrations of solidarity. This is true in the Arab and Muslim world, through the entire South, and also in the imperialist countries. In some places we have blocked and even occupied the embassies of Israel and targeted countries that have collaborated with Israel's war crimes. Activists here today have taken boats to Gaza and taken up collections for people-to-people humanitarian aid.

From the U.S. — we are proud to have helped to organize many thousands of people in the streets, emergency demonstrations day after day for three weeks in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and many other cities.

We must sustain an ongoing movement to boycott, divest and to impose sanctions [BDS] on the Israeli state and war crimes charges on its leaders. We must demand an accounting from our own governments.

We need to continue and deepen all these actions to find the best way of throwing a giant shoe into the gears of the imperialist and Zionist war machines.

Sisters and brothers — Gaza stands for global resistance.

It is the resistance of a whole people against starvation, blockade and siege.

World solidarity is a responsibility!

Palestine is fighting for all of us!

We must fight for Palestine!

*Published January 21, 2009*



**New York, Sept. 11, 2010.**

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

SECTION V

# **The Pentagon's War against Human Rights**



Chicago, May 20, 2012.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

## **Osama Bin Laden's Murder: It Is Terror, But Not Victory**

Very little is known about the top-secret U.S. operation that executed Osama bin Laden, except what President Barack Obama chose to announce: that U.S. secret forces found bin Laden, killed him on May 1, 2011 and disposed of his body at sea on May 2.

Although Obama hailed this as a “turning point in the war on terror,” it is clear that he was not proposing any plans to bring U.S. troops home. Instead, the resulting jingoistic media barrage is being used to celebrate the three unpopular wars that have devastated Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, at the cost of more than 1 million lives and \$1 trillion over the past 10 years.

**The orchestrated celebration of this military operation will justify further expansion of the military budget, weapons systems and tactics like targeted assassinations, secret rendition and new drone attacks.**

The threat of shadowy bin Laden and the al-Qaida network has been used again and again to build support for U.S. wars, repressive legislation, maximum security measures and wide-ranging attacks on civil liberties.

Obama warned of “violent attacks around the world after the death of bin Laden.” Such dire yet vague warnings might also be used to push through new legislation giving a blank check to wildly increased levels of repression within the U.S. and to waging new U.S. wars abroad without any form of Congressio-

nal debate or authorization. Such pieces of legislation are already introduced in both houses of Congress.

House bill H.R.968 and Senate bill S.551 are expected to be included in the upcoming military appropriations bill. These ever-expanding annual military appropriation budgets now sail through Congress without question or discussion.

### **Creating anti-Muslim bigotry**

The constant threat of terror attacks has whipped up a climate of anti-Muslim hate and fear in large parts of the population. Racism and fear are essential props of imperialist war. Whenever support for U.S. wars and the mood of hatred seems to wane, U.S. officials from local prosecutors to FBI and national police agencies uncover a new “plot.” Many have been exposed as scurrilous acts of entrapment against immigrants. But the media feeding frenzy lasts for weeks and poisons all relations.

Although no other attack blamed on Muslims has taken place since Sept. 11, 2001, hundreds of Muslims in the past 10 years have been sentenced to decades and even life in prison based on frenzied and flimsy charges. Thousands of Arab and South Asian immigrants have been deported without any appeal or due process. Thousands more have simply “disappeared,” as victims of extra-judicial kidnapping and secret rendition.

This is hardly the first U.S. political assassination. Progressive and revolutionary figures like Che Guevara in Bolivia, Patrice Lumumba in Congo and Salvador Allende in Chile were killed at the behest of the CIA. Today hundreds of drone attacks routinely target thousands of civilians in villages from Libya, Pakistan and Afghanistan to Yemen, Sudan and Somalia.

The assassination of bin Laden completely overwhelmed all coverage of NATO’s attempt to assassinate Muammar Gadhafi in Libya, which resulted in the death of Gadhafi’s son and three grandchildren in a missile strike.

It is significant that the operation against bin Laden comes at the very beginning of President Obama's announced new presidential campaign. It immediately raised his ratings in the corporate media, which are tied to the largest military corporations, at a time when big business is demanding more givebacks and every state and city is instituting cutbacks.

### **U.S. war created bin Laden**

Of course, the assassination of bin Laden raises many questions. He was not killed in a cave in Afghanistan or even near the border area, but in the center of the military stronghold of Abbottabad, just 100 yards from the Kakul Military Academy, the school for training officers of the Pakistani Army. It is a little like finding bin Laden on an estate next door to West Point Military Academy.

It is difficult to imagine that this elaborate compound was unknown. In the past decade U.S. military aid to Pakistan has surpassed \$20 billion. It has left the people of Pakistan impoverished and the military more bloated, repressive and corrupt than before. The war in Afghanistan continues at a cost of \$2 billion a week. U.S. wars and unlimited military aid are a source of fantastic profit to private contractors and hundreds of U.S. military corporations and banks.

**No declaration of war, no evidence and no discussion precede or follow these attacks. Similar targeted assassinations by Israel are now considered routine in the West Bank and Gaza.**

It is almost impossible to find a description of bin Laden that does not include the role of U.S. secret agencies in funding and training him during the years of war against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The U.S. had no trouble supporting a reactionary political outlook then that was discon-

nected from mass movements and progressive social issues and willing to use political terror, fanaticism and sectarian violence.

Again and again divisive sectarian bombings and attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan have been blamed on al-Qaida operatives, even when these acts have seemed to put a brake on unified mass resistance, thus assisting the continuing U.S. occupation.

In the past three months unified resistance by millions of people across the Arab world has challenged U.S. corporate domination and U.S.-supported dictators in a way that isolated sectarian bombings never could. It is no stretch to speculate that U.S. and Israeli “secret ops” may turn to bombings and massacres by unknown groups to create fear, sectarian divisions and new excuses for massive repression against the Arab Spring of revolutionary upheavals.

This is an old police tactic, used all too effectively against workers’ struggles in the past. On May Day in Chicago 125 years ago, a bomb thrown by police agents in what came to be called the Haymarket Riot was used to frame up organizers advocating the eight-hour workday and break up the workers’ movement.

An April 28, 2011, bombing at a café in Marrakesh, Morocco, that killed 16 people, many of them Western tourists, seemed to be directed not at the corrupt monarchy but at dampening the mass resistance that was spreading.

That bombing was immediately used as an excuse for a crack-down by the government and a reversal of the constitutional reforms that King Mohammed VI had promised after massive demonstrations demanding reforms and democracy. Security forces have since been stationed in Morocco’s main cities, supposedly to protect the public.

It is too soon to know the fallout of the latest U.S. secret operation in Pakistan. But we do know the U.S. has no plans to end the terror of its “war on terror.”

Every effort must be made to challenge the ugly, pro-war climate being whipped up. Demands to end these wars and bring

all U.S. troops home must become part of every struggle generated by the cutbacks and the growing attacks on unions.

**This summary execution will be used to justify further expansion of the military budget, new weapons systems and a stepped-up level of domestic repression.**

### **Events show the limits of U.S. power**

President Barack Obama has praised the targeted assassination of Osama bin Laden as a turning point and “one of the greatest military and intelligence operations in U.S. history.”

However, events in the week running up to the execution exposed the limits of U.S. imperialist power and showed why the imperialists are so desperate to project an all-powerful image.

Obama’s message was that the Pentagon can do anything, go anywhere, kill anyone, bomb any country. Sovereignty is now irrelevant. The compliant media are glorifying Navy SEALs, Army Special Forces and Airborne Night Stalkers as “America’s quiet professionals.” We are told they have recently carried out 50 operations in a dozen countries. International lawlessness — the use of torture, kidnapping, secret rendition, extrajudicial killings and targeted assassinations — is justified and defended.

But all this has been unable to reverse U.S. imperialism’s steadily eroding position in the region. Consider a few events that took place in the two weeks before and after the bin Laden assassination. Clearly events are spinning out of their control.

### **Prison break in Kandahar**

All their night-vision goggles, electronic listening gear and special ops units couldn’t prevent the escape on April 24, in Kandahar of 541 prisoners labeled as Taliban, including 104 commanders described as the very backbone of the insurgency.

The tunnel they had dug for months stretched half a mile and had electricity and air holes. Keys they had obtained to the cells

allowed organizers to open cellblocks and escort prisoners to the escape route.

The facility had undergone security upgrades and tightened procedures since a Taliban attack in 2008 had freed 900 prisoners. In that assault, an explosives-laden tanker truck at the prison gate diverted attention while an explosion at a back wall opened an escape route. Dozens of militants on motorbikes aided the escapes.

Afghan government officials and their NATO backers had repeatedly asserted that the prison now had vastly improved security since that attack with new guard towers, night illumination, a ring of concrete barriers topped with razor wire and an entrance reached by passing through multiple checkpoints and gates.

### **Turn the guns around**

On April 27, 2011, nine U.S. officers — two lieutenant colonels, one of whom had retired and become a contractor, two majors, four captains and one master sergeant, all of them armed — were killed in a meeting room at Kabul airport. The shooter was not with al-Qaida or the Taliban but was a trusted Afghan Air Force pilot with 20 years' seniority.

This is the seventh time this year that a trusted Afghan officer has turned his gun around and killed U.S. military officials.

The same week also saw attacks inside the Afghan Defense Ministry, at a Kandahar city police station and at a shared Afghan/U.S. military base in the east. In neighboring Helmand province on April 29, 2011, the top civilian chief of Marjah district was assassinated.

On the same day, April 27, 2011, the Wall Street Journal ran a front-page article headlined, "Karzai Told to Dump U.S." The article explained that "Pakistan is lobbying Afghanistan's president against building a long-term strategic partnership with the U.S., urging him instead to look to Pakistan — and its Chinese ally — for help in striking a peace deal with the Taliban and rebuilding the economy, Afghan officials say." The article described the

tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan and the deep hostility to U.S. domination throughout the region. Even the forces U.S. imperialism has created, armed and financed are increasingly wary of their alliances.

### **Cutting supply lines**

Meanwhile, there were mass sit-ins and rallies near Peshawar, Pakistan, involving thousands of people who blocked the main supply roads used by the U.S. and NATO to resupply their forces in Afghanistan via the Khyber Pass.

The organizers threatened that if drone strikes inside Pakistan did not stop within 30 days, they would block all NATO supply routes across Pakistan and march to the capital, Islamabad, to force the government to take a stand on the issue. U.S. drones have killed more than 1,000 people in Pakistan alone.

The execution of bin Laden came just one day after U.S. bombs meant for Muammar Gadhafi, the Libyan head of state, killed his son and three young grandchildren. The U.S./NATO war on Libya, once considered an easy “regime change,” continues without even a pro-forma congressional discussion or vote.

### **Arab spring**

All these immediate setbacks for imperialism reflect also the millions in the streets in Egypt and Tunisia who totally overwhelmed those U.S.-government-supported, long-term dictatorships that Washington had relied on in the region.

The April 27, 2011 announcement by Fatah and Hamas of a historic agreement of Palestinian unity, reached in Cairo with the assistance of Egyptian officials, led to immediate U.S. threats to cut off all aid to Fatah and to outraged denunciations by Israel. For many years U.S./Israeli policy has been to keep the Palestinian movement divided and the democratically elected government of Hamas isolated.

On that same day, the station that pumped natural gas from al-Sabil terminal near El Arish, Egypt, into Israel was blown

up. This third attack in three months will close the pipeline for weeks. Egyptian officials have also announced they are reviewing the below-market-price contract for natural gas that Egypt had formerly granted to Israel. Recent polls show the majority of Egyptians want to end the “peace treaty” with Israel.

On April 30 Egypt announced it was opening the Rafah border crossing into Gaza and ending the blockade of Gaza on a permanent basis. The U.S. and Israel had imposed a strict blockade on Gaza since 2007 with Hosni Mubarak’s full compliance. Mubarak’s overturn in Egypt has meant an end to many reactionary policies. The people are in motion, asserting their rights and making new demands.

Meanwhile thousands of Iraqis continue to take to the streets and demonstrate in front of U.S. bases protesting shortages of electricity, food and jobs and calling on all U.S. troops to leave. U.S. officials are having a difficult time negotiating an agreement for continued bases in Iraq, even with a compliant and corrupt government of their own making.

### **Execution against bin Laden**

The U.S. operation in Abbottabad, close to the Pakistan Military Academy and the restricted site of the Kahuta nuclear plant, sparked deep apprehension.

Pumped up by the bin Laden execution, the Pentagon launched another drone attack on Pakistan on May 6, 2011, killing 17 people.

In Yemen that same day a drone attack failed to kill Anwar al Awlaki, a U.S. citizen and radical cleric who has never been charged with any crime but is now on a U.S. international hit list. The announcement said the drone attack “may have killed some members of al-Qaida in Yemen.” The attack is a disaster for the U.S.-supported military dictatorship in Yemen, which is on the brink of collapse. For three months millions of people have cou-

rageously demonstrated in the streets against the government. The Pentagon had stopped drone attacks, fearing they would further undermine the military dictatorship. Last year after a U.S. drone mistakenly killed the leaders of a Yemeni province, even the government expressed great anger.

On May 8, the Taliban allegedly launched a multipronged attack on the offices of the governor, the national security directorate, police headquarters and a U.S. Special Forces base in Kandahar, Afghanistan. It created chaos in the capital of a province that NATO has spent the past year trying to pacify. The May 8 Observer of Britain explained, “The dream of turning the city into a bulwark of security was badly tarnished.”

**U.S. media polls have measured a temporary “bump” in President Obama’s ratings. But U.S. imperialism’s own standing is in continuing decline. It has economic problems it can’t solve and terrifyingly destructive weapons that are increasingly raising more anger and organized resistance than fear.**

After promises of an economic rebound, U.S. unemployment in April 2011 climbed to 9 percent. Wholesale attacks on Medicare and Social Security are proposed as solutions to the budget deficit. The capitalist economy can no longer afford guns and butter. Now the ruling class is pinning its hopes on the super-profits of military contracts and conquest.

While it is true that the Pentagon has weapons enough to destroy the world, it is increasingly coming up against the limits of the capitalist system it serves.

*Published May 3 and 12, 2011*



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

New York. March 1, 2012.

## **U.S. Promotes Assassination Threats against Iranian Scientists**

The International Atomic Energy Agency made public the names of Iranian nuclear scientists in a new report released in November 2011. Publishing their names makes these scientists targets for assassination.

This unprecedented violation of international guidelines, and of the IAEA's own Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, is the most menacing proof to date that the agency is not even superficially a neutral U.N. body that monitors nuclear weapons. Showing the agency's bias, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano met with the White House before meeting with U.N. officials on this latest report.

Several Iranian scientists have already been killed by bombs and drive-by shootings. The secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, Mohammad Javad Larijani, says the U.S. and Israel were behind the murders.

Exposing that these targeted killings are considered acceptable practice, U.S. presidential candidate Newt Gingrich declared that Washington is seeking to stop Iran's nuclear program through maximum covert operations, including the assassination of scientists.

U.S. CIA or Israeli Mossad agents have also carried out virus attacks on the computers of legal Iranian centrifuges, explosions at Iranian industrial sites and continuing acts of sabotage. All

this is part of an ongoing U.S. war that attempts to set back Iran's development as a modern, self-sufficient country.

**A new round of demands that other countries join in sanctions against Iran comes at a time of increasing crisis and upheaval in the region. The impact of an intractable capitalist economic crisis turns Pentagon war planners in an increasingly threatening direction.**

The IAEA report was leaked to the press before its official release. Rather than presenting information from the agency's countless inspections in Iran, it repeated discredited allegations originally made four years ago regarding a laptop computer "found" by U.S. authorities. The laptop supposedly showed Iran's "intention" to construct atomic warheads.

The leak of the report follows a bourgeois media frenzy over a wild claim that Iran was planning to execute a Saudi ambassador in Washington, D.C.

Most ominous are the media reports of a possible Israeli military attack on Iran. Israel is totally dependent on U.S. financial, diplomatic and military aid to survive. Any attack on Iran could occur only with U.S. authorization and overflight clearance of regions where the Pentagon has controlled the sky for decades.

### **The right to develop nuclear energy**

Like every other country, Iran is guaranteed the right to develop and acquire nuclear technology. Iran is also a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Today, at least 30 countries have nuclear power plants. According to the IAEA's most recent "International Status and Prospects of Nuclear Power" report, another 65 countries "are expressing interest in, considering, or actively planning for nuclear power." (iaea.org, March 2011)

But only Iran has faced every form of attack to block development of a nuclear energy program.

Every Iranian nuclear facility is under 24-hour-a-day surveillance by IAEA cameras, and Iran has not one nuclear weapon. Yet the U.S. continues to demand that Iran stop the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, because it could potentially lead to a nuclear weapon sometime in the future.

**The IAEA does not criticize, attack or demand inspections of the more than 10,000 nuclear weapons that the U.S. holds, nor of the hundreds of nuclear weapons developed by Israel.**

The bogus charges of Iraq having weapons of mass destruction to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq — despite years of total monitoring of every industrial plant in Iraq — confirms that no inspection can satisfy Washington's demands.

### **Sanctions on Iran's oil refineries**

The most recent U.S. sanctions are not focused on nuclear research. Instead, they are an attempt to hamper Iran's petrochemical industry.

Iran nationalized its production of oil after a revolutionary upheaval drove U.S. and British imperialism out of Iran in 1979. Since then, every effort has been made to destabilize Iran and regain the vast wealth that once flowed into Western banks and corporations.

Due to its past unequal relation with imperialism and the years of sanctions since, Iran has had to import large amounts of refined oil and petroleum products, from gasoline to jet fuel, cooking gas and more. In 2008, Iran still had to import nearly 40 percent of its market needs.

However, after completion of seven new refineries and improvements to existing refineries, Iran is now almost self-sufficient in oil refining needs. This is why the U.S. is so determined to again block Iran's refining capacity by hampering all forms of international investment.

As this entire resource-rich region continues to slip from U.S. imperialism's control and domination, the danger of a Pentagon-inspired provocation against Iran escalates. All those who oppose imperialist war should be on heightened alert.

*Published November 23, 2011*

## **WikiLeaks, the Printing Press and the Bible**

New forms of technology are inherently destabilizing to the established order.

This is the whole basis of a materialist understanding of history. But this reality can sometimes be confirmed in a manner that catches everyone by surprise. Dominance that was once unchallenged is suddenly contested on all sides. The struggle for change breaks out in new and unexpected ways.

U.S. imperialism cannot put back into the box or shut down what has been opened by WikiLeaks. Instead, the struggle to contain WikiLeaks has the potential to bring millions of people into political consciousness and conflict with the established order.

The effort to suppress the release of information on WikiLeaks by the arrest of Julian Assange and calls for his assassination or trial on terrorism charges, the imprisonment of Bradley Manning and the threats against WikiLeaks activists, along with the cancelation of its services by Amazon, PayPal, American Express, MasterCard, and U.S. and Swiss banks is radicalizing many highly skilled youth internationally. Hundreds of thousands of cyber attacks were organized on the multinational information corporations and banks that attempted to shut WikiLeaks down.

Every effort to shut it down has only served to spread it further and make it far more widely available. Thousands of mirror sites were set up within days of the effort to close WikiLeaks.

Even if the U.S. government succeeds in temporarily shutting down WikiLeaks, millions of people worldwide know that it is

possible to break U.S. government and corporate secrecy. Many new sites are sure to follow.

**The denunciations and attacks on the courageous individuals who have helped to provide access to government and corporate secret information will inspire many others who may have access to restricted information on all kinds of criminal and corporate skullduggery to join in leaking it.**

All this undercuts the endlessly polished image of U.S. imperialism as an invincible power with all the most advanced technology at its disposal.

So much of cyber warfare is dominated by theft of information for profit or espionage. The impact of many thousands of cyber activists all over the world working simply for the idea that information and communication should be free and available — not kept secret or owned for private profit — has revolutionary implications.

WikiLeaks has exposed government secrets through the cooperation of courageous, highly skilled individuals who are able to communicate and willing to risk everything in the name of freedom of information. But those forces alone would not have had the mass access of the corporate media.

The choice of documents and the steady, well-publicized daily release of hundreds of documents provided by WikiLeaks on the front pages of newspapers in Germany, France, Spain and Britain may reflect that the U.S.'s own imperialist allies are no longer willing to just be pulled in tow by the U.S.-dominated military alliance known as NATO.

In the past these imperialist countries and their corporate media have been willing to ignore clear evidence of U.S. crimes and conspiracies. Previously, these crimes were not even considered newsworthy or relevant.

Now these imperialist countries — long-time thieves and rob-

bers themselves — can see that today U.S. imperialism is in a long period of decline and decay. It is unable to prevail in a long ground war in Central Asia against one of the poorest, least-developed countries in the world: Afghanistan. It is unable to reverse the global capitalist economic crisis or solve the growing unemployment faced by millions of workers. Its industrial capacity is now a mere fraction of global production.

It is hardly a secret that in order to maintain its deteriorating monopoly on power, U.S. imperialism has used invasions, occupations, coups, bribery and military dictatorship. To hold in place an archaic, corrupt system of exploitation, it has openly engaged in the most repressive measures, including mass raids, disappearances, secret detentions, targeted assassinations, preventive prosecutions and frame-ups.

Both the Bush administration and now the Obama administration have politically defended the use of the most brutal forms of torture, including waterboarding, sensory deprivation, solitary confinement and electric torture. And they have used and sold weapons of torture around the world, from stun guns to white phosphorous and anti-personnel grenades.

Much of the information and even some of the pictures, videos and documents now being released were already known both in some specifics and in general outline. But concrete information can have radical consequences.

**To understand how futile the U.S. efforts to shut down WikiLeaks are, it is worth looking back to a struggle at the dawn of capitalism against the old feudal order in Europe.**

In the 16th century the Roman Catholic Church was the largest landowner in feudal Europe, controlling a third of all land. As an institution, it had a stranglehold on enormous amounts of property, privilege, titles, inheritance and especially ideas. The privileged clergy had a total monopoly on law, politics, science and “salvation.”

But new technology, trade and communication were bubbling beneath the surface. It was the newly invented printing press and its ability to widely disseminate information that broke the authority not only of the Catholic Church but also of feudal class relations.

### **The printing press and indulgences**

In 1440 Johannes Gutenberg built Europe's first wooden press, which used movable metal type. It took another 15 years, until 1455, to develop the rudimentary technology of movable type, metal molds, a special press and oil-based inks that together created mass production of the first printed book: 200 copies of the Bible. By 1499 — less than 50 years later — printing houses had been established in more than 2,500 cities in Europe. An estimated 15 million books had been printed of 30,000 titles, including hundreds of political and religious-political tracts which were distributed far and wide.

This new technology broke the monopoly of information once available only to a select few who had access to handwritten manuscripts that took years to individually copy or produce by laboriously inking carved wooden blocks.

The cost of Gutenberg's first run of a two-volume printed Bible was the equivalent of approximately three years' wages for an average clerk. This was far cheaper than a handwritten Bible, which could take a single monk 20 years to transcribe.

As Gutenberg was developing the technology to print an entire book, he sustained himself by mass producing for church officials tens of thousands of printed "indulgences." These were printed slips of paper sold by the Catholic Church that promised to remit punishments in the afterlife. These aggressively marketed notes could only be sold by agents or commissaries, who bought the rights to sell them from the pope in Rome.

Indulgences quickly became an enormous new source of

wealth for Rome — a commodity that could be bought and sold. It was a new form of extracting profits: onerous taxation and mass exploitation for all who wished for salvation. For 50 years it appeared that the wealth and power of Rome was growing based on indulgences, the currency of the age.

All these enormous changes — a new marketable source of wealth, an emerging capitalist class, new technology, new communication, a beleaguered peasantry and growing numbers of poor, urban workers — were brewing when a monk, Martin Luther, challenged Rome's absolute authority.

Nailing a declaration of 95 theses to the cathedral doors in Wittenberg in 1517, Luther opposed the buying and selling of indulgences and demanded the right to interpret the Bible. This bold challenge to papal authority is credited with unleashing 100 years of revolutionary upheaval known as the Protestant Reformation.

Luther's translation of the Bible from Church Latin into the vernacular German spoken by common people had an even more revolutionary impact.

### **The Peasant War**

For hundreds of years historians described the resulting wars that convulsed Europe as religious wars. The burning issue that moved millions of people to revolutionary action was the freedom to read the vernacular Bible and the right to interpret it. It was a break with the absolute power of the Catholic Church and its privileged clergy.

In the small book, *The Peasant War in Germany* Fredrick Engels shed new understanding on this period of upheaval with his explanation of the class forces emerging that challenged the authority of decaying, corrupt Rome. Local princes, lower nobility and landlords could quickly grasp the advantage of breaking with Rome and thereby lessening its enormous taxation and tithes. It was an opportunity to seize the wealth of church lands and be free of the burden of buying indulgences.

By 1524 large sections of the besieged German peasantry, who were being hammered by the tithes and taxations of both the church and the feudal lords, took the right of each person to interpret the Bible to heart, along with the right to seize the lands of the church and free themselves from ownership by lords and abbeys.

A radical challenge to property took root. The idea that all wealth of the church and the local lords should be held in common led to peasant uprisings that convulsed Germany for two years.

**Technology cannot be turned back. And the new ideas that arise from a society changed by technology cannot be stamped out by threats and repression.**

Thomas Munzer, the leader of the most radical thinkers, merged his biblical interpretations with the Anabaptist movement, a peasant-based, communist mobilization with the rainbow flag as its symbol. In this struggle millions of peasants and plebeians acted for the first time in their own interests, though following a religious program. They built a revolutionary army and contended for power.

Munzer, the Anabaptists and their movement were militarily defeated within two years. To make an example to other insurrectionary efforts, the leaders were horribly tortured and publicly executed. But revolutionary peasant uprisings continued across Europe.

The upheavals spread to Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands and England. The peasant movements, too disorganized, unskilled and illiterate to prevail, were again and again defeated by a bloc of the newly rising capitalist class and frightened princes and landlords.

The Catholic Church used every form of repression to reclaim its authority and privilege. Inquisitions used secret detention, horrendous forms of torture, mass campaigns of terror and

witch-hunts that consumed thousands in flames. Whole countries faced papal excommunication — a punishment similar to sanctions today.

Rome financed military campaigns and invasions, such as the Spanish Armada's attempt to invade Britain in 1588 in an effort to reverse the British monarchy's break with Rome. But no form of threats, terror or torture could restore the Church's uncontested position in feudal Europe.

### **No turning back for U.S. imperialism**

U.S. imperialism cannot shut down the flow of information or the drive it ignites for wider access and the end to the impossibly narrow constraints of private property and ownership of information and communication. The U.S. military may have originally developed the Internet for its own emergency military communication in time of war. But the Internet has long since escaped those bounds.

U.S. corporate power cannot shut down the Internet without totally disrupting their own businesses, production and marketing. The contradiction is that the immediate financial interests of the bourgeoisie make the Internet ever more accessible.

The much bigger problem for U.S. imperialism is that today, as consciousness grows and access to communication technology expands to include the whole world, it is not facing an isolated, illiterate and oppressed peasantry.

It is facing the increasingly educated and skilled multinational working class whom they created. This class will come to a consciousness of its own interests in unexpected and uneven ways. But this class is a force that cannot be stopped by feudal or modern repression and threats.

The rising consciousness of millions of the powerless can be more powerful than technology.

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New York. Dec. 15, 2011.

WW PHOTO: ELLEN CATALINOTTO

## **Militarism and the NDAA Threaten the Right to Organize**

The wording in the defense bill, the NDAA, has created alarm. It is in explicit violation of basic rights as expressed in the Bill of Rights. These rights, while always under attack in a time of rapidly growing political repression, had been considered untouchable by many civil liberties activists.

This article will examine the 2012 NDAA, investigate its relation to U.S. military expansion, look at the history of the Bill of Rights, and see how this can help point the way forward toward expanding rights and defeating repression.

### **What's in the NDAA?**

The controversial provisions in the NDAA grant the U.S. military authority to hold in secret and indefinite detention people deemed a threat to national security without recourse to counsel or a lawyer and without charges presented in a court of law or the right to a trial. Such police-state tactics have already been used against thousands of Muslim immigrants in the U.S. and around the world as part of the so-called “war on terror” since Sept. 11, 2001.

Across the U.S., press conferences, rallies and petition campaigns were quickly organized by a whole series of organizations on Dec 15, 2011. Ironically, passage of NDAA by a final conference committee representing both houses of Congress coincided with the 220th anniversary of the passage of the Bill of Rights on Dec. 15, 1791.

The bill's provisions are an explicit violation of what is known as "habeus corpus," the guarantee of the right to a hearing before a judge. They also violate the guarantee that the U.S. military will be kept out of all internal domestic areas. This is called "posse comitatus," meaning the U.S. military cannot act on U.S. soil against U.S. citizens.

A statement released by the United National Anti-War Coalition cited recent ominous national trends, including massive spying, entrapment and phony plots in the Muslim community, recent raids on homes of anti-war activists by federal agents and subpoenas to appear before federal grand juries, and the nationally coordinated, often violent police evictions of the Occupy movement around the country.

The statement also protested the refusal of the Chicago city government and the federal government to allow for peaceful protests when NATO and the G-8 countries come to Chicago in mid-May 2012 to hold summit meetings.

The Center for Constitutional Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Coalition for the Protection of Civil Freedoms, the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, the International Action Center, the National Coalition to Stop FBI Repression, Occupy Wall Street, Muslim Peace Coalition and many other groups released statements and participated in organized protests and internet petition campaigns calling on President Barack Obama to veto the bill. This unified response is an essential first step in what is needed.

A veto is unlikely because the Obama administration requested the inclusion of this provision in the military budget bill, and has been actively involved in efforts to further restrict basic rights.

Unfortunately, many courageous civil rights organizations in attacking these reactionary provisions have made no mention or criticism of the NDAA itself. But highlighting this vital connection will help provide a perspective on how to fight back.

## **Military breeds repression**

It is no accident that this assault on basic political rights long considered beyond the reach of government attack is part of the bill that funds the giant military machine. The military is the nut of the problem. This new unprecedented attack on civil rights at home cannot be seen in isolation to the ever-expanding role of the U.S. military on a global scale.

The NDAA is the annual bill that funds the bloated military. The U.S. military budgets are already larger than the combined military budget of the rest of the world. The 2012 bill authorizes \$554 billion for the Pentagon's base budget and \$115.5 billion for continuing the current wars and occupations. This appropriations bill funds 1,000 U.S. military bases in more than 150 countries around the world.

Other hundreds of billions of military expenditures hidden in the U.S. budget bring the war machine's total cost to more than \$1 trillion. This year's NDAA further extends restrictions on the transfer of detainees out of Guantanamo, and it contains new threats and stricter sanctions on Iran.

The demonization and criminalization, spying and entrapment of the Muslim community, especially since Sept. 11, 2001, has been used to justify aggressive new wars of conquest and expanding military influence. Increasing the budget for police and prisons is the domestic reflection of the growing weight of the military.

**The U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq represents a significant setback for U.S. strategic plans. But as this NDAA confirms, the U.S. military is hardly closing down.**

U.S. wars and the threat of military action across the globe, invasions, subversion, sabotage, increasing drone surveillance, deadly surprise assaults, kidnapping, secret rendition and targeted assassinations are all treated as acts of defense and national security.

The Pentagon serves the interests of the corporate ruling class. It secures global markets, loots natural resources and subjugates the workers of each country to the capitalist owners of all production. Its mission is to destroy any opposition to this domination from governments and popular rebellions.

The bill signals that no concessions are on the drawing boards, only further repression.

### **Bill of Rights and class struggle**

Many appeals to President Obama to veto this defense bill because of the new repressive provisions have glorified and idealized what the Bill of Rights is, what it stands for and how rights are secured and maintained.

The Bill of Rights was never a sacred document of grand wisdom arrived at by the “founding fathers,” as presented in popular myth and school history books. Nor was it just an academic debate between federalists and anti-federalists.

The Bill of Rights was from the very beginning a reflection of the early class struggle in the U.S. It was not part of the original Constitution drafted in 1787. That document was designed to protect the propertied classes, balance their competing interests and centralize the authority of the state.

These ruling-class elements were meeting in haste after a broad uprising in 1786 throughout New England of indebted small farmers against bankers and merchants known as Shay’s Rebellion.

When the Constitution was originally drafted, any proposal to include any individual rights was overwhelmingly voted down. Land seizures, food riots, debt protests and enormous social ferment made it clear that a Constitution written by slave owners, merchants and land speculators would not pass without some rights guaranteed to a significant section of the masses.

This was especially true because the masses were armed and in motion. The top 1% of 1787 — slave owners, plantation owners, wealthy merchants — made this belated and grudging concession

after four years of intense political struggle in many of the newly minted states. They gave in because they were anxious to quickly organize a centralized federal state to deal with the growing assertion of grievances and rights by poor farmers facing ruin.

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. They include freedom of speech, assembly, press, religion; freedom from torture or cruel and unusual punishment; freedom from warrant-less searches, excessive bail, seizures or imprisonment; plus the right to trial by jury and protection from a standing army. From the beginning they were a contradiction to the Constitution that protected property.

Despite its progressive side, it is important to recognize that the Bill of Rights did not mean rights for all people. Most people in the South were kidnapped African slaves who could be bought, sold, branded, beaten or killed without any protection. Indigenous peoples were targeted for expropriation, removal or extermination. Women were considered the property of their husbands and were granted no rights or protections. Thus the amendments guaranteed rights to a small minority of white men who owned property and were the only ones allowed to vote or assured of having rights.

Every step forward in rights took enormous and often bloody struggles. The struggle for the abolition of slavery only began to be resolved by the Civil War. And 100 years later the monumental Civil Rights Movement struggled for decades for the right to vote and win formal equality.

Even when the rights to freedom of assembly, speech and trial by jury were assured, they did not exist for working people. It took strikes, shut-downs, plant takeovers to win the right to unionize. It took 80 years of marches and mobilizations for women to even gain the right to participate in political life.

It is important to remember this history of struggle to expand rights in order to understand how to push this fight forward today.

## **OWS and fighting to expand rights**

Defending the right to freedom of speech, assembly and the press is important in the class struggle today — in order to have a voice to fight for the right to a job, the right to health care, the right to an education, the right to housing, the right to a safe and clean environment, and the right to oppose endless wars. Given the fabulous ability of technology to provide for all, these basic rights to a full life must be asserted, demanded and won.

But given the crisis of capitalism, all these basic human rights run counter to corporate survival.

Occupy Wall Street's great contribution in this period of contracting capitalism is its focus on the 1% who have benefited from all government bailouts and policies at the expense of the 99%. This popular formulation is a leap forward in class-consciousness on a national scale. Occupy Wall Street has also found creative new forms of mass participation and inclusion. Though imperfect, they are a big step forward.

For these very reasons, the large legal and overwhelmingly peaceful protest assemblies that erupted across the country were threatening to U.S. corporate power, the police and the military, who want only fear and compliance and are driven to shut down all forms of activism.

On a national scale through the Department of Homeland Security, every major OWS encampment was targeted with mass arrests. HS coordinated local police attacks. Even Democratic Party forces, which had originally embraced OWS as an antidote to the Tea Party, complied with police crackdowns.

But the past three months of mass struggles since Sept. 17 confirm once again that the best way to push back reactionary provisions in the NDAA is to raise the level of resistance. Defend the courageous young OWS activists who have opened new political space, build solidarity with the Muslim community against the broad-scale attacks, and challenge racist police practices of stop and frisk. Unity, solidarity and resistance point the way forward.

*Published December 23, 2011*



**Occupy Wall Street, Oct. 11, 2011.**

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL



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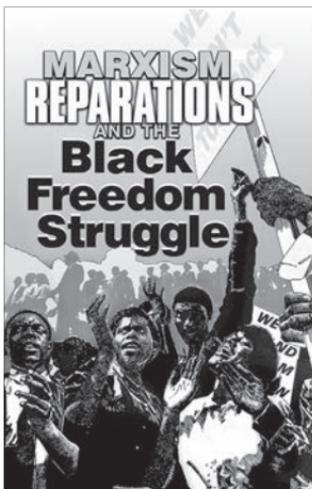
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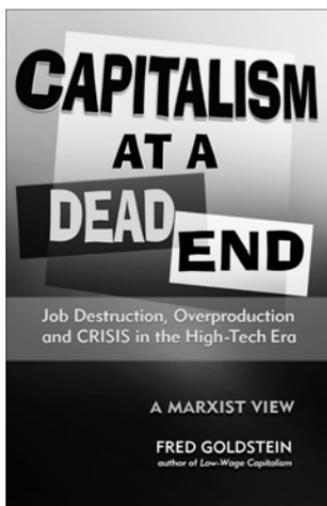
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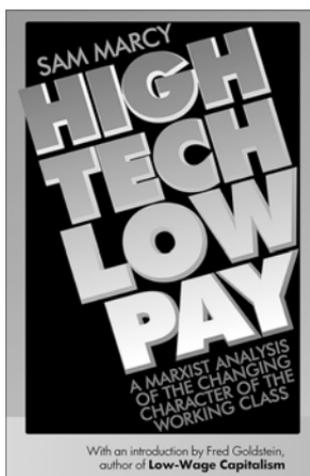
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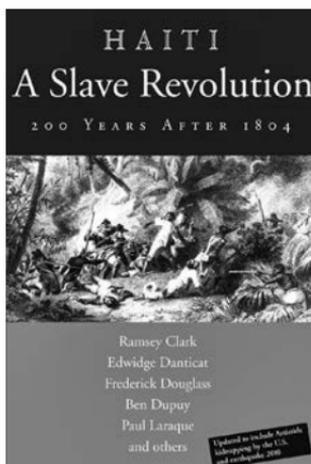


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