

# **The Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Politics of the Imperialists**

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The Balkans is a region where imperialist interventions and conflicts were always decisive. However the last two decades things have become much worse for the countries and the peoples in this region. After the dissolution of the USSR and the overturning of the balance of power on a global scale in favor of the western imperialists, the Balkans became one of the most afflicted areas planetwide, the imperialist interventions and conflicts opened the Pandora's Box for all countries and peoples of the peninsula. The reasons for this are obvious: The geostrategic importance of the region. It is close and touches Russia's interests, the chief antagonist of the US. It is near Central Europe. It is also near the Middle East, where the imperialists play hard. And, unfortunately, the imperialist plans are wonderfully served by nationalism and chauvinism abundant in the region that poisons the relations between peoples instead of the prevalence of friendship and solidarity. Up to now much blood has been shed in wars between Balkan countries and in imperialist raids, countries were carved up and great is the danger for more bloodshed as long as the imperialists hover unchallenged. No one can be sure who is expendable and who is not. The task of developing a mass antiwar and anti-imperialist movement is imperative, it is of first priority, so we can oust the imperialists, bring about the independence of our countries and the strengthening of friendship and solidarity in a peaceful peninsula. This is also a precondition for any social changes.

In the Balkans all imperialist interests are in conflict with each other (with the possible exceptions of Japan and China). In order to understand the developments that affect our region it is necessary to see the global scene and how this affects the region.

The overturns of 1989-91, that have changed the global balance of power and marked the victory of the US led western imperialists over the East, the victory of imperialism over the peoples, and the victory of capital over labor, have created new situations. The US emerged more powerful and over time they aimed at global domination sensing a great opportunity for them. Russia was cornered especially during the laughable Yeltsin period. The western European imperialists tried to upgrade their role. China claimed a bigger role especially in its region. Japan would like to disentangle itself from the US bear-like hugging.

At the same time the global capitalist system waged a full frontal attack against the working class and the toiling people. Its aim was not only to take back all these that the people have won during the past years but to completely dissolve the working class as a class organized for itself. Monetarism since Reagan and Thatcher was the dominant trend in economic policy, and became a storm that annihilated every labor, economic, pension, health care and educational people's right. Labor relations started going back to the Middle Ages hand in hand with the attack on

every trade union and democratic right. The disorganization of the communist and popular movement, along the national liberation movement, amplified the attack against the working class and the peoples.

So a series of wars and interventions occurred by the Americans in the Persian Gulf and former Yugoslavia among others and at the same time other countries were threatened if they did not follow the US imperatives. During the 90's the US used the Western Alliance, NATO, the UN and every means available inherited by the Cold War era to promote their objectives. They basically aimed at the encirclement and weakening of Russia - taking advantage of its internal problems - the expansion to the East, the control of regions around Russia and other regions. By having dominant role in the western alliance, the US wanted neutralize Russia – the only power that could challenge them in the nuclear strategic field – so they could finally subjugate militarily their allies, too. This was probably known to their allies but they had no strategy of their own, either together in the EU or each one by itself. Anyway the EU had never a unified strategy so they trailed behind the US claimed some role for themselves. Russia retreated several times that time and lost a few regions where it played a role as long as its main concern was its internal reorganization, the reorganization of the New Bourgeoisie and its apparatus that could give Russia the ability to utilize its massive potential on every level.

September 11th was a crossroads (whoever and for whichever reason masterminded the fall of the towers). The Cheney-Bush team expressed the most offensive sections of American imperialism (its win of the 2004 elections was even accused as a coup d'état). With the pretext of “war against terrorism” the greatest terrorists and butchers waged war against all humanity. The attack on Afghanistan (supposedly to capture Bin Laden) with the aid of their imperialist allies was accompanied with threats of attack on other countries supposedly hostile to the US or unwilling to side up with the US unconditionally. The politics of tension and US aggression was so intense that even the US allies were “skeptical”. The US threatened their adversaries even with a nuclear strike!

Iraq is a M. East country, an oil country and of great strategic importance, neighboring Palestine and the Zionist state of Israel, Syria and Iran, at the heart of the Arabic world. This country was the direct target of the US. They considered that the hostile to Saddam Shiites would accept them as liberators and would have behind them the whole of the Western Alliance. Using a host of false evidence about weapons of mass destruction, etc, yesterday's ally Saddam became the black sheep, the “dictator” while the Americans became the good guys who would create a “democratic” Iraq.

The attack on Iraq and its occupation was the decisive step of the US towards their world domination. They made this clear by announcing that they would invade Iraq even by themselves alone. Because of the conflict of interests and because the US intentions for world domination were not agreed upon by the other imperialists, this war was opposed not only by Russia and China but also by the so-called “old Europe”, the French, the Germans, even the UN! The Western Alliance was shaken all over but the US and England proceeded even against the UN (their own organ!) in this dirty war and the occupation of Iraq. But there they did not find any “enthusiastic” Iraqis. Instead they were met by the Iraqi Resistance that has brought them to a dead end. In these difficult times the Iraqi people and the Resistance showed that even the most

powerful imperialism is not invincible. They tore to shreds the cowboy team of Bush-Cheney and enlightened the popular struggles against war and imperialism all over the world because the people even in the US were by their side. Skepticism overcame the US, the coffins of dead marines were met by voices about a “new Vietnam”, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo showed the dead ends of the US.

The Americans found out that their objective of world domination could not be met because their forces were not enough and that there is a discrepancy between objectives and means to attain them. But the more they sunk in this quagmire the more they chose to build tension in order to force their allies to side along them. They threaten Iran, massacre the Palestinians through their watchdog Israel, they mess up the Balkans, they promote the antimissile shield in Europe, they play with fire in the Caucasus (Georgia), they step on thin ice in Ukraine, they blackmail every country that has made a deal with Russia regarding the natural gas pipelines, they strengthen their forces of occupation in Afghanistan, they threaten N. Korea, etc. And as they discover that this bullying does not bring results in Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Caucasus, Korea they become more dangerous and they build tension. Their quagmire led to the election of Obama. A black president in the land of KKK! American imperialism, an exceptionally aggressive imperialism, tries today to take new steps after the election of Obama. Bush - Cheney were totally bankrupt. It would be naïve to believe that suddenly the US will become a peaceful country that will stop advancing its imperialist interests in the four corners of the earth. Obama on the one hand seems conciliatory towards Russia and opens doors to China but on the other hand sends more troops in Afghanistan, asks for the cooperation of Russia and China in order to neutralize Iran and N. Korea and watches unemotionally the massacre of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. He declares that US troops will leave Iraq in two years time but 50.000 of them will remain there to “support” the government. US imperialism not only does not convince us that has the intention to leave the fronts it has opened but knows very well that retreat means defeat and a bigger one than Vietnam. So Obama looks for ways and tactics that will draw allies and fulfill their objectives more effectively. Their intentions for the revival of the Western Alliance, in its pre-Iraq form, are not an easy task. Before all else this would mean that the US resigns from their objective of world domination and the ceding of a more active role to the Europeans. That means a change of strategy. Is this really feasible in times of intense inter-imperialist antagonisms and capitalist crisis? It is very arguable that the US are really in a course of strategy and objectives change.

We live in an era of intense imperialist antagonisms and the question of strategic alliances is put on the table. War is waged in many places and a general war is not out of the question at all.

Opposite the US is Russia. Russia has a long road to travel until its New Bourgeoisie (NB) can be fully reorganized but on the other hand it has no intention of more retreats and vies for a more crucial role. There is some reorganization of the NB on a higher level that can make it able to utilize its huge potential. Economically is in a good track, its energy resources are huge and a major weapon in the hands of Putin. It has a first class technology and has strong and highly educated scientific personnel. It is first in arms sales and second in oil production. It has a mighty military force in the nuclear field as well as the conventional one. In the Caucasus and the Ukraine it has shown that any dispute in areas of direct interest will not be unanswered. The same is true about the antimissile shield or the containment of its energy policies. The peoples of

the Russian Federation may suffer but Russian imperialism is strong and will be stronger in the future. The US bet on Russia seems to be lost as time passes.

The Western European imperialists watch concernedly the revived antagonism between the US and Russia. Their lack of strategic capability of each one of them and the inability to unite politically in the EU makes them cautious. To broaden their role there must be a calm climate. So when crises erupt they find themselves between hammer and anvil. They would like an understanding between themselves and the Americans but in no case they want a confrontation with the Russians and not only in the energy field but mainly in the military field. They hope that the Obama election will mark a different US policy but history teaches us that no one powerful has ever resigned from his objectives unless defeated. The handshakes and smiles between Americans and Russians must not fool us. All contradictions in the world are intensified and this will determine the developments. We absolutely refuse the possibility of the US and Russia to be on the same side as allies.

China is an important factor concerning the balance of powers and its leaning to one or the other side will change this balance. It surely plays an important role in its immediate region and tries to broaden its influence elsewhere but it is very early to even consider of playing a more protagonist role on a world scale. There are some contacts between Russia and China and agreements on tactical matters (for example the Shanghai meeting) and this is very understandable concerning the US aggressiveness but these meetings do not rise to the level of strategic nature up to now.

Japan suffocates under the US bear hug and is afraid of China and Russia but to play a more important role needs to arm itself and this could create problems to the Americans in the future. The US quagmire creates conditions for other forces and countries, like India, Iran, Brazil, etc to play a more important role. These developments are not without importance although each one of these countries cannot be a protagonist by itself.

A few words about England; it is the closest US ally and up to now has participated actively in the open US fronts but its bourgeoisie has internal problems and the ability to follow the US ventures everywhere and at the same time participate in the EU is questionable. We do not foresee of course any breakup of this alliance but we want to emphasize the difficulties everyone has to face these times.

The present capitalist crisis is economic (they say that it is worse than 1929) but is also political. The economic crisis feeds and affects the political crisis and, vice versa, the political crisis deepens the economic crisis.

The dead-end of capitalism-imperialism create terrible problems to the working class and the peoples, who pay for the crisis while poverty and hunger embrace the capitalist advanced countries. The attack by the system against the toiling masses continues despite the shrinkage of the markets and war is a constant and horrible threat hanging over the heads of the people. Only the people can put an end to this horrible possibility.

Ten years have passed since the start of the bombings against Serbia and six years since the

invasion of Iraq. The whole of the western imperialists had fallen on one country and bombarded it furiously from one end to the other in order to force it to comply with their directives. After that NATO entered this country and carved it up, cutting its heart, Kosovo, and creating conditions for the cessation of Montenegro. They later proceeded in the “independence” of Kosovo through their former stooges, the UCK army, which they themselves had financed and armed to open the way for imperialism.

In the Balkans Americans, Western Europeans and Russians fight each other for control. They are unscrupulous in the promotion of their interests. The ground on which the imperialists stepped was nationalism and chauvinism, real or non-existent differences between the local bourgeoisies, territorial disputes, the so-called “lost fatherlands” and the “Great Ideas” for a Greater Greece, Greater Turkey, Greater Albania and so on. Various local petty rulers are depended on the imperialists and they are not only willing to play the games of their masters but to also put in danger their own people and their own countries. Real or non-existent differences between the Balkan countries give the ability to the imperialists to interfere and determine the fortunes of these countries and their people, sometimes through bloody wars, and carve up countries, change their borders and blackmail them in siding up with one or the other imperialist. Count up some indicative elements of frictions and disputes: Cyprus, Vojvodina, Northern Epirus, Istanbul, the Aegean, Thrace, and SE Bulgaria. Also there are disputes between Greece and Bulgaria, between Bulgaria and FYROM, between Greece and FYROM, between Albania and Greece, between Albania and Serbia over Kosovo, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Krajna, and so on. This is an unending number that gets greater or smaller depending on the imperialist schemes and the near-sighted politics of their vassals in the region who cannot understand - or play it dumb – that the imperialists promote only their own interests. The imperialists are neither pro-Greek, nor pro-Turkish or pro-Albanian and so on.

The resent events started in Yugoslavia which was disintegrated in more pieces than when it was formed. These events affected all the countries of the region. The beginning was the obvious support of Croatia by Germany in the war against Serbia in order to liquidate Yugoslavia. The US were at first against the dissolution of Yugoslavia because on the one hand they had no immediate and clear control over the involved countries and on the other they did see well of the German expansion in Central Europe and the Balkans. There were bloody wars among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims resulting in the creation of the separate countries of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM and the dependence of Krajna on Croatia. At that crucial moment several political powers and paid newspapermen came out raging against “Serbian chauvinism” and “dictator Milosevic” calling “indignantly” for the intervention of the US in order to bring Milosevic to reason! The conflict spread up but the subjugation of Serbia was not an easy task for the Germans and their allies so they called for the involvement of the US. So many “nearsighted” persons felt “justified” not seeing that the intervention of the imperialists and particularly the US signified terrible dangers for the Balkan peoples and all the countries of the region. The Americans took the reins and set foot in the region having alongside them Greece and Turkey and so they took full control of Albania, FYROM and later Bulgaria. Their objective was the complete subjugation or the dissolution of Serbia, the control over the whole of the Balkan Peninsula, the admission of all these countries into NATO and the complete ousting of Russia from the Balkans. Their spearhead was UCK which was active in Kosovo under their orders and with American financing and armament. The US christened that swarm of thugs and

assassins as “liberation army”, which fought for the “independence” of Kosovo, a Serbian territory with historical significance for the national integrity of Serbia and of being associated with the liberation of Serbia from the Ottoman yoke.

The relentless bombardments not only killed or maimed many Serbs but also polluted the waters and the ground. This had not results so the American and NATO forces passed through Greece into Serbian territory and threatened with total destruction. The anti-war movement in Greece and other countries were not able to stop the imperialist aggression because, we have to say it, was below the necessary. Certain people in Greece and other Balkan countries confused the necessary solidarity to the Serbian people with their hostility towards Milosevic while others applauded the bombings and the NATO invasion! Those were no people belonging to or associated with the ruling classes but people who appear as popular forces or even leftists! Such phenomena appeared in Greece and Albania where some people “defended” their Kosovar “brothers” siding with the imperialist assassins! Anyway to agree or disagree with Milosevic is one matter. It is a completely different matter to applaud imperialistic wars. As for Milosevic he confronted the killers of Serbian people with dignity at the War Court in The Hague while the applauders must not feel very good about the developments in the region. The defense of the people against his attackers has nothing to do with who is in power. The millions of demonstrators against the war on Iraq had nothing to do with Saddam. The question is: Are you with the people against the imperialists or with the imperialists against the people? Do you understand the dangers of an imperialist raid against a country? Are you with peace and against war? The answers cannot be ambivalent, “neutral” and full of sophistries.

So the Americans carved up Serbia, – Montenegro has also seceded – control the region from Albania to Romania, they have a dominant position in Turkey; they are strengthened in Greece, in Croatia, Slovenia, and so on. Russia has not resigned from the area but its position is weakened despite its good relations with the Serbian bourgeoisie. Things are getting more difficult for Russia here after the pro-American turn of the Czech Republic and Poland, the developments in the Ukraine, the anti-missile shield and the efforts to expand NATO eastwards (Georgia, Ukraine).

The brutal imperialist and particularly the American intervention in the Balkans, the “independence” of Kosovo, which the Serbs do not accept, and the border changes are very worrisome developments. The imperialist conflicts in the region continue. The existent or non-existent differences between countries not only do not diminish but are fostered. So the dangers for more bloodshed are grave. Greece and Turkey despite their “ordered friendship” have not solved any of their seemingly bridgeless differences. The ruling classes put the questions of Cyprus or Thrace differently. The confrontation in the Aegean is a daily matter. In Cyprus the Turkish troops continue their occupation of the North for 35 years and the imperialist plans and interventions push towards a complete division, Turkey and Bulgaria have their own differences (the ruling classes that is) in the SE part of Bulgaria where there is a numerous Turkish minority. In recent years the contradictions between Greece and Bulgaria are not what they were years ago but the bourgeoisie of Bulgaria still has the aspirations of an Aegean access while in Greece there are voices that claim Eastern Rumelia. The relations between Greece and FYROM are acute and not only over the name of this country. For the Greek chauvinists “Macedonia is one and Greek” and for some it reaches Skopje and half of Bulgaria while for the ruling class of

FYROM (genuine descendants of Alexander!) there are parts of FYROM that they “miss” mainly in the South! They are completely dependent on the Americans who hurry to put them inside NATO being ignorant of the fact that it is a weak country to bully others. They even have a major problem with the Albanian minority. As for Greece the ruling class not only they did not try to find solutions (at that time they dreamed of carving up FYROM) but they did everything to perpetuate the conflict. In Greece there are people who still think about N. Epirus and “worry” about the Greek minority there while in Albania others dream about Chamuria that reaches as far as Arta. The differences between Albania and Serbia are old and the Kosovo question accentuated the problem. Many things are heard about “Greater Albania” that could probably include Kosovo, parts of FYROM, maybe even parts of “Chameria (Çamëria), who knows... As if the Americans give a damn about creating a “Greater Albania”. Let’s throw in the “Muslim arc” from Turkey, through S. Bulgaria, FYROM, Kosovo and ending in the Adriatic! Great things! There is no need to add that the relations between Serbia and Croatia are not good not only historically but also over the recent events, the war that Croatia started and resulted in the dissolution of Yugoslavia, over Krajna and Bosnia-Herzegovina. There is also Vojvodina with a Magyar minority, Timisoara, etc, etc. We can also add the conflicts between the US and Russia over the gas pipelines. The Balkans that Rigas Feraios dreamed about as Confederation of peoples, where Armenians and Turks, Bulgarians and Greeks would live as brothers are now a thousand pieces. And maybe the worse are yet to come.

For all Balkan people, for countries, nationalities, and minorities the greatest and common enemy is imperialism, any imperialism and particularly US imperialism which has military bases from Souda, Crete and S. Turkey to Kosovo and wants to establish more of them in Bulgaria, Romania and Albania and promotes its antimissile shield in the Czech republic and Poland. NATO also embraces in a deadly grip all the countries in the region. For all Balkan people the canker of chauvinism eats away on the relations among people, it is the Trojan horse of imperialism that wants total control of the region even if a new bloodshed is required. Our day to day task is the development of broad and strong antiwar and anti-imperialist movement encompassing the region, a movement that will unite all anti-imperialist forces from Crete and Cyprus to river Danube and from the Adriatic to the far reaches of Turkey. Its objective will be the ousting of the imperialists, the wiping out of chauvinism and jingoism, the promotion of national independence, friendship and solidarity of all Balkan people.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the carving up of Serbia, the bad precedent of Kosovo (what if Mitrovica decides to seek independence from Kosovo?) demands the respect and conservation of the borders in the Balkans. The inviolation of the borders is the minimum guarantee for no more wars and no more divisions.

The intentions of imperialism were shown recently in Gaza and the West Bank. The armed to teeth Zionist state and watchdog of the US was butchering for days the Palestinian people. It was bombing from the air, the sea, with canons and tanks a small strip of land where one and a half million people live squeezed together, thrown out from land occupied now by Israel. It was a regular genocide. Neither the worldwide demonstrations nor the UN resolutions stopped the killers. For almost 25 days they sowed death on women and children - because to fight the Palestinian fighters was not easy; they had to enter populated areas – they bombed even UN schools. They sowed death in the West Bank where the Palestinians demonstrated daily. The

phosphorus bombs will kill for years. For years children and invalid people were killed by the Zionist encirclement, living in a big jail where food, water, drugs and electricity were in dire need.

But Israel did not win! It did not enter cities because it could not! That's why it will continue with the same method of embargo and bombings. This crime must be condemned with the strongest voice from all peoples. We saw the apathy of Obama as he watched the massacre of the Palestinians. Only the solidarity of the peoples will help the heroic Palestinians. The US, Israel and Abbas are all on the same side together with all the reactionaries and the leaders of the Arab world. Only the mobilization of the peoples and the strengthening of the antiwar and anti-imperialist movement will help the Palestinians.

Communists, left people, democrats wherever we live in the Balkans we must meet at the same barricades in order to achieve the above objectives for the brotherhood of the peoples. Iraq, Gaza, and Kosovo show to us what the imperialists and their watchdog prepare. People do not have differences among them, they have nothing to split. But they can win everything by fighting against our common enemies. The responsibility for poverty and misery in the region lies on the foreign masters and their local underlings who amass great wealth selling up whole countries and people.

**Let's march on:  
For a common antiwar anti-imperialist struggle  
For the brotherhood of the peoples  
For peaceful and independent Balkans**

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