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Culture as Imperialist Tool

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Humanitarian Intervention

Asvaththaamaa

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Gamaliharu

Mani Thapa

Gamaliharu¹

Mixing the smell of life

With the smell of sweat

Bartering life's vicissitudes

With timmur² seeds

Breaking head inside the quarries

For roofing other's houses

Swallowing salt-mixed porridge barely for the self

While cooking potatoes for the world:

The story of Gamalis

Used to sound strange, it used to sound time-worn

Haven't these faces came from some forest?

Aren't these famine-ravaged ugly faces?

Aren't these outlines pressed hard by landslides?

It seemed they were, they did really seem exotic

Seem as though the pressure of work caused the loss of their identity

Seem as though they're searching Gaam after the loss of their identity

Seem as though they've turned refugees after their Gaam's been looted

Seem ever helpless: seem ever estranged

Seem energy-less; seem as though they've lost their moon

The narrative of Gamalis

Looked like a kitchen with uncooked porridge.

It was not written on any limestone:

Their names and the name of the village they came from

It was not discovered in any voter list

Their name and name of the village they came from

Seemed as though their country's been looted; their form's been looted

Shedding blood ever inside the timmur bush

Shedding tears ever on bamboo shoots

Cow dung all in fingernails

(Continued on inside back cover)

From the Editor's Desk

The Report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission has been released an year later than initially scheduled. It is unlikely, however, that it will appease the US and its allies, despite their formal welcoming of its release.

The mandate of the LLRC was too restricted to give it room to deal with the roots of the national question or investigate issues of war crimes and human rights violations. It was this weakness that made organisations representing the Tamil people, reputed human rights organisations and the Tamil public unwilling to appear before the LLRC. Some did eventually give evidence amid intimidation by pro-government goons, only to place their views on record.

Despite boastful government claims about what the LLRC would achieve, the Report, besides ducking issues that could challenge chauvinistic hegemony, has gone on to express biased views about war crimes and declare that no war crimes had been committed by the armed forces. Meantime, it has eluded the question of the thousands who have been abducted or gone missing, denied due weight to evidence placed before it on arrests, abductions, and, disappearances, and not made recommendations based on the evidence.

The Report has not even hinted at any meaningful way to provide the Tamil people—who continue to suffer the destruction and misery caused by the war—with the necessary relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation. It does, however, admit that the Tamil people have problems, but avoids identifying them or assessing their gravity. The LLRC, rather than seeking ways to find short and long term solutions to the problems, has concentrated its efforts on rationalising the conduct of the armed forces, thereby, effectively endorsing the chauvinism of the government and its brutal conduct of the war.

The LLRC has also been selective in handling information accessible to it, and gone out of its way to denounce various international organisations like the Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for refusing to appear before it in protest of its limited mandate, and to reject the Channel 4 documentary on war crimes as faked. It has also claimed that there is no case for the Sri Lankan government or its armed forces to answer on matters of war crimes and violation of human rights.

What is overwhelmingly clear is that the LLRC, in order to exonerate the state and the armed forces of all wrongdoing and defend them against international pressure, has opted to gloss over issues of central importance to the national question and matters relating to the conduct of the war. Thus, it seems that the LLRC has done what it has been commissioned to do, namely to blame the LTTE and the Norwegians for the crash of the peace process and thereby justify the resumption of the war by the Rajapaksa government.

Whether or not the LLRC Report would help to ease external pressure on the government on the questions of human rights and war crimes, the point to note is that the cruel war seems to have no useful lessons to the LLRC on the gravity of the national question. What the Report contains is biased opinion blind to all evidence to the contrary.

The terms of reference of the LLRC cast doubts on the fairness of the investigation. The contents of the Report and the favourable response of the chauvinistic media have vindicated those fears. The Report will of course help the government to dodge the basic issues in the short and the long terms. That is unsurprising since no commission appointed thus far to inquire into major national issues has yielded results, as their purpose has not been to solve problems but to avoid dealing with them. What is sad is that, given the callous indifference of the government towards the national question, even the wishy-washy recommendations of the LLRC on 'demilitarisation' of society, detentions, armed militias, devolution of power and new Sinhalese settlements in the North-East— with no mention of power over of police and land to provincial governments —are unlikely to be acted upon.

The Report has come amid external pressure based on charges of war crimes and human rights violations as well as growing mass disaffection with government on a variety of issues including education, health, social services, wages, unemployment, soaring prices and the rising cost of living. The government will use each unfavourable foreign response to the Report to accuse the 'International Community' of being unfair and to deflect attention from the issues facing the people by arguing the need to defend the sovereignty of the country against foreign and Tamil nationalist conspiracy.

Thus, the various shades of Tamil nationalists, by openly appealing to foreign powers to intervene in the national question, will only add to the credibility of the claims of the Rajapaksa regime while letting themselves to be used in the schemes of the regional hegemon and the imperialist West to dominate Sri Lanka, with no eventual benefit to the Tamil people.

In this context, the left and progressive elements among the Sinhalese have a major responsibility in preventing foreign forces from taking advantage of the national question to serve their purpose of domination over Sri Lanka. They have the historical responsibility of defeating the reactionary chauvinist forces among the Sinhalese. By addressing the national question in a way that defends the rights of the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamils against chauvinist oppression they will not only help the minority nationalities to reject their archaic, reactionary and bankrupt leaders who have for too long dominated their affairs but also strengthen the struggle of the Sinhalese to rescue the fast eroding democracy and social justice in the country and to defend the country against foreign domination and control.

Culture as Imperialist Tool to Hegemonise the People of the World

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*[Draft text of paper by Comrade E Thambiah, International Organiser,
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It is now clear that globalisation of imperialism or imperialist globalisation is a new phase of imperialism which was born out of imperialist crisis and has in no way invalidated the scientific findings of Karl Marx or the definition of imperialism by Lenin. If at all it has only confirmed the findings of these great teachers.

Imperialism is the main enemy not only to Marxists but also to each and every human being who desires a life free of all manner of hegemony, discrimination and exploitation and wishes to preserve all good things in nature for future generations.

We have little time to waste on mischievous attempts to discredit the scientific findings and interpretations of imperialism by Marxists, although there are times when such mischief has to be exposed. The anti-imperialist task facing us is very important at both theoretical and practical levels and its implementation needs the broadest possible mass base and its building up must be in a revolutionary spirit enabling the unity and broadest possible participation of the people of the world.

Broad-based alliances also need to take into account the objective reality about the forces that could be united against imperialism. For example, the national bourgeois class under classic colonialism played a major role in freeing nations from the colonial domination. However, with the emergence of neo-colonialism and imperialist globalisation in the post-colonial era, the national bourgeoisie have lost their anti-imperialist potential and submitted to imperialism.

In the face of local and international economic challenges in the post-colonial era, which soon became the neo-colonial era, the nationalist elite who took over the regime from the colonial masters became increasingly oppressive towards the people. In course of time, the oppressive nationalist elite have become willing to surrender the sovereignty of their nations to fit the imperialist agenda in return for support and protection by the imperialists from their own people.

Amid the global surrender by nationalist rulers, a section of the nationalist elite, although void of anti-imperialist substance, continued with faked anti-imperialist posturing. Such nationalist rulers are being weeded out by imperialism by taking advantage of their anti-people, anti-democratic and anti-human-rights records. The process of weeding does not stop at the defeat or annihilation of individual oppressors but proceeds to bring the entire nation and its people under the heels of Imperialism.

Thus, unlike during classic colonialism and the early post-colonial period when neo-colonialism took shape, nations and people of the world now face a complex situation in confronting imperialism manifesting itself as imperialist globalisation and neo-colonialism.

It is important to note in this context that imperialism, besides penetrating the farthest reaches of economics, politics, political economy and political geography, has also penetrated culture in every country within its reach.

Karl Marx explained that culture was a superstructure built by the dominant classes and that it exercised hegemony over the entire social life in order to ensure economic exploitation of the oppressed classes by the dominant classes.

Several Marxist teachers have dealt extensively with cultural domination of capitalism and imperialism. Recent studies provide detailed evidence of how imperialism has by means of globalisation penetrated nation states, mass organisations, liberation struggles and exercises hegemony over the minds of people through pervasive cultural industries.

It is broadly accepted that culture produces values without coercion which are shared without mediation of exchange value for the satisfaction of the common needs of the people, including aesthetic values. Culture, being an aesthetic and intellectual product, is considered as a means of communication and social practice through which meaning and values are produced and disseminated.

National culture could manifest itself in an anti-colonial nationalist form or as ethnic nationalism and macro world culture. Imperialism has now very much commoditised culture and has supplemented if not substituted the minimum cultural values based on market needs to establish its hegemony

through an imposed culture and by posing cultural issues in ways favourable to imperialist globalisation.

In these circumstances we are obliged to take a closer view of at least the basic aspects of culture of globalisation.

1. Culture as commodity

Cultural products are brought to market as saleable commodities and thereby ignoring their intrinsic social values.

Although there is national and transnational collaboration in commoditising cultural products, there is pressure to register cultural products and creations directly or indirectly as intellectual property nationally as well as internationally through the World Trade Organisation, a major instrument of imperialist globalisation. Consequently, even rural folk culture comes under imperialist monopoly.

2. Consumerism as life style

Day to day life centres on consumerism. The market decides consumption, urging the spending entire earnings on consumer goods and pressing for increased earnings to meet the demands of consumption. Electronic media in the form of television and internet communication networking has invaded all homes to push people further into consumerism. Market forces not only condition choice in household necessities but also alter values of lived life, consumption patterns and even matters of human desire like love and sex.

3. Individualism as life style

In order to achieve macro-scale impact on culture, imperialism destroys the finer or micro-scale values of human life. Individualism is promoted under globalisation by projecting the life-style and attitudes of the affluent classes as the norm thereby weakening collectivism and shared public interests.

Many left intellectuals have fallen victim to individualist social practice to become bourgeois intellectuals. What used to be voluntary social work has been transformed into projects of non-governmental organisations which promote personal profit and individualism, particularly among intellectuals.

Individualism disunites the people, nations and working people. When pitted against collective interest, it makes society an incohesive collection of individuals and thereby undermines resistance to social injustice.

4. The nation state as corporate body under imperialism

Nation states, following liberation from colonial rule, were progressive and independent until the process of globalisation gathered momentum, and today most nation states depend on imperialism for their survival.

Imperialism has designated the nation state the role of a corporate body that would implement imperialist globalisation, thus rendering meaningless all nationalist claims to sovereignty, integrity and independence. Meanwhile, 'new' political thoughts are introduced into the nationalist agenda to accommodate imperialism.

5. Human rights as imperialist weapon

It is imperialism, more than dictatorial nation states in the neo-colonies, which nakedly violates human rights and humanitarian laws, while claiming to propagate human rights through the UN and its agencies as well as local and international political NGOs.

The imperialist agenda for human rights generally reduces issues of human rights to mere studies and confines struggles for human rights to matters of litigation and pressurising.

Where imperialism uses human rights as a basis for 'regime change' through encouraging dissident forces or by invading the country, the human rights issues invariably concern capitalist interests. NGOs play a role in creating a local political climate conducive to a 'regime change' that suits imperialist interests.

6. 'Cultural shocks' and 'cultural mediators'

The 'cultural shocks' and 'cultural mediators' under globalisation are not what one has in mind in discussions to exchange progressive culture or progressive cultural adaptation.

Cultural globalisation has its agenda of 'cultural shocks' and 'cultural mediation' which seek to eradicate the lived values of culture and to substitute them with values of corporate or market culture to exercise hegemony on the minds of the people in order that they accept imperialist globalisation as inevitable destiny.

Cultural shocks include the marketing of Valentine's Day as a celebration at international level and the promotion of gay rights in counterproductive ways. War, torture, butchery and other crude forms of violence are either glorified or transformed into 'entertainment' by powerful propagation in order that people are conditioned to accept them as normal if not justifiable events.

Besides bourgeois intellectuals, propagators of postmodernism serve as cultural mediators of imperialism, either knowingly or by participation in well-paid projects work. Postmodernist rejection of all existing values brings them close the cultural agenda of imperialist globalisation, so that postmodernists, implicitly or explicitly, end up promoting the culture of globalisation.

There are several more aspects to the culture of globalisation that go against freedom of humanity and remain to be addresses. The present survey it is hoped draws sufficient attention to the threat posed by the culture of globalisation and the need to resist it.

STRUGGLES AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST CULTURE OF GLOBALISATION

Careful analysis of the present global situation will show that struggles on macro and micro scales against imperialism in the field of culture during the phase of imperialist globalisation are far more important than during earlier phases of imperialism.

At local level, within a country or a nation, the impact of globalisation often becomes evident in relation to specific issues or of concern to particular sections of society and consequently micro scale struggles become necessary. Such struggles could be carried out by individuals acting as a group or by an organisation.

Macro-scale struggles become necessary at a regional level or at international level. We witness dedicated efforts by individuals and groups both regionally and internationally. Yet they are inadequate to meet the challenges of imperialist globalisation.

In addition to activities expressing solidarity with just causes, there is a need for well co-ordinated concrete, organised activity guided in a coherent manner by confederated international structure. One cannot rightly claim that micro-scale struggles on a national or countrywide level constitute macro-scale struggles. Micro-scale struggles, irrespective of their spread and frequency, are no substitute for macro-scale struggles at an international level.

Thus there is a need for international institutions and organisations, and internationalised struggles against imperialism. The International Anti-Imperialist Co-ordination Committee, for example, can play a role as a cultural organisation to meet imperialist challenges. Observation of the International Anti-Imperialist Day, regular international publications and campaign using the internet and other means could contribute to the growth and solidarity among local struggles to acquire an international dimension as well as reinforce ongoing international struggles.

A culture of resistance is at present an essential first step in combating the culture of imperialist globalisation. At the same time thought has to be given to developing a new alternative culture that will unite humanity and free it from all forms of hegemony.

Re-Reading “Humanitarian Intervention” in the Light of Libyan Occupation

Asvaththaamaa

Introduction

What we have witnessed in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire has a lot more to them than simply international interventions. The events and outcomes in those countries have set new precedents and also shown the *Modus Operandi* of a world in the making. The NATO-led intervention in Libya, “Operation Unified Protector”, is noteworthy for two central reasons. Firstly, it is the first instance in over a decade of what Andrew Cottey calls “classical humanitarian intervention”— that is, humanitarian intervention that lacks the consent of the government of the target state, has a significant military and forcible element, and is undertaken by Western states (Cottey 2008).

It appeared for a while as if the sun had set on (classical) humanitarian intervention (Weiss 2004). The focus of the West, especially of the US, was on fighting the ‘war on terror’ and using force in the name of freedom and democracy, rather than trying to halt mass atrocities. Moreover, the domestic and international costs of the actions in Iraq and Afghanistan led to a widely held expectation that there would not be another major Western-led military intervention any time soon, let alone in response to mass atrocities and in another Muslim state. Libya thus caught many by surprise. This is the first classical case of humanitarian intervention since the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect* (RTP), and agreement among states at the 2005 UN World Summit that there exists a responsibility to protect (ICISS 2001, UN 2005). There has since been much talk of the need to “operationalise”, “implement” and “realise” RTP, as well as to turn “words into deeds” and “rhetoric into practice”. Without a major humanitarian intervention in the name of RTP, the doctrine was viewed by some as a catchy slogan, but ultimately hollow and lacking in any real practical effect (Hehir 2010).

UN Security Council Resolution 1973 against Libya authorised “all necessary measures” to protect civilians without the consent of the “host” state. In contrast to other crises involving alleged crimes against humanity,

diplomacy produced a decisive response in a relatively short time. Hence the Libyan intervention went well; it will put teeth in the fledgling RTP doctrine. The ICISS sandwiched military force between the sliced white bread of prevention and post-conflict peace building. With its more popular elements on either end of the RTP continuum, the option of military intervention to protect human lives became somewhat more palatable than it had been, especially in the global South.

Despite widespread opprobrium and numerous UN resolutions, the collective acceptance to military action in 2010-2011 to oust Laurent Gbagbo and install Alassane Ouattara in Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) provides a situation very similar to Libya. The departure of Gbagbo in April followed a half year of dawdling as Côte d'Ivoire's unspeakable disaster unfolded. Three times in March 2011 alone the Security Council menaced the designated loser of the November 2010 elections and repeated its authorisation to "use all necessary means to carry out its mandate to protect civilians". In early April 2011, action led by the 1 650-strong French Licorne force did what was expected for the wishes of the West. The international willingness to use significant armed force abetted Gbagbo's intransigence. Thus Ivory Coast too presents a case of how the 'humanitarian intervention' and 'RTP' is perceived and operates.

Setting the Stage for Interventions

The preoccupation with naming follows from the legal implications of how a thing is named: 'genocide' goes with an international responsibility to intervene. In the post-cold war era, that responsibility has been defined as 'the responsibility to protect' and broadened to include three crimes in particular: genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Arranged in order of gravity, they are said to justify a 'humanitarian intervention' and the jurisdiction of an International Criminal Court— the first based on a right to protect and the second on a right to punish —both overriding claims of sovereignty.

The new order is sanctioned by a new language that departs markedly from the older language of democracy and citizenship. It describes as 'human' the populations to be protected, and as 'humanitarian' the crisis they suffer from, the intervention that promises to rescue them and the agencies that carry out the intervention. Whereas the language of sovereignty is profoundly political, that of humanitarian intervention is seemingly apolitical, and at times even anti-political. Looked at closely and critically, what we are witnessing is not a global, but a partial, transition. The transition from the old system of sovereignty to a new humanitarian order is confined to those states defined as 'failed' or 'rogue' states. The result is a bifurcated system whereby state sovereignty obtains in large parts of the world but is suspended in more and more countries in Africa and the Middle East (Mamdani 2010).

The era of international humanitarian order is not something new. It draws on the entire history of modern Western colonialism. At the very outset of Western colonial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, leading Western powers (UK, France, Russia) claimed to protect 'vulnerable groups'. When it came to countries controlled by rival powers, such as the Ottoman Empire, Western powers claimed to protect populations they considered 'vulnerable', mainly religious minorities such as specific Christian denominations and Jews. The most extreme political outcome of this strategy can be glimpsed in the confessional constitution bequeathed by France on independent Lebanon (Makdisi 2000). When it came to lands not yet colonised by any power, such as South Asia and large parts of Africa, the practice was to highlight local atrocities and pledge to protect victims against rulers. It was not for lack of reason that the language of modern Western colonialism juxtaposed the promise of civilisation against the reality of barbaric practices.

War has long ceased to be a confrontation between the armed forces of two states. As became clear during the confrontation between the Allied and Axis powers in the Second World War, in America's Indochina War in the 1960s and 1970s, its Iraq War in 1991 and then again in its 2003 invasion of Iraq, states do not just target the armed forces of adversary states; they target society itself: war-related industry and infrastructure, economy and workforce, and, sometimes, as in the aerial bombardment of cities, the civilian population in general. The trend is for political violence to become generalised and indiscriminate. Thus modern war is total war.

This particular development in the nature of modern war has tended to follow an earlier development of counter-insurgency in colonial contexts. Faced with insurgent guerrillas who were none other than armed civilians, colonial powers targeted the population of occupied territories. If Mao Zedong wrote that guerrillas must be as fish in water, the American counter-insurgency theorist, Samuel Huntington, writing during the time of the Vietnam War, responded that the object of counter-insurgency must be to drain the water and isolate the fish, i.e., ethnic cleansing. But the practice is older than post-Second World War counter-insurgency.

The distinction between war, counter-insurgency and genocide is blurred in practice. All three tend to target civilian populations. In the era of nationalism and nation-states, power as well as its adversaries tends to be identified with entire national communities, whether defined by race, ethnicity or religion. Yet, the regime identified with the international humanitarian order makes a sharp distinction between genocide and other kinds of mass violence. International legal norms tend to be tolerant of counter-insurgency as integral to the exercise of national sovereignty and war as a standard feature of international politics— but not of genocide. The purpose of the distinction is to reserve universal condemnation for only one form of mass violence— genocide —as the ultimate crime and thus call for 'humanitarian' intervention only where

'genocide' has been unleashed, while treating both counter-insurgency and war between states as normal developments, one in the internal functioning of nation-states and the other in the international relations between them. The point, even if not made explicitly, is clear: counter-insurgency and inter-state violence are after all what states do. It is genocide that is violence gone amok, amoral, evil. The former is normal violence, only the latter is bad violence.

The depoliticising language of humanitarian intervention has a wider function: 'humanitarian intervention' is not an antidote to international power relations, but its latest product. Bolton sensed that the most likely consequence of the absence of formal political accountability would be the informal politicisation of the ICC. His worry, though, was that 'the ICC will be "captured" not by governments but by NGOs and others with narrow special interests, and the time and resources to pursue them' (Bolton 2001). What Bolton failed to foresee or foretell was that the ICC would be captured by the US governmental power rather than by NGOs. None should be surprised that the US used its position as the leading power in the Security Council to advance its bid 'to capture' the ICC.

The contrast is provided by Bosnia and Rwanda, two countries where the administration of justice became an international responsibility: 'Bosnia is a clear example of how a decision to detach war crimes from the underlying political reality advances neither the political resolution of a crisis nor the goal of punishing war criminals. Like Bosnia, justice in Rwanda too has become a ruse for 'score-settling'. The focus of the Rwanda tribunal, says Bolton, has been 'war by other means', so much so that 'it is delusional to call this "justice" rather than "politics"', and he rightly concludes: "Many questions are clearly political, not legal: How shall the formerly warring parties live with each other in the future? What efforts shall be taken to expunge the causes of the previous inhumanity? Can the truth of what actually happened be established so that succeeding generations do not make the same mistakes?" (Bolton 2001)

Morality Justification

Today the ideals of international justice and the breaking down of state sovereignty are argued to be not an expression of growing international morality but an extension of American power. Certainly for Western states, major military interventions were justified in highly moral and altruistic terms, of being fought on behalf of others. Vaclav Havel famously called the NATO intervention in Kosovo a war for 'values' (Clark 2009). Even the first Gulf War, often understood to be a 'traditional' conflict, was framed by George Bush, Senior in a strikingly novel manner. In his notorious 'new world order' speech President Bush announced a new order in which the rule of law replaced the old power politics, 'A world in which nations recognise the shared responsibility for freedom and justice; A world where the strong respect the rights of the weak' (Bush 1990). As elaborated by Robert Cooper, post-cold

war military interventions conducted by the West arise from: 'The wish to protect individuals, rather than to resolve the security problems of states' (Cooper 2004).

Yet in Kosovo, after the war NATO's local ally, the Kosovo Liberation Army, an ethnic Albanian militia, expelled 100 000 non-Albanians from Kosovo whilst Kosovo was supposedly controlled by international forces (see, for example, the report by the International Crisis Group in 1999 [ICG 1999], also Bancroft 2009). However, despite this disastrous outcome, as we have seen the Kosovo conflict is upheld by advocates of humanitarian intervention and the RTP as an example of a successful intervention which can provide a pattern for future interventions.

Chandler (2002) suggests that the roots of contemporary ethical foreign policy are to be sought in the evolution of the NGO movement. The grievous experience of the Biafran crisis prompted the establishment of a new generation of NGOs. Having abandoned the traditional neutral standards of humanitarian action, these representatives of civil society base their activities on two 'solidarity principles', namely 'freedom of criticism' or 'denunciation' and 'subsidiarity of sovereignty' or 'right of intervention'. In other words, they feel free to criticise oppressive governments as well as to intervene in cases of humanitarian emergency. In time, some of these agencies started to claim that aid merely treats the symptoms rather than the roots of the problem, and could even prolong crises. In order to avoid that risk and to enhance the effectiveness of operations, assistance has been increasingly subjected to political as well as human rights conditions, the non-fulfilment of which could even provide an ethical justification for the denial of help. The most radical advocates of the 'new humanitarianism', however, consider the conventional forms of relief insufficient and urge military action. Humanitarianism has, thus, often been subverted to become its opposite: coercive, partial and politicised.

He argues that Western governments ostensibly resort to force to protect human rights abroad, but their purpose is to overcome certain problems of their own. The strength of an ethical foreign policy, in his view, is that it demonstrates adherence to values and goals— the protection and promotion of human rights —that are able to unify a society and consolidate the domestic authority of Western governments by providing a new form of legitimacy. Ethical foreign policy can legitimise political power in a non-political manner and establish an area where 'the government can operate outside the traditional sphere of policy-making' (Chandler 2002). Chandler points out that the pursuit of such policy has other advantages as well: the object of criticism is a foreign government and 'credit can be claimed for any positive outcome of international policy, while any negative outcome can be blamed on the government which was the object of criticism'.

What human rights advocates consider the strengthening of international law runs the risk of being, in fact, its abolition. The implicit denial of the

sovereign equality of states, the bypassing of the Security Council and the marginalisation of the UN are likely to deprive international law of its consensual basis, introduce institutionalised inequality among its subjects, raise the frequency of armed conflicts, and revive the old Westphalian order (Chandler 2002). The rise of international criminal justice, as well as the inclination of Western powers towards the invocation of a 'higher duty' of fighting evil for the justification of unauthorised armed interventions are, in Chandler's view, all eloquent symptoms of this tendency. His gloomy vision of a 'post-UN international order' adequately identifies certain anomalies and echoes the concerns of many experts. Humanitarian intervention is not altogether advantageous because of the way the human rights discourse challenges political equality and popular democracy at the domestic level, both within the intervening Western and in the non-Western target states.

Human rights advocates will describe both the local political elite and the local people as politically incompetent thus legitimising calls for an alternative regulation dictated by external actors on the basis of human rights— for instance in the form of long-term transnational authorities, such as those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor or Afghanistan. This solution, however, substantially undermines the legitimacy of a non-Western state, which is increasingly evaluated by other states or international organisations based on human rights rather than through domestic democratic channels.

Theses of democratic peace hold that international peace can be achieved via the establishment of a world of liberal states. It has to be noted that the line of demarcation between liberal and non-liberal states is unclear. In fact, there are unacknowledged links between democracy and authoritarianism: 'non-liberal democratic states invariably have some democratic and liberal features and further potentials', while 'liberal-democratic states certainly have non-democratic and non-liberal features and potentials'.

Use of Force

The main way that the use of force has been expanded is that it is no longer seen as a universal right of self-defence. Thus, for some powers, the self-selecting US-led 'coalitions of the willing' have argued that they have a right to self-defence that other countries do not necessarily have. That makes definitions of self-defence rely on who makes the decisions about self-defence and what it entails in a new era. It is no longer something adjudicated by the UN or limited to an image of direct threat, but expanded to be much broader not merely in terms of the willingness to use force and the legitimacy of the objects of such force, but also in endorsing the idea that it is legitimate for some countries to use self-defence, but not for others. One would never find people arguing that India or Pakistan have the right to self-defence or pre-emptive strikes against potential threats or should act globally in terms of preventive intervention. It's very clear that this is a definition that stands outside any formal framework of international law. No one is arguing the case

for a broader extension of the right to self-defence: the debate concerns Western or 'Great Power' responsibilities.

The legitimacy of self-defence is one of the problems of international life, but not the only one. An equally important problem is the effectiveness of self-defence. Even if the UN Charter and international law guarantee the right to self-defence to almost everyone, the real problem is that some powers are able to defend themselves while others are not. For example, a weak political entity such as the Palestinian people might have the legal right to self-defence but that is of little use since they lack the instruments to exercise the right. In Rwanda, as in Bosnia, the international community was closely involved from the beginning. People were aware that there was already international reform of the governing process that created instability. There was also a war going on: an invasion from Uganda that was supported by the US and UK. One reason for the unwillingness to intervene was that the international community was already so involved. The understanding that the genocide came out of nowhere, is as ridiculous as the idea that the genocide in Bosnia came out of nowhere without international intervention, which ignores the whole international involvement in the breakup of Yugoslavia, the recognition of the separation of the republics and the undermining of the rights of the federal state to defend its borders.

Human Rights

With the end of the Cold War, human rights concerns shifted from the margins to the mainstream of international concerns as universal humanitarianism appeared to be a feasible possibility. Western states and international institutions had much greater freedom to act in the international sphere with the attenuation of Cold War rivalries freeing policy from narrow geo-strategic concerns. New possibilities for intervention and aspirations for a more universal framework of policy making were increasingly expressed through the expanding discourse of human rights.

It was in the humanitarian sphere that the shift from formal views of rights, based on rational autonomous subjects, to ethical views of rights, based on a lack of capacity and the need for external advocacy and intervention, became a major factor in international relations. The introduction of the human rights-based approach into traditional humanitarian practices reflected two trends: firstly, the increased penetration of external actors and agencies into post-colonial states and societies; and secondly, the transformation of the content of traditional humanitarian principles.

As Western humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) acquired greater powers and authority within post-colonial countries, they redefined the central principles guiding their work. Universality and neutrality came to be redefined, based not on a universal view of humanity as being equally moral and autonomous, but on end goals or aspirations. This

expansion of external power, through redefining the 'human' as lacking autonomy, effectively set up a hierarchy of the 'helper' and the 'helpless'. Through the ethic of responsibility to assist the 'helpless'— those without autonomy —this discourse reframed political choices as ethical questions. In this way, external NGO actors maintained a 'non-political' stance of neutrality while at the same time claiming extended rights to intervene in domestic political processes. From the late 1960s onwards, international humanitarian NGOs used the discourse of human rights to rewrite the boundaries of their authority through expanding the sphere of ethics into the sphere of political decision making.

The human rights-based discourse of humanitarianism enabled NGOs to blur the distinction between politics and ethics. Central to this conflation of politics and ethics was the development of new codes of practice based around redefining neutrality. Neutrality no longer meant equal respect for parties to conflict or for locally-instituted authorities, but was redefined as neutrality with respect to human rights frameworks and outcomes. In this way, NGOs claimed decision-making powers over who deserved aid and which practices of development were most appropriate. NGOs accrued more authority through the human rights discourse because they were held to be acting on behalf of those unable to act or incapable of acting on their own behalf.

The extension of the power and authority of humanitarian non-state actors took place in relation to changes in approaches to both conflict and development. Firstly, through the extension of assistance to victims of war, there was a shift from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) approach of aid to casualties and assistance to prisoners regardless of political affiliation to a more engaged, 'solidarity' approach, advocated by agencies such as *'Médecins Sans Frontières'* (Doctors without Borders) who argued that there was a need to discriminate between abusers and victims and to intervene in conflict with a view to rights-based outcomes. Secondly, there was a shift in NGO approaches to emergency relief, and an increased understanding that famines and natural disasters could be better addressed by long-term developmental approaches rather than short-term palliative ones.

It now appeared that humanitarian NGOs were duty bound to intervene in more direct and lasting ways. However, this approach of solidarity, and education and training meant that the relationship between NGOs and their beneficiaries changed from one of charity between ostensible equals to one of dependency and empowerment. The humanitarian NGOs shifted from a traditional liberal rights-based approach of equality to an ethico-political approach of human rights that facilitated the inequality of treatment. This has resulted in humanitarian NGOs opposing the provision of aid in cases where it was felt that human rights outcomes could be undermined (Leader, 1998; Fox, 2001).

By the end of the Cold War, the discourse of humanitarian universalism had become a highly interventionist one, transformed through the modern discourse of human rights values and assumptions. Once the barriers to state actors intervening were diminished, this discourse was increasingly taken over by leading states and international institutions and NGOs boomed in numbers and authority as new frameworks of intervention were instituted. According to Mark Duffield, the 'petty sovereignty' of NGOs— their increasing assumption of political decision making powers in regions intervened in —was 'governmentalised' in the 1990s: integrated within a growing web of interventionist institutions and practices associated with external intervention and regulation (Duffield 2007).

The privileging of human rights as individual rights above the sovereign rights of states has altered traditional international practices, especially with regard to international law and the use of force. The human rights-based justification for military intervention is often posed in terms of the revival of pre-modern 'just war' thinking, which is concerned with the moral and ethical bases of war rather than with its legal grounding. Here the clash between the universal ethics of human rights and the legal framework of international society as it is currently situated comes into stark clarity.

Rather than universal discourses of human rights expressing a new progressive political era, Ignatieff highlights that the focus on human rights expresses disillusionment with political engagement and social change: the concern that 'there are no good causes left— only victims of bad causes' (Ignatieff 1998). He notes (1998) the danger of this modern moral universalism, which 'has taken the form of an anti-ideological and anti-political ethic of siding with the victim; the moral risk entailed by this ethic is misanthropy'.

Re-reading Libya

The adoption of Resolution 1973 by the UN Security Council on 17th May 2011 approving a no-fly zone over Libya and calling for "all necessary measures" to protect civilians, reflected a change in the Council's attitude toward the use of force for human protection purposes, and the role played by the UN's new Joint Office on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect point toward the potential for this new capacity to identify threats of mass atrocities and to focus the UN's attention on preventing them.

In Resolution 794, the Security Council authorised the Unified Task Force to enter Somalia to ease the humanitarian crisis, but this was in the absence of a central government rather than against one— a point specifically made at the time by several Council members (Williams 2011). Similarly, in Resolution 929 the Security Council authorised the French-led Operation Turquoise, ostensibly to protect victims of the ongoing genocide in Rwanda. Operation Turquoise enjoyed the consent of the interim government in Rwanda as well

as its armed forces. More recently, in Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Ivory Coast, the Security Council has authorised the use of “all necessary measures” to protect civilians, but all the peace operations in these countries are carried out with the consent of the host state (Williams 2011). But it was not the case in Libya

None of the world’s various risk-assessment frameworks viewed Libya as posing any threat of mass atrocities. That the UN had authorised action despite an extremely short time frame exposes the intentions and politics behind the intervention. The UN Secretariat was purposefully assessing the situation through the prism of RTP and drawing attention to human protection issues. Of course, there can be times when plausible options are extremely limited. Somalia is a case in point. Following the upsurge of violence in Somalia in 2006, the African Union and the Bush administration called upon the UN to deploy a peace operation. European members of the Security Council countered that the conditions were not ripe for peacekeeping because there was no viable and inclusive political process, no peace agreement and little local commitment. In this context, they argued that a UN peace operation was likely to be counterproductive. The Security Council compromised and asked the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to assess the military options. The DPKO reported that UN peacekeeping was viable only if certain conditions were met (especially a lasting cease-fire and viable and inclusive political process) and that, in their absence, the only plausible military option was the deployment of a large and highly capable multinational force to conduct a peace enforcement operation and impose a settlement. Given past experience in Somalia, Western military overstretch, the likelihood of external intervention being treated as hostile by several armed groups, and the absence of a clear route from large-scale military intervention to exit and sustainable peace, there was understandably little enthusiasm for the multinational force option. With Security Council approval, the African Union eventually authorised and deployed an 8 000-strong mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to support the peace process and transitional institutions. But, as predicted, it has proven unable to bring peace, deployed only 6 000 of its mandated 8 000 troops, and become party to the conflict (Williams 2009).

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his January 2009 report emphasised state responsibility, capacity building, and international responses as the “three pillars” of RTP. A formula aiming to add finesse to the third pillar includes the use or the threat to use military force to stop mass atrocities (Ban Ki-moon 2009). Clausewitz is the usual point of departure for those who argue that diplomats should step aside when negotiations fail and let soldiers pursue politics by other means. However, RTP requires that diplomats succeed in securing agreement either on preventive measures or on the deployment of military force. In the latter case, diplomats stand aside after they have succeeded, and soldiers do what diplomats cannot— halt mass atrocities. The international action against Libya was all about bombing for democracy,

sending messages to Iran, implementing regime change, keeping oil prices low and pursuing other such narrow interests. In real terms it is not about saving lives or stopping genocide but about narrow interests of oil. As reported recently, atrocities and human rights violations occurred on a large scale in the so called "liberated" areas in Libya. The question remains as to who will take responsibility for the killing of innocent people by indiscriminate NATO bombings.

Concluding Remarks

What has happened in Ivory Coast and Libya is a resonance of the politics of armed interventions. The number of civilians killed by foreign forces in Libya remains unknown and it will remain unaccounted forever. As for the role of the UN and the International Community, the events in Libya and Ivory Coast have once again shown how the world order works or does not work on the pretext of justice and morality, as discussed earlier.

A military campaign was launched ostensibly to enforce the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 in order to protect civilians in Libya. The bombing of Ivory Coast was undertaken to enforce Security Council Resolution 1975 to protect civilians there. The UN Charter does not permit the use of military force for humanitarian interventions. Military interventions in Libya and Ivory Coast have been justified by reference to the RTP doctrine. It is thus useful to reread the two Security Council resolutions to shed more light on the matter.

Resolution 1973 begins with the call for "the immediate establishment of a ceasefire." It reiterates "the responsibility of the Libyan authorities to protect the Libyan population" and reaffirms that "parties to armed conflicts bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians. The resolution authorises UN Member States "to take all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas" of Libya.

But immediate military action was taken instead of pursuing an immediate ceasefire. The military force had exceeded the bounds of the "all necessary measures" authorisation. "All necessary measures" should firstly have been peaceful measures to settle the conflict. But peaceful means were not exhausted before the military invasion began. A high level international team consisting of representatives from the Arab League, the African Union, and the UN Secretary General should have been dispatched to Tripoli to negotiate a real cease-fire, set up a mechanism for elections, and protecting civilians. Moreover, following the passage of the resolution, Libya immediately offered to accept international monitors and Qaddafi offered to step down and leave Libya. These offers were promptly rejected by the opposition. Security Council Resolution 1975 on Ivory Coast is similar to resolution 1973 on Libya, and authorised the use of "all necessary means to ... protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence" in Ivory Coast. It reaffirmed "the primary responsibility of each state to protect civilians" and reiterated that "parties to

armed conflicts bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians.”

The UN Charter commands all member states to settle their international disputes by peaceful means, and to maintain international peace, security, and justice. Members are obliged to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or in act in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. Under the UN Charter, a state can militarily attack another state only when it acts in self-defence, in response to an armed attack by one country against another. The need for self-defence must be overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation. Neither Libya nor Ivory Coast had attacked another country. The US, France and Britain in Libya and France and the UN in Ivory Coast were not acting in self-defence; and humanitarian concerns do not constitute self-defence.

There is a double standard in the use of military force to protect civilians. US did not attack Bahrain where lethal force was used to quell anti-government protests, because that is where the US Fifth Fleet is stationed. The Asia Times reported that before the invasion of Libya, the US made a deal with Saudi Arabia, whereby Saudi Arabia would invade Bahrain to help put down the pro-democracy protests and enlist the support of the Arab League for a no-fly-zone over Libya. When Obama defended his military actions in Libya, he said “Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different.” Two weeks later, the Arab League asked the Security Council to consider imposing a no-fly-zone over the Gaza Strip in order to protect civilians from Israeli air strikes. But the US, an ally of Israel, as always, refused to allow the passage of such a resolution, regardless of the number of Palestinian civilians killed by Israel. That is how the politics of imperialism works.

During a discussion of the RTP in the General Assembly on 23rd July 2009, the Cuban government raised some pertinent questions that should make those who support this notion pause: “Who is to decide if there is an urgent need for an intervention in a given state, according to what criteria, in what framework, and on the basis of what conditions? Who decides it is evident the authorities of a state do not protect their people, and how is it decided? Who determines peaceful means are not adequate in a certain situation, and on what criteria? Do small states have also the right and the actual prospect of interfering in the affairs of larger states? Would any developed country allow, either in principle or in practice, humanitarian intervention in its own territory? How and where do we draw the line between an intervention under the Responsibility to Protect and an intervention for political or strategic purposes, and when do political considerations prevail over humanitarian concerns?” These questions still remain valid and will remain so for years to come.

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Dhaka Declaration, 2011

The Third International Anti-imperialist Conference jointly convened by International Anti-imperialist Coordinating Committee (IACC) and Socialist Party of Bangladesh (SPB) have adopted after two days of deliberations the following document as the Dhaka Declaration, 2011.

The Calcutta Declaration adopted at the Anti-imperialist Convention held in 1995 stressed that with the counterrevolutionary overthrow of socialism in Soviet Russia and the East European countries the imperialist forces became more and more belligerent and aggressive, and the grave international situation underscored the necessity to build up broad-based People's Fronts inclusive of all progressive, democratic-minded, anti-imperialist people irrespective of their political opinions to fight against the imperialist menace. Such broad-based committees with communists at the core would conduct militant anti-imperialist and anti-war movements conducive to revolutionary struggles for the emancipation of the people. A call was given to coordinate the anti-imperialist movements surging forward in different countries so that a mighty torrent of global anti-imperialist movement is released. In response to this call the International Anti-imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee, now renamed as the International Anti-imperialist Coordinating Committee (IACC), was formed in 2007. This Committee, in collaboration with other organizations, organized the Second International Anti-imperialist Conference in Beirut (Beirut International Forum for Resistance, Anti-imperialism, Solidarity between Peoples, and Alternatives). The Forum gave a call for revolutionary fight against imperialism and neoliberalism, hegemony and militarization policies of the imperialists. This Third International Anti-imperialist Conference of IACC is a step forward in building international coordination and solidarity. From this platform the IACC gives a call for building up militant anti-imperialist movements throughout the world and to coordinate such movements going on in different countries.

The world situation in the twentieth century has proved beyond doubt the truth of Lenin's thesis that it is imperialism that begets war. The hollowness of the bourgeois propaganda that with the dismantling of the socialist camp the danger of war and the threat to world peace have disappeared stands exposed by the wars launched by the imperialist powers led by the USA in different corners of the globe. The capitalist world is racked by one crisis after another, the current one surpassing all the others in its depth, extent and severity. In its desperate bid to come out of such all-embracing and recurring crisis the ruling capitalist class in the imperialist as also in the developing countries must perforce resort to artificial

stimulation through the militarization of the economy. This is firstly because the military establishments all over the world are the richest and chief consumers, and arms trade is the biggest economic activity in the capitalist market. Secondly, the aim of the imperialist powers, in particular of USA, is to establish domination over the so-called globalized market through flexing of their military muscle. Consequently, engineering local and partial warfare for the release of stockpiles of arms and for the establishment of political domination has become a compulsive necessity of imperialism. Aiding and abetting one country against another, or one section of people against another, provoking and fostering tension between nations and between communities, creating war-like situations and engineering local wars are constant features of imperialist machinations across the world today. We have witnessed this in Yugoslavia, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and now glaringly in Libya.

As the economic crisis worsens and the markets get squeezed the contradiction between the imperialist powers is also sharpening, and competition between them for shares in the shrinking world market is becoming more and more fierce. At first the USA was the unquestioned leader in the imperialist camp because of its economic and military strength. But as the traditional manufacturing base of the USA is withering away, other countries are coming to positions of supremacy in industrial production, for example, Japan in the electronics industry, Germany and Japan in the automobile industry, European Union in commercial aircraft manufacturing etc. The economic supremacy of the USA is now being challenged; European Union and Japan have emerged as contenders. Capitalist Russia after getting over the initial chaos following the overthrow of the socialist system is trying to expand its sphere of economic and political influence. China is also emerging as a global economic force in South Asia. Indian capital has attained imperialist character; it is a junior member of the imperialist camp but has the aspiration to emerge as a regional superpower. Indian finance capital is being exported to Nepal, Bangladesh and many other countries to exploit their resources and labour. Thus we see that the number of competitors is getting more while the market is being progressively squeezed. Inevitably, there is cut-throat competition between the imperialist powers to expand their own reserve markets. The hegemonic aspiration and the urge of each of the imperialist powers to expand its sphere of influence is making the world an unsafe place and is leading to military aggression on this or that country to bring its economy under the domination of one imperialist power or a group of powers.

The truth of Lenin's thesis that imperialism is the progenitor of war and the principal danger to world peace is vividly manifested in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. The imperialist powers led by the USA have been directly or indirectly interfering in the internal affairs of other countries and violating the sovereignty of nations. Propagating falsehoods as excuse they ousted Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi from power and orchestrated their killing. They unleashed the most savage military attacks on these countries and put their puppets in the seat of power to ensure political and economic domination.

We are now witnessing that crisis-ridden imperialism has added another tool to its arsenal of conspiracies. Imperialist globalization and ruthless exploitation have

driven the common people in every part of the world to penury. Groaning under the burden of unemployment, poverty and utter destitution, the grievance of the people in several countries in North Africa and Middle East have burst out as militant mass upsurge against autocratic rulers, who were often the stooges of imperialists and were propped up by them. People's grievance in these countries has given the imperialists an opportunity to meddle in their internal affairs in the name of protecting democracy and thereby increase their sphere of dominance. In these countries, to arrest the progress of people's movements towards the goal of emancipation from capitalist exploitation, the imperialists are adopting different tactics. In some countries, in the aftermath of the ouster of imperialist stooges by mass upsurge they are conspiring to bring the groups friendly to them to power, and are propping them up. Their aim is to lead the popular movement into a blind alley of engineered election process and make it fizzle out. In other countries, where the rulers refused to bow down to imperialist diktats and took up a spirited oppositional stance, the imperialist powers, the USA and its cohorts in the NATO, instigated disaffected groups and agents to rise in rebellion against the rulers. They labelled these as movements for democracy, and on the pretext of aiding democracy they went for an all-out military attack to oust the rulers. The imperialists have employed this tactic very successfully in Libya, culminating in the murder of Colonel Gaddafi. Now they are targeting Syria for a replay of the Libyan scenario.

This Conference stresses that unless a true revolutionary leadership emerges, the spontaneous people's upsurge against autocracy would not culminate in the overthrow of the oppressive, exploitative and tyrannical system. Then all the sacrifices of the people would be in vain, and taking advantage of the situation the rightist forces or the religious fundamentalists would come to power; one autocratic system would be replaced by another equally autocratic system.

But the silver lining in the global scenario is that the imperialists' bid for world domination is being challenged by people all over the world, and they are demanding to put an end to capitalist oppression and aggression. Massive anti-war, anti-globalization demonstrations have shaken even the advanced capitalist countries. Vibrant people's movements in "Arab Spring" have unseated several stooges of imperialism. Spirited resistance in Middle East that fights against capitalism, imperialism and Zionist aggression is getting stronger. In 2006 the Lebanese resistance successfully fought off the Israeli aggression in southern Lebanon. Determined resistance in Iraq foiled the US conspiracy to keep the country under military occupation and forced the imperialists to ignominious troop withdrawal.

The recent movement of "Occupy Wall Street" that started in New York has spread like wild fire throughout the world and massive demonstrations have rocked 950 cities, across more than 80 countries, signifying people's anger with the exploitative rule of capitalism. This Conference hails the heroic fight of the people in different parts of the world, and stresses that their aspiration for freedom from exploitation and oppression can be truly realized only with revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system and establishment of socialist system in its place that would bring in social justice and solidarity of the people. The Conference

enjoins that the principal task today is to organize anti-imperialist movements in all countries with a correct revolutionary leadership and to build up resistance movements against all acts of imperialist aggression or interference in the internal affairs of countries anywhere in the world.

The Conference adopts the following Resolutions.

1. This International Anti-imperialist Conference condemns in no uncertain terms the economic onslaughts launched by the USA and other imperialist powers through the policies of globalization, liberalization and privatization, and through institutions like IMF, World Bank, WTO etc., leading to poverty, unemployment and misery for the common people in all countries.
2. This Conference condemns the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan by the imperialist powers led by the USA. Using blatant lies as pretext, brazenly violating international law and norms, and contemptuously disregarding world-wide public protests, the USA unleashed savage attacks on these two countries, indiscriminately bombing hospitals, schools and civil installations, and entire countries have turned into rubble. The imperialist powers have set up puppet governments in these countries, but these are under virtual military occupation. This Conference demands immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of all occupation troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. The two countries are to be returned back to the people who are to be allowed the full freedom to decide what type of government they are to have, without interference from any external power. The imperialist powers have inflicted extensive devastations on these countries and they have to bear the entire responsibility of rebuilding and restitution. This Conference demands that the imperialist perpetrators of unjust wars and of massacres of native population in Iraq and Afghanistan be branded as war criminals and brought to justice.
3. The Conference notes that faced by the determined Iraqi resistance the imperialist powers had to announce troop withdrawals, but they are attempting to replace their overt military presence by the deployment of intelligence men under the cover of diplomats and military security companies that continue the occupation, an act of hegemony over the Iraqi decision and fortunes. We condemn this heinous conspiratorial manoeuvre.
4. This Conference condemns the military attack by NATO forces on Libya as a criminal act of aggression, and demands that the aggressors be branded as war criminals. The perpetrators of the murder of Colonel Gaddafi must be brought to book. Imperialist powers are to desist from interfering in the internal affairs of the country and totally and unconditionally withdraw their military presence. It is the people of Libya who are to decide, without any foreign interference, on the form of governance of their country.
5. This International Anti-imperialist Conference condemns the butchery of the Palestinian people by Israel, its military raids and its forcible encroachment upon and resettlement in Palestine territory, all with the full backing of

imperialist USA. Israel's blockade of Gaza has been going on for years and the entry of even humanitarian aid is stopped using military force. Bombing and shelling on the people of Gaza are continuing unabated. The imperialist powers are in effect encouraging the state terrorism of Israel. This Conference demands that Israel must stop its attack on the Palestinian people, give back to them the forcibly occupied territory, and release all Palestinian political prisoners. This Conference expresses its unequivocal support to the right of the Palestine people to have their own independent sovereign Palestine state, and to their right to return to their homelands. We condemn that Israel, with full backing of the USA, is blocking all moves for the formation of an independent Palestine state and is violating all UN Resolutions to this effect. We call upon the people of all countries to come forward in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people, and to organize movements to force their own Governments to put pressure on Israel for stopping the acts of aggression and for acceding to the demand for independent Palestine state.

6. This Conference hails the militant spirit of the Lebanese people and the Lebanese Resistance in their struggle to liberate the occupied land and pledges full support to them. This Conference demands of the United Nations to act and to achieve full withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the occupied lands belonging to Lebanon. This Conference condemns the setting up of Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and its use as a means to harass the Lebanese Resistance and its leaders and throw them in internal and external crisis.
7. The conference hails the struggle of Bahraini people against the U.S.-backed oppressive regime and we denounce the brutal suppression of the opposition and the killing, detainment and torture of men, women and children.
8. This Conference notes with grave concern the attempts of the imperialist powers and their lackeys in the Middle East to interfere in the internal affairs of Syria, and to bring about a regime change in that country. Ignoring all proclamations by the Syrian Government the imperialists are resorting to a constant barrage of propaganda in the western media, controlled by the corporate houses, about "democracy movement" in the country, and its alleged violent suppression by the present Government. Mass demonstrations in support of the Government, on the other hand, are blacked out. The stage is being set for a military attack on Syria to overthrow the present Government. This Conference demands that the imperialist powers desist from all attempts to oust the present regime through military intervention and attack on the people of Syria. We reiterate that it is the Syrian people who have the sole right and authority to decide who should govern the country and on the character of the ruler; the imperialist powers have no mandate to interfere in the process.
9. This Conference condemns the constant threat of military attack against Iran by US-led imperialist powers. There is vociferous propaganda in the

media about Iran's nuclear weapons to justify possible military action against Iran and there are already reports of attacks through the use of drones. This Conference notes that the International Atomic Agency reported that there is no evidence to back up the charge that Iran is producing nuclear weapons. We demand that the USA abandons its aggressive postures against Iran, and lift the sanctions. We recognize the right of Iran to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Conference expresses its solidarity with the Iranian people's struggle to protect their sovereignty from imperialist attack.

10. This Conference condemns in strongest terms the military attacks on the Kurdish people by Turkey, a staunch ally of U.S. imperialists in the Middle East, and its massacre of the Kurdish people, including by the use of chemical weapons. Thousands of Kurdish politicians are placed under detention. We condemn the violation of civil and human rights of the Kurdish people, and demand the release of all Kurdish political prisoners.
11. This Conference condemns U.S. intervention in Sudan's internal affairs, and its instigation of ethnic and tribal strife there.
12. This International Anti-imperialist Conference condemns the United Nations for becoming virtually a rubber stamping body to the decisions of the imperialist powers, particularly of the USA. This is nakedly manifested in the UN-sanctioned aggressions on Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. In the name of sending UN Peace Keeping Forces the imperialist powers are bringing countries under military occupation, and by setting up puppet regimes are controlling them politically and economically. In contrast, because of imperialist machinations, particularly by the USA, the United Nations has totally failed to stop the barbaric Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, to make Israel return its forcibly occupied territories back to them, and to set up an independent, sovereign Palestinian state. We also condemn that in response to UNESCO recognition of Palestine the USA has stooped to curtailing its obligatory financial grant to UNESCO in order to pressurize the body into denying the statehood of Palestine.
13. This Conference condemns that the International Criminal Court is targeting in a premeditated way the leaders of the developing countries of Africa for indictment, while the many criminal acts of the imperialists led by the USA in Iraq and Afghanistan, or the U.S. drone attacks on Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia etc., or the many crimes of Israel against the people of Palestine and Lebanon are not brought to trial, let alone being punished.
14. Today the world's progressive people have been ardently desiring a durable peace in the Korean peninsula to remove as early as possible the suffering of national division which has persisted for over half a century. However, the acute military confrontation is continuing on the Korean peninsula due to the U.S. manoeuvres of war provocation, which are arousing a deep concern and apprehension among the world people. Desirous of improving the situation of the reunification cause of the Korean people, this Conference adopts the special resolution as follows.

Today the world's progressive people have been ardently desiring a durable peace on the Korean peninsula to remove as early as possible the suffering of national division which has persisted for over half a century. However, the acute military confrontation is continuing on the Korean peninsula due to the U.S. manoeuvres of war provocation, which is arousing a deep concern and apprehension among the world people. Desirous of improving the situation of the reunification cause of the Korean people, this Conference makes the following points in this Resolution:

- A: The United States should renounce its hostile policy towards the DPRK, lift the more than 50-year old blockade, and stop at once the aggressive military war exercises that the USA is staging every year on the Korean peninsula.
 - B: For an independent and peaceful reunification of Korea, the USA should pull out its army troops from South Korea and accede to the proposal of DPRK to replace the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement.
 - C: We fully support the Korean people in their struggle for an independent and peaceful reunification of Korea under the banner of the June 15 Joint Declaration and the October 4 Declaration.
 - D: We will extend full solidarity to the Songun policy (giving precedence to military affairs and advancing the socialist cause by holding up the armed forces as the pillar of revolution) of the Korean people to smash the imperialists' manoeuvres for war and aggression. The only way to safeguard the socialism is to strengthen the self-reliant defence capabilities when the imperialists are increasing the threat of aggressive war and nuclear blackmail. The Songun policy carried out by the leader Kim Jong Il is sure guarantee for the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula and the region. We, all the participants in the current conference, once again, are extending our wholehearted support to the heroic Korean people who are struggling firmly in the forefront of anti-imperialism. We will in the future, too, strengthen the close cooperation and solidarity with the Korean people in their struggle against imperialism and for an independent and peaceful reunification of Korea.
15. This Conference condemns the persistent attempt by the USA to destabilize socialist Cuba and to overthrow socialism there by instigating counter revolution. We demand that the USA immediately lifts its more than half century old blockade against Cuba which has inflicted untold hardship on the life of the people there. Along with this we join all the progressive people of the world in calling for the immediate release of the five Cuban political prisoners held in U.S. prisons.
 16. This Conference hails the heroic struggle of the people of Latin America against the aggressive manoeuvres and conspiracies of U.S. imperialism and expresses solidarity with their fight. We strongly condemn the destabilization attempts of the USA against countries like Venezuela, Bolivia

and other Latin American countries whose Governments are not bowing down to U.S. diktats.

17. This conference draws attention to, condemns and calls for the closing of more than 1,000 U.S. military bases around the world in 150 countries. These bases, built to maintain U.S. imperialist domination, are a national affront and an attack on the sovereignty and self-determination of the countries forced to host them. We condemn the unequal 'Status of Forces' Agreements granting total immunity to crimes committed by U.S. soldiers that are imposed on many countries forced to host U.S. troops. We also condemn the rapidly expanding series of secret U.S. drone bases in Africa and West Asia conducting undeclared wars against totally defenceless populations.
18. This International Anti-imperialist Conference notes with great concern that South and Southeast Asia has become a playground for imperialist manoeuvres, intrigues and conspiracies. These countries were erstwhile colonies of the European powers. Today the USA and those European powers are all out to expand their markets in this region and to export their capital to exploit the cheap labour in these countries to manufacture goods so that they have an edge in the competitive market. In addition to the western imperialist powers India and China have also emerged as powerful countries and both of them want to have a share in this market. Indian and Chinese capital is invested in countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Vietnam. There is intense competition between all these powers for market share and this portends grave danger for peace in the region. We call upon the people of these countries to develop powerful anti-imperialist movements conducive to socialist revolution which alone could hold the marauding imperialist powers in check and save the people from imperialist exploitation and oppression.
19. This Conference expresses solidarity with the struggle of the people of Bangladesh for protecting the oil, gas, coal and other natural resources from loot and plunder by the imperialist powers. The Conference expresses its support to the legitimate, long-standing demand of the people of Bangladesh for equitable sharing of river waters between India and Bangladesh, and condemns the unilateral decision of India to erect the Tipaimukh Dam in Manipur, which runs counter to the interests of both the countries.
20. This International Anti-imperialist Conference hails the successful struggle of the Nepalese people under the leadership of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN (M)) for overthrowing the monarchy. It notes with concern that the reactionary forces in Nepal aided by the imperialist powers, particularly India, are trying to hinder the process of adopting a democratic constitution for Nepal and creating obstacles in the functioning of the UCPN (M)-led Government. We condemn the conspiracies of India and the USA to scuttle the democratic process in Nepal and to prevent the formation of a democratic republic of Nepal. We strongly demand that all

external interventions, particularly by expansionist India, be immediately stopped.

21. This Conference demands that the national question of Sri Lanka be solved politically by finding the just solution acceptable to the Tamils and other oppressed nationalities of Sri Lanka. It further demands investigation into the alleged war crimes committed by the security forces of Sri Lanka, in order to avoid intervention or invasion by the imperialist powers using war crimes as a plea.
22. This Conference expresses its solidarity with the renewed revolt of the Egyptian people against usurpation by vested interests of the fruits of their struggle for democracy, and condemns the police crackdown on the demonstrators. This Conference also hails the militant spirit of the demonstrators in the "Occupy Wall Street" movement that swept across the USA and spread to different countries in Europe, registering refusal of the people of those countries to accept the capitalist-imperialist system. We appeal to the people from all over the world to rise in solidarity with the people's revolt in the very citadel of imperialism.
23. This Conference condemns the imperialist and Israeli Zionist crimes of mass imprisonment, kidnapping, torture, secret renditions and targeted assassinations. We call for a full accounting of all political prisoners from all over the world and their immediate release.
24. This Conference unequivocally supports the people's struggles, armed and unarmed, against all forms of oppression, and national liberation movements going on in different parts of the world.
25. This Anti-imperialist Conference notes that during May 15-22, 2012, military and civil representatives of the 28-nation military alliance of NATO, and a summit of the eight heads of state and the finance ministers of G8 countries are meeting to plan ever new draconian measures seeking to resolve the problems created by their crisis-ridden and profit-driven socio-economic system at the expense of working people and the poor everywhere. This Conference calls upon the people of every country to organize mass demonstrations on May 19, 2012, in protest against the imperialist policies which are affecting the lives of the common people all over the globe.
26. This Conference notes that there is feminization of poverty on a global scale. Women have the highest rates of poverty and the least rights. Capitalist globalization impacts women as a source of cheap labour and it increasingly turns women into a commodity. The trafficking of women and sex tourism is a growing market of exploitation. Physical violence and atrocities against women are increasing. The largest banks and global finance capital ensnares the poorest women of South Asia, Africa and Latin America in a web of micro-loans. This Third International Anti-imperialist Conference declares that it stands for the full economic, political and social rights of women and for their full equality in all spheres.

27. Capitalism-imperialism has a long and shameful historical record of displacing the indigenous people and tribal people from their homelands, condemning them to a life of untold misery and destitution, and sometimes to annihilation and extinction. This Conference condemns the collusion of the multinationals and the governments of many countries for displacing the tribal people from their lands without adequate compensation or providing alternative means of livelihood, and demands that the displaced tribal people must be properly rehabilitated, and their culture protected, so that they can live with dignity.
28. This Conference notes that capitalism-imperialism not only exploits people ruthlessly, it has scant regard for the environment. With its insatiable greed for profit it has polluted the environment, degraded the land and has caused unchecked emission of greenhouse gases leading to global climate change. The Conference demands that industries be forced to strictly follow the prescribed environmental protection regulations, and that they must not be allowed to flagrantly flout the regulations or clandestinely bypass them.
29. This Conference proposes to observe 6th August, the Hiroshima Day, as the International Anti-imperialist Day.

This Conference declares that its delegates, who are here to voice the words of millions of their countrymen, are standing up to hail the people around the world for their resolute struggle against occupation, onslaught, genocide, carnage, sanction and blockade by the imperialist powers with U.S. imperialism as the bulwark. We reiterate that as the crisis intensifies in the capitalist-imperialist countries the imperialists in their desperate bid for survival would attempt to launch wars, invade countries and bring them under military occupation. From this platform we are giving a call to the people of every country to unite and organize militant movements in a coordinated way against imperialist acts of aggression and oppression. We emphasize that unless a correct revolutionary leadership emerges which can guide the movements along the correct line the desired goal of emancipation of the people would not be attained. We further stress the necessity of coordinating these movements to release an unconquerable wave to remove the scourge of capitalism-imperialism from the face of the earth.

NDMLP Diary

NDMLP Statement to the Media

6th September 2011

Barbaric Attack on Student Union Leader

The following statement denouncing the barbaric attack on S Thavabalan, President of the University of Jaffna Students' Union was issued by Comrade SK Senthivel on behalf of the Politburo of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party.

The attack in broad daylight on S Thavabalan (age 25 years), President of the University of Jaffna Students' Union demonstrates that the culture of belligerence and rowdy attacks that came into existence thirty-five years ago continue to persist in the North-East. Armed men on motorbikes, with faces covered by black cloth, have waylaid and attacked Thavabalan, causing him serious injury. This attack can in no way be justified or covered up. The New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party strongly denounces this attack carried out on the University Students' Union President for holding a dissenting political view. At the same time, it views this attack as an attack on every university student. Hence, the Party joins the people in calling out aloud that such armed attacks that continue should be brought to an end.

It is the government that protects an environment devoid of democracy, freedom and normal life in the North-East. It was amid this environment that armed men staged a variety of acts of intimidation, attack, burglary and murder. The situation still continues. People live amid fear and intimidation. Meantime, journalists and individuals with dissenting views are being attacked in a planned manner.

Two months ago, Kuganathan, a journalist for *Uthayan*, was attacked by armed ruffians and received severe injuries to his head. Day before yesterday, even before Kuganathan could recover fully from his injuries, University Students' Union President Thavabalan has been subjected to severe attack. Those who guide armed ruffians to carry out such serial attacks seek, besides exacting revenge from those whom they dislike, to create a mood of fear and intimidation among the people, especially university undergraduates. They seek thereby to preserve an oppressive environment by preventing the restoration of democracy, freedom and normal life. Hence, the Party points out at this juncture that there the need has arisen for democratic, progressive and left forces to unite based on common demands.

SK Senthivel
General Secretary

Comrade KA Subramaniam Remembered

The 22nd death of Anniversary of Comrade KA Subramaniam (Comrade Maniam) founder General Secretary of the Party was marked on 27th November at the Kailasapathy Auditorium of the Dhesiya Kalai Ilakkiyap Peravai in Colombo 6.

Dr S Sivasegaram, chairing the commemorative meeting, remembered the dedication of Comrade Maniam to his political cause and the high standards of selflessness and honesty that he showed in his private and public life.

The Comrade KA Subramaniam Memorial Oration titled “Memories of a pioneer of the communist movement and current political trends” was delivered by Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the Party. Comrade Senthivel talked about the evolution of Comrade Maniam from a progressive reformist into an exemplary communist leader. The speech outlined the ability of Comrade Maniam to bring out the best in every young party member and activist and his role in building up the communist movement to its peak of strength in the North, taking the responsibility of founding the Party in 1978 following a major crisis and split in the Marxist Leninist Communist Party and defending it against chauvinism and narrow nationalism through the difficult years of war, national oppression and LTTE tyranny in the North-East. He summed up the adverse and favourable aspects of the current local and international political situation and emphasised the need for the younger generation to draw inspiration from Comrade Maniam in carrying forward the struggle against imperialism and chauvinistic reaction.

Comrade Soodamani Shares Experiences

On the occasion of the 75th birthday of Comrade IK Soodamani, the Vavunia Branch of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party, jointly with members of his family, organised an event to share with Comrade Soodamani his revolutionary experiences. Members of the Central Committee of the Party and comrades from Colombo, Jaffna, Batticaloa and the Hill Country attended this important event.

The revolutionary spirit of Comrade Soodamani reminded his comrades of the spirit of the ‘old man who removed the mountains’ in the well known Chinese fable. The event was organised since he had expressed his desire to meet his comrades, while undergoing medical treatment in hospital during the preceding several weeks.

Comrade Soodamani, born in Jaffna spent 55 years of his life not only as one who had accepted Marxist ideology but also as a practitioner of Marxist practice and mass struggle. He has been attacked by the police for participation in struggles against caste oppression and detained on several occasions by the police for his political activities. He is living evidence from

among the many who had shed blood in the struggle for temple entry, without which major temples in Jaffna would not have been open for all to worship.

Although he faced many hardships in life including the crippling of his wife during the war, dislocation by war, loss of employment and poverty, he steadfastly stood by his policies and is proud to work for the Party even today. Comrade Soodamani not only successfully confronted negative criticism from within the community and disheartening narratives from those who had abandoned their party and policy for the sake of small favours and those who yielded to gun culture and abandoned their communist ideal to submerge themselves in Tamil nationalism but also gave guidance to members of his family. Comrades from the Hill Country reminisced that Comrade Soodamani who brought many people into the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party in the Vavunia region has also participated in several people's struggles in the Hill Country.

Besides making his donation to the Party as he does on his every birthday, he also demonstrated his selflessness by donating the entire collection of cash gifts for his 75th birthday to a student to meet his medical expenses.

A book and a documentary movie about the life and work of Comrade Soodamani are under production for the younger generation to learn from the spirit of Comrade Soodamani.

Comrade Thambiah at the 3rd Anti-Imperialist International Conference

Comrade E Thambiah, International Organiser, New-Democratic Marxist Leninist Party left for Dhaka on 25th November to participate in the 3rd Anti-Imperialist International Conference of the International Anti-Imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee convened jointly with the Socialist Party of Bangladesh (SPB). The event held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 27th to 29th November also marked the occasion of 94th Anniversary of November Revolution and 31st Anniversary of Foundation of SPB.

Comrade Thambiah was invited by the Organising Committee of the Conference to chair two of its sessions and to address its plenary session.

He read two papers at the Conference, one on the role of culture as an imperialist tool to hegemonies the people of the world and the other on the imperialist grip on Sri Lanka.

The draft text of the first talk is published in this issue of New Democracy and the text of the second will appear in the next issue.

Sri Lankan Events

Bold and Unbowed

At a special ceremony held in Jaffna on 20th October to honour the three best performers at the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination from the Northern Region, Ten year old P Sethuragavan, the best performer, to the shock of the personalities present, refused requests by the organisers as well as his parents to fall at the feet of the Minister of Education, Bandula Gunawardane. Answering reporters outside the auditorium Sethuragavan explained that he had to struggle against difficult conditions in detention camps in the Vanni to attain his good results and that he owed nothing to anyone other than his parents and teachers. He has been commended by many for setting an example that deserves emulation by adults of all nationalities.

Rowdyism Prevails

Parliamentary business descended to rowdy levels on 21st November during the budget speech of President Rajapaksa when unruly government MPs sought to abuse, verbally and physically, members of the main opposition party, who held aloft placards and shouted slogans critical of the budget.

What was equally shameful was the failure of the Speaker to take prompt action to maintain order and immediate disciplinary action against those who resorted to unruly and un-parliamentary conduct.

Fatal Attraction

Vickramabahu Karunaratne, leader of the Left Front (a.k.a. NSSP) shed the last shred of self respect of his Trotskyite Party by contesting on the ticket of the Democratic People's Front led by the Colombo-based Tamil nationalist Mano Ganesan. The reason for this strange alliance was the desperate need of Mr Karunaratne to secure a seat in a local body— following a long drought since election in 1999 January to the Western Provincial Council with the backing of the NDMLP to serve a six-year term, and bad defeats at all subsequent elections even with opportunist alliances. It may not totally be a coincidence that the veteran Trotskyite was photographed next to the leader of the UNP in a united campaign to 'save democracy' at a time when his senior partner Mano Ganesan is warming up to the UNP.

Journey to the West

The team of TNA leaders before its visit to the US in late October claimed in that it was invited by the State Department for discussion with its officials and that it was scheduled to meet Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and was also expecting to have discussions with Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the UN. Neither of these claims materialised, and what seems to have taken place was a rather routine meeting with officials at a low level. No joint statement was released at the end of the meeting or a formal photograph taken, as would have been the case with formal meetings.

Whether there was an invitation at all is now in question, and it seems that the TNA invited itself in view of its current helpless situation where it is due to face elections to the Northern Provincial Council, with its Indian patrons unable to persuade the Sri Lankan government to conduct a serious dialogue with the TNA.

Brand Name Problems

The JVP faction despite considerable grassroots level support among JVP cadres and mass organisations has failed to capture the party machinery and has founded the Jana Aragala Vyaparaya (Movement for People's Struggle). The JAV, in its bid to establish its credibility among the JVP rank and file as the genuine successor to the JVP policies, is uncritically upholding the cult of Rohana Wijeweera, whose policies it claims to loyally follow, which the JVP establishment has betrayed.

The entire JVP has much to answer for, including its two disastrous insurgencies. Without a review of the past, beginning with its petit bourgeois origins, and going through a process of criticism and self criticism, the JAV could be doomed to the same fate as the JVP. The challenge for the JAV therefore is to carry out a serious uninhibited review of its tragic history.

Gas Bubbles

The country is being told that investigations have shown the existence of oil and gas in the sea to the north west of the country. What has not been told to the people is the extent of the deposits if any and the economic feasibility of extraction, let alone the adverse impact on the environment and the fishing industry and the prospect of foreign investors taking out any likely marginal benefit.

ASIA

Nepal: The Great Betrayal

The long overdue meeting of the Central Committee (CC) of the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) fixed for 19th November was prorogued indefinitely, reportedly because of internal dispute over the 11th Amendment to the Interim Constitution, which has since been withdrawn. Party Chairman Dahal (Prachanda) had been deferring the meeting meant to nail down differences that went public since keys to the Maoist arsenal were handed to the Army Integration Special Committee (AISC). He postponed the meeting indefinitely as the crisis further deepened with the signing of Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement (BIPPA) with India during Prime Minister Bhattarai's visit to India, and the seven-point deal with non-Maoist parties without due consultation within the party. The crisis in the party, however, remains grave and shows no sign of remission, while the inner party struggle has now spilled out to the streets owing to the gravity of the issues.

Indra Mohan Sigdel (Comrade Basanta), Politburo Member of the party, in his article of 18th November titled "The tasks of the ongoing CC meeting" (<http://maoistroad.blogspot.com/>) accused Dahal of preventing the CC from discussing key issues. The article also accused Dahal of not clearly declaring to the party his position on the party's line and strategy, despite admitting that the inner party struggle was due to differences over the party's line and strategy and insisting on taking the line struggle to its very end.

The article urging the party's need to reach a comprehensive synthesis of the problems drew attention to challenges faced in the establishment of the correct ideological, political, organisational and cultural lines. It emphasised the urgency of uniting the entire party ranks based on the revolutionary line and developing a comprehensive plan consistent with that line in order to realise the party's immediate objective, namely a People's Federal Republic.

The article accused party Chairman Dahal and Vice Chairman Baburam Bhattarai of taking many wrong decisions in recent months— especially since Bhattarai became Prime Minister —that are being implemented to the detriment to the people. It pointed out that these decisions made without due consultation within the party violated party policy and that, in the face of failure by the main leadership to stand by the party's line, policy and system, Comrades Kiran and Badal shouldered the responsibility of defending the

party line and debating on following key political issues within the party as well as among the masses.

The first is Chairman Dahal's signing, without reference to other leaders, a four-point pact with Madhesi parties consenting to a democratic republican constitution, contravening the party line of establishing an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist People's Federal Republic. Significantly, the pact includes a vague statement that all the issues proposed by neighbouring countries will be resolved, implying support of and a commitment to implement pending proposals by India that Nepal signs an extradition treaty, and allows the presence of a Indian Air Marshal in Nepal's Airport and intrusion by the Indian army to protect projects of Indian nationals in Nepal.

The second concerns Bhattarai's signing the anti-national BIPPA with India during his first visit to India as Prime Minister violating the instruction of the Standing Committee that he should not sign any controversial agreement with India in this transitional period. Chairman Dahal's ambiguous utterances too indirectly support the BIPPA. This deal is in direct conflict with the UCPN-M position that the main contradiction of the Nepalese society is that between the Indian monopoly capitalists and their Nepalese agents on the one hand and the Nepalese people and the nation, on the other.

The third concerns the relief package to the people declared by Bhattarai following swearing in as Prime Minister. The package with little to offer to landless and poor peasants, who overwhelmingly comprise the oppressed people, has pledged compensation to landlords whose land the landless and poor peasants seized during the People's War.

The fourth concerns the UCPN-M policy of carrying out army integration and constitution writing side by side. But the PLA was disarmed even before work on the constitution started by surrendering to the AISC the keys for the containers with PLA weapons. The seven-point deal with non-Maoist parties has, thus, forced the surrender of the PLA, built to prevent counter-revolution. The PLA has now been dissolved through disarming and integration with the Nepal Army on an individual basis, with PLA fighters offered posts as forest security guards and watchmen, despite the UCPN-M Central Committee categorically stating that a national security policy should be followed by group-wise army integration without disarming, and that the new force—comprising at least 50% from the PLA and the rest from government security forces—should be led by the PLA and deployed as a border security force.

The fifth concerns the reversal of the principle of establishing 14 federal states in Nepal, in order end to the national, linguistic and regional oppression under a unitary state. A major accomplishment of the People's War was the achievement of federalism. Party Chairman Dahal has reportedly agreed in a deal with the UML and Nepali Congress to organise Nepal as 7 federal states

by reversing the majority decision in the constitutional committee through setting up a parallel committee of experts for implementing federation.

Basanta summed up the crisis as the outcome of a series of wrong decisions of the leadership made in breach of earlier stands, commitments and concepts of the party, generally since entering the peace process and particularly with Bhattarai as Prime Minister. As a result of the wrong decisions the people have lost all their gains through ten years of People's War: there is no people's power; the PLA has been dissolved; and federalism has been hijacked by 'experts'. Privileges for the oppressed, including Dalits, women, indigenous people, Muslims and Mahdesis, pledged by the party are set to vanish in the impending constitution.

The article argues that these failures were the result of Chairman Dahal's deviation from the ideological and political line and minimum strategy of the party. It draws attention to Dahal's statement to the journal Krambhanga (meaning rupture) where he has implied that the establishment of bourgeois democratic revolution comprises completion of the New Democratic Revolution, which is against the decision of the last CC meeting at Chunwang. The article suggests that Dahal through that interview on the eve of the meeting of the CC was preparing the ground for a new revisionist line to liquidate the New Democratic Revolution into bourgeois democratic republic, and calls for the defeat of this right revisionist line to protect party unity and carry forward the New Democratic Revolution.

The Economist (UK) commented on the integration process (<http://www.economist.com/node/21538549>) as follows: "The final terms of integration remain vague but are based on proposals produced by the army and accepted by the "pragmatic" wing of the Maoists, currently in the ascendant. It is a matter of speculation how deep discontent runs within the party, although even hardliners are not threatening imminent trouble". That is consistent with what Bhattarai had said at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore on 25th March, several months before he became Prime Minister: "There is general agreement in the Maoist radical democratic camp that principal impediments to social progress in present-day Nepal are the feudal remnants in different spheres of society, economy and state. Hence the UCPN (Maoist) has identified its principal immediate task as the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution", (<http://www.ekantipur.com/2011/03/29/oped/post-conflict-restructuring/331642.html>).

"The issue of the Maoist fighters was indeed an obstacle in writing the new constitution. The recent deal was greeted with relief by many, who hope the process will now come unstuck. Yet talk of "democratising" the army, or of land reform, or the other reforms promised in the CPA and once widely accepted as necessary, has long since slipped off the agenda. The constitution is already late, with several fundamental issues seemingly destined for inelegant, last-minute fudges sometime next year."

Meantime, the All Nepal Peasants Federation (Revolutionary) on 15th November declared at a press meeting that it would not return land taken over during the People's War. On 25th November, a section of the UCPN-M in Bardiya District announced the return to Nepali Congress politician Binaya Dhoj Chand the land previously owned by him. On the 26th cadres loyal to the revolution re-seized the property, but the police later took control of the land. (www.nepalnews.com/archive/2011/nov/nov26/news07.php). What is certain is that returning to landlords land seized by peasants will not be as easy as the government led by Bhattarai thinks.

India: Democracy at Stake

Kishenji: Killer State and a Loving People

Maoist sympathisers and representatives of various people's organisations, civil liberties activists and hundreds of others on Sunday 27th November paid their last respects to Kishenji (Mallojula Koteswara Rao) in his hometown Peddapalli in Andhra Pradesh. People turned up in large numbers at Kishenji's house to pay their tribute and console his family. Amid huge police presence, mourners, with folded hands, passed by the flower bedecked coffin.

His remains were flown from Kolkata to the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad. The Police took control of Kishenji's remains on arrival and prevented Maoist sympathisers from taking his remains into the city for the people pay their last respects. Kishenji's niece Deepa Rao and Maoist sympathiser and renowned poet Varavara Rao, who accompanied Kishenji's remains from Kolkata, lodged their strong protest against the police attitude: "They not only killed him in cold blood but are also denying us the right to pay our last respects and perform his last rites the way we want to," said Varavara Rao. They were not alone in charging that Kishenji was tortured before being killed in a fake encounter on 24th November and demands are growing for an impartial inquiry.

New Democracy joins the freedom loving people of India in paying its respects to a committed revolutionary leader and fighter for social justice.

Money for Mineral Exploration

India's Ministry of Mines has proposed a government investment of 1.4 billion US dollars between 2012 and 2017 with the aim of boosting the share of mining in the country's GDP, currently pegged at 2.2%. (www.miningweekly.com/topic/jharkhand). The proposal to expand mining in India on a large scale should be seen in the context of the desire of India's capitalist classes to enhance their profits from mining and of the Indian state to reinforce itself as a capitalist power and regional hegemon, with no concern

for environmental destruction or sustainability and even less the welfare of indigenous peoples.

Popular resistance backed by Maoists in the tribal areas of Central and Eastern India has slowed down the expropriation of land from the people. Thus further capitalist mining will only mean further military and economic attacks on the tribal people in the name of hunting down Maoist 'terrorists'.

Tamilnadu: Caste-based Police Violence

Within four months of Ms Jayalalitha assuming power, police fired indiscriminately on Dalits who congregated at Paramakkudi in the Ramanathapuram District on 11th September to observe the 54th anniversary of the martyrdom of their leader Emmanuel Sekaran and killed six people and injured many, to the shock of the entire nation.

The text below is based on an extensive fact finding report by the Tamilnadu-based Centre for Protection of Civil Liberties (CPCL), Tamilnadu on police firing at Paramakkudi.

Although upper caste atrocities against Dalits in this region are not unusual and in conflicts between Dalits and non-Dalits the state has always sided with non-Dalits, this crime was committed by the state for no understandable reason since there is no evidence that the people's really went out of control to warrant lathy charge by the police. There is even less justification for the police opening fire on the people, killing four and injuring scores of others.

The CPCL investigation also exposed the mainstream media which without exception reproduced as news the flawed interpretation of events by the Police seeking to justify its murderous brutality by accusing Dalit protesters of provocation. The report concludes that the police action was premeditated and that callous treatment of the injured by the police reflected deep-seated hatred towards Dalits. The report also draws attention to related incidents of police attack on people going to Paramakkudi from neighbouring areas to forcefully prevent them from attending the rally in Paramakkudi.

The report also criticised Chief Minister Jayalalitha for interpreting the incident as a caste conflict between Thevars and Pallars, provoked by defamatory graffiti against the late Muthuramalinga Thevar (a notoriously caste conscious and reactionary leader of the Thevar community in the last century) in order to deflect attention from the lack of professionalism of the state police.

Also see "A Press Note for the Press Meet on 4 October 2011 at Chennai Press Club" (<http://www.icawpi.org/de/peoples-resistance/statements/789-butchery-of-dalits-in-paramakudi->)

Anti-Nuclear Struggle Gathers Momentum

In ND 42 we reported the initial success of the resistance to the Koodankulam nuclear project. But there was no illusion that nuclear production will not be initiated in Koodankulam. India's nuclear lobby is far too strong to give up readily. With the Koodankulam project closely linked with plans for expansion of the Kalpaakkam complex the struggle was certain to have an impact across Tamil Nadu and beyond.

The protest movement continued to spread across Tamilnadu, despite the tough line of the central government and the indifferent if not hostile attitude of the media to the protests. The central government, the nuclear lobby and other reactionary forces have since resorted to other tricks.

In early November the establishment launched former President and 'nuclear scientist' Dr Abdul Kalam to argue the case for the Koodankulam reactor and convince the people that there was nothing to fear about it. Nearly every argument put forward by Kalam were exposed as inaccurate if not intentionally misleading.

More recently, a Hindutva dimension has been added to the issue by highlighting the role of the Roman Catholic clergy in promoting the protest campaign, mainly in view of the fact that they need to address the concerns of the predominantly Catholic fishing community in the region adjoin Koodankulam. Meanwhile the police continued to harass priests who have been urging people to join the protest movement. Police sources said that 76 cases have been registered so far against the protestors, and that cases were registered against the RC Bishop of Tutucorin Diocese Yvon Ambrose and other priests for the same offence."

[Source: <http://www.tamilnetonline.com/priests-preaching-against-koodankulam-project-police-register-cases/>]

Victory for a Just Struggle of the JNU Students

After 6-months of uncompromising struggle, the student community forced the JNU administration to revoke its authoritarian 'restraint' order on the JNU Forum against War on People and lift all restraints on the Forum to hold public meetings, and to print and distribute pamphlets, posters etc.

A hunger strike campaign enjoying public support and a massive united protest demonstration by the students forced the administration on 8th November to talk to a teacher's delegation and then to an all-organisation delegation. Unable to provide valid reasons for the imposition of the restraint the administration admitted its mistake in taking this unprecedented repressive action, and agreed to scrap the draconian circulars of 19th May 2011 from the Proctor's Office.

Many students and students' organisations representing a wide spectrum of left, progressive and democratic opinion participated in the united struggle initiated by the JNU Forum against War on People. The Forum reiterated its firm resolve to continue with its struggle against the anti-people Operation Green Hunt campaign of the state.

The victory of the struggle has thus delivered a strong message to the JNU administration and its political masters that the voices of the students and their rejection of the anti-people war cannot be gagged. It has also conveyed a message of strong solidarity with peoples' movements fighting against Green Hunt as well as all other forms of state repression.

[Source: <http://www.icawpi.org/en/peoples-resistance/statements/799-united-students-struggle-has-forced-the-authoritarian-jnu-administration-to-revoke-the-ban-on-jnu-forum>]

Afghanistan: Russian Rumblings

Russia threatened to cut off NATO supply routes to Afghanistan if NATO did not compromise on its missile defence plans. Russian news services reported: "If NATO doesn't give a serious response, we have to address matters in relations in other areas". They added that Russia's cooperation on Afghanistan may be an area for review.

With Pakistan already cutting NATO's supply routes after NATO attacks killed twenty-six Pakistani soldiers, Russia seems to take advantage of the plight of the US to extract concessions from it without risk of provoking the US. Although Pakistan's retired Lt General Hameed Gul among others share the view that US and NATO troops have been strangled in Afghanistan and it is time for Pakistan to avail itself of the opportunity that it missed on 9/11 to regain respect and sovereignty by taking advantage of Russia's differences with the US. But, given Russia's stand on a number of international issues, it is unlikely that Russia will do anything more than exploit the strained relation between the US and Pakistan to make gains closer to home.

Hopes have been expressed that Russia could cut supply lines to NATO while Pakistan shuts air corridors to suffocate the US war effort in Afghanistan. But they belong to the world of fantasy. The US has since 2009 worked on options in the event that Pakistan becomes unreliable. A report in the Christian Science Monitor of 29th November said that the US military has shifted around 40% of its overall logistics supply to a Northern Distribution Network passing through Russia and other former Soviet republics and expects to increase that component to 75% by the end of 2011.

On the Latvian route, cargo is carried by truck and train through Russia and then by truck through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to Afghanistan across the

border post of Termez. The Georgian route avoids Russia and uses Azerbaijan to cross the Caspian Sea to enter Kazakhstan, and move through Uzbekistan to Afghanistan. Pakistan, despite its protests at the volume of US military materiel shipped across its territory into Afghanistan, needs the tariff revenues from the US for the use of its ports and roads. With much of that revenue diverted to countries of the former Soviet Union, the government of Pakistan and its transport firms are bound to suffer financially.

Yet, the struggle against the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan of is a struggle by the people of Afghanistan. The US and its allies portray it as a war against the Taliban and whip up Islamophobia in their respective countries and internationally to arrest the surging unpopularity of the war.

It is true that the fiercest military attacks are by the Taliban and its allies, and intensifying the war in the countryside has led to Taliban attacks on high profile targets in Kabul and other cities and the Taliban asserting its power in various ways like shutting off telecommunications at will. But what matters is that the people, although weary of war, remain defiant and want the foreign aggressors out. In a world without a powerful anti-imperialist bloc, a liberation struggle cannot benefit from rivalry between powers or be at the mercy of a big power. The struggle, as long as it is by the people, is certain to win, and only the oppressed people of the world can be their true ally until final victory and after.

[Sources: <http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com>; www.csmonitor.com; www.nytimes.com]

Pakistan: Growing Anti-US Feelings

Wars are waged by the US as an aspect of its strategy of cultivating strife to sustain its arms industry while exerting control over vast sources of energy through occupation of territory. US aggression goes on ceaselessly irrespective of consequences to lands and people. A major consequence has been the brutalisation of the state, subversion of law, marginalisation of all democratic institutions and criminalisation of governance. Pakistan is a classic example of what prolonged US intervention could result in.

Since 1947, the US provided massive sums as military and civilian 'aid' to Pakistan— the third-largest recipient of US 'security aid' after Israel and Afghanistan in recent years. During the Cold War, Pakistan was assigned a role to prevent Soviet expansion in the region. Despite strong US influence, US governments did not always have their way with Pakistan because of its geopolitical significance. Thus Pakistan could on occasion defy US pressure, for example, to maintain a close relationship with China and continue with its nuclear weapons programme, but not forever.

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, the US badly needed Pakistani help to overcome Soviet forces in Afghanistan, and Pakistan

became a major partner of the US in its 'crusade against communism'. Relations began sour when in 1998, Pakistan carried out several nuclear tests in response to India, which was by then warming up to the US. But Pakistan reasserted its geostrategic importance to the US, following the attack of 11th September 2001 on the World Trade Centre in New York, and the US decision to wage war in Afghanistan in 2001, allegedly, to overthrow the Taliban regime and get rid of Al-Qaeda.

The US needed the support of Pakistan to invade Afghanistan. Having got itself involved in an unwinnable war, the US besides dragging Pakistan into the war and using Pakistani territory to fight a war from which Pakistan had little to gain, also launched attacks within Pakistan which killed civilians in the sensitive regions bordering Afghanistan. When it was clear that the US not only cannot win the war, but may face worse humiliation than in Vietnam 46 years ago, it began to look for scapegoats and blamed Pakistan for not doing enough to control Islamic militants. Acrimony between the US and Pakistan got amplified and came into the open since the killing of Al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden in Pakistan on 2nd May, which embarrassed Pakistan as well as exposed the bankruptcy of US foreign policy.

When the US military establishment unleashed a string of bellicose statements targeting the Pakistani military and the intelligence service, ISI, the Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Kayani, under immense pressure from his own ranks, responded to assert Pakistan's legitimate strategic interests, something which the political leadership should have done but failed to.

On 26th November, NATO helicopters attacked two Pakistani military border posts along a mountainous frontier suspected of harbouring militants and killed 26 soldiers. The people of Pakistan— already bitter about killing of civilians by US bombings inside Pakistan's territory and events like the release under US pressure of a CIA agent who killed two Pakistani civilians in January—expressed their anger in public anti-US demonstrations so that the government of Pakistan was compelled to call the bombings a grave infringement of the country's sovereignty, block vital supply routes for the US-led troops in Afghanistan, and demand of the US to vacate a base used by its drones. Pakistan has also announced plans to review all diplomatic, military and intelligence links with the US and NATO. On 2nd December Pakistan's army chief General Kayani ordered his troops to respond to NATO fire with fire.

The incident has delivered a blow to US efforts to rebuild its tattered alliance with Pakistan which is vital for the US to wind down its losing war in Afghanistan. But it will be wrong to expect the main political parties of Pakistan, in and out of power, to sustain their defiance against the US, for each has, in turn, compromised the country's sovereignty to serve the interests of US imperialism.

The US is obsessed with absolute control over political and economic developments in Central Asia to isolate Russia and China. That is in conflict with Pakistan's strong relations with China which at present seem important to expedite Pakistan's development. Also in conflict with Pakistan's interests in a negotiated peace in Afghanistan is the US desire for long-term presence in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's nuclear capability, never desired by the US, is now seen as a threat to the interests of the US and its ally, India, while to Pakistan, and perhaps China, it is necessary for stability in the region. The desire of the US to promote its principal ally India as proxy to exercise hegemony in South Asia too runs counter to Pakistan's interests.

It will be futile for the rulers of Pakistan to hope that the increasing assertiveness of its armed forces will persuade the US to retreat once its immediate interests had been secured. The interests of US imperialism and Pakistan disagree and will be so for long. To US desires absolute capitulation by Pakistan and will use its vast network of non-state militant collaborators and paid agents to destabilise Pakistan as has done in the recent past.

Even as Pakistan's economy is in tatters, it is being rapidly stripped of its resources with the help of its corrupt politicians and thieving elite classes. Pakistan faces an even bigger political crisis owing to widespread internal strife and the government's inability and unwillingness to deal with the root causes as well as due to external threats across its borders from a historically hostile India and an unfriendly Afghanistan ruled by a US puppet with close ties to India. The biggest threat to Pakistan is, however, the US, which, besides its flagrant violation the sovereignty of Pakistan, has subversive implants in every shade of the parliamentary political spectrum, Islamic militants and the armed forces.

The only hope for Pakistan lies with its toiling masses who should unite against imperialism and its allies in the region, not on a purely nationalistic programme but one defending the interests of the oppressed majority against its oppressors who divide the people in the name of nationality and religion.

[Sources: <http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Opinions/Columns/02-Dec-2011/PakUS-relations-A-bad-marriage>;
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/02/pakistan-military-return-fire-nato>]

Iran: Impending War Threat

A nonexistent "nuclear threat" is being used by the US as pretext to seek to install a 'friendly' regime in Iran, the last serious obstacle to US military, economic and political control over the Middle East. Through it, the US hopes to undercut geopolitical rivals China and Russia and gain full control over

Iran's vast petrochemical wealth, which has thus far been denied to exploitation by Western oil companies.

The United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) on 1st December called on the entire progressive movement of the US to demand "**No War, No Sanctions, and No Internal Interference in Iran!**" [http://nepajac.org/UNAC_email_iran.html]

The UNAC pointed out that, US hostility towards Iran since its revolution three decades ago has intensified in the last few months with a steady escalation of charges, threats, sanctions and preparations for an attack. The UNAC drew particular attention to Israeli media speculation since late October that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was heavily lobbying for military strikes on Iran's nuclear energy sites and to Israel's test firing of a missile able to carry a nuclear warhead into Iran. It also drew attention to Britain's armed forces stepping up contingency planning for potential military action against Iran. These developments need to be seen in the context of

- US allegations of an Iranian plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the US, allegedly using a hit-man from the Zeta drug cartel, deeply infiltrated by US anti-drug agents
- Moves to forbid the President of the US from speaking to Iranian officials without explicit permission from Congress;
- The Boeing Company sending to the US Air Force in November the first of 20 "bunker-busting" bombs, designed to destroy underground facilities like those housing Iran's nuclear energy program;
- The US & UK imposing fresh sanctions against Iran's banking system, aiming to strangle the country's economy; and
- The strengthening of the military alliance with the Persian Gulf states that, together with U.S.-occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, to form a military semi-circle around the Islamic Republic.

That there is no evidence that Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon has not prevented the US, its allies and the major news media, from repeating the charge as if it is an established fact.

On 8th November, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the nuclear watchdog of the UN, released its latest report on Iran's nuclear program, which was unable to say that Iran is developing a nuclear bomb but repeated past charges and introduced new 'evidence' claimed to be from ten unnamed countries without showing Iran the actual 'evidence', citing unidentified intelligence sources, and using innuendo and political spin to give the impression that Iran is about to construct nuclear weapons.

IAEA reports on Iran have become increasingly critical since 1st December 2009 when Yukiya Amano, a Japanese career diplomat, replaced Dr

Mohamed El Baradei of Egypt as Director General of the IAEA. The report failed to mention that Iran, as a signatory to the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, has an internationally recognised right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Notably, Israel, a country with 200-300 nuclear weapons and threatening to attack Iran, is one of only three countries that still refuse to sign the NPT.

There are also other reports of the US planning cyber attacks against Iran as well as using terrorist proxies, including Israeli agents, to subvert Iran. On 12th November a blast at an Iranian missile base west of Teheran led to the killing of over 40 people including Major General Hassan Moqqadam, a senior leader of Iran's missile program. While Iranian officials insist that the blast was an 'accident', accounts in the corporate press and by independent analysts support the claim that Israel and the West's terrorist cat's paw, the bizarre political cult, Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) were responsible. There have been 17 reported explosions on natural gas pipelines since 2010 up from only three in 2008 and 2009, and about 10 at oil refineries.

Besides the cyber attack using the Stuxnet virus that wrecked the nuclear energy program of Iran in 2010, espionage tools like Duku are being developed to facilitate future attacks. It is feared that alongside the ratcheting-up of bellicose anti-Iranian rhetoric, moves to collapse the economy and an assassination and sabotage campaign targeting Iranian scientists and military installations, cyber-warriors are infecting computer networks with viruses and "beacons" that will be used to attack air defence systems and civilian infrastructure.

Of late, the US and its allies, especially the UK, have been applying a string of sanctions against Iranian financial and commercial institutions with the aim of weakening the economy. They are unable to impose a total embargo on business in view of its implications for the recovery of the tottering economies of Europe.

Waging war on Iran in one form or the other serves several imperialist purposes and in what way it will be initiated and what form it will take are open to debate. But, if we go by the experience of Iraq, we can be certain that the pretext for the attacks will be Iran's 'plans to develop nuclear devices' and the scope of attacks will not be confined to Iran's nuclear facilities.

When Iraq had control over its oil and asserted its right to follow its own political path, the US falsely accused it of developing weapons of mass destruction and ties to al Qaeda to make a case to wage a cruel and unjust war. No weapons were found, nor was evidence of ties to al Qaeda, but after nine years of war, Iraqi oil is open for Western exploitation.

The threat of war is all the more real in the context of the economic meltdown in the West and the working class and the broad masses rising in rebellion against the ruling class.

[Readers are referred to the essay "Target Iran: Washington's Countdown to War" by Tom Burghardt in Global Research.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=27864>

Palestine: The Price of Success

The US punished the UNESCO for voting on 31st October to grant member status to the Palestinian Authority. The US turned to laws that prohibit US support of UN agencies that accept the PA as member. The US pulled out of the UNESCO and announced the stoppage of payment of \$80 million in dues and voluntary contributions.

It is expected that, although the decision has adverse implications for US technology companies that use UNESCO to open markets in the developing world and rely upon an associated entity, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, to police international disputes over music, movies and software, pressure from the pro-Israeli lobby will block withdrawal of the anti-PA legislation. But it may not be correct to place the entire blame on the pro-Israel lobby since Israel is not the master of the US, but a loyal servant taking advantage US dependence on Israel to do its dirty work in the Middle East.

Admission of the PA to the UNESCO, nevertheless, has far-reaching implications including potential admission as member of the UN, which the US has successfully prevented for too long. That angers the US.

Syria: Pushed towards Civil War

With help from external forces, the opposition has grown stronger in its confrontation with the government of President Bashar al-Assad. In November, army defectors and protesters had assaulted military bases, and a civil war looms large unless differences are settled through negotiations.

Given the geostrategic importance of Syria in the Middle East and its close ties with Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas, all hostile to the West, attempts to re-enact the Libyan experience in Syria will be a dangerous move. On 28th November, a delegation led by Burhan Galioun, president of the rebel Syrian National Council met with Col. Riad al-Asaad, the highest ranking Syrian army defector and leader of the "Free Syrian Army", and Galioun pledged support to the "Fighting Force", an organisation formed by army defectors in Syria.

Sanctions against Syria by the West and more recently by the Arab League (a subsidiary of Saudi Arabia and repressive Gulf emirates that dances to Washington's tune), with Algeria, Iraq and Lebanon dissenting, will only aggravate the crisis and pave the way for military intervention by the West in

Syria. As evidence that the West is considering an invasion of Syria— and in the process force Iran to retaliate —is that, for the first time in many months, the US Navy super-carrier CVN 77 George HW Bush left its traditional theatre of operations just off the Straits of Hormuz and has parked close to Syria.

Significantly, Western countries have also advised the opposition to refrain from dialogue with the government, implying that they will back moves to topple the government violently. Russia has learned from the failure of its diplomatic efforts in Libya, and its Foreign Minister has denounced Western advice as ‘political provocation’. Russia reaffirmed its opposition to any military strike against Syria, and has responded to moves by the US by sending a battle group led by the heavy aircraft-carrying missile cruiser, Admiral Kuznetsov, with two supporting ships to the Syrian port of Tartus.

Syria has for long been geopolitically the most sensitive part of the Middle East so that prolonged instability there, let alone a regime change and the subsequent shift in diplomacy, will alter the balance of power in the region.

Retired Major General Armagan Kuloglu, a senior Turkish security and defence analyst in the Ankara-based Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies, told the Iranian news agency Press TV on 3rd December that military intervention in Syria will be a “big mistake” and warned against foreign meddling in Syria's internal affairs. He also noted that implementing a regime change will not be easy, as the Syrian government is still popular and is supported by Russia and China. He pointed out that Russia's sending a military flotilla to the eastern Mediterranean is a message of support for Syria.

Hundreds of people, including Syrian security forces, have been killed during the unrest. The Syrian government accuses that outlaws, saboteurs, and armed terrorists orchestrated from outside the country are behind the turmoil and deadly violence. While the opposition blames the security forces for the killings, the West seems intent on using an adapted version of its strategy in Libya of using its clients among the opponents of the regime to avoid a negotiated settlement and plunge Syria into civil war.

[Sources: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-11/23/c_122320581.htm; <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/213555.html>; <http://www.globalresearch.ca/PrintArticle.php?articleId=27848>]

AFRICA

Egypt: Army Rules, OK!

The Egyptian revolutionary movement has called for the end of the state of emergency which has existed in Egypt since 1967. While the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (SCAF) that is ruling Egypt has claimed that

the referral of civilians for military trials would end when the state of emergency is lifted, it has refused to set a date and has instead utilised this as a broad mandate to bring all manner of civil issues before military, rather than civil, courts.

On 19th November, at least one Egyptian protester calling for an end to military rule and the fulfilment of the revolution's demands for democracy and social justice was killed and over 670 injured in police attacks on protesters in Tahrir Square, the centre of Egypt's revolutionary mobilisations. Protests have taken place across Egypt and another protester was murdered by the military in Alexandria.

It is clear now that, despite the fall of Mubarak, the struggle is far from over. Human rights abuses and military repression continue against Egyptian popular movements and activists. The huge protest on 18th November and the resumed occupation of Tahrir Square marked the climax of a swelling wave of actions against military trials of civilians, the regime's murder of protesters in the joint Christian/Muslim demonstrations against anti-Copt prejudice, torture and coercion against prisoners, and repeated statements by the military that it would hold on to power even after elections.

Three days after the murder of the 24 year old political prisoner Essam Ali Atta by police torture, the military on 30th October detained prominent Egyptian blogger and activist Alaa Abdel Fattah along with another activist who was later released on bail for his opposition to military courts trying Egyptian civilians. Thousands of people angered by light sentences by the Criminal Court for police killers of civilians in contrast to harsh sentences handed down to civilians by military courts took to the streets demanding the release of political prisoners and an end to the unjust military trials, and called for international solidarity with their campaign.

Nearly 12 000 Egyptian civilians have been tried by military courts since the fall of Mubarak, and the tribunals have convicted 8 071, in violation of Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which obligates states to protect and ensure the right to fair, independent and impartial trials and freedom of expression, and Egypt is a signatory to the ICCPR. For more recent information on military trials in Egypt visit <http://en.nomiltrials.com/>.

The flawed election process in Egypt has led to the success of 'moderate' Islamic political parties, which are likely to strike a deal with the SCAF which is ruling Egypt and has refused to let any elected civilian government to draft a new constitution challenging its control over Egypt.

Islamists seem to have been the beneficiaries of the democracy campaigns in North Africa. In Tunisia, the moderate Islamist party An-Nahda Party won 90

out of 217 seats in elections held in October to an assembly that will write a new constitution for Tunisia

In Morocco with only 45% of registered voters turning out, and only less than 14 million of the 21 million Moroccans of voting age registering as voters (2 million fewer than in 2007) the moderate Islamist PJD party won the most seats (107 of 395) in the country's parliamentary election. The record of the Islamists has thus far been collaboration with those in power and cooperation with the monarchy is likely to continue in Morocco.

It will eventually be the Egyptian working class which has begun to assert itself since 2008 along with the new generation of radical youth that will free Egypt from its military rulers and their American masters who continue to arm successive repressive regimes.

For further informed comment on political trends in Egypt see Peter Custers <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=197621>; Samir Amin, <http://www.viewpointonline.net/samir-amin-on-egypt.html>; and James Petras <http://petras.lahaine.org/?cat=3>.

Somalia: Ethiopian Meddling

Russian news agency Novosti reported, citing local elders as well as the BBC reporting eye witnesses to at least 20 vehicles carrying Ethiopian troops, that several hundred Ethiopian troops with military vehicles have crossed into Somalia's southern and central parts, amid denial by Ethiopian authorities and joint military operations undertaken by Kenyan and Somali troops against Al-Shabaab in the southern provinces after the two countries accused it of being behind a wave of abductions of foreigners.

On 19th November, Xinhua reported that, according to residents of the central Somali town of Beledweyne in Hiran province along the border with Ethiopia, hundreds of Ethiopian troops had gathered along the common frontier with Somalia where Al-Shabaab rebels are in control. Reports from other areas in central Somalia also said that troops from Ethiopia were seen along the common frontiers of the two countries and that rebel fighters' battle wagons were seen heading towards the frontier.

Al-Shabaab fighters currently control much of the south and centre of the war ravaged country while the 'internationally recognised' Somali government runs only the capital Mogadishu— from which it successfully drove out Al-Shabaab following a major offensive backed by African Union peacekeeping troops —and few parts in the south. Ethiopian troops withdrew from Somalia in 2009 after two years of occupation during which they unsuccessfully fought with insurgency led by the radical Islamist group of Al-Shabaab.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Community of Latin American and Caribbean States Founded

Leaders from 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean met in Caracas on 2nd and 3rd December at the two-day founding summit of a new regional bloc— with the notable exclusion of the United States and Canada —aimed to boost integration and economic development. Members of the newly-formed Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which emerged out of the Rio Group and the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development, approved the Declaration of Caracas and 22 other documents calling for the promotion of regional integration in politics, economy and culture, and realising common regional development. Documents adopted at the summit covered the issues of the US embargo on Cuba, social inclusion, food security, counterterrorism and drug trafficking.

The summit marks a significant move by Latin America away from its status as the backyard of the US to assert its importance as a player in its own right in international politics. With CELAC countries holding much of the mineral wealth of the globe including its largest oil reserves, building on existing inter-regional bodies like the Union of South American Nations and the proposed Bank of the South will place it on a strong footing economically.

The fact that Cuba, excluded from the Organisation of American States (OAS) for daring to challenge US imperialism and defend its revolution, was not only included but asked to host the 2013 CELAC Summit. Thus, there is reason to expect that the consolidation of CELAC will be the final nail in the coffin of the US-dominated OAS. It is therefore significant that the founding of CELEC occurred at a time when US economic and political power is on the decline and the European Union is struggling to avert economic collapse.

The US had tried everything possible to stop CELAC and, recently, former Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, a US puppet, during his recent visit to Venezuela had urged the right-wing opposition to issue a “public statement” denouncing the growing relationship between Colombia and Venezuela. But Colombian President Manuel Santos, despite adhering to Uribe’s neoliberal and repressive politics at home, is adopting a foreign policy that contrasts with that of Uribe in seeking to integrate Colombia into regional organisations and strengthening bilateral relations with other Latin American countries. This does not mean that Colombia and other Latin American countries which follow US foreign policy dictates will change their attitude or enable CELAC to supersede the OAS. What is certain, however, is that the US cannot for long bully the countries of the American continent the way it did only a decade ago.

EUROPE

Greece: Deepening Debt Crisis

The recent sequence of events in Europe is a sequel to the public debt crisis of the US government. On 21st July, representatives of European governments agreed to a new package of loans to Greece, to pre-empt Greece defaulting on its obligations to foreign creditors. The approval of the package rather than point to a solution to Europe's debt crisis, led to the failure of the first package for Greece agreed in 2010. Europe's financial markets continued to slide in the face of fear that Greece will eventually default with knock on effect on other European states. French President Sarkozy and German Chancellor Merkel, representing the strongest economies of Europe held a hasty bilateral summit in mid-August, and called for coordinated economic policy making in Europe and levying of taxes on financial transactions. The proposals met with scepticism so that, following the summit, share prices on Europe's financial markets continued to tumble with those of some European banks falling by 30 to 40% in two weeks. The Western world is thus beset by major debt crises in the US and in Europe.

When the world financial crisis erupted in 2008, most Western countries lent massive amounts of money to save their tottering banks. The obligation of the Euro zone countries to keep budgetary deficits within strict limits was temporarily relaxed following the crisis and public debts grew in most European countries. In 2010, Germany's debt constituted 80% of its GDP, and that of Italy 120%. Thus, Greece with public debt at around 150% was not alone in failing to prevent a rise in debt level. However, unlike other Euro zone countries, it became target to ruthless speculation which forced it to pay usurious interest rates in the region of 15% (much higher than the rate paid by any other in the EU) to private lenders including French and German banks, showing the dominance of Europe's leading banks over the EU and its member states.

When Greece first threatened to default on its repayment in April 2010, the EU and the IMF jointly devised an 'aid'-package accompanied by standard austerity measures like reductions in social spending and wages of state employees and in addition the obligation to sell-off 56 billion Euro in state properties. The impact of austerity measures and privatisation on Greece was disastrous: contrary to the claim by the EU and IMF that balancing of Greek government budget is necessary for economic growth, the Greek economy showed a negative growth rate of 6.9% in 2010. Thus, the imposed conditions only worsened the crisis for Greece.

Austerity measures imposed in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis led to Europe-wide protests including, among many others, the sustained protest movement by the newly emergent youth movement, the '*indignados*' in Spain.

Violent riots of the unemployed youth August 2011 in the UK were preceded by a series of protests against austerity measures and corporate tax avoidance. In Greece, following parliamentary approval of austerity measures in May 2010 to accommodate extra budget cuts of 30 billion Euros over three years as part of a deal with the EU and IMF for a bailout— the first ever in the EU —anti-austerity protests unequivocally took the form of civil disobedience. Leading Greek trade unions have staged general strikes when the first international plan against a default was adopted in May 2010 and in early 2011. Besides, 50% of Greece's population supports what's called the '*We Won't Pay*' offensive, which has taken the form of people's refusal to pay the reportedly corrupt road-tolls, refusal to pay for the city's metro tickets in Athens, and a bus-fare boycott in Thessaloniki, the country's second largest city. The struggles against privatisation and road-toll protests have put the parliament and government on the defensive.

The Euro zone's rescue package for Greece hammered out by the leaders of France and Germany in October 2011 was unlikely to be popular with the people of Greece and Prime Minister George Papandreou, much to the anger of the sponsors of the package, proposed a referendum on it, which the right-wing opposition as well as some members of his centre-left coalition rejected. Papandreou was forced to resign on 9th November and an interim coalition government was formed on 10th November with Lucas Papademos, a former vice-president of the European Central Bank as Prime Minister.

The rescue package is not a long term solution and Greece is likely to default and leave the Euro zone, which will pave the way for others like Portugal and Ireland to follow suit with adverse consequences for the Euro and the finance capitalists of Europe whose interests are actually defended by the EU.

[For an extensive analysis read "Europe's Debt Crisis Fuels Civil Resistance" by Peter Custers, <http://www.countercurrents.org/custers030911.htm>]

Kosovo: NATO's War on Serbs

Disturbances occurred in Northern Kosovo on 23rd November as Serbs thwarted attempts by a Kosovo Force (KFOR) contingent under NATO command to dismantle a barricade near the town of Zvecan in Northern Kosovo. In response to NATO claims that the clashes injured 21 of its soldiers, Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Ivica Dacic called on the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci to restrain his NATO led forces from attacking Serbian civilians and warned the Kosovo regime against any further provocation.

The Serbian minority of Kosovo, comprising 10 per cent of the population and mainly resident in northern Kosovo, lost its legal status when Kosovo, backed by the West, unilaterally proclaimed independence from Serbia in

2008. The Serbs consider themselves citizens of Serbia, while the majority Albanians expect them to leave their homes and move to Serbia.

Until July the Serbs enjoyed a measure of independence and right to free contact with mainland Serbia. When the Kosovo regime moved to take control over the border with Serbia in July, to install customs stations, the Serbs saw it as an initial step infringing upon their remaining freedoms, and erected barricades in response. Tensions have been on the rise for months over the disputed border crossings, and a compromise was proposed that the stations will be controlled by KFOR forces and not Albanians. But the Serbs, who see KFOR as a force that implements the policies NATO, which enabled the secession of Kosovo, and protects Albanian interests to the detriment of the Serbs, rejected it.

[Sources: <http://tv.globalresearch.ca/2011/11/tear-gas-barbed-wire-isolation-nato-tools-kosovo-raid>; <http://rt.com/news/kosovo-serbs-barricades-kfor-267/>]

NORTH AMERICA

US: Occupying Wall Street and Beyond

Inspired by the mass protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square and Madrid's Puerta del Sol Square, hundreds camped out in Zuccotti Park near Wall Street since 17th September, as part of the "Occupy Wall Street" (OWS) campaign. On 15th October, its global day of action, it drew protests by thousands in 1,500 cities world-wide, including more than 100 in the United States.

The protest campaign is going on despite cold weather and snowfall. As the slogan "We are the 99%" sums up, the protest is against the capitalist system. Although there are similarities with the anti-globalisation movements earlier this century against imperialist globalisation there are essential differences.

By the 1990s individual issue-based protest movements (e.g. environment, anti-globalization, peace, women's rights, climate change etc.) had been promoted through NGOs mainly as substitutes to a cohesive mass movement. This pattern was evident in the counter G7 summits and People's Summits of the 1990s. The Seattle 1999 counter-summit, once upheld as a triumph for the anti-globalization movement, in fact, ended up helping globalisation by undermining the growing public awareness and resentment of globalisation by allowing NGOs not only to infiltrate but also decide the agenda of the anti-globalization campaign. 50,000 people from diverse backgrounds, civil society organizations. The protest movement was found to have received funding from big corporations, and is for all practical purposes dead. (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21110>).

The OWS campaign from its outset had a strong spontaneous element comprising the growing public dislike and distrust of capitalism. But it is far from adequate to overthrow capitalism and replace it with the only feasible alternative, namely socialism,

Capitalism— which has now taken the form of globalised imperialism and neo-colonialism wields control over the world economy through its highly centralised international trade and financial arms backed by far reaching military might —cannot be defeated by disorganised groups without a clear goal and programme of struggle. The need for an international mass movements led by well organised Marxist Leninist parties is therefore even greater than in the colonial era. Failure of the left to act will be taken advantage of by imperialism through its subversive agencies, especially the NGOs.

The struggle has therefore to be directed against the main enemy, namely imperialism, as well as its agents among class collaborative trade union organisations and 'left-of-centre' political parties which do not want to upset the capitalist apple cart, but only rearrange things slightly so that life goes on the way they are used to.

The OWS campaign, despite growing mass support within the US and outside and growing public frustration about the failure of the state to defend the interests of the people against a handful of capitalists, is at risk of not only failing in its general objective of taming capital but also of denying the people the opportunity to mobilise themselves in a struggle to be rid of the capitalist system. It cannot be allowed to suffer the same fate as the fore-doomed anti-globalization projects of the last decade. The task of organising the masses and building a left alternative political movement can no longer be postponed.

It will, be terribly wrong to remain aloof and mock at the campaign. The correct approach will be to use the opportunity to educate the masses about the capitalist system and the need for an organised struggle not only to overthrow capitalism but replace it with something that is fair and humane. The building blocks for a revolutionary Marxist Leninist communist party are to be found from among the protesters, especially the members of the working class. The task before Marxist Leninists is to recognise them and organise.

(Continued from inside front cover)

Now preparing food by boiling the top of Sisnu³ in water
Now preparing food by boiling the tip of tongue for taste
Is it tasty or tasteless; is it hot or bitter?
Seemed as though they've lost the taste; seemed ever hot
The narrative of Gamalis
Used to seem very old; used to seem unknown
Seemed like the potato skin leftovers of porcupine
Like heat-withered potato- plants
Ever like the tear-drop fallen on account of weight of potato- sack
Seemed as though potato's what defined their life
It seemed strange.
The story of Gamalis
The uneducated Gamalis, who knew not the first letter of the alphabet
Can know if now even in a poem
While searching image and reflection
They seem to be making pens of a bamboo
Those whoever searched their identity on potato leaves
Are writing these days slogans of movement on those leaves
It seems totally new
The narrative of Gamalis these days.
Gamalis do not come down to Pyuthan carrying timmur these days
Are rather busy making new chemical out of the same timmur
Gamalis do not even grow potatoes these days
They grow martyrs
Gamalis do not break their head in quarries
They carve martyr's statue on those stones;
Wonderful Gamalis! Real, wonderful Gamalis!!

(Source: "Poems of the People's War" published by Ichchhuk Cultural Academy)

1. Gaam: a village development committee in Rolpa⁴, where class struggle got intensified. Inhabitants of Gamm are called Gamalis. Gamaliharū is plural of Gamali.

2. Timur is a species of tree which produces small fruits used as spice.

3. Sisnu is a plant, whose nettle the poor people in the villages of Nepal eat as substitute for food.

4. A place in Western Nepal, known as a place of the People's War.

IN THE DARK DEPTHS

Jose Maria Sison

The enemy wants to bury us
In the dark depths of prison
But shining gold is mined
From the dark depths of the earth
And the radiant pearl is dived
From the dark depths of the sea.
We suffer but we endure
And draw up gold and pearl
From depths of character
Formed so long in struggle.

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