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Bush goes overseas to bolster empire

By Fred Goldstein

In the wake of the invasion and colonial occupation of Iraq, President George W. Bush has embarked on a diplomatic offensive in Europe and the Middle East to promote and give momentum to Washington's program for conquest and empire.

The Bush administration's political agenda dominated the final pronouncement of the G-8 summit meeting in Evian, hosted by French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac. The statement, issued by the seven most powerful imperialist countries plus Russia, as posted on the summit website, said, "We recognize that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery poses a growing danger" and "together with the spread of international terrorism, it is the pre-eminent threat to international security."

It is important to note that the original G-7 summit meetings were established for the purpose of dealing with the world capitalist economy. The summit is supposed to concentrate on stabilizing the global economy, promoting the economic growth of world imperialism and combating recession. As such, it has been a forum primarily focused on inter-imperialist economic rivalry.

But, at this summit, more than half the documents issued dealt with "weapons of mass destruction" and "international terrorism." Vital economic questions concerning the world capitalist downturn and economic stagnation, as well as the U.S. currency wars against the euro and the yen, were virtually ignored by Washington and barely reflected at all in the summit documents.

The pretext of WMDs

The "weapons of mass destruction" referred to are not those in the arsenals of U.S., British or French imperialism or those belonging to the oppressive Israeli occupiers of Palestine. Only two countries were singled out.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was told to "visibly, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle any nuclear weapons program." The statement also declared that "We will not ignore the proliferation implications of Iran's advanced nuclear pro-

gram" and demanded that Iran submit its program to international inspections.

The statement enumerates "a range of tools available to tackle this threat." After citing a list of treaties, agencies and diplomatic measures, it goes on to authorize the use of "other measures," if necessary, "in accordance with international law." This is a clear reference to military measures. And as far as "in accordance with international law," U.S. imperialism has all along declared that its illegal, colonial invasion of Iraq is "in accordance with international law." Thus the G-8 lent itself to a veiled threat of force.

Both Iran and the DPRK are the immediate targets of the Bush administration's aggressive designs. Both countries have every reason in the world to fear an attack by the Pentagon. Both have watched as imperialist weapons inspectors swarmed over Iraq as a prelude to invasion. Both have developed nuclear power for the purpose of providing energy. The DPRK has openly stated its right to have a weapons program in view of the aggressive designs of the U.S. The government of Iran has declared its nuclear program to be peaceful.

The so-called "war against terrorism," with its allied campaign against alleged "weapons of mass destruction," has, since the Sept. 11 attack, been the main theme under which the Bush administration has inaugurated its campaign of "endless war." It has been cited as reason to carry out the destruction of Afghanistan and expand U.S. bases into Kirghistan, Uzbekistan and Georgia. It has been the rationale for sending troops to the Philippines, Yemen and Colombia. It is given as the justification for an escalation of the struggle to overthrow the Cuban government. It was the cover to give all-out support to Ariel Sharon's war to exterminate the Palestinian national movement. And, of course, it was the false justification for the invasion of Iraq.

**G-8 go along with Pentagon program
for world conquest**

All the G-8 leaders knew very well that in Bush's infamous "axis of evil" speech, the three countries singled out as

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Oakland artists take on Mayor Jerry Brown 3



Multicultural performance arts groups are fighting to save the Alice Arts Center from real estate developers.

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Thousands march in Newark, N.J.

Mourn slain Black lesbian teenager

By Leslie Feinberg

On May 16 a crowd of some 2,500 people united with the family of Sakia Gunn at the funeral for the 15-year-old Black butch lesbian. She had been stabbed to death in Newark, N.J., five days earlier.

The turnout was unprecedented: predominately Black, largely high school students, mostly lesbians.

The day before, hundreds of youths had marched with Gunn's family to the steps of Newark's City Hall to express their anger at the killing. Throughout the week, hundreds of high school students and others turned out for vigils at community-built memorials outside Gunn's West Side High School and the site where she was killed.

Sakia Gunn was killed at a Newark bus stop on May 11. She was on her way home from New York's Greenwich Village with four friends. According to the other women, two men got out of a car, made sexual advances and physically attacked the teenagers. The women fought back. Gunn was stabbed in the chest. She died a short time later at a local hospital.

Richard McCullough turned himself in to the prosecutor's office five days later, after reports that the police considered him a suspect in the stabbing. He was arraigned May 16 in Superior Court on murder, weapons and bias charges. His lawyer entered a not-guilty plea.

McCullough's mother expressed her deep condolences to Sakia Gunn's family. She argued, however, that she does not believe her son is anti-gay. She said his grandmother, who helped raise him, was a lesbian. (Newark Star-Ledger, May 17)

A June 3 protest rally on the steps of Newark City Hall was set after members of the Newark Pride Alliance explained that they had been unable to secure a meeting with Mayor Sharpe James to deal with issues of community safety. They also reported official insensitivity in response to Gunn's murder.

The Pride Alliance, formed after Gunn's death to support lesbian, gay, trans and bisexual youth, is putting forward five demands:

- Grief counseling for Gunn's fellow West Side High School students.

- Support for gay and straight alliance high school clubs to educate parents, school administrators and other students about the LGTB community.

- Development of and support for a Newark LGTB community center—a safe space to get together.

- Posting of at least two police officers on round-the-clock patrol on the Penn Station-Broad Street Corridor where Gunn was killed.

- That city legislators take responsibility to improve the quality of life for their LGTB constituency "that they have neglected and ignored for so long."

- That the school board be held responsible for the lack of compassion and concern exhibited by the principal of West Side High School, and allow for an independent investigation into allegations made by the students.

West Side students report that the principal made anti-lesbian statements about Sakia Gunn after her death, according to Laquetta C. Nelson, founder of the New Jersey Stonewall Democrats.



Courage and pride

On the afternoon before Gunn's funeral, several hundred people—mostly teenaged Black lesbians and gays—marched from the site where she was killed to City Hall. Police lined the street.

Toni Gunn, Sakia's mother, told the crowd, "My daughter did not die in vain. She will be remembered."

Sakia Gunn's uncle, Anthony Hall, led the chant, "No justice, no peace." Protesters also sang "We Shall Overcome"—the anthem of the African American civil rights struggle waged in the United States long before many of the young demonstrators were born.

The outpouring of Black youths flooded the streets and parking lot around Perry's Funeral Home on May 16. Many wore t-shirts emblazoned with Gunn's photo or rainbows—symbol of the modern LGTB freedom movement.

A number of the teenagers outside the funeral home were from West Side High, waiting to say goodbye to the friend they knew as "T," who aspired to be a Women's National Basketball Association player and an architect.

Many in the crowd spoke proudly of the way Gunn lived her life—and affirmed their own pride as well.

Inside, Sakia Gunn lay dressed in a white sweat suit. A rainbow symbol—the assertion of her sexuality and of LGTB pride—lay just above her head.

Her parents, LaTona Gunn and Gerald Gadson, sat together among what was described as literally hundreds of relatives.

Her mother said of the sheer numbers who came in solidarity, "All this love, that's what's keeping me strong. I love my daughter so much. I'm so proud of her."

Gadson said he was also emotionally moved by the support for his daughter, with whom he was reunited last year.

Sakia Gunn's grandmother, Selma Gunn, is in cardiac intensive care. She suffered a heart attack after hearing the news of the stabbing. She said of the lesbian granddaughter she raised: "I knew about her and I accepted her. I loved her. And she loved me."

City officials, including the mayor, were reportedly caught off guard by the response. "They weren't prepared for how many people showed up," observed Gary Paul Wright, director of Newark's African American Office of Gay Concerns. "It wasn't until gay activists cornered the mayor as he went into the funeral that he realized the depth of feeling the murder had caused."

The mayor did not attend the May 15 vigil on the steps of City Hall. And his office had made plans for only several hundred mourners the next day. But as the crowd of thousands marched from the funeral parlor to nearby Essex County College, the mayor joined in. □

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LOS ANGELES

Sun., June 15
Special Red & Lavendar Forum. Hear Leslie Feinberg, author "Stone Butch Blues" and "Transgender Warriors," on LGTB Liberation and the Struggle Against Racism, Oppression and War. Host: Stuart Timmons, author "Trouble with Harry Hay" and executive director the ONE Institute and Archives. At ONE Institute and Archives, 909 W. Adams Blvd. For info (213) 487-2368 or (213) 741-0094

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SAN FRANCISCO

Sat., June 14
Prospects for LGBT liberation through reform and revolution. Featuring Leslie Feinberg. Sponsored by Workers World Party. Donation \$5-\$10. At Women's Bldg., 3543 18th St. For info (415) 821-6545.

Sat., June 21
Cuba: the next target in Bush's endless war? Featuring Andres Gomez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade and editor Areito Magazine Digital, and Gloria La Riva of the Nat'l Comm. to Free the Five. At Horace Mann Middle School, 3351 23rd St. For info (415) 821-6545.

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City Council passes resolution

Philly says no to 'Patriot Act'

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

By a city council vote of 13 to three, Philadelphia has become the biggest U.S. city to condemn the USA Patriot Act. On May 29 the council passed a resolution denouncing the law as a "threat to fundamental rights."

The non-binding vote made Philadelphia the 117th city to condemn the law. Three states—Alaska, Vermont and Hawaii—have passed similar resolutions.

Introduced by Councilmember Angel Ortiz, the resolution called for the "Philadelphia Congressional Delegation to vigilantly monitor the implementation of the USA Patriot Act and to actively work to repeal it." The resolution blames the federal law for allowing racial profiling, denial of due process and invasion of privacy.

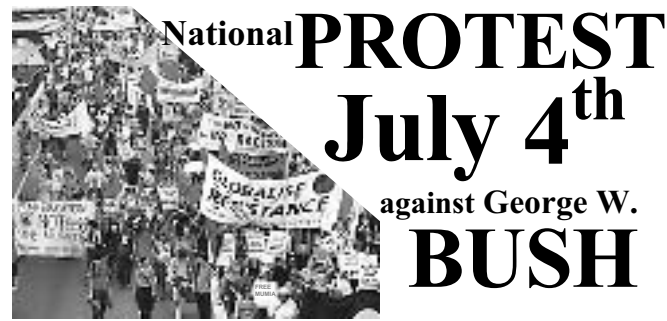
Nearly 20 community groups, in an effort organized by Unite for Peace, had supported the resolution. An overflow crowd filled the council chambers.

The USA Patriot Act, drafted by aides to Attorney General John Ashcroft and enacted on Sept. 26, 2001, significantly

widened the government's investigative and prosecutorial powers. The law gives the federal government expanded power for surveillance of an individual's internet, medical, financial, educational and business records. This includes monitoring books purchased or taken from libraries. Further, the law limits disclosure of public documents and records under the Freedom of Information Act.

The council resolution noted that targeting selective racial and religious groups, including immigrants, is especially alarming because Philadelphia is home to a diverse population "whose contributions are vital to the city's character and function." The resolution stated in part that "a threat to any one person's constitutional rights is a threat to the rights of all."

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During the debate, Councilmember David Cohen introduced Hiro Nishikawa, a Japanese American who had been forced into an internment camp during World War II. She was present to support the resolution.

"Hiro Nishikawa's experience is a stark reminder of dark days in our nation's history. We must not allow the government

When Bush visits Philadelphia on the 4th of July, he'll find himself in a city that opposes the repressive "Patriot Act"

to trample our civil liberties under the cloud of war," said Iftekhar Hussain, secretary general of the American Muslim Society of Pennsylvania.

The fight to repeal the USA Patriot Act will be taken up again in Philadelphia on July 4 when thousands of people from around the country unite for a National Protest to Stop U.S. Wars at Home and Abroad. The event coincides with President George W. Bush's visit to the city for the opening of the National Constitution Center.

The national rally will demand an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq and money for human needs, not for the Pentagon's wars. □

OAKLAND, CALIF.

Community fights to save arts center

By Bill Hackwell
Oakland, Calif.

In a struggle that symbolizes the clash between community culture and corporate redevelopment, an historic arts center here is fighting for its life.

For over 20 years, the Alice Arts Center has been home to the multicultural performance arts community in Oakland. It is nationally and internationally renowned for its vitality and immeasurable contributions to the city. Known affectionately as the Alice, this majestic building on Alice Street in downtown Oakland houses 74 artists who live in single-occupancy residences, and studio rooms for 22 artistic organizations that serve the community with low-cost classes, workshops, performances and cultural programs.

All this is threatened by Mayor Jerry Brown's redevelopment plan, which is designed to shut down the Alice and expand a charter arts school that he temporarily had put in the basement.

Brown has become known as the gentrification mayor. He is responsible for eliminating much of the affordable housing in Oakland while catering to corporate real-estate interests.

Displacement is so widespread that many who work in Oakland are forced to commute from as far as Sacramento—85 miles away.

To combat Brown's plan, the artists and residents of the Alice have, with growing community support, formed the ARTS (Artists and Residents Survive Together) Coalition. The coalition points out that the city owns and controls over 1,000 properties, many of which are suitable for the charter arts school.

The ARTS Coalition has a strong distrust of Brown, who has failed to live up to promises to improve maintenance at the Alice. Despite a long waiting list, he has

allowed 25 to 30 artist apartments to remain vacant so it will appear that the building is running at a financial loss.

Brown had to retreat on some of his threats to close the Alice after 400 artists, residents and community supporters, many of whom take classes at the center, marched to Oakland City Hall on May 27. The march was led by Fogo N' Ropa, a Brazilian-style drum orchestra, which rents a space for capoeira classes in the building. Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art played to music.

As the marchers moved down 14th Street, their strength and spirit drew many onlookers to join in and brought shopkeepers out of their stores. At City Hall the protesters were so loud that the city council sent representatives out to try to quiet them down.

The people were so charged and determined to show their opposition to closing the Alice that the rally grew even louder.

Infamous 'Scarlet Letter' law is repealed

By Leslie Feinberg

Florida's internationally infamous "Scarlet Letter" law was finally repealed on May 31.

The bill, passed into law in October 2001, required women who wanted to put a child up for adoption but couldn't find the child's father to run ads in newspapers describing themselves and their sexual histories.

The law, penned by State Sen. Walter G. Campbell Jr.—a Democrat—required women who'd had sex outside of marriage to pay out of pocket to place ads that listed their name, age, height, weight, hair and eye color and nationality. They had to be run in every city or county where the child could have been conceived.

In addition, the women were obligated



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Marchers moved to a Brazilian-style drumbeat.

Speakers included artists, performers and residents, as well as representatives of the community group Just Cause and the ANSWER Coalition.

The movement to save this community jewel continues to grow. Organizers say they will be out in force on June 10 when the city council discusses the Alice Arts Center's future.

Azania Howse, one of the artists who

organized the May 27 protest, explained this community struggle's importance in light of cutbacks nationwide: "What is happening here in Oakland to something so positive as the activities of the Alice is just another projection of what is happening around the country. Money is being stolen to build up the military at our expense. Poor people are just going to be out of luck if they don't fight back." □

to give descriptions of any men they'd had sex with that could have resulted in the pregnancy, and the time, date and location that sexual intercourse took place.

No exceptions were made for rape or incest survivors or for underage girls.

Politicians who passed the law claimed to be concerned about paternity suits in adoption cases.

While officials say they don't know how many women have actually been compelled to take out these ads, women's advocates estimate the number is at least hundreds.

Women's and civil rights groups across the United States protested the draconian state law as just as humiliating as chaining women in public stocks as punishment for sex outside of wedlock. International journalists skewered it, as well.

Gov. Jeb Bush signed a bill rescinding the state law. However, the governor and the legislature only moved to erase the law from the books after a South Florida rape victim went to court to challenge it. That legal battle resulted in two state courts ruling the law unconstitutional.

But now, Gator state political patriachs in both houses have voted unanimously to establish a "Scarlet Registry" to replace the old law. This database, which will be kept by the state Department of Health's Office of Vital Statistics, allows men who believe they may be the father to list the name, address and physical description of a woman they had sex with, along with the date and place where conception took place.

Some 30 states have these "father registries." □

Bush and the trillion dollars

Now you see it, now you don't

By Leslie Feinberg

It wasn't that long ago that the sharks on Wall Street and the politicians in Washington were insisting that social programs like welfare had to be cut back because the economic health of the United States depended on balancing the budget. "End deficit spending" was the mantra of the conservatives. It became the rationale for big cuts in needed social programs. For a few years toward the end of the nineties, the government's debt was actually reduced.

But then came the big military buildup, the beefing up of the domestic police agencies under the excuse of "homeland security," the huge tax cuts to the rich, and a downturn in the economy. The budget deficit began to grow sharply.

So, very quietly, President George W. Bush signed a bill on May 27 that raises the federal government's debt limit by close to \$1 TRILLION.

That's a million times a million dollars.

Imagine the howls of indignation from the political representatives of big business if this colossal amount of debt were being contemplated in order to finance a federal jobs program, or free medicines for those who can't afford them, or a crash program to develop sustainable sources of energy.

But there have been no howls. Both Democrats and Republicans have been very quiet about it. For not only is this money earmarked for Bush's "endless war," it also has the blessings of Wall Street.

The growing debt means the government will have to borrow massive amounts of money. Wall Street is happy about that because it means more interest to the banks. The prime interest rate set by the Federal Reserve Bank is on the floor, supposedly to get companies to borrow money and expand, but lowering the rate hasn't led to an upturn in the economy because businesses don't want to expand when the markets are glutted. So the government will now be taking out huge loans—a boon for the banking empire.

Why haven't the Democrats made a big noise about all this? They usually claim to be the party that cares about workers and the middle class—and an election year is looming.

The Democratic Party used to advocate government spending on social programs as a means to stimulate the economy during recessions. The irony of the present situation is that both Democrats and Republicans hope that government spending will work again—but the spending is on the military-industrial complex

and domestic repression, not on programs to help the unemployed or improve health care or Social Security.

In fact, the capitalist economic slump is not based on lack of cash or capital investment. It's rooted in the boom-and-bust cycle of a profit-driven economy. The crisis is one of over-production, of abundance.

Who will pay this debt? The government is making it crystal clear that the "tax man" won't be hounding the rich or their corporations and banks for it.

The very next day after Bush quietly signed the IOU for a trillion dollars, he signed the third-largest tax cut in history, making it a media event. However, it gives billions to the wealthy elite and little or nothing to the workers and poor, who are already being hit with increased local taxes, mass transit hikes and other forms of taxation.

This is class warfare on the domestic front.

More than a half-million jobs have already been lost this year and more than 8.7 million people are counted as unemployed. That official figure doesn't count those who are discouraged and have stopped job hunting.

Wages are falling, across the board.

"The president is not calling his tax package the 'Windfall for the Wealthy' act, which is what it is," observers Jared Bernstein, an economist with the Washington-based Economic Policy Institute. "He calls it the 'Jobs and Growth' act, which is what it's not."

And when the yeas and nays were tallied, the tax measure passed 58 to 33. Almost a quarter of the congressional

Imagine the howls of indignation if this colossal debt were to finance a jobs program or provide free medicines for those who can't afford them.

votes came from Democrats.

Those who voted for it made a big deal about an addition of \$400 to the child tax credit. But as soon as it passed, the truth came out. The bill denies the credit to families with incomes between \$10,500 and \$26,625. That's 12-16 million kids—one out of every six children in the U.S. under the age of 17, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

About half of all African American and Latino children either get no benefit, or a very meager allowance, from this bill.

The legislation also leaves high and dry, without any tax relief, some 8 million mostly low-income taxpayers who have no children.

What would it have cost to pass on the extra \$400 credit to all families? \$3.5 billion. But the legislators thought that was just too extravagant.

However, House and Senate negotiators slashed provisions in the bill that would have cracked down on corporate tax shelters, blocked some accounting scams like those that enriched Enron CEOs, prevented U.S. companies from creating post-office box headquarters in offshore tax havens, and limited bloated deferred-compensation plans for executives. (New York Times, June 2)

That cost us \$25 billion—and the corporations laughed all the way to the bank. □

It's a fact: wages are falling

By G. Dunkel

Workers in the United States know times are tough. Whether you're shaping up in a 7-11 parking lot, catching a job every other day, or using your high-speed Internet connection to surf job banks and mail hundreds of resumé's, you are going to have a hard time finding work.

The figures bear out this feeling. A half-million workers lost their jobs this year, making a total of 2 million jobs lost since the beginning of 2001 when Bush took office. It now takes a worker on average 20 weeks to find a job, the longest since the recession of 1984. Statistics for undocumented workers are not collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, even though they make up a substantial sector of U.S. workers. Anecdotes in newspapers from across the country indicate they are facing the same slowdown.

Wages are also starting to slip as producer prices decline. The BLS in a report issued the last week of May states that the compensation for civilian workers increased by only 1.3 percent in the first three months of this year.

But that's not the whole story. According to an analysis of government data by Jared Bernstein and Lawrence Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, wages, when adjusted for inflation, are falling for workers across the board. They found that the median weekly paycheck fell 1.4 percent over the past year, and that workers in all pay grades, white-collar and blue-collar, had taken a hit. (Bob Herbert, "Caught in the Squeeze," New York Times, May 29)

The Commerce Department, one of whose tasks is to prepare reports for businesses that need to make investments, released a report May 30 showing workers' compensation fell sharply in April for

important sectors of the U.S. working class, even as "personal income increased \$4.0 billion, or less than 0.1 percent."

This decline is not just due to large layoffs and the loss of overtime. Workers are getting paid less per hour, according to BLS reports. (www.bls.gov/ncs/ect/home.htm)

There are lots of ways to pay someone less without cutting their salary. Bosses reduce benefits, extend the working day, cut out breaks. They also hire new workers at a lower pay scale than current workers. They can claim financial inability to meet their payroll and force the workers to take less pay or do more.

In Oregon, for example, some school districts fired their janitors and bus drivers and told their teachers to do that work as well as their own. Other school districts there shut down weeks early or got their teachers to work without pay.

The actual decline in the income of working people in the United States can be seen in what is happening at food pantries throughout the country. In the recent past, these charities mainly served single men with substance abuse problems. Now they are serving many working families who can't make ends meet.

Because workers are earning less, sooner or later they will lose access to credit to maintain their living standards. When this happens, the U.S. economy is going to face a major problem. The average household's credit card debt is up to \$8,000, and many people have huge mortgages and car payments as well.

There's nothing automatic about wage increases or even wage stability under capitalism. The tendency, in fact, is for the bosses to keep demanding more work for less pay, citing the pressures of competition—until the multinational working class puts up such a broad fight that the bosses have to raise wages. □

Bloomberg's 'ticket blitz'

A sneaky way to raise taxes

By G. Dunkel
New York

All over the country, tax cuts for corporations and the rich plus a weak economy have left local governments struggling to handle the resulting deficits.

They can't print money, like the federal government, and are prevented by law from running into red ink. Some cities which have essentially gone bankrupt have been put under state control and have to slash services to the bone and beyond.

New York's billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg has come up with a novel twist on raising money—without formally raising taxes, which requires permission from the state and his City Council. It's called a ticket blitz.

This reporter saw a good example of the blitz. Two cars were parked in a bus stop, picking up students from a local college. A traffic agent wrote two tickets at over \$100 each, threatening the drivers with another if they didn't move. When one pulled out of the bus stop and doubled parked to get the last bit of luggage in, another cop came along and gave him a ticket for double parking.

And it's not just parking tickets. Press reports tell of one person who was ticketed for sitting on a milk crate—that's against some local ordinance. A pregnant high

school student was tired and sat on some subway steps to rest. She got a ticket for blocking the steps.

A block in Queens was subject to a sanitation agent blitz; there are an amazing number of ways you can incorrectly put out your garbage. But even when residents pulled in their bags before the agents got to their houses, they were ticketed. And some were ticketed because the agent had already made out the ticket even though he couldn't find anything wrong with their bags.

The billionaire mayor, accused of setting quotas, says they are just "productivity targets."

Black and Latino political leaders have denounced this new Bloomberg campaign. "Again, Mayor Bloomberg is showing his preference for the rich," said Helen Foster, co-chair of the Council's Black and Hispanic Caucus.

"I'm sure if his mother, sister or daughter were pregnant, he wouldn't want them to get a summons for sitting down on the subway [steps]. But then again, they'd probably be in a car service and wouldn't have to be on the train. And that shows two worlds," Foster said at a City Hall news conference.

Added Council member Charles Barron of Brooklyn: "We cannot allow the mayor to continue to balance the budget off the backs of poor people." □

A visit with Ramón Labañino

By Teresa Gutierrez
U.S. Federal Prison
Beaumont, Texas

Anyone who travels to Cuba meets many women and men there who defend their country and their way of life. It is a wonderful and rich experience.

They have a tremendous zest for life, a unique view of world events, and an intense passion for the world, especially their beloved country.

Ramón Labañino is such a Cuban.

But he is not in Cuba. He is serving a life sentence in a federal prison in Beaumont, Texas.

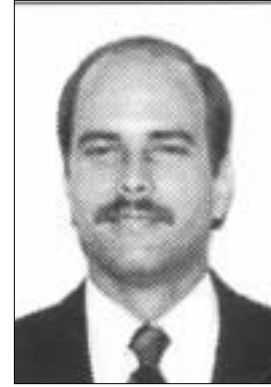
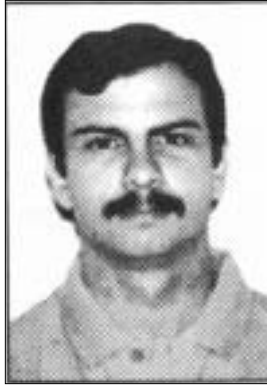
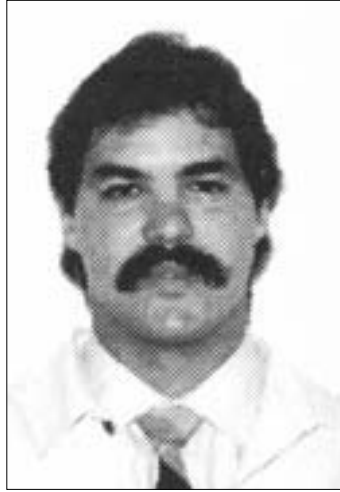
He and four other political prisoners—Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, René González and Fernando González—are in federal prisons scattered around the U.S. They have become known as the Cuban 5.

This writer visited Labañino on May 30 in Beaumont, along with anti-death penalty activist Gloria Rubac.

As he excitedly walked out to visit with us, dressed in the brown khaki issued to inmates, it was hard to imagine that this man, tall and robust, flashing a wide smile, was going through the horrors of what is known as the U.S. justice system.

Ramón and the other four had come to the U.S. to monitor the actions of U.S.-backed right-wing terrorists, who regularly carry out provocative and dangerous actions against Cuba. These terrorists are based in Florida but get their direction from Washington. They have brought untold suffering to the Cuban people.

The five were arrested in 1998 and charged with espionage against the U.S. government, which they emphatically deny. They had come to fight terrorism, but the U.S. government launched a deceptive, unjust and cruel campaign against them that resulted in the harshest



FREE THE CUBAN 5: Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández and René González.

sentences possible.

All five were tried in Miami, Fla., where it is impossible for those defending Cuba to get a fair or just hearing.

Ramón had made a tremendous sacrifice when he accepted the assignment and left behind his beloved country, as well as his wife, Elisabeth, and three daughters.

But he came to Florida because of his deep devotion to his nation and his unflinching support of the Cuban Revolution.

As we visited with Labañino on May 30, his love for Cuba was evident, but he also expressed a commitment to the people of the world. He explained that his actions to defend the Cuban people against those who would like to see the revolution overturned were also meant to defend an idea—the progress of humanity.

Ramón was indignant about recent criticisms of Cuba for having arrested paid agents of the U.S. who were trying to bring about “regime change” and for executing three hijackers.

“One cannot judge Cuba out of context,” he said. The Cuban government had to take these actions at a very critical moment to defend the country, which has been the subject of attack from the U.S. for over 40 years, he explained. The progres-

sive movement needs to unite against imperialism, which is the most important problem in the world.

Intellectuals, he pointed out, should contribute to the progress of humanity, act responsibly about important matters and look at Cuba historically, which means in the context of its history.

Ramón stressed the importance of the people of the United States and said he even felt at times that he'd like to stay and do political work here if he were free.

He believes the people here must be more organized and the movement should be the strongest and biggest because of the role that the U.S. government plays around the world.

It is here, he said, “where the people must be most conscious.”

Ramón described his life in a Texas prison. Divisions abound, he told us. Gangs, drugs and violence run amok. Prisoners somehow get access to guns and drugs, which contributes to the repressive and violent atmosphere. This climate is fostered by the system and benefits the prison officials. U.S. prisons serve only to repress, not to rehabilitate.

Labañino told us more than once to express his profound gratitude to all the people who have worked so hard to defend

him and the other four political prisoners.

He receives 10 to 15 letters a day and cannot respond to them all. So he wants to make sure that everyone who writes to him and works on his case knows how deeply grateful he is.

Indeed, the solidarity movement has been decisive in the case of the five. When John Ashcroft's Justice Department decided, with absolutely no justification whatsoever, to put all five in solitary confinement a few months ago, it was international pressure that helped get them out of the hole.

Attorneys for the five have stressed that the next few months are extremely important. Oral arguments are expected to take place soon. Forums, letters and campaigns of all kinds are needed to get the word out on the case.

Tens of thousands of people in the U.S. have traveled to Cuba and know first-hand that it has achieved a society worth fighting for.

Ramón Labañino, Gerardo Hernández, René González, Fernando González and Antonio Guerrero are innocent and deserve to be freed.

The web site www.freethefive.org has more information on their case and how to help. □

NEW YORK

Protests continue against police killings

By Richard Wales
New York

Since the year started, New York City police have killed a number of unarmed civilians not engaged in any criminal activity. All were people of color. The two most recent killings were within a week of each other; police murders in this city, like runs in a baseball game, seem to come in bunches.

Alberta Spruill and Ousmane Zongo were killed on the 16th and 22nd of May, respectively. Spruill was in her apartment getting ready to go to work when a narcotics SWAT team broke down her door and burst in, exploding concussion grenades. Their “mistake”—they had the wrong apartment—cost this 57-year-old city worker her life from a heart attack.

Zongo was gunned down at his place of work—a warehouse where he repaired cultural objects imported from Africa.

Both had no particular reason to fear that their lives would be taken by people who were supposedly paid to protect them. Spruill was buried on May 24 after services at the Convent Avenue Baptist Church that she attended. Zongo's body will be flown back to his homeland, Burkina Faso.

As usual, there are promises of investigations into these deaths. Will the usual



Alberta Spruill.

pattern of coverup take place? Will the district attorney's office find no reason to bring even the slightest criminal charges against the offending officers and/or their bosses? Will the police commissioner or mayor, a couple of months down the road, declare that nobody was at fault? They will want to let everybody off if they feel they can get away with it. To do this they have to quiet public outrage and they have a lot of practice in this.

However, there have been a number of rallies, marches and press conferences to protest these killings. One demonstration protesting Spruill's



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

The funeral for Alberta Spruill became a protest march of 3,000 people.

killings was followed by a cook-out. During the civil rights struggles in the south, fish fries were often where communities got together to discuss plans of action to further their struggle for equal rights. Harlem community groups are meeting to discuss further actions.

All gains made by our class throughout history have been won through struggle.

It will only be through struggle that we remove killer cops from our streets. The system will not voluntarily become fair. To paraphrase Mumia Abu-Jamal, the courts are only user friendly for the rich. We have to stay outraged until the murderers are punished. We have to also be optimistic, because when the people realize their strength, the people will win. □

Middle East struggle

The 'road map' & U.S. strategy

By Richard Becker

What is the Bush administration seeking to accomplish with its "road map" for Palestine and Israel? Answering this question is key to understanding the current diplomatic offensive undertaken by Washington in the aftermath of the Iraq war.

While facing growing opposition to its colonial-style occupation in Iraq, the administration is moving forward very aggressively to reorganize and subjugate the entire Middle East. The "road map" is a key element in their plans.

The military defeat of Iraq and the destruction of its government and state were seen by Washington as necessary pre-conditions for opening a new round of negotiations with the Palestinians.

From the beginning of his administration until just recently, Bush had refused to even speak with the leadership of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). During that time, he hosted Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at the White House on eight occasions, more than any other foreign leader. The U.S. has continued, during the same period, to funnel massive economic and military aid to Israel.

Since the start of the second Intifada in September 2000, Israel has re-occu-

pied the Palestinian cities, towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza. Economic life has been largely destroyed, unemployment has risen to 80 percent or higher in many areas, and poverty and hunger have skyrocketed. Over the past 32 months, 2,200 Palestinians have been killed—three times more than Israelis. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been injured and more than 10,000 imprisoned. Those jailed are routinely beaten and tortured by the Israeli authorities.

Despite facing overwhelming firepower—the Israeli military is rated as the fourth most powerful in the world—and widespread suffering, the Palestinians have not been defeated.

But with the crushing of Iraq, Washington views the Palestinians, and Arab people as a whole, as in a weakened position.

It was a similar combination of factors that impelled the first Bush administration to open the Oslo "Peace Process" after defeating Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war.

U.S. demands new Palestinian leaders

Before officially announcing the "road map," the U.S. insisted that the PNA reorganize itself and choose a prime minister acceptable to Washington. They specifi-

cally wanted Mahmoud Abbas, a long-time associate of PNA President Yasir Arafat. Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, has been critical of the Intifada and has called for an end to armed resistance to the Israeli military occupation.

Officially entitled, "A Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," the document projects three phases leading to a final resolution by 2005. Overseeing the plan is the "Quartet"—the U.S., European Union, Russia and the UN—though the pre-eminence of the U.S. role is beyond doubt. It makes absolutely clear that it is the Palestinian "performance" that is to be judged.

Overwhelming emphasis in Phase I is placed on "Security," which it translates as ending Palestinian "violence and terrorism." Section after section focuses on reorganizing PNA security forces, cutting off funding to Palestinian resistance organizations, creating a U.S.-Jordan-Egypt "oversight board" to train and monitor the PNA police and security.

Egypt and Jordan, it should be noted, both maintain large police forces funded by the U.S. to ruthlessly control their respective populations.

While Israel is called on to take "no actions undermining trust," the docu-

ment nowhere links words like "violence" and "terror" to actions of the Israeli military.

As Andrea Anderson, director of Harvard University's Middle East Initiative noted in a recent commentary: "the conditionality of the agreement only applies to ending Palestinian violence."

Israeli settlements in the West Bank have nearly doubled in population, to 235,000, since the Oslo "peace" process began to be implemented in 1993. The Israelis are supposed to stop expanding these settlements and dismantle a small number of lightly populated "outpost" settlements.

Phase II is envisioned as beginning later this year—presumably after the Palestinian resistance has been terminated: "In the second phase, efforts are focused on the option of creating an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and attributes of sovereignty ..."

Speaking in extraordinarily patronizing and colonial tones, the "road map" continues: "As has been noted, this goal can be achieved when the Palestinian people have leadership acting decisively against terror, willing and able to build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty."

In other words, when the Palestinians

Bush goes overseas to bolster empire

Continued from page 1

Washington's primary targets were Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Iraq has been invaded. Now Iran and the DPRK are at the top of the list of those countries being threatened with so-called "regime change." And despite all the false anti-war posturing of the French and German imperialists and of the Putin regime in Russia, after bullying and bribery they have lent themselves to promoting the Pentagon's program for world conquest.

In fact, according to the New York Times of June 4, "senior White House officials said that the unusually strong language was made possible only thanks to the support from France, Germany and Russia."

The most hypocritical performance at the summit was given by Chirac. Bush and Tony Blair both left the conference a day early, in a direct snub to Chirac and the "old Europe." After they were gone, Chirac fulminated publicly about how he still considered the Iraq war "illegitimate and illegal." (New York Times, June 4) But this did not prevent him, while Bush was there, from promoting the "unifying" statement of the G-8 which says that "our shared objective is a fully sovereign, stable and democratic Iraq, at peace with its neighbors and firmly on the road to progress."

Thus, Chirac opposes the "illegitimate and illegal" invasion, but approves the equally illegal and illegitimate occupation and destruction of Iraqi national independence by a brutal military authority which is the result of that invasion.

Campaign against Iran

The U.S. government is using the bombings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and other recent terrorist bombings as a pretext to open up a campaign against Iran. Washington has demanded the apprehension of alleged al-Qaeda members in Iran and has taken a hard line on Iran's nuclear program. Except for the absence of charges about chemical and biological

weapons, this sounds like a replay of the campaigns against Afghanistan and Iraq.

When asked at a news conference about arrests of alleged al-Qaeda members in Tehran, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer replied, "The steps that the Iranians claim to have taken in terms of capturing al-Qaeda are insufficient." (New York Times, May 28) As to claims by Iran that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, Fleischer declared that "the United States rejects that argument as a cover story."

The Washington Post of May 29 reported that "U.S. officials are watching Tehran's responses closely as the Bush administration mulls shifting to a policy of destabilizing Iran. Senior officials were scheduled to discuss policy toward Iran on Tuesday, but the meeting was postponed until Thursday."

A belligerent Post editorial of the same day entitled "The Iranian Challenge" referred to "talk of taking preemptive actions against suspected Iranian nuclear sites, like the Israeli raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor 22 years ago." The Post continued: "If a key report by the International Atomic Energy Agency, expected in two weeks, finds that Iran has violated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it may be possible to organize concerted multilateral action, in or outside of the UN Security Council."

Threats against North Korea

At the same time the Pentagon is making menacing military gestures toward the North Korean government. "The deputy secretary of defense, Paul Wolfowitz, all but stated that American troops would be withdrawn from the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea, a move intended to take them out of easy range of North Korean artillery, and theoretically position the United States to mount a pre-emptive attack against the North." (New York Times, June 3)

A senior Pentagon official was quoted in the same dispatch: "While we can't completely compensate for the fact that North Korea has so much stuff right up forward on the DMZ, we could begin taking it down from the first hour of the war, and that would make a big difference."

"Officials said," continued the Times, "that in case of war, American and South Korean troops could be dispatched directly to the interior of the north in pursuit of the North Korean leadership, a strategy that was inspired, in part, by the American military experience in Iraq."

Whether or not all this talk is psychological warfare or not, it reveals the direction in which the Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz grouping is moving: trying to restore colonial domination of the oil-rich and strategically located country of Iran, in the same way it has done in Iraq, and escalating its threat of unprovoked aggression against the DPRK.

From Evian, Bush traveled to Sharm El Sheik, an Egyptian resort on the Red Sea, to meet with Arab leaders and press his "road map" to subjugate the Palestinian national movement and bring security to Israel. The initial and essential goal of this U.S. plan is the disarmament of the Palestinian resistance and/or promoting civil war among the Palestinian people. Bush's hope is to use Abu Mazen, the U.S.-chosen prime minister, and the collaborating regimes in the Arab world to accomplish this goal. Bush hopes to consolidate their commitment to this reactionary process at another meeting in Aqaba, Jordan.

But even as Bush travels triumphantly throughout Europe and the Middle East, looming behind him is the resistance to the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

General admits Iraq war 'not over'

One month after Bush announced the end of the war in Iraq during a photo op if him landing aboard an aircraft carrier, Lt.

Gen. David D. McKiernan, commanding general of all U.S. forces in Iraq, declared that "the war has not ended." (Washington Post, May 30) Instead of pulling troops out of Iraq, Washington has had to bring in another infantry division and thousands of military police, bringing the troop level up to 160,000 U.S. and British troops, not counting the 90,000 troops in Kuwait carrying out support operations.

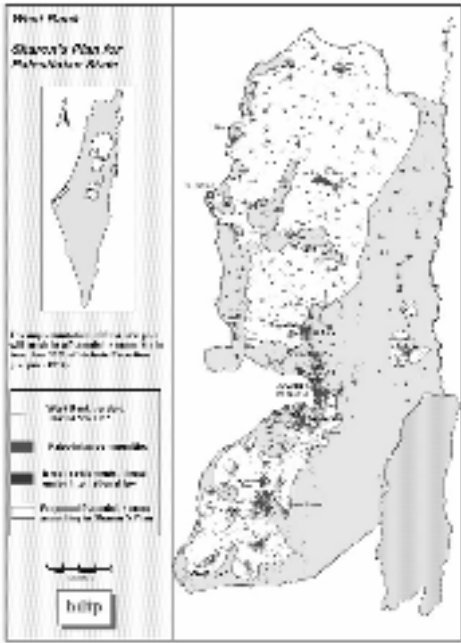
U.S. soldiers are being killed in what appears to be a coalescing resistance in Baghdad and regions to the north. Whether or not this resistance can be sustained in the short run remains to be seen, but long-run resistance is inevitable. Referring to the resistance, McKiernan stated emphatically: "These are not criminal activities, they are combat activities. We are going to address these activities by applying every resource available to us. The war has not ended. That's the point I need you to understand."

Michael Gordon, a New York Times military reporter who was "embedded" with the Pentagon during the invasion, wrote a major piece on May 30 entitled "How Much Is Enough?"

Gordon refers back to the verbal war in February between Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki. Rumsfeld denounced Shinseki for saying that it would take several hundred thousand troops to occupy Iraq. Not only did Rumsfeld argue with Shinseki, but he had former Army Secretary Thomas White forced out following a similar struggle over the force size necessary to hold the Iraqi people down.

While for the Army chiefs this was partly a struggle over budgets and resources, at bottom it is a struggle about the expected role of the masses.

The current crowd in the Bush administration has dreams of ruling the world with high-tech warfare and special



have “shown they are worthy,” they will be awarded not self-determination, but autonomy.

After presumably meeting many more similar requirements, the Palestinians are to enter Phase III sometime in 2004 to 2005. Then, and only then, will such fundamental issues as the Palestinian right to return, Jerusalem and more even be discussed.

The right of Palestinians living in exile is especially critical. In 1948, to make way for the establishment of the state of Israel, 780,000 Palestinians were either evicted from their homeland or fled the fighting. Their lands, orchards, shops and homes were seized without compensation. Hundreds of thousands more were driven out

Continued on page 10

forces—easily taking out governments that resist U.S. domination and carrying out smooth “regime change” by fear and intimidation. They discount the mass of the people, whom they regard as a docile and submissive element who will dutifully sit on the sidelines while U.S. imperialism restructures their fate and prepares their exploitation and the plunder of their countries.

In light of the Iraqi experience, Gordon of the Times, undoubtedly speaking for others inside and outside the Pentagon and the Bush administration, did a nervous review of the forces available to the Pentagon.

“If the Army’s postwar effort to stabilize Iraq is taken into account,” he wrote, “it would seem that the service needs more troops, not less.”

“Certainly,” continued Gordon, “the Army does not seem to have many forces to spare. Of the Army’s 10 divisions, more than four are deployed in Iraq.... Of the remaining Army divisions, the Second Infantry Division is in South Korea, the 10th Mountain Division is headed to Afghanistan and a brigade of the First Infantry Division is in Kosovo.”

Only two divisions, the First Cavalry Division and the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, are not spoken for at this time.

The implications are clear. To expand their effort to control the world, the U.S. ruling class will have to vastly expand its military forces on the ground and subject the working class in this country to the horrors of war and occupation against oppressed people all over the globe. This comes at a time of growing economic hardship, poverty, racism and general assaults on the masses, which are the natural result of capitalism in crisis and are exacerbated by the reactionary give-to-the rich policies of the Bush administration.

Under these conditions, Washington’s pursuit of empire can only result in massive resistance, at home and abroad. □



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Support for Palestine at Salute to Israel parade in New York.

Pro-Israel parade draws protests

In 1948 European settlers used terror, force and massacre to drive nearly 800,000 Palestinians from their homes and land. More than 400 villages were wiped off the map. In New York City this genocide is celebrated in an annual festival of hatred and bigotry called the Salute to Israel parade.

The organizers seek to mobilize the Jewish community in particular to support Israel’s U.S.-funded reign of terror against Palestinians today. This year they failed. The city’s hated mayor, billionaire budget-cutter Michael Bloomberg, and other white politicians—no Black elected officials were present—led contingents from private schools and a smattering of corporate floats up Fifth Avenue. But the

turnout was sparse and the organizers were hard-pressed to fill the time allotted for the event. To make it appear larger, they arranged large gaps between contingents and had many of them march the route twice.

Protesters were there, too, many of them Jewish. Opposition to the hate march was organized by Jews Against the Occupation and the Palestine Activist Forum. They carried Palestinian flags and signs denouncing Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and supporting the right of Palestine refugees to return to their homes.

Some carried pictures of Rachel Corrie, the Olympia, Wash., trade unionist crushed to death by an Israeli soldier as

she tried to stop his bulldozer from demolishing a Palestinian family’s home. Protesters chanted, “Nothing here to celebrate, Israel is a racist state,” and sang a song in support of Palestinian freedom to the tune of the Jewish children’s song “Dreidl.” Another chant told the marchers, most of whom hailed from prosperous, segregated suburbs, “Long Island is your home, leave Palestine alone.”

A group of black-clad observant Jews from the Neturei Karta movement waved Palestinian flags. Israeli Army veterans were also among the demonstrators. The parade was thrown into further disarray when activists ran into the street and blocked the route with a sit-in. Two people were arrested.

—Bill Cecil

An egregious violation of diplomatic immunity

U.S. troops raid Palestinian office in Baghdad

By Leslie Feinberg

In an outrageously illegal move, U.S. military brass ordered a raid on the Palestinian diplomatic mission in Baghdad on May 25. No official excuse was offered in U.S. media accounts.

A convoy of armored vehicles surrounded the mission in the early morning hours. A Palestinian guard from the mission recalled, “We said this is the Palestinian Embassy and there is international law and we are not letting you in. They said, ‘We are the international law, you have to let us in.’”

Troops reportedly burst through the gates and blew open office doors with shotguns. They seized books, files and computers. They also confiscated the contents of a safe—\$15,000 to \$20,000 in payroll cash—and jewelry belonging to the wife of one of the diplomats, Palestinians officials stated.

When diplomats arrived at work in the morning, they were arrested. Eleven people were held, including the chargé d’affaires, Najah Abdul Rahman, and two other diplomats, all of whom had been accredited by the former Iraqi government. The Palestinian ambassador, Azzam al-Ahmed, was not in the country at the time.

U.S. civilian and military authorities “seemed unable to state today where and on what basis they were continuing to detain the Palestinian diplomats,” a New York Times article datelined May 30 explained. In Washington, the Palestinian representative, Hassan Abdulrahman, said the Palestinian Authority had been trying to get information from the State Department. “It’s amazing, but we still don’t know what’s happening,” he said.

Palestinian Consul Dalil al-Qusous called on U.S. and British authorities to release the embassy’s administrative counselor, Mahmoud Barakat, who suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure.

According to an unnamed administration official quoted in the article, senior U.S. civilian authorities overseeing the occupation of Iraq had not been informed about the raid before it took place. “As a result, according to a State Department official in Washington, the State Department was unaware for at least 24 hours that a military operation had been conducted against a diplomatic compound here.”

“I really can’t confirm anything about the events or even that they occurred,” State Department spokesperson Richard A. Boucher said the day after the raid.

Spokespeople for the United States Central Command in Tampa, Fla., and in Kuwait said they had no information about the situation of the diplomats and other detained Palestinian staff.

The Times concluded “Since the raid, several Arab governments that continue to operate their embassies have sought reassurances from Washington about the safety of their diplomats.”

Some governments are trying to send their diplomats back to Baghdad to regain properties and to prepare for resumption of relations with a future Iraqi government. But Boucher urged governments to take their time.

“We’re discouraging foreign diplomats in general from entering Iraq,” he said. “There is no Iraqi government for them to interact with. There’s no Iraqi government to grant the privileges and immunities that diplomats would normally have inside a country.”

And, he concluded, the United States reserves “the right to exclude people who we don’t think belong here.”

This extreme and brutal violation of Palestinian sovereignty came at the same time that the Bush administration was pushing a “road map” that it claims will lead to a peaceful settlement of the Palestinians’ long struggle with Israel. □

Capitalist globalizers rely on teargas, rubber bullets as

G-8 summit draws large protests

By John Catalinotto

While the G-8 heads of state, which includes the world's major imperialist powers plus Russia, were meeting high above Lake Geneva in Evian on June 1-3, tens of thousands of demonstrators were blocking the streets of Lausanne and Geneva, Switzerland, and the Geneva suburb of Annemasse, France. They were trying to prevent G-8 officials from reaching the summit. The movement was saying no to Bush's war and to capitalist globalization.

Some thousands of the most militant demonstrators were able to block Geneva's bridges and highways for hours despite the brutal actions of 25,000 police, who used tear gas and rubber bullets to dislodge them. According to a report in the June 2 Berlin daily Junge Welt, the German metal workers union IG Metall used its truck to provide water for the demonstrators so they could wash out their eyes.

On June 1 tens of thousands marched from Annemasse toward Geneva, meeting a mass march from that city at the border. Slogans included, "You are globalizing poverty and war," held by the Communist Party of France. Others were "G-8 illegal, annul the debts" and "Against an endless war, endless resistance." The crowd swelled to over 150,000, even though many unionists in France, Germany and Austria were preparing massive general strikes for June 3 to

fight pension cutbacks.

Workers World was able to briefly interview Sarah Sloan, the Washington organizer of the U.S. anti-war ANSWER Coalition, who was at the demonstrations with a delegation of ANSWER youth. Sloan's description indicated that the police were much more brutal and arbitrary than the corporate media reported.

"The demonstration was even more interesting on Monday, June 2, in Geneva," she said, "because a majority of the participants were not protesters, they were working-class youth who were drawn into a struggle with the police. The Swiss and German police used water cannons, rubber bullets and some type of tear gas I have never experienced before.

"And they used it on people who were just eating, drinking or hanging out in a section downtown. This involved thousands of people, while about 500 protesters were trapped. There were demonstrators in the crowd, but most were onlookers, young people, many people of color. The police attacked heavily, but the young workers were unafraid and wanted to struggle."

Sloan said that she and the other ANSWER youth would be returning to the U.S. on June 9 and in the weeks that followed would be writing and also speaking in different cities in the Northeast on their experiences at the Evian demonstration and at meetings of the anti-globalization movement. □

Marching from Annemasse toward Geneva



Why Bush didn't visit the battleship Aurora

By Stephen Millies

During the Iraq War, President George W. Bush made a photo op of landing on the deck of the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln. Yet this war criminal didn't dare visit the battleship Aurora when he recently traveled to St. Petersburg in Russia.

Unlike the planes that took off from that U.S. ship and dropped thousands of bombs on Iraqi children, the Aurora delivered a mighty blow for human freedom. The shots fired from this Russian vessel by sailors on Nov. 7, 1917, guaranteed the victory of the workers' insurrection that was taking over St. Petersburg, then known as Petrograd. The Russian Revolution eventually ended World War I.

The world's first socialist revolution was born.

Russia's revolution inspired oppressed people all over the world to break their

chains. China's landless millions knew that Russia's peasants had taken over the land. Decades of struggle there led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

The USSR aided Cuba, Korea, Vietnam and Africa—not just with surplus food but with the technology and skills to develop their economies.

Thirty thousand members of the South African Communist Party proudly display the "hammer and sickle" on their banners. This symbol—showing the unity of workers and peasants—was the Soviet emblem.

Heroic city defeated Hitler

Hitler hated the birthplace of the Russian Revolution so much that, during World War II, he wanted to raze it to the ground. By that time its name had been changed from Petrograd to Leningrad, after the revolution's leader, V.I. Lenin.

Nazi armies blockaded Leningrad for

900 days. Over a million people perished in history's greatest siege. But the city's workers and soldiers held out and helped defeat Hitler.

In Piskariovskoye Cemetery alone, 500,000 of these heroes are buried. More people were interred in the 186 mass graves there than the number of U.S. dead in World War II.

Even presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton paid homage at Piskariovskoye. But George W. Bush ignored this sacred ground.

Working class citadel built by serfs

Bush went to St. Petersburg as it was celebrating its 300th anniversary. It was named for the patron saint of its founder, Peter the Great. This tyrant had his own son, Alexis, beaten to death.

Thirty thousand serfs died during the building of St. Petersburg. Serfdom was a form of land slavery. Serfs could be sold with the land they were forced to work on. They were beaten with a whip known as a "knout."

As terrible as these conditions were, African Americans were treated worse on plantations. Tens of millions died in the African Holocaust.

Just as serf labor built St. Petersburg, slave labor built Washington, D.C. The U.S. Capitol was constructed by Black people in chains. Bush must have felt at home.

It wasn't accidental that Russian serfdom was abolished in 1861 at the beginning of the U.S. Civil War. Czar Alexander II was forced to get rid of this feudal form of exploitation in order to keep up with his more advanced European rivals. But shock waves from John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry were also persuasive.

St. Petersburg was already the political and cultural capital of the Russian Empire. Alexander Pushkin, the most beloved of Russian writers and poets, was a resident. Like the elder Alexandre Dumas, who wrote "The Three Muske-

teers," Pushkin was a Black man with African ancestry.

Abolishing serfdom led to the growth of a working class that was forced to sell its labor power to wealthy capitalists. Because industrialization started later in Russia than in Western Europe, St. Petersburg skipped over the stage of smaller workshops and became home to the largest factories in Europe. The Putilov works alone employed 30,000 workers in the manufacture of engines and cars.

These workers, brought together under one roof in large numbers, could feel their own strength. But they also needed a revolutionary theory to get rid of the czar and the capitalists who were making them work 11 hours a day.

The teachings of Karl Marx showed them how capitalism developed and why it would be overthrown. The greatest Russian Marxist was Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik Party. When Lenin was 17 years old, his brother was hanged in St. Petersburg for trying to overthrow the czar.

Lenin waged a merciless struggle against racism. He taught Russians that they couldn't free themselves while other peoples in the czarist empire—like Kazakhs, Georgians, Ukrainians and Jews—were treated like animals. The Soviet Union pioneered affirmative action.

In 1905 workers in St. Petersburg formed their own councils, called "soviets." That was during the first of Russia's three revolutions. Although defeated in 1905, they were victorious in 1917 when peasants and soldiers joined them.

The U.S. government dominated by Wall Street spent trillions of dollars and threatened nuclear annihilation in order to overthrow the Soviet Union and its socialist achievements. They finally succeeded in 1991 and changed the city's name. But the memory of what workers did in St. Petersburg 86 years ago will never be erased. □

More French workers strike over retirement

On June 3 new layers of French workers joined the struggle started by public employees against reforms proposed by the government that would add years to the retirement age and cut pensions. Workers from the private sector—steel, chemicals, trucking, even retail—struck and marched.

Some 250,000 workers marched in Paris and 250,000 in Marseilles, France's second-largest city. One million marched elsewhere in France, in small and large cities, before government offices, corporate headquarters, city halls and train stations. Some 80 percent of air flights were canceled as well as a majority of inter-city trains. Some mass transit in the larger cities ran, but most did not.

Teachers and school staff came out in large numbers over the issue of retirement and also the government's plan to restructure education, even though the government now says it is going to postpone until the fall any parliamentary action on its plan to restructure education.

Some 500,000 workers in Austria held a one-day general strike in solidarity with the French workers and because they face the same issue of retirement changes. There were major demonstrations in Italy and 90,000 steel workers in eastern Germany also went out for equal wages with their western colleagues.

European workers say that joint actions in a spirit of solidarity give them additional strength. —G. Dunkel

Some generals are out—now what about the economy?

New Argentine president raises hopes of masses

By Alicia Jrapko

Every May 25, Argentines celebrate the anniversary of their independence from Spain. This year, thousands took to the streets to celebrate the departure of Carlos Menem, the infamous former president who had followed the dictates of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and who withdrew from the runoff election for president at the last minute.

Argentines are trying to hold onto the dream of a better future for their families. They have been devastated by these neoliberal policies, which led to an implosion of the economy. In this once prosperous country, half the population now lives at or under the poverty line.

As the people were celebrating, Nestor Kirchner, former governor of the province of Santa Cruz, became the 49th president of Argentina. Kirchner is the first president to come from the generation of leftists and progressives that opposed the bloody military dictatorship of the 1970s. Thousands were “disappeared”—kidnapped and secretly killed by the right-wing military.

Twelve heads of state attended the presidential inauguration, including Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Hugo

Chavez of Venezuela and Fidel Castro of Cuba. The Bush administration gave a lukewarm response to Kirchner’s victory by sending Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mel Martinez as its representative.

One of the highlights of the days preceding Kirchner’s inauguration was a speech by President Castro at the Faculty of Law. He was supposed to address some 1,200 students, but 40,000 people came to hear him. He electrified the crowd, saying, “The people of Buenos Aires are sending a message to those in the world who want to ride roughshod over our cities and our countries in Latin America.”

The visit of Fidel Castro comes at a time when Argentina is moving closer to Cuba.

In his inaugural speech, the new president of Argentina criticized neoliberal policies and promised that he would not ask the poor for more sacrifice to pay the foreign debt. He declared, “Creditors have to understand that they can only collect if Argentina is doing well.” He stressed the need to create new jobs and make education and health care accessible to all.

Kirchner promised to reshape Argentina’s military to reflect “a commitment to the future and not to the past,” a reference

to the dictatorship of 1978 to 1983. After the inauguration he replaced Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo Brinzoni with Gen. Roberto Bendini and forced other high-ranking members of the army, the navy and the air force into early retirement.

Brinzoni was surprised and angered by the decision, saying that he was stepping down in “inexplicable circumstances.” But for many Argentines, the wounds of the seventies are still open. In 1990 Menem had pardoned the leaders of the bloodiest military dictatorship in the history of Argentina. In reference to these years, Kirchner said, “We arrive without rancor but with memory.”

The new president vowed that his foreign policy would give priority to strengthening ties with neighboring countries, especially with members of Mercosur, the South American common market, as part of what he called “a new model of nation.”

The U.S. corporate media, uneasy with the nomination of prominent leftists in Kirchner’s new cabinet and with his presidential campaign speeches against the IMF and other creditors, are portraying him as a populist and predicting a catastrophe.

But while Kirchner has made great

changes in the military, he reappointed Economy Minister Roberto Lavagna, a holdover from the default presidency of Eduardo Duhalde, and Central Bank President Alfonso Prat Gay. This indicates his difficulty in breaking from the imperialist-dictated economic policies of the past. Lavagna was able to make an agreement with the IMF to hold off loan repayments, but the challenges ahead are great. If the government takes economic measures to help the unemployed and the poor, it will face the opposition of the IMF and the World Bank. If it does not, it will face the opposition of the people.

New winds are blowing throughout Latin America. The progressive new presidents in the region owe their seats to the struggles of the people, who voted to distance themselves from the neoliberal policies dictated by the United States and its financial institutions.

Only time will tell if the new president can or will fulfill his promises to a people who view his election as a ray of hope. In the meantime, those who have been in the streets struggling know that this is just one phase in a long battle for real and profound changes in Latin America and in the rest of the world. □



PERU



Millions join nationwide strikes, protests

By Andy McInerney

Some 2 million Peruvian workers and peasants took to the streets in late May to block President Alejandro Toledo’s efforts to impose economic austerity measures. The protests included strikes, road blockades in the countryside, and street battles pitting students and workers against the army.

The demonstrations are the largest yet against the Toledo government. They are an indication that the wave of protest that has swept Latin America against International Monetary Fund-backed regimes continues to spread.

The backbone of the latest protests has been the 280,000-member teachers’ union SUTEP, which has been on strike since May 12. The teachers are asking for a \$60 raise over their monthly \$200 salary—a demand that the government claims it cannot meet within the bounds of an IMF-imposed austerity plan. Toledo had promised to double teachers’ salaries during his electoral campaign in 2001.

“If the government doesn’t change its policy of kneeling down before the IMF, it’s going to have to go,” high school teacher Jorge Vargas told Reuters on May 28.

At the end of May, health workers, judiciary workers and farmers joined the

teachers. The demands varied, but they were united by opposition to Toledo’s neoliberal policies of cutbacks, austerity and privatization.

On May 27, Toledo declared a nationwide state of emergency to combat the protests. When strikers refused to call off their actions, troops opened fire on them in several cities, injuring 95 and killing at least one student. Street battles broke out in Lima, Huancayo, Puno, Barranca, Chiclayo, Arequipa and other cities around the country.

The declaration of a state of emergency provoked widespread anger. Mario Huamán, leader of the country’s largest labor federation, CGTP, told the daily La Republica on June 1 that the federation would organize a national protest on June 3 calling for lifting the state of emergency. Students also called for actions on June 4.

Toledo was elected in 2001 after more than a decade of dictatorial rule by Alberto Fujimori. Toledo’s campaign was marked



by classic electoral demagoguery: to the working people he flouted his Indigenous background—no small factor in a country where the 82 percent Indigenous and mestizo population has faced historic super-exploitation—and promised to create a million jobs. To Washington and the Peruvian ruling class, he emphasized his credentials as a U.S.-educated World Bank economist.

Since the election, he has been loyal only to the ruling class.

While Toledo may be a darling of Wall Street, his credibility on the streets and shanties of Lima and other Peruvian working-class centers has never been lower. Polls show his approval rate at less than 15 percent. Half of Peru’s 27 million people earn less than \$1.25 a day. Unemployment stands at an official rate of 10 percent—unchanged from when Toledo came into power.

The challenge facing Peru’s workers and farmers is whether a class-conscious leadership can develop to channel the defen-

sive economic struggles into a political offensive against the U.S.-backed Peruvian elite. So far, former President Alan Garcia, Toledo’s electoral opponent in 2001, has made a big effort to channel the protests in another direction—right into his APRA political party. The forces of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) have yet to recover from the CIA-organized counter-revolutionary offensive of the 1990s—although the PCP has carried out some actions in recent years.

Peruvian workers and peasants are not struggling in a vacuum, though. In neighboring Colombia, powerful revolutionary insurgencies are challenging the U.S.-backed regime. In Venezuela, workers are taking advantage of the political space opened by President Hugo Chávez to create organs of popular power. Working people in Argentina and Ecuador have toppled governments in recent years; a similar powerful movement is building in Bolivia. Cuba remains a revolutionary beacon across Latin America and the Caribbean.

These continent-wide battles magnify the power that the Peruvian workers, peasants and students can bring to bear against Toledo’s regime as well as the stakes of the battles ahead. □



Rogues with nukes

If too much CNN or Fox News has contaminated your brain, you might think the greatest danger of nuclear proliferation comes from Iran. If you mistakenly think Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz occasionally speaks the truth, you might think a real threat of nuclear-weapons use arises from North Korea.

Even if you carefully follow the news, you might have missed the atomic misadventures of the real rogue state in today's world.

Yes, the USA is again number one. The warfare state is prepared to spend more tens of billions of dollars to expand its already overwhelming nuclear arsenal. The U.S. has produced 70,000 nuclear warheads since it started the Manhattan Project during World War II. Now the Pentagon wants to expand in a direction that will open the door to really using nuclear weapons to make war against poor, Third World countries, Washington's targets of choice these days.

The latest plan is to make small nuclear weapons. These will be fission bombs with a yield of about five to 10 kilotons of TNT. Like the larger "conventional" warheads used against Iraq to intimidate the population into surrendering, or to blow up underground bunkers and air-raid shelters, these are tactical weapons. They are meant not simply to intimidate but to be used.

Can anyone doubt that the Pentagon bullies, once they have these weapons available, will find a way to

use them? They have used depleted-uranium warheads to penetrate underground bunkers and shelters and destroy them. They have used 20-ton bombs in and around Baghdad to "shock and awe" the people.

Even testing these weapons will increase the dangers to humans and other living things on the planet, and will remove another constraint set by international treaties during the time when the U.S. and the USSR faced each other with enormous strategic nuclear stockpiles.

Congress disburses only pennies for medical research—for AIDS or SARS, for example. And nothing is done for the 40-plus million uninsured people in the U.S. who have no way to pay hospital bills. Yet the federal government is ready to spend more tens of billions of dollars on this military research for an anti-people weapon.

The Pentagon gang and this administration have shown themselves to be the number one war criminals on the planet. It is they—not Iraq or Iran or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—who have to be disarmed by the people of this country. Keep these tactical nuclear weapons out of their hands by not letting them be built in the first place. And begin meaningful nuclear disarmament by disarming the world's number one rogue state—the United States of America, whose policies are dictated not by the people but by a small clique of super-rich intent on getting even richer at the expense of the rest of the world. □

The 'road map' and U.S. strategy

Continued from page 7

in the 1967 war when Israel seized the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai peninsula. Today an estimated 4.5 million Palestinian refugees and their descendants live in exile, many in extreme poverty in camps in Jordan, Lebanon and elsewhere.

According to Israeli law, any Jewish person from anywhere in the world has the right to "return" to Israel and immediately claim citizenship. Yet not one Palestinian refugee has ever been allowed to return to their homeland. This despite UN Security Council Resolution 191, of 1949, stipulating that all Palestinian refugees must be granted the right to return.

The Bush administration has conveniently left Resolution 191 out of those mentioned in the "road map." Moreover, the Sharon government has stated from the very beginning that it will never consider allowing the Palestinians back.

Sharon and the entire Israeli power structure are opposed to any Palestinian right to return. They view it as undermining the existence of Israel as an exclusivist state in which Jewish people are given special and superior rights. The U.S. rulers support the apartheid-like character of the Israeli state, seeing it as a guarantee that Israel will remain an outpost of Western imperialism in the Middle East.

Many inside and outside Israel have been surprised that Sharon has agreed to negotiations at all, even with major conditions and reservations. Sharon's whole career—which spans the existence of Israel—has been dedicated to expanding the state. His bloody history of massacres and repression against the Palestinians is well known.

Two factors explain Sharon's "new look." First, there is intense pressure from

Washington—Israel's economic, diplomatic and military lifeline—to get on board with the new Bush initiative.

Second, Sharon intends to annex large sections of the West Bank, and to relegate the Palestinians to disconnected pieces of territory surrounded by Israeli military power. In addition, Israel would retain control of the borders, airspace, water and subsoil rights of all of Palestine.

Under his plan, the Palestinians would be "self-governing" within small, controllable areas that would become labor colonies for Israeli businesses.

What Washington and Wall Street want

The U.S. objective in this process is the same one Washington has pursued for decades: the establishment of U.S. hegemony over a pacified Middle East. Domination of the Middle East, due to its oil riches and strategic position, has been a central goal of the U.S. ruling class since World War II.

Crushing the Palestinian resistance—which is so central to the struggle in the region as a whole—is considered to be key to establishing U.S. hegemony over the entire area. Achieving that goal is what the "road map" is all about.

Elias Rashmawi, a spokesperson for the Free Palestine Alliance-U.S., said of the negotiations:

"The road map is the ultimate formulation by the U.S. to fully end all forms of resistance and fragment the Palestinian national unity. The plan brings nothing new to the Palestinian people. The claim that a Palestinian state will emerge is not any different from the 'Autonomy' project of the 1970s and the first Camp David agreement. Missing are all core and fundamental issues, particularly the right of return and the principle of full national sovereignty.

"In reality this is a 'security plan' designed to destroy resistance on all fronts. The ultimate goal is not Palestinian statehood and return, but the normalization of Zionist discourse and the Israeli polity throughout the Arab world.

"This plan is part of the overall design by the U.S. to control the Arab world in full by gutting out the core liberationist effort—the Palestinian resistance.

"The ongoing attempt to bring the Palestinian National Authority into the fold along with other Arab regimes is a dangerous attempt to strike a wedge in Palestinian society and to further strengthen the dependency relationship on the U.S. It is geared towards the transformation of the Palestinian national movement into a functionary entity in a globalized U.S. economy and a militarized region subject to the garrisons of Israel and the U.S. Nullified are all aspects of independence.

"This is a plan that is in tandem with other ongoing U.S. projects worldwide, including the transformation of the Philippines as a whole into a military base, the destruction of the Cuban model, the control of the Korean peninsula, and the total grip on Latin America." □

Protesta Nacional del 4 DE JULIO EN FILADELFIA para Parar las Guerras Internas y Externas de los EE.UU

Continúa de pagina 12

El racismo está en aumento; los programas de Acción Afirmativa están siendo atacados; la restitución por la esclavitud, por el genocidio indígena, y por la ocupación colonial no ha acontecido; y los medios informativos le dan carta blanca a los derechistas políticos para atacar los derechos de trabajadores, los pobres y personas que sufren diferentes grados de opresión.

La Rama Ejecutiva bajo el mando de Bush opera bajo modo dictatorial—sus decisiones fácilmente avaladas por el Congreso y el Tribunal Supremo.

Las guerras de Bush a favor de los intereses corporativos, requieren una transferencia masiva de fondos de los programas sociales. La administración reparte contratos lucrativos a Bechtel, a Halliburton, y a Exxon, y ha ingeniado \$2 billones en recortes de impuestos que benefician principalmente al más rico. Pero la mayoría en los EEUU encuentra un alto desempleo; ha habido recortes en el presupuesto para el transporte público, viviendas, bienestar social, educación, cuidado de niños, beneficios para los veteranos y personas con VIH; hay cierres de hospitales, bibliotecas, centros de rehabilitación de drogas y más, cuando los estados se fuerzan a equilibrar sus presupuestos porque Washington no ayuda.

Se aumenta la disparidad de ingresos. Según el Departamento del Trabajo, en

los años 80, el ingreso promedio de los grandes ejecutivos era 40 veces más que el del trabajador promedio. Hoy la diferencia es 531 veces. Las mujeres ganan 73% de lo que los hombres ganan, 63% para mujeres Negras y 53% para mujeres Latinas.

Pero no encaramos estos tiempos difíciles sin esperanza. Millones de personas de todas las esferas se reunieron en este país y alrededor del mundo en manifestaciones inauditas contra la guerra y para la justicia social, y no

Pending formal endorsements, groups that have participated in building the July 4th mobilization: • Act-Up Philadelphia • Anarcho-Communist Union of Philadelphia • Act Now to Stop War & End Racism (ANSWER) • ATAC (Avenging the Ancestors Coalition) • Brandywine Peace Community • Catholic Peace Fellowship • Communist Party • E.PA & DE • Defenestrator • Delaware County Wage Peace and Justice • Democratic Socialists of America (Philadelphia) • Earth Charter Citizens • East Timor Action Network • Friends of MOVE, Global Women's Strike • Green Party of Philadelphia • International Action Center • International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal • Minority Experience Network • National Organization of Women (Philadelphia) • NION • Partnership for Civil Justice • Peace Action Delaware Valley • Phila-

delphia Anti-War Forum • Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network (PRAWN) • Queers for Peace and Justice • Refuse & Resist • Solidarity • Uhuru Solidarity Committee • United for Peace and Justice • Unite for Peace • Veterans for Peace • Wages for Housework Campaign • Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, Youth PAWR

podemos rendirnos ahora. Saquemos energías de las historias de resistencia de nuestros pueblos. Nosotros en Filadelfia hemos estado firmes en la unión. Haciendo que nuestras voces sean oídas en protestas, entrando en el proceso político directamente, el pueblo llega a ser un factor decisivo.

Los ojos del mundo estarán en Filadelfia en el 4 de julio. Le pedimos a usted que esté con nosotros.

July 4 Mobilization—(215) 701-7341 o July4Mobilization@hotmail.com

delphia Anti-War Forum • Philadelphia Regional Anti-War Network (PRAWN) • Queers for Peace and Justice • Refuse & Resist • Solidarity • Uhuru Solidarity Committee • United for Peace and Justice • Unite for Peace • Veterans for Peace • Wages for Housework Campaign • Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, Youth PAWR

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Filipino people say no

Reject joint war maneuvers with U.S.

By John Catalinotto

The U.S. and Philippines governments have been trying to use the excuse of the “war on terror” to reintroduce Pentagon forces into the islands. At each step they run into increased opposition from the people of the former U.S. colony.

It was reported by the Philippines press that on June 2, popular resistance had forced the postponement of the latest scheduled joint military exercises.

Until an erupting volcano and a mass protest threw them out in 1991, U.S. forces inhabited two major military bases on the major Philippines island of Luzon. These were Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base, which saw its first U.S. troops in 1901 and became the largest U.S. land base in the world. Both were used heavily during the war on Vietnam.

After the bases were closed, the Filipino people made it part of their constitution that U.S. troops would not be stationed on their national territory.

In the days following Sept. 11, 2001, the government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was one of the first to throw in support behind the Bush administration. Throughout this winter and spring the Pentagon and the Philippines Armed Forces have increased joint oper-

ations. In April they carried out joint military exercises and U.S. troops entered both the old bases.

U.S. “advisors” have been training Filipino troops who are hunting down the Abu Sayyaf organization in the southern Philippines. When Macapagal-Arroyo made a state visit to Washington for four days, beginning May 19, Bush promised to carry out another joint operation known as the Balikatan exercises. The two leaders vowed to crush the Abu Sayyaf group “once and for all.”

Bush offers \$30 million in warfare goods

Bush also offered \$30 million in new aid for training and equipping the Philippine armed forces, and 20 UH-1H helicopters. The Philippines government, representing only the few wealthy Filipinos, looks to the U.S. to save it from insurgencies it faces—and not from the Abu Sayyaf group, which is relatively insignificant.

Philippine popular organizations consider Abu Sayyaf to be simply a bandit group, without a political program. With only a few hundred fighters and no popular support, Abu Sayyaf would of course be doomed in a serious military battle with Filipino and U.S. troops.

But there are two legitimate liberation movements with popular followings that both Manila and Washington are really targeting. One is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), with 12,500 fighters in the South. The Philippines armed forces are currently waging an offensive against the MILF, without success.

The other movement is the New People’s Army (NPA), whose political organization is the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). A leading organization in the NDFP is the Communist Party of the Philippines. The NPA and the MILF have a united front against the government.

These groups represent serious popular insurgencies that can challenge the pro-U.S. government in Manila. Prospero Pichay, head of the armed forces committee in the Philippines House of Representatives, says the U.S. aid “will be welcome assistance. If we have to modernize the armed forces using local funds, we will not be able to modernize it at all.”

With the Abu Sayyaf story so obviously a ploy, Washington and Manila are looking for a better way to justify the joint exercises. On May 31 the New York Times ran a front-page story not only on Abu Sayyaf but also on alleged connections between

the MILF and al-Qaeda. It quoted unnamed “intelligence officials” from assorted countries on the Pacific rim who described in vivid detail alleged MILF explosives training camps.

Filipinos don’t buy story

Whether or not this story convinced anyone in the U.S. is yet to be seen. It failed miserably in Sulu in the southern Philippines.

According to a story in the Manila Times of June 2, “Sulu residents opposed hosting the Balikatan exercises when they learned that U.S. soldiers would take part in combat against the Abu Sayyaf.”

“Sulu officials also said that residents remain resentful of foreigners a century after suffering at the hands of American soldiers in the pacification campaign during the Filipino-American War.” That war followed the 1898 Spanish-American war and wiped out about 600,000 Filipinos, who fought the U.S. occupation for 17 years.

Philippines Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said on June 2 that the Balikatan war games scheduled for June will be postponed while the “terms of reference”—the relation of the U.S. troops to the Filipino troops—are sorted out. □

Workers protest pro-militarist moves in Japan

By Migiwa Kanazawa

This spring, the Japanese government has been trying to pass new laws to allow the expansion and aggressive use of the Japanese military. These attempts have aroused popular protest in Tokyo, on the island of Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan.

Japanese politicians in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and in the opposition Democratic Party of Japan have pushed for a more aggressive military posture. These politicians have used an alleged threat from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to press for changes in the Japanese Constitution.

After World War II, as part of the disarming of Japan, the U.S. occupying force imposed a constitution that allows only “defensive” use of Japan’s armed forces. The Japanese military is even called the “Self-Defense Forces.”

The Japanese working class, which has been strongly anti-war following the horrible experience of that inter-imperialist war, has often rallied to defend the pacifist clauses in the Constitution.

This spring, workers in Japan have been protesting new bills before the Diet—the Japanese parliament—that were passed by the lower house on May 14. While these “Emergency Bills” don’t directly change the Constitution, they would allow the Japanese government to order offensive military actions, including a pre-emptive strike against North Korea.

The bills allow prompt government action in case of a so-called military emergency. The government could mobilize not only the Self-Defense Forces, but also all ministries, railroad and airline companies, and any sort of public institution. The definition of “military emergency” is vague and allows a broad interpretation.

Should the bills become law, people in Japan would be expected in the event of war to give up their own property, including land, houses, vehicles and even food if the government asked. If they refused, they could be fined or imprisoned up to six months. Demonstrations, strikes and rallies would also be prohibited.

The law would be the first legal framework for Japan to launch a military attack



30,000 workers gather in Tokyo.

PHOTO: ONE MILLION SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN JAPAN

on another country since World War II. This could certainly create tension with other East Asian countries; its immediate relevance is to try to intimidate North Korea.

Series of anti-war actions

After the lower house passed the bills, on May 17 some 5,000 people met at an open-air stadium in Okinawa to ratify resolutions of protest.

On May 21, another 1,000 workers in labor unions demonstrated in front of the Diet building in Tokyo. They held sit-ins all day.

The biggest meeting was on May 23. Thirty thousand workers gathered in a mass rally organized by 20 different labor unions of land, sea and air transportation and longshore workers, plus more than 100 prominent individuals. Some marched into the Diet building. Others went to downtown Tokyo to get out the word.

Some 5,000 in Okinawa ratify resolutions protesting pro-war bills.

PHOTO: ANTI-WAR JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE

Since May 29, workers have been protesting a public hearing on the bills. The hearing is one of the procedures required to put the bills into effect.

Despite these protests, the Japanese government is pressing on with its pro-military policy. It has scheduled the first-ever joint exercise involving Japanese F-15s and AWACS aircraft in the United States. Using in-air refueling would allow the F-15s to fly much further from Japan—for example, to attack North Korea. The drills will train Japanese F-15 pilots to fly combat missions and be integrated into electronically guided warfare.

On May 28 a citizens’ group opposed to the AWACS training mission rallied in protest in front of the AWACS home base in Hamamatsu.

Interviewed on NHK television in Japan on May 31, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz urged the Japanese to send medical and engineering units into Iraq, calling them “peacekeepers.” He also asked Japan to cooperate with the United States to isolate and threaten North Korea. □



Las bombas cayendo y los dólares también

Por Bill Cecil

Los invasores del régimen de Bush entraron a Irak el 19 de marzo. Después de dos meses y miles de civiles muertos, sucede que el 19 de mayo, el Secretario del Tesoro de los Estados Unidos, John Snow da la señal que los Estados Unidos no actuarían para detener la caída del dólar contra el euro.

La moneda estadounidense ha disminuido un 26% frente al euro desde el discurso de Bush en enero del 2002. La invasión de Irak y la nueva política del dólar están directamente relacionadas. La invasión hizo posible la caída del dólar.

Ambas fueron guiadas por la crisis económica capitalista. Ambas fueron actos de guerra.

Snow dio esta señal en Deauville, Francia donde había acudido para la reunión del Grupo de los 8—Breñaña, Canadá, Francia, Alemania, Italia, Japón, Rusia y los Estados Unidos. Algunos pensaron que los Estados Unidos usarían esta reunión para remendar las relaciones dañadas por la guerra contra Irak

Pero Snow declaró una guerra económica—una gigantesca operación contra las economías de la Unión Europea, el Japón y Canadá. Fue una movida tan peli-grosa como cualquier aventura militar.

Los precios de las acciones europeas disminuyeron después de las declaraciones de Snow. Ya para el fin de la sem-

ana, Berlín, Moscú y París habían votado en las Naciones Unidas para reconocer el “derecho” de los Estados Unidos de ocupar a Irak y vender su petróleo.

Sin embargo, esta rendición no va a satisfacer a Washington.

No cambiará los factores económicos que guía la agenda de Bush.

Lo que Snow en realidad dijo fue que la fuerza del dólar dependía de la “confianza del inversor” y no de la tasa de cambio. El dio a entender que los Estados Unidos ya no compraría más dólares para mantener la moneda fuerte. Fue un cambio importante. Cuando Snow fue nominado para la posición del Tesoro en enero, él dijo que quería un dólar fuerte.

¿Qué cambió en el lapso de cuatro meses? Es muy sencillo. Las tropas estadounidenses tomaron la segunda reserva petrolera más grande del mundo.

Un dólar más bajo es en sí un recorte en los salarios de los trabajadores estadounidenses. Los precios de los productos estadounidenses son más bajos en el mercado mundial y los productos importados como los automóviles, son más caros aquí. Les da a las compañías de los Estados Unidos ganancias más grandes en sus inversiones mundiales.

Aún antes de la conferencia de prensa de Snow, la revista Business Week, llamó la bajada del dólar “buenas noticias para gran parte de la América Empresarial, especialmente para las compañías multi-

nacionales. ...La razón mayor de las ganancias que se están viendo no es un alza en las exportaciones o una mejor protección contra las importaciones baratas sino que simplemente son las ganancias producto de unas monedas más caras que el dólar.”

Cerca del 26% de las ganancias de las corporaciones estadounidenses son de operaciones en el exterior. Esa suma se espera que aumente.

Pero un dólar más barato está lleno de riesgos para la clase dominante de los Estados Unidos. A los soldados se les puede ordenar avanzar, detenerse o retirarse. Sin embargo, el capital tiene su energía propia. La caída del dólar podría cambiar de un retiro organizado a una derrota. ¿Por qué debería la gente comprar acciones y activos valorados en dólares cuando esta perdiendo su valor?

“Cuando eres el banquero del mundo entero, realmente tienes que mantener la confianza en ti y en tu moneda”, dijo el economista mayor de la Northern Trust Paul Kasriel a los reporteros del programa televisivo CNNMoney. “Si comienzas a decir a los acreedores que vas a compensarles con una moneda que no tiene tanto valor como antes, ellos no van a querer mantener más una cuenta en tu banco”.

Los Estados Unidos tienen una economía de \$10 trillones de dólares—la más grande del mundo. También tiene el déficit comercial más grande que se ha

visto en el mundo. El año pasado los EE.UU. importaron \$435 billones más en productos que los que vendieron en el exterior. Solamente en marzo de este año la cifra alcanzó \$44 billones.

¿Cómo ha sido posible que la economía sobreviva tal déficit comercial sin desplomarse? Durante los años 1980 y 1990 inversionistas internacionales compraron una cantidad enorme de activos fijos en los EE.UU. Entre los años 1995 y 2000 los EE.UU. recibieron aproximadamente \$500 billones por año en inversiones. Eso no incluye los billones en acciones, bonos, bonos del tesoro, bienes y raíces, cuentas bancarias, etc.

“Inversionistas del exterior ahora son dueños de alrededor de \$8 billones de activos financieros en los EE.UU.”, según reportó el New York Times el 20 de abril. También “tienen dos quintas partes de la deuda federal en manos privadas”. Para pagar el déficit, los EE.UU. necesitan \$1,5 mil millones en inversiones nuevas externas por día. ¡Ahora estamos hablando de ayuda del exterior!

Mucho de ese dinero viene de países productores de petróleo en el Medio Oriente y otros lugares. Sus economías están atadas a Wall Street porque el petróleo se comercializa en dólares. Se estima que solamente Arabia Saudita tiene casi \$1 billón invertido en los EE.UU. Eso fue el año pasado. Actualmente, a lo mejor esas inversiones tienen un valor mucho menor. La caída del dólar es, entre otras cosas, un robo tremendo a estos inversionistas internacionales.

Entonces, ¿porqué los sauditas y los demás no sacan su dinero? ¿Por qué no venden el petróleo por euros en vez de dólares? Irak recibió permiso para hacer eso en 2000. Irán, Libia, y Venezuela han dicho que posiblemente harán lo mismo.

Irak no va a vender el petróleo por euros por mucho tiempo. Está bajo la ocupación militar de los EE.UU. Irán ha subido en la lista de blancos posibles de Bush. Y si Arabia Saudita comienza a sacar fondos de los EE.UU. no pasaría mucho tiempo antes de que Donald Rumsfeld “descubriera” un grupito aliado a “al-Qaeda” en el palacio real en Riad. La ocupación militar de los EE.UU. en Irak es como una pistola apuntada a la cabeza. No solamente ubica una fuerza militar masiva en el país vecino. También proporciona a la América corporativa el control sobre el precio del petróleo. Esto es una pistola apuntada a la cabeza del mundo entero.

Mucha gente, hasta en el movimiento anti-guerra se quedó perpleja por la deses-peración de la administración de Bush de atacar a Irak. No creyeron en las mentiras sobre las supuestas conexiones con al-Qaeda o en las armas de destrucción masiva. Ni siquiera la codicia por el petróleo pareció justificar los riesgos.

La desesperación del imperialismo estadounidense fue el resultado de la caída de la tasa de ganancias corporativas. La conquista de Irak, las amenazas contra Irán y Corea del Norte y la guerra económica contra Europa tienen una sola meta: destruir cualquier vía económica del planeta que no conduzca a Wall Street.

Endose el Llamado para la Protesta Nacional del 4 DE JULIO EN FILADELFIA para Parar las Guerras Internas y Externas de los EE.UU

El viernes 4 de julio, únase a miles en Filadelfia para protestar contra George W. Bush.

La protesta comenzará a las 8 a.m., mitin 10 a.m., marcha 12 mediodía, evento de clausura 2 p.m.

Únase para demandar un cambio total en prioridades:

- Fin a la ocupación de Iraq por los EE.UU. — y que regresen las tropas a los EEUU
- No a las guerras interminables, a ocupación, el colonialismo y el imperio de los EE.UU. ** Revocación del Acta Patriótica, restauración de las libertades civiles, fin al fraude electoral y a la corrupción
- No al racismo, al sexismo, y a los ataques a inmigrantes
- No a la privatización, a los recortes en la educación, el bienestar social, los beneficios para veteranos
- Presupuesto para servicios sociales — no para la máquina de guerra del Pentágono

El viernes, 4 de julio, George W. Bush, junto con todos los ex presidentes vivos de los EE.UU., han sido invitados a hablar en la apertura del Centro Nacional de la Constitución en Filadelfia. Sandra Day O'Connor, jueza del Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, estará también presente para recibir la Medalla de la Libertad. Ellos estarán celebrando en un edificio construido sobre las tumbas de africanos esclavizados. Estarán culminando una semana de festividades llamadas “Bienvenida América” patrocinadas por la gigantesca firma de petróleo Sunoco.

Estamos determinados a parar la serie interminable de guerras contra el pueblo tanto de aquí como en el exterior. Nosotros nos solidarizamos con los pueblos que por todas partes del mundo luchan para un mundo que valúa al pueblo por encima de las ganancias. Nos solidarizamos con los pueblos que viven bajo la opresión y la ocupación, los cuales no tienen nada celebrar en este día.

Bush ha mentido sobre las armas de destrucción masiva en Iraq y continúa mintiendo cuando dice que la guerra ha terminado, mientras manda más tropas para aplastar la resistencia iraquí. El pueblo de Iraq está sin electricidad, sin agua potable, y sin cuidado médico mientras bombas — racimo sin explotar, epidemias de cólera, y balas disparadas por

tropas de los EE.UU. — claman vidas todos los días. Los EE.UU. continúan discutiendo planes para cambios de régimen, ya sea por invasiones, presión económica o aumentando las operaciones secretas, contra todos los que procuran retener su soberanía nacional. Siria, Líbano, Palestina, Corea del norte, Cuba, Zimbabwe, Irán, Venezuela, Colombia, Haití y otros países se designan para la agresión. Sin embargo, el presupuesto de \$400 mil millones del Pentágono es 30 veces más que el presupuesto combinado de defensa de todos los países que son blanco de los planes guerrillistas de Bush.

Tenemos a un presidente que hurtó la elección negando el voto Negro en la Florida. Ha habido un asalto mayor a la Carta de Derechos por el pasaje del Acta Patriótica y la legalización del perfil racial. El encarcelamiento está en aumento con más de 2.2 millones de personas encarceladas y sobre 3,000 en pena de muerte. Las madres solteras de color son la población de la prisión que más rápido crece.

Miles de inmigrantes, incluso ciudadanos de los EE.UU., han sido detenidos sin cargos ni audiencias. Los derechos constitucionales se les sigue negando a los presos políticos Mumia Abu Jamal, Leonard Peltier, a los 5 cubanos y a otros.

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