

WHAT WILL STOP IMPERIALISM

Jan. 31 — These are dangerous times. The political and diplomatic maneuvering that precedes military action is growing, with the U.S. government in the forefront of trying to round up support for new imperialist interventions.

We in the United States have a special obligation to stay the hands of the war hawks, because the Pentagon, in our name and sucking up our money, is the most aggressive and destructive force in the world today.

That's why Workers World Party is in complete solidarity with all the anti-war actions that are demanding: No war on Iran! No intervention in Syria! U.S.-NATO out of Libya! End the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq now! Bring U.S. troops and special ops home from Korea, Guantanamo, Pakistan, Somalia and everywhere else!

But taking action to oppose imperialist wars and occupations is not an issue for the anti-war movement alone. Everyone in the United States who is suffering from or just worrying about the deep economic problems affecting the millions here needs to understand that the war threats are intimately connected with imperialist plunder abroad and capitalist exploitation at home.

Moreover, it is only when the war-makers in Washington fear a massive response to their lethal decisions that we can hope to pull them back from the brink.

It is clear from the many anti-war and anti-imperialist demands of those attracted to the Occupy movement that such a consciousness is growing in this country.

So we are in a race for time. Which will come first — another war or the explosive growth of anti-war sentiment among the people, especially the working class and oppressed?

Capitalist economic crisis fuels war drive

The deepening capitalist economic crisis is fueling an increasingly belligerent foreign policy by all the imperialist powers. The "scramble for Africa" that happened toward the end of the 19th century, when the European capitalists raced each other to grab the most territory on that great continent, is being repeated today — but now it is a struggle to recolonize countries in Asia and Africa that had, by the 1960s, won some measure of independence, aided by the existence of a bloc of socialist countries.

In today's scramble, the U.S. has blasted its way into Iraq and Afghanistan, with the British ruling class tagging along for their cut of the pie. The European imperialists and the U.S. collaborated on hammering down the Gadhafi government in Libya — like Iraq, a country

that had used its oil revenues to greatly raise the standard of living of most of the people.

Now the U.S., Britain and France are hauling out their big guns — literally and figuratively — to try and get United Nations cover for an attack on Syria. As we write, the foreign ministers of all three imperialist countries are in New York putting pressure on Russia and China, which have veto power in the U.N. Security Council. These two only abstained on the Libya vote early last year. The imperialists used the resolution allowing a "no-fly zone" over Libya as cover for an intensive bombing campaign that lasted more than six months and finally brought down the government of that North African country. Obviously, to them no-fly doesn't apply to their bomb-laden planes and drones.

China and Russia have said they don't want to make that mistake again. It takes an outright veto to block a resolution supported by the other three permanent members of the Security Council — the U.S., Britain and France. We hope that this time these two countries will do just that and emphatically vote no.

The irony is that the imperialists, the U.S. first and foremost, are pushing military solutions because they, in fact, are growing weaker economically. The capitalist system that has fattened off super-exploitation of the developing world is now choking on the highly efficient, high-tech global economy it has created.

This crisis brings to the fore a fundamental contradiction of capitalism that Karl Marx unraveled when it was still in its early stages. Capitalist competition drives forward technological innovation, which at first makes more profits for the owners because they can shed labor. But eventually the process overwhelms the markets for their products — workers have no money to buy the greater and greater quantities of goods produced! — and a crisis occurs. The privately owned profit system is at war with the socialized character of the productive process.

Today's crisis is worldwide and reflects the global character of the capitalist economy and the labor market. It will not yield to politicians' promises or some tinkering with credit or taxes or currencies.

The impasse the system is in can intensify all of capitalism's ugliest features: xenophobia, as seen in the vicious crusade against immigrants; racism, which deepens the immense suffering of the oppressed communities even if a few individuals are allowed to advance; jingoism and "America first" bombast against other countries, most notably China at this

time, concealing who the real enemies of the working class are.

It is U.S. corporations, and the banks behind them, that decide to move their operations to low-wage countries in search of even greater profits, even though they already possess the greatest riches in human history. Unfortunately, some union leaders are misdirecting the anger of their members against China at this time. That only feeds into the divide-and-conquer strategy of the boss class, which has an international outlook. It is time for U.S. labor leaders to also think globally and strengthen solidarity with workers around the world.

Solidarity and unity needed to fight the capitalist system

But political reaction can also arouse the instincts of solidarity and unity of all the workers and oppressed — instincts they need to fight the system. It is beginning to happen. Black, white, Latino/a, Asian, Native and Arab together are helping each other resist evictions, walk the picket lines and occupy public spaces in protest over poverty and injustice.

People here celebrated the struggles of the Egyptians in Tahrir Square. The Egyptians in turn cheered on the Wisconsin sit-in at the Capitol building and sent pizzas, via cell phone, to Occupy Wall Street.

Class struggles are growing in Europe as workers there fight back against the austerity measures imposed by banks and bureaucrats.

Decades ago, Longshore union workers in the U.S. refused to load apartheid South African ships and cargo destined for U.S.-supported dictatorships in Central America.

This kind of solidarity is a direct challenge to the empire builders who would rip up our pensions, our jobs, our health care and other social services in their mad profit-driven attempts to control the world.

We must work to ensure that the anti-war movement deepens its roots among the people, especially the most oppressed, and becomes one with the class struggle against capitalism and imperialism. □

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As danger to Iran grows Anti-war groups to hit the streets

By John Catalinotto

The following are three important anti-imperialist events scheduled for the coming months. Workers World Party is supporting and participating in each of them.

FEB. 4: Emergency protest in 48 cities to stop war on Iran

U.S.-based anti-imperialist and anti-war organizations have called for protest demonstrations to stop U.S. aggression aimed at Iran on Feb. 4, calling it a “global day of action.” As of Jan. 29, the movement had grown to include protests in 48 U.S. cities, plus cities in five other countries.

The demonstrators demand, in a leaflet posted on a few of the endorsing organizations’ websites: “No war, no sanctions, no intervention, no assassinations against Iran.”

While the organizations involved have varied assessments of the Iranian government, they all see that any intervention by U.S. imperialism in the oil-rich Asian country not only threatens the Iranian people, but could also be a stepping stone to a much wider war in Asia.

Activists in Iran are also concerned about these dangers. The Iranian organization called The House of Latin America has been contacting its friends in the Western Hemisphere to work toward actions on Feb. 4.

Workers World spoke on Jan. 28 with Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, one of the original organizations to call for the Feb. 4 action.

“The quick response to the emergency action shows deep apprehension about the threat of war,” said Flounders. “Different combinations of the endorsing groups have already called for actions in 48 cities around the United States. Each of these groups has its own political program and analysis of the world situation, but they have agreed to give priority to fighting against this new and possibly devastating war that threatens humanity.

“Sometimes people in the U.S. fail to see that sanctions are in themselves an act of war. Those the U.S. and the United Nations carried out against Iraq from 1990 to 2003 cost the lives of more than 1 million Iraqis, including at least half a million children. The Iran sanction measures also impose sanctions on any country that doesn’t go along with the U.S. blockade. This drives up oil prices and threatens to unhinge the economies of the poorest countries.

“International support, considering the short time span, has been good,” continued the IAC leader. “Demonstrations are planned in Ireland, Norway, India, Bangladesh and Canada.”

People can follow developments on the Facebook link: No War On Iran: National Day of Action Feb 4, tinyurl.com/883f7jg. There will also be updates, giving times and places of demonstrations, at the International Action Center website: iacenter.org.

MARCH 23-25: UNAC national antiwar conference

Hundreds of anti-war activists are expected to attend the United National Antiwar Coalition’s National Conference in Stamford, Conn., March 23-25.

UNAC established itself as a major anti-war coalition in the summer of 2010 when 800 people gathered for a conference in Albany, N.Y. At that meeting, a large majority voted to support UNAC’s anti-imperialist positions opposing U.S. intervention against Iran and condemning U.S. support for the Israeli settler-state.

The group held major anti-war demonstrations, a march of 10,000 people from Union Square to downtown Manhattan on April 9 and a march of 3,000 people in San Francisco on April 10. Demonstrations were also held on the 10th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

UNAC says this will be “a conference to challenge the wars of the 1% against the 99% abroad and at home” and to “say NO! to the NATO/G8 wars and poverty agenda.” (unacpeace.org) One of the main tasks of the conference will be to plan protest activities in Chicago when both NATO and the G8 are holding summits May 15-22.

A series of workshops and plenaries at the March 23-25 conference will take up questions including the Occupy Wall Street movement, the global economic crisis, anti-Islam bigotry, the movements that sprang up in Tunisia and Egypt and spread throughout the Middle East, and U.S. intervention in many parts of the world, including Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Latin America and Africa.

UNAC says its conference will highlight “the relationship between the wars abroad and the racist war at home on the Black Community” and “the way in which mobilizing around these issues is central to effective movement building.”

May 19: Protest the G8 and NATO in Chicago

Whoever plans summits for the imperialist gangsters dominating and plundering the world decided that it was a good idea, after the October 2010 NATO summit, to hold summits for both the G8 economic centers (the old G7 plus Russia) and the NATO military powers in Chicago on May 15-22.

The summits were planned before the so-called debt crisis and austerity measures opened a new recession in Europe — and provoked a fightback from European workers along with the rise of the “Indignant People’s movement.” It was also long before the Occupy movement began to change the political discourse in the United States and put youth on the streets — with banners and political discussion — in more than 100 cities.

By last summer anti-war forces in the U.S., many of them in UNAC, began to organize protests for that week in May. They submitted requests for permits to the Chicago police. They organized a struggle around the right to demonstrate, appealing under the name of the Coalition Against the NATO and G8 War & Poverty Agenda (CANG8).

On Jan. 12, the City of Chicago granted the permit for suitable marches and rallies. Organizers took note, however, of a clause that allows the City to rescind the permit should there be a demand from Homeland Security to do so. CANG8 and all supporters of the right to protest say they will remain mobilized to fight for that right.

Meanwhile, the imperialists scaled down their summits so that the G8 will meet May 19-20 and NATO May 20-21. CANG8 will hold a “People’s Alternate Summit” on May 12-13 and a mass rally and march on May 19. The entire week will be filled with meetings and protests.

On Jan. 25, Adbusters, the Canada-based network associated with the Occupy movement, issued Tactical Briefing #25, urging massive support for the May actions.

Besides a growing movement within the U.S. that supports the protests in Chicago, the joint meeting of NATO and G8 has aroused international indignation. Already the organizers of the Chicago actions have opened discussions with anti-war forces in other countries to arrange solidarity actions — either to participate in Chicago or to hold mass actions in their home countries.