



NEHAWU

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ADVANCING WORKING CLASS POWER TOWARDS OUR 10TH NATIONAL CONGRESS AND OUR 26TH ANNIVERSARY

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1.1. THE AU REITERATES THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE AND CONSENSUS IN BURUNDI

13 May 2015

African Union Commission Statement

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, continues to follow closely the developments in Burundi, which have the potential to further destabilize the country and the region, and to complicate the search for a solution to the current crisis. It is in this regard that she participated in the extraordinary summit of the East African Community (EAC) which took place today in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The Chairperson recalls the AU's principle rejecting unconstitutional changes of Government and its commitment to the rule of law and democracy, as enshrined in the Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. In this respect, the Chairperson condemns in the strongest terms today's coup attempt in Bujumbura, calls for the return to constitutional order and urges all stakeholders to exercise utmost restraint and refrain from any act of violence likely to lead to further loss of lives, population displacement and destruction of property.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses the AU's full support to the efforts of the leaders of the EAC, in particular, the steps agreed upon at the Dar es Salaam Summit, including (1) the call to Burundian authorities to postpone the elections for a period not beyond the mandate of the current government; (2) regional efforts aimed to restore peace and stability so as to ensure the return of refugees and the holding of elections in a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and inclusive manner; and (3) the cessation of violence by all parties.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU's appeal to all the Burundian stakeholders, within the framework of the country's constitution, laws and in the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, to accept the

recommendations of the EAC summit, end all acts of violence and intimidation, respect fundamental human rights and freedoms, and engage in a genuine dialogue which will contribute to peace and stability in Burundi and create conditions conducive to the holding of free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections.

The Chairperson of the Commission pledges the AU's commitment to continue to work with the EAC leaders, as well as with other international stakeholders, to contribute to the search for a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis.

Source: <http://cpauc.au.int/en/content/au-reiterates-need-dialogue-and-consensus-burundi>

1.2. AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION CONGRATULATES LIBERIA ON ITS EBOLA-FREE VICTORY

10 May 2015

African Union Commission Statement

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, congratulates Liberia on being certified, by the World Health Organisation this week, as Ebola-free. This is a victory for the people's and Government of Liberia, and a victory of all Africans and the international community, who rallied in solidarity to support them in this fight.

“Although we may see a great improvement in combatting the pandemic, the global community, however, must understand that the fight against Ebola is not yet over. As such, strengthening healthcare systems and surveillance systems should continuously remain at the core of responding to the disease until the African continent is free of Ebola”.

“It gives us, as Africans, great pleasure to see Liberia Ebola free. This is testament to the notion that if we stand together as a continent, we can achieve great things for Africa and in this case, defeating the Ebola virus in one of the most affected countries in West Africa. Today is a particularly significant day for the African Union which, through its African Union Mission to the Ebola Outbreak In West Africa (ASEOWA) sent 300 qualified African health workers to treat and care for Ebola victims in Liberia alone. In total, ASEOWA contributed over 800 health workers to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. ASEOWA also played a big part in rebuilding the health systems of the affected countries. As a sign of the improvements on the ground, we have now started drawing down our health workers.” expressed Dr. Dlamini-Zuma.

Dr Dlamini Zuma congratulated Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the government and the people of Liberia for overcoming the Ebola epidemic in their country. She also expressed her gratitude to African leaders who rallied to the call made by the AU Commission for health workers.

The AUC Chairperson thanked partners from all parts of the world who have been and continue to be instrumental in helping the affected countries get to zero. She highlighted the role played by the African private sector which showed its solidarity with the affected countries by donating funds and embarking on other fund raising projects for the ASEOWA mission.

“The African Union will remain seized with the eradication of Ebola and all other contagious diseases, and in this respect, we are looking at establishing the African center for Disease Control. While Liberia's victory indicates that West Africa is near defeating the deadly disease, we must not cease to see the complete eradication through. It is now up to all of us as Africans, with the enduring support of our friends from international communities, to collectively fight aggressively to curb the spread of Ebola and restore the dignity of those affected,” concluded Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

Official commemorations are planned for Monrovia on the 9th to mark the end of Ebola. Due to its contribution in the Ebola fight, ASEOWA teams have been given special invitations to attend the event. A statement from the African Union Commission Chairperson will be read by the ASEOWA mission head Dr Julius Oketta.

“To commemorate this milestone victory over Ebola, we intend to bring together local and international stakeholders to reflect on this difficult chapter in our nation's history and show appreciation to all stakeholders, especially ASEOWA, who contributed enormously to the fight against Ebola”, read part of the letter of invitation sent to the African Union by Mr Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, Liberia's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

1.3. 70 YEARS SINCE THE GREAT ANTI-FASCIST VICTORY

09 May 2015

WFTU Statement

The World Federation of Trade Unions honors the 70 years since the Antifascist Victory of the peoples on 9 May 2015. A high-level delegation of the WFTU is participating in the celebrations in Moscow, Russia to pay their respects to the people and the heroic working class of the Soviet Union who sacrificed the most with more than 20 million dead in the war against Nazism and Fascism.

9 May is a symbol of the great victory over Fascism and Nazism which in the times of the II World War seemed impossible to many. However, the enormous military power of German and the Fascist Axis (Italy and Japan) despite the immense support received by the German and International Monopolies were defeated by the organized resistance of the peoples and the role played by the Soviet Union -who at that time was in a temporary alliance with the USA, France and Britain. The II World War was a result of the great intensification of the contradictions and the competitiveness between the capitalist states over the natural resources, the markets and the redistribution of the control over the world. Fascism/Nazism: The most brutal face of capitalism

During the II World War, which was the biggest crime of capitalism against humanity, the people realized in full extent the barbarity which this system is capable of. Some of the well-known practices and incidents of the period were the following:

- Concentration - "Labor" camps were created by the Nazi throughout Europe, where labor was compulsory for 17-20 hours, which often along with mistreatment and starvation led to the extermination of those imprisoned. Brutal tortures and indescribable moments of terror took place with the extermination of millions in gas chambers, crematoria and other means. The list of still existing transnational monopolies that profited from this type of forced labor is very long.
- Winter of 1941. In Katyn (Belarus) under the control of the German Nazi, thousands of Polish Military Officials were executed and buried in mass graves. In April 1943, the Nazis tried to turn their crime into a provocation against the Soviet Union by claiming that they discovered graves from people killed by the Red Army. This provocation is still utilized by some today. (κι εμείς τους το θυμίζουμε, μήπως και το ξεχάσουν)
- 1941: In the ravine Baby Yar (Ukraine), the Nazis murdered around 150,000 people. Jews and Bolsheviks were placed alongside the ravine in endless lines, executed with a bullet and then thrown down the cliff.
- July 2nd, 1942: 105 children were accumulated by the Nazis in the village Lidice of Czechoslovakia, a month after all men above 16 years old were murdered in the same village and sent to concentration camps. Only 17 survived.
- 1st of May 1944: 200 Greek Communists participating in the Greek Resistance Army were executed in the Shooting Spot of Kaisariani. The communists were singing and shouting slogans until the last minute of their death. 10 June 1944: In Distomo (Greece), looking for partisans of the resistance the Nazi killed old people, women, children and babies. In 13 December 1945: In Kalavrita (Greece), the Nazi gathered all the citizens in the school and murdered more around 1,436 men of age above 14 years old.

The list of cruelties is endless and expands in many countries.

On the other side of the War, USA and Britain which temporarily sided with the Soviet Union in order to establish their dominance in the imperialist competition against Germany, took decisions which were catastrophic for the humanity as well. It is characteristic to remember:

- On 3-4 February 1945: 1,500 airplanes and 400,000 bombs of USA and Britain killed more than 120,000 people and completely destroyed the city of Dresden. However, it is characteristic to note that the factories of the city which were American investments remained intact.
- 6-9 August 1945: The USA used atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan) killing more than 300,000 people and leaving behind a tragic impact of radioactivity to the generations to come. This tragedy took place even after Germany had already surrendered to the Soviet Union and can only be seen as an effort of the USA government to mark its dominance for the decades to come.
- In April 1949, the NATO was founded to play the role as the master of imperialist wars and dictatorships around the world up to now.

At the same time workers today cannot forget the role by the international monopolies that profited from the war and supported the Nazi Regime. Although the list is too long, some characteristic examples are the following:

- The IT organization of the Nazi concentration extermination camps (78 in total) which was crucial for their “effective organizational functioning” was provided with the contribution of technology and know-how by the American Monopoly IBM.
- The General Motors (American monopoly as well) constructed thousands of armored cars, trucks and tanks for the German Nazi Army.
- In 1941, the Ford Factory in Berlin provided 1/3 of the total of trucks of Wehrmacht, while half of the “employees” of the company were under the “forced labor system” coming from concentration camps in the occupied countries.

The Heroism and the Humanitarian Sacrifice of the Organized and Just struggle of the people

However, the II World War highlighted also the great difference of Man under Capitalism, Fascism and Nazism on the one side and the Man in Socialism, in the Soviet Union and in all movements of resistance in various countries of the world on the other side.

In complete contradiction with the capitalist and fascist ideas and from the side of the Soviet Union, millions of Soviet people voluntarily entered into the Army to defend their country and their people and died in the battlefield with courage and militancy offering their lives as the highest form of sacrifice. The Red Army with discipline and great organizational skills and with the fair cause on their side gave great battles during the Siege of Leningrad, the Battle of Moscow, the Battle of Stalingrad, the Battle of Kursk liberating in its victorious course to Berlin, and the collapse of the center of the Nazi Regime in 40 days, 10 European Countries. On 1st May 1945, the Red Flag was raised over the Reichstag. On the night of May 8th to May 9th, Germany was forced to surrender unconditionally.

At the same time the struggle of the men and women workers in the factories and the socialist production to support the Red Army and to reconstruct the cities and the infrastructure after the war was heroic. The Antifascist Victory was a victory of socialism over capitalism.

In the Antifascist Struggle and the Resistance, great moments of heroism are to be remembered by thousands of known and unknown fighters in Europe and Internationally, in Italy, in Greece, in Spain, in Germany, in France and many more countries against the executions, the tortures, the imprisonment, the exile.

On their memory we continue the struggle today...

Today when the labor and social rights are being under attack in the framework of the international crisis of capitalism, today that the imperialist wars and the conflicts are intensifying, today that the competition for the natural resources, the control, the markets and the profits is increasing, it is no wonder that fascist perceptions are expanding, racism and xenophobia are promoted by the reactionary regimes and various forces, becoming the source of new crimes.

The World Federation of Trade Unions supports the class-oriented trade union movement internationally, struggles for class unity and joint action of the working class and the popular strata enhancing the international solidarity and projecting demands that cover all the contemporary needs of the people to live in peace, prosperity and harmony.

As a child of the antifascist victory and as a mature seed of the international proletarian solidarity, the World Federation of Trade Unions celebrates this year its 70 years since its foundation. 70 years of internationalist and militant struggle with great contribution for the improvement of working and living conditions.

We continue with determination, with internationalism, with struggles against capitalist barbarity and imperialism.

THE SECRETARIAT

Source: <http://www.wftucentral.org/9-may-2015-70-years-since-the-great-antifascist-victory/>

1.4. ON THE OCCASION OF THE GIH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NAKBA

13 May 2015

Dr. Ashrawi: "The Nakba did not end with the creation of Israel; rather, it is an ongoing process that seeks to displace Palestine and replace it with 'Greater Israel' at the expense of its people and their rights"

On the occasion of the Gih anniversary of the Nakba, PLO Executive Committee member Dr. Hanan Ashrawi stated:

"In 1948, Israel destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages and took control of an additional 774, and more than 800,000 Palestinians were forced to become refugees.

However, the Nakba ("catastrophe") did not end with the creation of Israel; rather, it is an ongoing process that seeks to displace Palestine and replace it with 'Greater Israel' at the expense of its people and their rights. For the past sixty-seven years, Palestinians have been subjected to countless injustices and an ongoing cycle of violence, terror and war crimes, while Israel has pursued systematic and dehumanizing policies of military occupation, apartheid and ethnic cleansing. These include Israel's illegal settlement enterprise, apartheid walls and checkpoints, the demolition of Palestinian homes, structures and villages and the confiscation of land and resources in Jerusalem and Area C, the eviction of Palestinians from their homes, the revocation of Jerusalem IDs, the imprisonment of more than 6,000 Palestinian political prisoners, the implementation of racist and discriminatory laws, legislation and practices against the Palestinians, the targeting of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and its worshippers, and the continued siege on Gaza and the horrific wars waged on its people, among other violations of international law.

Palestinian people, whether the indigenous population in Israel or under occupation in the 1967 territories or in exile, remain vulnerable and continue to be victimized by Israel, as well as regional developments.

Currently, there are more than seven million Palestinian refugees residing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in exile; the majority of them live in thirty-one refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. This Palestinian refugee crisis remains a disastrous problem that must be resolved and put to an end by the international community in accordance with international law and conventions, including the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948), the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

In spite of Israel's systematic and flagrant efforts to negate and erase our history, culture, heritage, and narrative, we will remain steadfast and resilient with our non-violent resistance and determined efforts to stay on our land.

The Palestinian leadership is committed to pursue diplomatic and multilateral initiatives to safeguard the rights of the Palestinian people and to ensure self-determination, independence and justice for all Palestinians. We will continue to join multilateral organizations and agencies and move forward to ensure accountability for Israel in the International Criminal Court and in other venues.

We are not accidents of history, and it is time for the tragic injustice of the Nakba and the grave suffering of the Palestinian people to end."

Source: EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE PRETORIA

1.5. ISRAELI VIOLATIONS AND ANTI-PEACE STANCE

11 May 2015

Palestine Speech at the UN

Excellency,

In both word and deed, the new Israeli Government is proving its anti-peace, anti-two-State stance as it persists with unlawful policies and practices entrenching its illegitimate occupation and colonization of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and systematically and grossly violating the human rights of the Palestinian people.

From the composition of Prime Minister Netanyahu's Cabinet, including a Justice Minister who is on record as calling for violence and destruction against the Palestinian people and calling Palestinian children "little snakes"; to recent announcements to carry on with settlement activities in Occupied East Jerusalem and particularly in the so-called "E1 area"; to demolitions of Palestinian properties and seizure of Palestinian homes by settlers; to the forced displacement of hundreds more Palestinian civilians in the West Bank; to the ongoing inhumane and suffocating blockade against the Gaza Strip; to the arrest of more than 100 Palestinians, including children, in the span of just one week; to ongoing violent assaults on Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces and settlers - it is clear that Israel, the occupying Power, is not interested in peace and intends to persist with its destructive and colonial occupation policies in grave breach of international law, flagrant violation of United Nations resolutions and absolute contempt of the international community.

On 7 May, shortly after the formation of the new Israeli Government, an announcement was made regarding the approval for construction of 900 more settlement units in the so-called "Ramat Shlomo" settlement in Occupied East Jerusalem. This approval of a previously-declared plan will facilitate the actual construction of hundreds more units to which hundreds more Israeli settlers will be transferred by the occupying Power in direct contravention of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as other relevant provisions of international law, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Such actions further undermine the contiguity of the Palestinian land and the viability of the two-State solution, making a mockery of international calls and efforts to salvage and actually implement that solution.

Clearly, this extremist government is bent on pursuing the aggressive, unlawful measures that have been Israeli policy for decades with the aim of pushing the Palestinian people off their land. In addition to settlement expansion, on 4 May, the occupying Power approved plans for the demolition of tents and homes in the village of Khirbet Susiya near Al-Khalil in order to advance plans to build a park for settlers in the area. If not stopped, such demolitions will render 450 Palestinians, including 120 children, homeless and forcibly displace them from their land, in breach of international law.

Palestinian civilians in the northern Jordan Valley also continue to be displaced as a result of so-called "military training exercises". Bedouin and herding communities have repeatedly borne the brunt of such practices. 320 Palestinians were recently temporarily forced to leave their homes and livestock due to these activities, which have in the past led to the destruction of Palestinian land and property in the area, including the burning of 3,000 dunums of crops after a fire caused by military drills on 28 April and the burning of 5,000 dunums of land on 4 May due to heavy military fire. Such Israeli practices are widely considered to be among the many means used to engender fear and uncertainty among Palestinians in the Jordan Valley area, increasing pressure on them to leave their land and thus facilitating further de facto annexation by the occupying Power.

Simultaneously, Israeli settlers continue their terror rampages and seizure of Palestinian properties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the recent period, this has included assaults on Palestinian men, another hit and run incident in which a 5-year old Palestinian child was struck by a settler car, and the destruction of a water network affecting at least 40 homes in Al-Khalil. Also, on 6 May, in the Silwan neighborhood of Occupied East Jerusalem, a group of Israeli extremists, comprised of 20 settler youth and backed by occupying forces, overtook yet another Palestinian home, raiding and seizing the home while the Palestinian family that owns the home was away.

Such settler depravity is undoubtedly fueled by the constant provocation and incitement by Israeli political leaders, including members of the new Israeli Government, and by the absolute impunity enjoyed by the settlers, who are never held accountable for their crimes against Palestinians.

This protection crisis persists also as a result of the excessive, indiscriminate force constantly used by the occupying forces against the Palestinian civilian population in breach of international humanitarian law. Military raids in which civilians are shot at are the daily norm in the West Bank, and civilians in the blockaded Gaza Strip, particularly near the border areas and at sea, also continue to be targeted by Israeli fire. Moreover, the occupying forces continue to fire at civilian demonstrators, including most recently during demonstrations marking World Press Freedom Day, during which at least 13 Palestinians, including 2 children and 5 journalists, were injured.

Moreover, Palestinian civilians continue to be targeted for arrest and detention by the Israeli occupying forces, with an average of 100 persons a week arrested, including children and women, in violation of the Geneva Conventions. Their plight during incarceration is marked by unbearable physical and psychological mistreatment and grave affronts to their human dignity.

In this regard, I draw attention to the arrest of another democratically-elected Palestinian official, Ms. Khalida Jarrar, a parliamentarian in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Ms. Jarrar was seized from her home by occupying forces in Ramallah on 2 April and sentenced to a six-month administrative detention. She has clearly been targeted for her peaceful, non-violent, legitimate activities in rejection of the occupation, similar to so many Palestinian political prisoners. We call for her

immediate release and the release of Palestinian prisoners and detainees so wrongfully being held captive by Israel.

We reiterate the call on the international community to uphold its responsibilities, especially the Security Council, to put an end to Israel's settlement colonization, destructive measures and collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Collective and concrete action is needed to hasten the end of this illegitimate, immoral and inhumane occupation and the realization of Palestinian freedom.

We will continue to seek the support and action of the international community for this objective and continue our pursuit of all peaceful, political and legal means to achieve the rights of the Palestinian people, including via our status as the 123rd State Party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, a non-violent, legal path to confront Israeli impunity and attain justice for our people.

This letter is in follow-up to our 542 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 1 May 2015 (A/ES-10/678 S/2015/309) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr. Riyad Mansour

Ambassador, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

Source: <http://palestineun.org/11-may-2015-israeli-violations-and-anti-peace-stance/>

1.6. OUR RIGHT TO BE MARXIST-LENINISTS

14 May 2015

Fidel Castro Ruz, in MRZine, USA,

The 70th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War will be commemorated the day after tomorrow, May 9. Given the time difference, while I write these lines, the soldiers and officials of the Army of the Russian Federation, full of pride, will be parading through Moscow's Red Square with their characteristic quick, military steps.

Lenin was a brilliant revolutionary strategist who did not hesitate to assume the ideas of Marx and implement them in an immense and only partly industrialized country, whose proletarian party became the most radical and audacious on the planet in the wake of the greatest slaughter that capitalism had caused in the world, where for the first time tanks, automatic weapons, aviation, and poison gases made an appearance in wars, and even a legendary cannon capable of launching a heavy projectile more than 100 kilometres made its presence felt in the bloody conflict.

From that carnage emerged the League of Nations, an institution that should have preserved peace but did not even manage to stop the rapid advance of colonialism in Africa, a great part of Asia, Oceania, the Caribbean, Canada, and a repugnant neo-colonialism in Latin America. Barely 20 years later, another atrocious world war broke out in Europe, the preamble to which was the Spanish Civil War, beginning in 1936.

After the crushing defeat of the Nazis, world nations placed their hopes in the United Nations, which strives to generate cooperation in order to put an end to aggressions and wars, such that countries can preserve peace, development, and the peaceful cooperation of the big and small, rich and poor, States of the world.

Millions of scientists could, among other tasks, increase the chances of the survival of the human species, with billions of people already threatened by food and water shortages within a short period of time. We are already 7.3 billion people on the

planet. In 1800 there were only 978 million; this figure rose to 6.07 billion in 2000; and according to conservative estimates by the year 2050 there will be 10 billion.

Of course, scarcely is the arrival to Western Europe of boats full of migrants mentioned, traveling in any object that floats -- a river of African migrants, from the continent colonized by the Europeans over hundreds of years. 23 years ago, in a United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development I stated: "An important biological species is in danger of disappearing given the rapid and progressive destruction of its natural life-sustaining conditions: man." I did not know at that time how close we were to this.

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War, I wish to put on record our profound admiration for the heroic Soviet people, who provided humankind an enormous service. Today we are seeing the solid alliance between the people of the Russian Federation and the State with the fastest growing economy in the world: the People's Republic of China; both countries, with their close cooperation, modern science, and powerful armies and brave soldiers constitute a powerful shield of world peace and security, so that the life of our species may be preserved.

Physical and mental health, and the spirit of solidarity are norms which must prevail, or the future of humankind, as we know it, will be lost forever. The 27 million Soviets who died in the Great Patriotic War also did so for humanity and the right to think and be socialists, to be Marxist-Leninists, communists, and leave the dark ages behind.

Source: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/yclsa-eom-forum/Y5DNSTa-TL8>

1.7. EXCLUSION OF CUBA AS TERRORIST COUNTRY DOES NOT MEAN BLOCKADE RELIEF

12 May 2015

Cubainsidetheworld.com

Exclusion of Cuba from the list of country sponsoring Terrorism does not mean a relief of economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by United States, asserted today in Gramma newspaper.

The publication noted that the island was included in that list in 1982, and the laws and regulations that established the policy of blockade were issued, mostly before that date.

He added that US officials themselves clarified that from the publication of the decision of President Barack Obama most of the restrictions associated with the inclusion of Cuba on the terrorist list will continue, as they are contained in the complex network of sanctions that make the blockade.

Among them the Trade Law with the enemy (1917), the Foreign Assistance Act (1961) and the Law of Export Administration (1979), these regulations underpinned, in the early years of the Revolution, the policy of economic war against Cuba.

It also mentioned the Regulations for the control of Cuban Assets (1963) and Regulations for Administración of Exports (1979), issued to implement what has been codified in these laws.

Subsequently, other laws such as the Torricelli (1992), the Helms-Burton (1996) and the Law of Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Expansion (2000), intensified the prohibitions on transactions with Cuba, with a strong extraterritorial character, added the newspaper.

The removal of Cuba from that list will constitutes an act of historical justice with the Cuban people, stressed the media, because for 33 years the US government kept this Caribbean nation on a list that it should have never been included, for being a victim country hundreds of terrorist acts.

Cuba has always condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as any action that seeks to provide encouragement, support, financing and covering up of acts of this nature, emphasized the daily.

The removal from the terrorist list for its symbolic and positive political effect, could have an impact on the perception of

Cuba as a country of risk by financial institutions and alleviate, but not eliminate, the fear of banks, especially foreigners to maintain relations with our country, it assured.

Source: <https://cubainsidetheworld.wordpress.com/2015/05/12/exclusion-of-cuba-as-terrorist-country-does-not-mean-blockade-relief/>

1.8. OVER EIGHT THOUSAND 300 KILLED BY TWO EARTHQUAKES IN NEPAL

14 May 2015

Prensa Latina

The death toll from Tuesday's quake in Nepal amounted to 96 today, bringing the total of deaths by two earthquakes in less than three weeks passed eight thousand 300.

The latest report from the Ministry of Interior said that the huge tremor-the April 25 marked 7.9 degrees on the Richter scale; the day before yesterday, 7,3- caused about 19 thousand wounded and multibillion-dollar losses in buildings, roads and other infrastructure.

Rescuers from the army and police, as well as other countries, now intensify the search in the districts most affected by the jolt on Tuesday, especially in Dolakha (130 kilometers northeast of Kathmandu), where he located the epicentre and the dead are almost half of the total.

Narrated field teams to local television that the tasks of search, rescue and delivery of food, water, medicine and material assistance of various kinds is hampered by landslides that block roads and roads in a region always inaccessible by the mountain.

Despite its magnitude, the quake was listed antier by geologists as an aftershock on April 25. Clearly perceptible tremors since then pass 240, for an average of more than 13 replicas per day.

Categorizations aside, what most worries the Nepalese is that earthquakes of the past three weeks are signs of an ancient and persistent process of readjustment of the crust that can still bring new aftershocks of incalculable consequences.

Source:http://www.plenglish.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3801321&Itemid=1

1.9. SYRIAN WAR SET TO RE-EXPLODE

14 May 2015

Shamus Cooke, Counterpunch.com

The Syrian war stalemate appears to be over. The regional powers surrounding Syria – especially Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar, and Jordan – have re-ignited their war against the Syrian government. After over 200,000 dead and millions of refugees, the U.S. allies in the region recently re-committed to deepening the war, with incalculable consequences.

The new war pact was made between Obama's regional darlings, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, who agreed to step up deeper military cooperation and establish a joint command in the occupied Syrian region of Idlib.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia are now openly backing Islamic extremists under the newly rebranded "Conquest Army." The on-the-ground leadership of this "new" coalition consists of Jabhat al-Nusra – the "official" al-Qaeda affiliate – and Ahrar al-Sham, whose leader previously stated that his group was the "real al-Qaeda."

The Huffington Post reports:

“The Turkish-Saudi agreement has led to a new joint command center in the northeastern Syrian province of Idlib. There, a coalition of groups – including Nusra and other Islamist brigades such as Ahrar al-Sham that Washington views as extremist – are progressively eroding Assad’s front. The rebel coalition also includes more moderate elements of the Free Syrian Army that have received U.S. support in the past.”

The article admits that the Free Syrian Army – that Obama previously labeled as “moderates” and gave cash and guns to – has been swallowed up by the extremist groups.

This dynamic has the potential to re-engulf the region in violence; deep Saudi pocketbooks combined with reports of looming Turkish ground forces are a catastrophe in the making.

Interestingly, the Saudi-Turkish alliance barely raised eyebrows in the U.S. media. President Obama didn’t think to comment on the subject, let alone condemn it.

The media was focused on an odd narrative of Obama reportedly being “concerned” about the alliance, but “disengaged” from what two of his close allies were doing in a region that the U.S. has micromanaged for decades.

It seems especially odd for the media to accept that Obama has a “hands off” approach in Syria when at the same time the media is reporting about a new U.S. program training Syrian rebels in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

It’s inconceivable that Obama would coordinate deeply with Turkey to set up a Syrian rebel training camp on Turkish soil, while at the same time be “disengaged” from the Turkish-Saudi war coalition in Syria.

One possible motive behind the fake narrative of “non-cooperation” between Obama and his Turkish-Saudi allies is that the U.S. is supposed to be fighting a “war on terrorism.”

So when Turkey and Saudi Arabia announce that they’re closely coordinating with terrorists in Syria – like al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham – Obama needs an alibi to avoid being caught at the crime scene. He’s not an accomplice, simply “disengaged.”

This is likely the reason why Obama has insisted that his new “moderate” rebels being trained in Turkey will fight ISIS, not the Syrian government. But this claim too is ridiculous.

Is Obama really going to throw a couple hundred newly-trained “moderate” Syrian rebels at ISIS while his Turkish-Saudi allies focus all their fire on the Syrian Government? The question answers itself.

The media has made mention of this obvious conundrum, but never bothers to follow up, leaving Obama’s lame narrative unchallenged. For example, the LA Times reports:

“The White House wants the [U.S. trained rebel] proxy force to target Islamic State militants, while many of the Syrian rebels – and the four host nations [where Syrian rebels are being trained] – want to focus on ousting Syrian President Bashar Assad.”

The article simply shrugs its shoulders at the irreconcilable. The article also fails to mention that Obama’s “new” training camps aren’t new at all; he’s been arming and training Syrian rebels since at least 2012, the only difference being that the “new” training camps are supposedly meant to target ISIS, compared to the training camps that were openly used to target the Syrian government.

Here’s the LA Times in 2013:

“The covert U.S. training [of Syrian rebels] at bases in Jordan and Turkey began months before President Obama approved plans to begin directly arming the opposition to Syrian President Bashar Assad, according to U.S. officials and rebel commanders.”

This is media amnesia at its worse. Recent events can’t be understood if the media doesn’t place events in context. In practice this “forgetfulness” provides political cover to the Obama administration, shielding his longstanding direct role in the Syrian war, allowing him to pretend to a “passive,” “hands off” approach.

When it was reported in 2012 that the Obama administration was funneling weapons to the Syrian rebels, the few media outlets that mentioned the story didn't bother to do any follow up. It simply fell into the media memory hole. After the weapons funneling report came out, Obama incredulously stated that he was only supplying "non lethal" support to the rebels, and the media printed his words unchallenged.

Consequently, there was no public discussion about the consequences of the U.S. partaking in a multi-nation proxy war against Syria, a country that borders war ravaged Iraq.

In 2013 when Obama announced that he would be bombing the Syrian government in response to a supposed gas attack, the U.S. media asked for no evidence of the allegation, and strove to buttress Obama's argument for aggression.

And when Pulitzer Prize winner Seymour Hersh wrote an article exposing Obama's lies over the aborted bombing mission, the article didn't see the light of day in the U.S. media. Critically thoughtful voices were not welcome. They remain unwelcome.

In 2015 direct U.S. military intervention in Syria remains a real possibility. All the conditions that led to Obama's decision to bomb Syria in 2013 remain in place.

In fact, a U.S. intervention is even more likely now that Turkey and Saudi Arabia are fighting openly against the Syrian government, since the Saudi-Turkish alliance might find itself in a key battle that demands the special assistance that only the U.S. air force can offer.

Unsurprisingly, there has been renewed discussion of a U.S. enforced "no fly zone" in Syria. ISIS doesn't have an air force, so a no fly zone would be undeniably aimed at the Syrian government to destroy its air force. The new debate over a "no fly zone" is happening at the same time as a barrage of new allegations of "chemical weapons" use are being made against the Syrian government.

If a no fly zone is eventually declared by the Obama Administration it will be promoted as a "humanitarian intervention, that strives to create a "humanitarian corridor" to "protect civilians" – the same rhetoric that was used for a massive U.S.-led NATO bombing campaign in Libya that destroyed the country and continues to create a massive refugee crisis.

As the Syrian war creates fresh atrocities the Obama administration will be pressured to openly support his Saudi-Turkish allies, just as he came out into the open in 2013 when he nearly bombed the Syrian government.

History is repeating itself. But this time the stakes are higher: the region has already been destabilized with the wars in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, and the regional conflicts have sharpened between U.S. allies on one hand, and Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Russia on the other.

Such a volatile dynamic demands a media willing to explain the significance of these events. The truth is that Obama has been a proxy war president that has torn apart the Middle East as badly as his predecessor did, and if the U.S. public remains uninformed about developing events, an even larger regional war is inevitable.

Source: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/05/14/syrian-war-set-to-re-explode/>

1.10. US ECONOMY COLLAPSES AGAIN

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Jack Rasmus, Counterpunch.com

Data released last week by the U.S. government showed the U.S. economy came to a near halt in the first three months of 2015, falling to nearly zero - i.e. a mere 0.2 percent annual growth rate for the January-March quarter. The collapse was the fourth time that the U.S. economy in the past four years either came to a virtual halt or actually declined. Four times in four years it has stalled out. So what's going on?

In 2011, the U.S. economy collapsed to 0.1 percent in terms of annual growth rate. At the end of 2012, to a mere 0.2 percent

initial decline. In early 2014, it actually declined by -2.2 percent.

And now in 2015, it is essentially flat once again at 0.2 percent. The numbers are actually even worse, if one discounts the redefinitions of GDP that were made by the US in 2013, counting new categories as contributing to growth, like R&D spending, that for decades were not considered contributors to growth - in effect creating economic growth by statistical manipulation. Those highly questionable 2013 definitional additions to growth added around US\$500 billion a year to U.S. growth estimates, or about 0.3 percent of U.S. GDP. Back those redefinitions out, and the U.S. experienced negative GDP four times in the last four years. We get -0.2 percent in 2011, 0 percent in 2012, -2.5 percent in 2014 and -0.1 percent earlier this year.

It is therefore arguable that the U.S. has also experienced at least one mild 'double dip' recession, and perhaps two, since 2010.

All the four U.S. economic relapses occurred following preceding month gains in growth sufficient to generate claims by politicians and pundits alike that the U.S. economy had finally 'turned the corner' and was now on a path of sustained economic recovery. Yet every time such claims were made, reality contradicted their predictions within a few months, and the economy collapsed again, creating a scenario not of sustained economic recovery but of a 'stop-go' trajectory.

The consequence of this 'stop-go' recovery is that the U.S. economy since 2009 - the official end of the last recession - has experienced the weakest recovery from recession in the last fifty years, just about half the normal post-recession recovery. And this 'half normal' recovery since 2009 occurs after an annual growth averaging only 1.7 percent during the years 2001-2010 in the U.S. Something new is happening to the U.S. economy since 2000. What is it?

Recessions in the U.S. have occurred on average every 7 years. It's now year five since the last one officially ended in June 2009. What happens if the current weak recovery reaches its end at around 7 years, i.e. in mid-2016 a year from now? Will the next recession prove even worse, perhaps much worse, occurring as it will on a base recovery half of normal?

Unfortunately, such questions aren't asked by most mainstream economists, and certainly not by politicians and business media pundits.

Stop-Go On A Steady Slowing Global Economy

The problem of weak, stop-go, recovery in the U.S. today is further exacerbated by a global economy that continues to slow even more rapidly and, in case after case, slip increasingly into recessions or stagnate at best.

Signs of weakness and stress in the global economy are everywhere and growing. Despite massive money injections by its central bank in 2013, and again in 2014, Japan's economy has fallen in 2015, a fourth time, into recession.

After having experienced two recessions since 2009, Europe's economy is also trending toward stagnation once more after it too, like Japan, just introduced a US\$60 billion a month central bank money injection this past winter. Despite daily hype in the business press, unemployment in the Eurozone is still officially at 11.4 percent, and in countries like Spain and Greece, still at 24 percent. Yet we hear Spain is now the 'poster-boy' of the Eurozone, having returned to robust growth. Growth for whom? Certainly not the 24 percent still jobless, a rate that hasn't changed in years. Euro businesses in Spain are doing better, having imposed severe 'labor market reforms' on workers there, in order to drive down wages to help reduce costs and boost Spanish exports. Meanwhile, Italy remains the economic black sheep of the Eurozone, still in recession for years now, while France officially records no growth, but is likely in recession as well. Elites in both Italy and France hope to copy Spain's 'labor market reforms' (read: cut wages, pensions, and make it easier to layoff full time workers). In order to boost its growth, Italy is considering, or may have already decided, to redefine its way to growth by including the services of prostitutes and drug dealers as part of its GDP. Were the USA to do the same redefinition, it would no doubt mean a record boost to GDP.

Across the Eurozone, the greater economy of its 18 countries still hasn't reached levels it had in 2007, before the onset of the last recession. Unlike the U.S.'s 'stop-go', Europe has been 'stop-go-stop'.

Even beyond the Eurozone, in the broader Euro area the picture is not much better. After a brief, artificial real estate boom fueled by foreign investment, the UK is now growing again at a mere 0.3 percent rate. And then there's China, where economic growth continues to slow, despite multiple fiscal and monetary stimulus programs introduced the past two years to try to boost the economy further. And the global slowdown applies not just the largest economies. Emerging market economies in Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere that are especially dependent on commodities production and exports have been descending one by one into recession, or at best stagnating.

Yet despite this growing global economic weakness, and the U.S. economy's repeated annual economic relapses and 'half normal' recovery rate, we are still being told that the U.S. economy is sound and that it will lead the rest of the world economy toward sustained economic growth this year and next.

It's the Weather!

We're told the declines in U.S. growth the last two years - January to March 2015 and before that 2014 - have been due to 'bad weather'. And that this coming summer 2015 the U.S. economy will 'snap back' again, as it did last summer 2014.

But is economic forecast by weather metaphor really the cause of the recent U.S. slowdown? Not really. Even economists themselves admit that, at the very most, only 0.5 percent of last quarter GDP decline can be attributed to weather. If the fourth quarter 2014 U.S. GDP was 2.2 percent, in other words, then only -0.5 percent of the drop was due to weather. So what about the other -1.5 percent drop from the fourth to the first quarter 2015?

A closer look shows that at least -1.25 percent of that -1.5 percent was due to the sharp decline in U.S. exports. That decline was due largely to the US dollar's sharp rise in value compared to other currencies since last fall. A rising dollar makes U.S. exports more expensive. U.S. exporters lose out to European, Japanese and Chinese competitors. Since U.S. exports are largely manufactured goods, that means U.S. manufacturing slows - which it has. And that in turn means U.S. growth slows.

The reason for the dollar's rise is threefold. First, the U.S. central bank's repeated signaling of intent to raise U.S. interest rates this year. Second, the collapse of world oil prices that also drive up the dollar. Third, the massive money injections by Europe and Japan central banks in the form of 'quantitative easing' (QE) programs that are designed to drive down the value of the Euro and the Yen in order to achieve a competitive advantage for their region's exports at the expense of U.S. exporters.

What's going on globally today is rolling 'competitive devaluations' of currencies by means of massive central bank monetary injections. In ways this is somewhat like the 1930s depression. Then countries devalued their currencies by legal declaration, as they tried to boost their economies by stealing exports from competitors. The problem with that strategy is that all could do it, and they did. So no one gained in the end and the global economy and trade sank further. Today's new form of competitive devaluation is no different. It signals the major capitalist regions of the world - i.e. north America, Europe, Japan, and now even China - are beginning to fight over a slower growing global economic pie. The devaluations are just assuming a different form. Not legal declaration but monetary injection by central banks.

In early 2014 Japan introduced its QE and central bank injection. It gained a temporary trade advantage. But then Europe did the same. Japan lost its advantage, which Europe gained. The U.S. lost the most in terms of exports, since its dollar rose for two reasons - Japan and Europe currencies falling and talk of U.S. interest rate hikes as well.

But most recently, the U.S. central bank has signaled that interest rates may not rise this year. Oops. There goes the Euro and Yen losing its advantage once more and their economies slipping again. This see-saw, back and forth, fighting over a shrinking trade pie only reveals a new instability growing in the global economy. Europe in particular will soon be hammered by a potential Greek debt default, a continually imploding Ukrainian economy it has committed to bail out at US\$40 billion so far, and now the U.S. indicating it won't raise rates. Watch Japan, which will likely again devalue still further to offset U.S. and Europe measures. Meanwhile, as China continues to slow, it could eventually reduce the Yuan to boost its exports as well.

What this global scenario means is that the U.S. economy significantly weakened in the first quarter 2015 due not to weather, but because of loss of global exports due to the reasons noted. But trade competition and currency wars are not the only explanation for the near collapse of the U.S. economy last quarter.

Collapse of Oil Prices and U.S. Economic Slowdown

Another major development in 2014 in the U.S., that disappeared by early 2015, was the Oil/Shale Gas boom. After having surged to record levels in the first half of 2014, contributing largely to the summer 2014 U.S. 5 percent GDP rise, after mid-year the global price of oil collapsed. By end of year 2014 the collapse was in full swing. Investment in this sector fell by nearly half, regional construction activity in the Dakota-Texas area also fell abruptly, as did the mining activity as oil/gas wells were shut down, and as railroad and trucking transport activity declined. A major contributor to 2014 economic growth in the U.S. thus fell through by early 2015. What's significant, moreover, is that it won't come back in 2015. So the 'recovery' in the summer of 2014 won't have this contributing factor behind it in 2015.

One-Time Consumer Spending on Health Care

Another temporary factor that contributed to the summer 2014 surge in U.S. growth, that has also since disappeared, is first time consumer household spending on healthcare services. Last summer was the first full year of sign-ups by 10 million households to Obama's 'Affordable Care' Insurance Program. Spending on new insurance premiums, and on healthcare services by millions of new customers for the first time, together served to give U.S. GDP last summer 2014 another major boost. But those sign-ups have leveled off. Most of those who wanted to sign up have done so. Future growth in health insurance and health care services has therefore leveled off.

So like the shale/oil gas surge and the export-trade advantage, the health care spending surge contribution to U.S. economic growth is most likely temporary as well.

Why the US Economy Will Continue A 'Stop-Go' Trajectory

There are three fundamental causes why the U.S. economy will continue on its 5 year long, stop-go recovery trajectory until the next recession in 2016 or after.

First, there is insufficient wage and income growth for the approximate 100 million wage earning households that constitute the bulk of consumer spending in the U.S., which accounts for roughly 70 percent of the US economy annually. In turn, the reason for the lack of wage and income growth by these households is the lack of full time, decent paying jobs creation in the US. Jobs that are being created are low pay, no benefit jobs. Part time and temp jobs. Service jobs, and few manufacturing or construction jobs. Working class consumption is also compressed by inability to earn interest on basic savings accounts. Then there's household debt, for past education borrowing, for auto purchases, and credit cards, which also takes a toll on spending.

Second, there's the lack of investment spending by business. Large, multinational corporations in particular continue to prefer to invest outside the U.S. rather than in it. When not investing abroad, they prefer to 'spend' their record profits on stock buybacks and dividend payouts to shareholders. More than US\$5 trillion worth since 2009. Another trillion dollars projected in 2015 alone as well. Then there's their growing investing in financial asset markets and securities, which now constitute about 25 percent of all multinational corporate investing. And what they don't invest in financial assets, invest abroad, or spend in buybacks and dividends, they just hoard as cash on their balance sheets, reportedly now in excess of US\$1.7 trillion in their offshore subsidiaries. None of these alternatives and diversions result in real investment that create real decent paying jobs, at decent pay and benefits. Hence, consumption by the 100 million households stagnates or lags—except for more debt based spending perhaps.

Third, there's no sustained recovery on the near horizon because the U.S. government has clearly decided on growing only defense spending. The new Republican Party dominated U.S. Congress insists on cutting social programs further, including long time once sacrosanct programs like Medicare for seniors. In the first quarter U.S. GDP numbers, spending by State and Local governments slowed noticeably, as did US federal spending on non-defense products and projects.

Instead of sustained growth, the scenario is 'stop-go', as this or that temporary factor occur to boost U.S. GDP and growth temporarily, followed by other temporary developments that in turn subsequently drag U.S. GDP back to zero or negative growth. Add further to this scenario the Eurozone's continuing economic instability, the UK's new stagnant growth, Japan's descent into yet another recession, China's deepening struggle to maintain 7 percent growth that is almost certain to fall below that level soon, oil and commodity producing emerging markets that are already in recession, and an historic weak recovery already in its 5th year of an average 7 year cycle—then what remains is a likely further long term, stop-go US economy as the global economy continues to slow as well.

Source: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/05/14/us-economy-collapses-again/>

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