

## Make War and Peace a Central Election Issue p.3



## Photos from Actions at Conventions, p.6-9

VENEZUELA FIGHTS BACK AGAINST U.S.  
IMPERIALIST-INSPIRED COUNTER-REVOLUTION

## Workers Take Back Factory from U.S. Company After 1,000 Layoffs

Venezuela's Labor Ministry approved workers' request to occupy a paper products plant previously owned by the U.S. consumer products monopoly Kimberly-Clark after the company laid off its

workers and closed the plant on July 9.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro condemned the transnational firm for its decision on state television on July

**Venezuela Fights Back • 19**

### IN THIS ISSUE

- **ELECTION 2016:** War and Peace, Third Parties Blocked from Debate, Photos from Conventions: **3-9**
- **ELIMINATE U.S. NUKEs:** Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Koreans Oppose Missile Defense, U.S protest: **10-18**
- **VENEZUELA FIGHTS BACK:** Hunger and Look Behind the Spin, Attacks on Delivery Trucks: **19-23**

## To Eliminate U.S. Nuclear Weapons, Fight for an Anti-War Government

August 6 marks the 71 anniversary of the U.S. crime and use of weapons of mass destruction against the people of Japan, dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and on August 9, Nagasaki. These were not military targets, as the U.S. claimed, but massacres of civilians and mass destruction of both cities. The physical and mental impacts are lasting to this day, as are the environmental impacts. Use of nuclear weapons, these weapons of mass destruction, is a crime. Yet the U.S., with the largest arsenal is not disarming, as is required by the

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) treaty. Instead Obama authorized spending \$1 trillion over the next 30 years to modernize the nuclear arsenal. This modernization, along with increasing use of U.S. missile defense systems are part of strengthening the U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons, materials and technology.

The dropping of the bomb, twice, was an act of state terrorism. It was not done to save lives — U.S. military generals at the time said it was not necessary to end the war. **Fight for Anti-War Government • 10**

# August edition of **Voice of Revolution**

## **Editorials & Statements**

- *To Eliminate U.S. Nuclear Weapons, Fight for an Anti-War Government* 1
- *Venezuela: Workers Take Back Factory from U.S. Company*  
*After 1,000 Layoffs.....* 1

- *Make War and Peace a Central Election Issue* ..... 3

## **War and Peace Central Election Issue**

- *Third-Party Candidates Blocked from Presidential Debates* ..... 3
- *Open Presidential Debates to Third Party Candidates* ..... 4
- *Microsoft Pitches Technology That Reads Facial Expressions at Political Rallies* ..... 4
- *Photos from Actions at Conventions* ..... 6

## **Eliminate U.S. Nuclear Weapons Now**

- *After Hiroshima and Nagasaki* ..... 10
- *Massive Deployment of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Targeted by Peace Group* 11
- *The City of Hiroshima: Peace Declaration* ..... 12
- *Koreans Militantly Oppose U.S. Anti-Missile System that Serves U.S. War Plans* ..... 13
- *Information on U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense Program and Preemptive Strike Doctrine* ..... 14
- *Historic Countdown to the U.S. Nuclear Attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki* ..... 16

## **Venezuela Fights Back**

- *Special Report: Hunger in Venezuela? A Look Beyond the Spin* ..... 19
- *Reports of Attacks Against Food Distribution Trucks Increase in Venezuela* ..... 23

Send reports, letters and photos. Read, distribute and write for Voice of Revolution. Bulk rates available.

Publication of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization  
[www.usmlo.org](http://www.usmlo.org) • [office@usmlo.org](mailto:office@usmlo.org) • 716-602-8077  
3942 N. Central Ave, Chicago, IL 60634

### I • Make War and Peace a Central Election Issue

---

As the presidential campaigns now go forward following the conventions, the entire process is being used to divert attention and discussion away from the central issue of war and peace. The candidates are not to be held accountable for solutions to the issue of U.S. crimes and terrorism of drone warfare and wars of aggression but instead all are to be drawn into their negative attacks and comments about each other.

For example, the issue of war was barely mentioned by the candidates in their convention speeches. Trump stated, “The problems we face now – poverty and violence at home, war and destruction abroad – will last only as long as we continue relying on the same politicians who created them in the first place.” No solutions were provided to the problem of “war and destruction abroad,” and indeed further aggression was threatened. Trump called for replacing the policy of “regime change” with a policy of “destroying ISIS” and doing it quickly, saying “we’re going to defeat them fast.” The inference is more all-out bombings of civilians in Iraq and Syria and countries the U.S. is not at war with, such as Yemen, Pakistan and now Libya again.

Clinton, in her convention speech, repeated her comments, reflecting the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the presidency, that “We entrust our commander-in-chief to make the hardest decisions our nation faces. Decisions about war and peace. Life and death.” She added, “Strength relies on smarts, judgment, cool resolve, and the precise and strategic application of power. That’s the kind of Commander-in-Chief I pledge to be.” So again, more aggression that is “precise and strategic.” Nothing from either candidate addressing the anti-war demands

of the people to end U.S. wars and bring troops home now. Nothing in their speeches about significantly cutting war funding and instead funding the rights of the peoples abroad and at home. Nothing about U.S. nuclear disarmament and the trillion planned to upgrade the massive nuclear arsenal.

Serious political discussion about ending U.S. wars and contributing to peace in the world will not come from Trump or Clinton and the presidential election. Addressing the issue of war and peace relies entirely on the people themselves and their anti-war efforts. Discussion at workplaces and schools, house-meetings, public meetings addressing the issue of war and peace and the pro-social aim of organizing for an anti-war government are a far better use of time and energy than listening to the candidates and presidential debates. It is vital to break from the efforts of the rich to divert and divide, using the elections and instead organize to strengthen efforts to use our own thinking and our own agenda against war. Now is the time to step up our *Fight for an Anti-War Government!* By taking initiative, it is our own independent organizing that can make the issue of war and peace a central election debate.



---

### DEMOCRACY DEMANDS EQUAL RIGHT TO ELECT AND BE ELECTED

## Third-Party Candidates Blocked from Presidential Debates

A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit by third-party candidates Gary Johnson of the Libertarians and Jill Stein of the Greens. The lawsuit sought to have the candidates participate in upcoming televised presidential debates. The debates are organized by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD).

The candidates argued that the CPD protected a de facto monopoly for the Democrats and Republicans and acted as gatekeeper for millions of dollars in free publicity that the debates provide. They also said the 15 percent polling threshold that the CPD requires for a candidate to be part of the debates was a threat to First Amendment rights of free speech and association.

On August 5, U.S. District Court Judge Rosemary Collyer ruled that the candidates did not have standing as they were not injured by the CPD. She asserted that they were responsible for the failure to secure the 15 percent requirement, implying it was valid. She also said that since the CPD is a private organization, it was not required to meet First Amendment claims. Even though the CPD is dealing with a public matter, the elections, and using the public

airwaves for an event addressed to the public, it is not required to uphold the First Amendment, according to the Judge. Only government institutions have First Amendment obligations she ruled. In this manner she is upholding the old notion that free speech and association are not rights belonging to all humans, simply because they are human, but rather something that exists only if private monopolies and organizations like the CPD grant the privilege.

In the relatively short history of televised presidential debates, Ross Perot, in 1992, is the only third-party candidate to participate in the debates with the Democrats and Republicans. In 1980, independent candidate John Anderson appeared in one debate with Ronald Reagan, but not one with incumbent President Jimmy Carter.

Third-party candidates have repeatedly taken legal action to participate in the debates. But they have systematically been blocked from the media coverage automatically accorded the Democrats and Republicans, which makes it difficult to even be known all across the country, let alone poll at 15 percent. Plus every effort is made by the rich and their media to impose the notion that a third

party candidate cannot win, that it is a wasted vote, that it allows a “worse” candidate to win, and so forth. All of this is designed to keep a rigged, undemocratic set-up in place — a set-up that keeps working people from exercising their right to elect and be elected. The interests of working people are not represented and that is a problem to solve. The equal right to elect and be elected is a human right belonging to all as human beings. It is not something that belongs exclusively to the rich. The existing set-up not only blocks third party participation, but also working people themselves from selecting candidates that represent them and winning election.

A modern democracy is one where the equal right to elect and be elected finds its reflection in the actual process. Instead the current outdated process is one where white men of property and their

rights are enshrined. Universal suffrage was supposed to contribute to changing this situation, but it has not. This is evident not only in the many ways people eligible to vote are blocked from doing so, such as voter registration and all the various related laws related, but also in all the obstacles to getting on the ballot, the way in which candidates are chosen and more. These obstacles vary from state to state and require considerable funds and organization to contend with, especially for a presidential election but also for statewide ones at the federal and state levels.

A key issue for those concerned about democracy is not so much who does or does not “win” the debates, but rather the people themselves discussing and debating a set-up where the equal right to elect and be elected is affirmed.

## Open Presidential Debates to Third Party Candidates

*Fairdebates.com*

The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), which decides who participates in the presidential debates, has a rule that candidates must average 15 percent in popular polls. The catch is that it is virtually impossible for any candidate without the free publicity and exposure provided by the two major parties, the media and, of course, nationally-televised debates, to reach 15 percent. It is a classic “Catch 22.” Even with his millions of personal wealth, the last third party candidate to appear in a CPD-sponsored debate, Ross Perot, in 1992, would not have qualified under the 15 percent rule. It is also the case that for most polls, the names of third-party candidates do not even appear, thus they cannot gain any percentage of support on the poll.

The official-sounding and acting Commission on Presidential Debates is, in reality, a private organization created by the Republican and Democratic parties, ...whose goal is to protect the status quo. Thus, it is no surprise that the Debate Commission has adopted “rules” that make it virtually impossible for an independent or third-party candidate to participate in the Presidential Debates. [...]

A 2014 Gallup poll found that Americans are fed up with the two major parties. “A majority of U.S. adults, 58 percent, say a third U.S. political party is needed because the Republican and Democratic parties ‘do such a poor job’ representing the American people,” reported Jeffrey M. Jones. [Based on 2014 data, 39 percent identify as independents, 32 percent as Democrats and 23

percent as Republicans.]

Governor Gary Johnson and Dr. Jill Stein, in 2012 [and now for 2016,] obtained their ballot access the hard way — via petitions in states across the country. They were the only two candidates in 2012, beside the Democrat and Republican, who appeared on enough state ballots to get elected as the President of the United States by the Electoral College. Yet, both Johnson and Stein were excluded from the “official” televised 2012 presidential debates.

Most Americans have no idea that the official-sounding and acting CPD is a private organization created by the Republican and Democratic Parties. With polls showing that “independent” voters now constitute a majority of the American electorate, this duopoly simply is not fair — and must be changed. So get involved.

Sign the petition to demand that one straightforward, common sense change be made in the rules for future presidential debates: Rather than picking and choosing polls to decide who can participate (polls that always favor the Democratic and Republican candidates), simply allow participation by any candidate who has qualified for enough states’ presidential ballots to have a mathematical chance of being elected. (<https://www.fairdebates.com/petition.html>). Join the fight and support the excluded 2012 candidates — Jill Stein, Gary Johnson, their campaigns, the Green and the Libertarian parties, to fight for Fair Debates for ALL candidates of the future.

## Microsoft Pitches Technology That Reads Facial Expressions at Political Rallies

*Alex Emmons, The Intercept, August 4 2016*

*(One feature of the conventions this year was a less obvious presence by police at the various actions, including many who were dressed normally rather than the usual riot squad or combat uniforms, with vests, helmets, big batons, shields, tasers and automatic weapons. It was clear that a decision had been taken in both Cleveland and Philadelphia to not use tear gas or broadly display the militarist side of police agencies. However, it is also the case that the military’s Northern Command (NorthCom) for*

*all of North America; NORAD, its missile “defense;” the Department of Defense, Homeland Security (with its many agencies like ICE and Border Patrol) and FBI, DEA, ATF, Secret Service and 50 agencies in total, were present. These agencies likely made use of both facial recognition software and facial analysis software, as described below. The protests at conventions and elsewhere serve as live exercises for the various agencies to test various types of software, weapons, training and command structures.*

---

## ELECTIONS 2016: WAR AND PEACE CENTRAL ISSUE

---

*And to crimilize and try to stifle dissent making it “normal” to have a massive police presence before any actions even occur. — VOR  
Ed. Note)*

\* \* \*

On the 21st floor of a high-rise hotel in Cleveland, in a room full of political operatives, Microsoft's Research Division was advertising a technology that could read each facial expression in a massive crowd, analyze the emotions, and report back in real time. "You could use this at a Trump rally," a sales representative told me.

At both the Republican and Democratic conventions, Microsoft sponsored event spaces for the news outlet Politico. Politico, in turn, hosted a series of Microsoft-sponsored discussions about the use of data technology in political campaigns. And throughout Politico's spaces in both Philadelphia and Cleveland, Microsoft advertised an array of products from "Microsoft Cognitive Services," its artificial intelligence and cloud computing division.

At one exhibit, titled "Realtime Crowd Insights," a small camera scanned the room, while a monitor displayed the captured image. Every five seconds, a new image would appear with data annotated for each face—an assigned serial number, gender, estimated age, and any emotions detected in the facial expression. When I approached, the machine labeled me "b2ff" and correctly identified me as a 23-year-old male. It interpreted my facial expression as "neutral," with a bit of "surprise." I asked Christina Pearson, a nearby Microsoft spokesperson, to confirm that the technology was meant to be used on a large crowd, like at a Trump rally. "Yes," she confirmed.

"Realtime Crowd Insights" is an Application Programming Interface (API), or a software tool that connects web applications to Microsoft's cloud computing services. Through Microsoft's emotional analysis API—a component of Realtime Crowd Insights—applications send an image to Microsoft's servers. Microsoft's servers analyze the faces and return emotional profiles for each one.

In a November blog post, Microsoft said that the emotional analysis could detect "anger, contempt, fear, disgust, happiness, neutral, sadness or surprise." Microsoft's sales representatives told me that political campaigns could use the technology to measure the emotional impact of different talking points—and political scientists could use it to study crowd response at rallies.

But the use of facial analysis at political events is eerily reminiscent of George Orwell's 1984, where the government monitors faces for any sign of dissatisfaction, or "facecrime." In Orwell's world, "to wear an improper expression on your face (to look incredulous when a victory was announced, for example) was itself a punishable offense." Microsoft's Realtime Crowd Insights could potentially pick out the stern faces of dissenters, or angry faces of future protestors, all in a matter of seconds.

Donald Trump's security personnel have already tried to pre-empt protests at rallies by kicking out people they thought likely to protest. At one rally in February, security asked 30 black students to leave before Trump started speaking. According to USA Today, the students had planned to sit in silent protest, but one 19-year-old student said, "We didn't plan to do anything."

In Politico's suite in Cleveland, one passerby told me he was "slightly creeped out," and another asked me why Microsoft was collecting their facial information. The machine also picked up on

a small range of negative responses in the room, including "fear, contempt, and disgust."

When I attended the "Realtime Crowd Insights" display in Philadelphia, I asked to speak with a spokesperson and was introduced to Kathryn Stack, a managing director with the public affairs firm Burson-Marsteller. I asked Stack whether the product could be used to identify protestors or dissidents at rallies or political events.

"I think that would be a question for a futurist, not a technologist," she responded.

Facial Recognition Technology—the identification of faces by name—is already widely used in secret by law enforcement, sports stadiums, retail stores, and even churches, despite being of questionable legality. As early as 2002, facial recognition technology was used at the Super Bowl to cross-reference the 100,000 attendees to a database of the faces of known criminals. The technology is controversial enough that in 2013, Google tried to ban the use of facial recognition apps in its Google glass system.

But "Realtime Crowd Insights" is not true facial recognition—it could not identify me by name, only as "b2ff." It did, however, store enough data on each face that it could continuously identify it with the same serial number, even hours later. The display demonstrated that capability by distinguishing between the number of total faces it had seen, and the number of unique serial numbers.

"Realtime Crowd Insights" is an example of facial characterization technology—where computers analyze faces without necessarily identifying them. Facial characterization has many positive applications—it has been tested in the classroom, as a tool for spotting struggling students, and Microsoft has boasted that the tool will even help blind people read the faces around them.

But facial characterization can also be used to assemble and store large profiles of information on individuals, even anonymously.

Microsoft has traditionally adopted an "opt in" policy with facial recognition, requiring users' consent before Microsoft can store an image of their face... Microsoft has a similar code of conduct for APIs, which requires developers to "obtain the consent of the people whose data (such as images, voices, video or text) are being processed by your app."

Alvaro Bedoya, a professor at Georgetown Law School and expert on privacy and facial recognition, ...pointed out that it leaves a number of questions unanswered—as illustrated in Cleveland and Philadelphia.

"It's interesting that the app being shown at the convention 'remembered' the faces of the people who walked by. That would seem to suggest that their faces were being stored and processed without the consent that Microsoft's policy requires," Bedoya said. "You have to wonder: What happened to the face templates of the people who walked by that booth? Were they deleted? Or are they still in the system?"

Microsoft officials declined to comment on exactly what information is collected on each face and what data is retained or stored, instead referring me to their privacy policy, which does not address the question.

Bedoya also pointed out that Microsoft's marketing did not seem to match the consent policy. "It's difficult to envision how companies will obtain consent from people in large crowds or rallies."

## ELECTIONS 2016: ACTIONS AT REPUBLICAN CONVENTION



## ELECTIONS 2016: ACTIONS AT REPUBLICAN CONVENTION



## ELECTIONS 2016: ACTIONS AT DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION



## ELECTIONS 2016: ACTIONS AT DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION



### **I • Fight for an Anti-War Government**

---

Then General Eisenhower, for example said that “the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn’t necessary to hit them with that awful thing.” It served then, as U.S. threats of nuclear first strikes serve now, as nuclear blackmail — as evidence that the U.S. would stop at nothing to achieve world empire.

The same blackmail, with increasing war plans continues. The U.S. is expanding its missile shield program and preemptive strike capacity in North America, the Asia-Pacific and Europe, all while President Obama claims he supports eliminating nuclear weapons. His actions, as a war president, as one who has greatly expanded the crime of drone warfare and continued threats of first-strike nuclear attacks, speak far louder than his words. The U.S. spends more than \$62 billion yearly in public funds to keep and modernize its weapons, far more than all the other major nuclear powers combined. And this is in addition to the almost trillion dollars the Pentagon spends *yearly* for war.

It is the peoples’ struggles that have been a major factor in blocking nuclear war, as they have consistently fought against

aggressive war and for elimination of nuclear weapons, those of the U.S. first and foremost. Countries like Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have joined in calling for nuclear free zones in their regions — which the U.S. rejects. The opposition now to expansion of the missile shield program, in Korea and Europe are also standing against U.S. war plans.

The fight now to demand the U.S. disarm and be held accountable for its war crimes, present and past, is an important part of honoring the peoples in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and all those worldwide massacred by U.S. imperialism.

In the presidential elections, the issue of nuclear weapons has been reduced to who has their finger on the button and if they are “fit” to have it there. For the people the issue is elimination of nuclear weapons and blocking the U.S. from using them. We do not need another war president. We need an Anti-War Government that defends the interests of the peoples, here and abroad. Let this be the focus of debate in the elections. We say, *Stop Funding War and Fund Our Rights! Eliminate U.S. Nuclear Weapons Now!*

## **After Hiroshima and Nagasaki**

*Russell Vandenbroucke, University of Louisville*

On August 6 each year, the world commemorates the dawn of the atomic age by remembering the obliteration of Hiroshima. In May, President Obama laid a wreath in the Peace Park that marks ground zero there. This is also the time each year when politicians, historians, veterans, and peace activists revisit the decision to use this new weapon for the first time, then for the second three days later at Nagasaki. The rationales are familiar: nukes would shorten the war, save American lives, and demonstrate the country’s overwhelming military and technological superiority. It did not last long. Stalin mobilized Soviet resources to break the American monopoly soon after receiving intelligence reports on the successful Trinity test in New Mexico. The arms race began to sprint before the nuclear dust settled in Japan.

After laying a wreath in Hiroshima, President Obama said, “among those nations like my own that hold nuclear stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear and pursue a world without them. We may not realize this goal in my lifetime, but persistent effort can roll back the possibility of catastrophe.”

Why, then, is he planning to develop a new cruise missile and to rebuild our nuclear arsenal over the next 30 years at a cost estimated at \$1,000,000,000,000? Yes, one trillion!

No nation monopolizes “new and improved” weapons forever, no matter what lead it might have at any given time. Where is the consistency in the president proposing a world free of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and improvements on existing ones in Washington? Former Secretary of Defense William Perry says new cruise missiles reflect outdated, Cold War thinking and would be “a grave mistake.”

Since cities are the obvious target for nuclear weapons, urban



dwellers are at added risk. Mayors for Peace, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) whose home is the same Peace Park that President Obama visited, understands this as well as military planners. It promotes solidarity among cities to abolish nuclear weapons completely. Steve Lepper, its former head, says: “mayors are ahead of national politicians. No municipality wants war in any form. This always comes from central governments. Cities are left to pay the price.” Mayors for Peace is now composed of more than 7,000 cities – more than 200 in the United States – from 161 countries. Reducing stockpiles of nuclear weapons would be progress, but abolishing them is safer still: terrorists cannot steal what does not exist.

The U.S. entered World War II after Japan’s surprise attack on military targets at Pearl Harbor; it ended after surprise attacks destroyed two Japanese cities full of women and children. Of the nearly 100,000 humans who perished at Nagasaki, only 250 were military personnel. The ancient distinction between combatants and civilians – one a legitimate military target, the other not – had long since disappeared during what some call “The Good War.”

This remains the case today as mass violence is just as likely to be directed against civilians as soldiers even when rules of engagement pay lip service to excluding civilians. Following a request from the United Nations General Assembly, the International Court of Justice offered an opinion about nuclear weapons in 1996: it advised that the mere threat of using them is illegal, let alone actually doing so. In the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, do stockpiles make any of us feel safer? I can conceive of no sane reason to waste billions modernizing weapons that should never again be used.

*Russell Vandenbroucke is director of the Peace, Justice & Conflict Transformation Program at University of Louisville*

# **Massive Deployment of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Targeted by Peace Group**

*Martha Baskin, Seattle*

The ad pierces your consciousness and catches you by surprise. Plastered on the side of Seattle's King County Metro it hurls you momentarily back in time, to a time when nuclear weapons were an imminent threat to our survival. Or did the era never end?

The ad – sponsored by the local group Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action – reads: "20 miles west of Seattle is the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the U.S."

Behind this text is a map, depicting the proximity of Seattle to Naval Base Kitsap, located on the eastern shore of Hood Canal, one of the four main basins in Washington state's Puget Sound. The base is homeport for eight of the US Navy's 14 Trident ballistic missile submarines as well as an underground nuclear weapons storage complex. Together they're believed to store more than 1,300 nuclear warheads, according to Hans Kristensen, Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists.

This is arguably the biggest single concentration of nuclear warheads not only in the US, but in the world.

King County Metro was initially hesitant to run the ad, until Kristensen confirmed its accuracy. The combined explosive power contained in the base is equivalent to more than 14,000 Hiroshima bombs, he says.

But the most surprising thing to him about the underground nuclear weapons storage complex – known as the Strategic Weapons Facility Pacific (SWF-PAC), and completed in 2012 – is the extent to which a \$294 million bunker has largely escaped public debate, except for a few industry-related articles.

The small nonprofit behind the ad shares a land border with the naval base. It launched when Robert Aldridge, an engineer for Lockheed Martin in California – the arms manufacturer has a facility at the base to ensure that Trident D5 ballistic missiles are ready for deployment on the subs – quit his job directing missile design when he saw they could be used in a preemptive first strike against the Soviet Union.

According to Ground Zero's Glen Milner, Aldridge then contacted two peace activists – Catholic theologian Jim Douglass and his wife Shelley – and the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action was formed.

For a time Ground Zero was successful in engaging the public. When the first Trident warship arrived in Hood Canal in 1982, several thousand protesters gathered on shore and a small flotilla of boats to meet it. The US Coast Guard kept them at bay by severing outboard gas lines and threatening to use fire-hoses.

When nuclear warheads began to arrive at Naval Base Kitsap on rail cars from the Pantex assembly plant in north Texas, momentum in the antinuclear movement began to build. The rail cars were initially white, says Milner. As a result, the "white trains" became a focal point not only for antinuclear weapons protesters



in Washington but around the country. The trains were met by protesters on their way to Bangor. After this, the Department of Energy stopped shipping warheads by train and began moving them via unmarked trucks and trailers.

The enormous amount of nuclear weaponry in Seattle's backyard is no secret to industry analysts, military contractors, or public officials. But the general public is less informed, say those who initiated Ground Zero's bus campaign. They describe the goals of the advertisements as twofold: to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding the naval base, and to re-ignite public debate about nuclear weapons in the US arsenal.

"This is a wake up call," says Ground Zero's Leonard Eiger. "Why do these nuclear weapons exist 70 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Why do we continue to not only deploy them but why are we maintaining them and planning for a new fleet that could run over \$100 billion? What are the economic, political and social costs?"

**\$1 Trillion in Public Funds to Upgrade Nuclear Weapons**  
The Washington Military Alliance – a group formally established in 2014 by Governor Jay Inslee, which advocates for military investment in the state – claims that Naval Base Kitsap is a driving economic force in the region.

The U.S. Navy has presented a plan to spend more than a trillion dollars during the next 30 years upgrading and maintaining the entire triad of US based nuclear weapons, according to Martin Fleck of Physicians for Social Responsibility, a group that advocates for nuclear disarmament. This includes over \$100 billion to replace the base's nuclear submarines.

The plan was approved by Obama in 2010.

"We and our allies," says Fleck, "are arguing for sanity with nuclear weapons given that we have enough already to end the world several times over. Why on earth would we invest another trillion dollars in them at this late date?"

Nuclear weapons contractors in the United States brought in \$334 billion in government contracts between 2012 and 2014, according to research conducted by Physicians for Social

Responsibility.

The ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, Representative Adam Smith, D-WA, has questioned the nuclear spending currently being proposed. Smith joined 159 other members of the House of Representatives to support an amendment to the House Defense Appropriations bill, which would have slashed funding for a nuclear cruise missile.

Both Lockheed Martin and Boeing Corporation weighed in to oppose the amendment, and it was defeated along partisan

lines. But the vote, says PSR's Fleck, proved that Congress is far from united over the government's massive WMD spending plan. Smith later penned an op-ed for *Foreign Policy* magazine, titled "America Already Has More Than Enough Nuclear Missiles." [...]

"It's time to step back from building another generation of nuclear weapons," says Eiger. "The doctrine came out of the Cold War but it still exists. It's a dangerous road to travel."

*Martha Baskin is a Seattle-based journalist.*

## The City of Hiroshima: Peace Declaration

[www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp](http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp)

1945, August 6, 8:15 a.m. Slicing through the clear blue sky, a previously unknown "absolute evil" is unleashed on Hiroshima, instantly searing the entire city. Koreans, Chinese, Southeast Asians, American prisoners of war, children, the elderly and other innocent people are slaughtered. By the end of the year, 140,000 are dead.

Those who managed to survive suffered the aftereffects of radiation, encountered discrimination in work and marriage, and still carry deep scars in their minds and bodies. From utter obliteration, Hiroshima was reborn a beautiful city of peace; but familiar scenes from our riversides, patterns of daily life, and cultural traditions nurtured through centuries of history vanished in that "absolute evil," never to return.

He was a boy of 17. Today he recalls, "Charred corpses blocked the road. An eerie stench filled my nose. A sea of fire spread as far as I could see. Hiroshima was a living hell." She was a girl of 18. "I was covered in blood. Around me were people with skin flayed from their backs hanging all the way to their feet — crying, screaming, begging for water."

Seventy-one years later, over 15,000 nuclear weapons remain, individually much more destructive than the one that inflicted Hiroshima's tragedy, collectively enough to destroy the Earth itself. We now know of numerous accidents and incidents that brought us to the brink of nuclear explosions or war; today we even fear their use by terrorists.

Given this reality, we must heed the hibakusha [survivors of the U.S. bombing]. The man who described a living hell says, "For the future of humanity, we need to help each other live in peace and happiness with reverence for all life." The woman who was covered in blood appeals to coming generations, "To make the most of the life we've been given, please, everyone, shout loudly that we don't need nuclear weapons." If we accept these appeals, we must do far more than we have been doing. We must respect diverse values and strive persistently toward a world where all people are truly "living



together."

When President Obama visited Hiroshima in May, he became the first sitting president of the country that dropped the atomic bomb to do so. Declaring, "Among those nations like my own that hold nuclear

stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and pursue a world without them," he expressed acceptance of the hibakusha's heartfelt plea that "no one else should ever suffer as we have." Demonstrating to the people of the U.S. and the world a passion to fight to eliminate all remaining nuclear weapons, the President's words showed that he was touched by the spirit of Hiroshima, which refuses to accept the "absolute evil."

Is it not time to honor the spirit of Hiroshima and clear the path toward a world free from that "absolute evil," that ultimate inhumanity? Is it not time to unify and manifest our passion in action? This year, for the first time ever, the G7 foreign ministers gathered in Hiroshima. Transcending the differences between countries with and without nuclear weapons, their declaration called for political leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and fulfillment of the obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament mandated by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This declaration was unquestionably a step toward unity.

We need to fill our policymakers with the passion to solidify this unity and create a security system based on trust and dialogue. To that end, I once again urge the leaders of all nations to visit the A-bombed cities. As President Obama confirmed in Hiroshima, such visits will surely etch the reality of the atomic bombings in each heart. Along with conveying the pain and suffering of the hibakusha, I am convinced they will elicit manifestations of determination.

The average age of the hibakusha has exceeded 80. Our time to hear their experiences face to face grows short. Looking toward the future, we will need our youth to help convey the words and feelings of the hibakusha. Mayors for Peace, now with over 7,000 city members worldwide, will work regionally, through more than

## FIGHT FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT

20 lead cities, and globally, led by Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to promote youth exchange. We will help young people cultivate a shared determination to stand together and initiate concrete action for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Here in Hiroshima, Prime Minister Abe expressed determination “to realize a world free of nuclear weapons.” I expect him to join with President Obama and display leadership in this endeavor. A nuclear-weapon-free-world would manifest the noble pacifism of the Japanese Constitution, and to ensure progress, a legal framework banning nuclear weapons is indispensable. In addition, I demand

that the Japanese government expand the “black rain areas” and improve assistance to the hibakusha, whose average age is over 80, and the many others who suffer the mental and physical effects of radiation.

Today, we renew our determination, offer heartfelt consolation to the souls of the A-bomb victims, and pledge to do everything in our power, working with the A-bombed city of Nagasaki and millions around the world, to abolish nuclear weapons and build lasting world peace.

— MATSUI Kazumi, Mayor The City of Hiroshima

## Koreans Militantly Oppose U.S. Anti-Missile System, Part of U.S. War Plans

The Korean people north and south are united in militantly opposing the decision of the U.S. and south Korean government to station a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile battery in Seongju, 296 kilometers (about 180 miles) south of Seoul, under U.S. command. The THAAD is part of the U.S. nuclear build up and plans for broader war, threatening Korea and the entire region. The decision was opposed by Russia and China and has met with staunch resistance in south Korea.

The lack of consultation and short notice of the decision were meant to undermine the people’s opposition, but they are having none of it. The people, especially those in Seongju, are denouncing with increasing anger the U.S. and the Park Guen-hye government for its treachery in imposing THAAD.

Kim Hang-gon, the Mayor of Seongju, pointed out: “There should be sufficient discussion or consultation between the central government and provincial government for a consensus. Our Seongju residents, 50,000 of them, are outraged that the decision was made unilaterally without prior consultation or agreement.” Mayor Kim and three local councilors used their own blood to write a protest letter to the government. On July 13, local residents filled five chartered buses to take their protest to Seoul. Given their proximity to the proposed installation, there is much concern that the strong electromagnetic waves will cause environmental damage and affect their health. Local farmers, who make up one-fifth of Seongju’s population, are concerned about negative effects on their melon crops — they supply about 70 per cent of the melons in — and that their livelihoods will be destroyed.



On July 15, 3,000 residents of Seongju, wearing red headbands that said “Opposed to THAAD!” confronted south Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn and Defense Minister Han Min-koo when they paid a visit to placate the people and to justify the decision to put the THAAD battery in their community. The protesters were joined by some 800 students, many of whom had boycotted classes that day to attend the rally. Outside the county



office, when Hwang tried to suggest that the deployment of the THAAD was necessary because the DPRK is building nuclear weapons every day and posing a grave danger to the security of south Koreans, he was jeered and pelted with eggs and water bottles and he and the Defense Minister were forced to beat a hasty retreat under the protection of security police.

At an action at the Ministry of Defense in Seoul, protester Oh Mi-jeong pointed out, “There is no ‘best place’ to deploy THAAD in South Korea. We strongly urge the government to withdraw the decision to deploy the THAAD system, which will destroy peace on the Korean peninsula and jeopardize our national security.”

The south Korean newspaper *Hankyoreh* brought out that, “If THAAD is deployed in Seongju, Seoul, and most of its suburbs will fall outside of THAAD’s 200km (120 miles) defense range. It is absurd for the Ministry [of Defense] to claim that it decided to deploy THAAD to protect the people from North Korean attacks when it leaves a densely populated area that is home to nearly half of South Koreans outside of THAAD’s defense range.

“If THAAD is deployed in Seongju, the Seoul area will not be included in its protective range, while U.S. military bases in Pyeongtaek, Osan, Gunsan, Daegu and Chilgok will be included.

“The implications here are obvious: the campaign to deploy THAAD was purely organized and promoted by U.S.

---

## **ELIMINATE U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOW**

---

interests, and THAAD is a system designed to defend the U.S. military.”

The organization Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea (SPARK) also held an action and press conference on July 13 at the Ministry of Defense. SPARK pointed out that the government’s decision to permit the deployment of THAAD in south Korea will make it an outpost of the U.S.-Japan military alliance, sour relations with neighboring countries and worst of all increase the possibility of igniting a war on the Korean peninsula. SPARK urged the U.S. and south Korean governments to immediately rescind the plan and pledged that it will carry on protest actions until then.

In the north, the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) denounced the U.S. and the Park regime for its subordination of the national interest to the U.S., escalating tensions between Korean compatriots in the south and north, and offering the Korean peninsula to foreign forces as a theater for nuclear war. The CPRK demanded that the decision to install the THAAD system be annulled.

To counter growing opposition against THAAD, the south Korean Ministry of Defense issued a statement trying to justify this unacceptable decision. It claimed that “By operating the U.S. THAAD battery in Seongju, we will be able to better protect one-half to two-thirds of our citizens from North

Korean nuclear and missile threats” and “it will dramatically strengthen the military capabilities and readiness to defend critical national infrastructure such as nuclear power plants and oil storage facilities, as well as the military forces of the South Korea-U.S. alliance.”

Attempts to justify THAAD only strengthen the resolve of all the Korean people south and north to rid their country of the U.S. military and peacefully reunite their country. It is the U.S. — its nuclear blackmail with threats to use pre-emptive nuclear strikes, its military occupation of south Korea that began at the end of the Second World War, its refusal to sign a peace treaty and support a nuclear-free zone for the region — that has posed the gravest danger to peace, security and stability on the Korean peninsula. The Korean people both north and south have more than 70 years of direct experience with U.S. imperialist military occupation and plunder of south Korea. They are stepping up their joint resistance aimed at getting rid of the U.S. occupiers once and for all, which is the only way to guarantee a permanent peace on the Korean peninsula.

Peace- and justice-loving people in the U.S. and worldwide world stand united with the Korean people in demanding the repeal of the decision to place the THAAD missile system on Korean soil, ending of all war games and the withdrawal of all U.S. troops and armaments from the Korean peninsula.

## **Information on U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense Program and Preemptive Strike Doctrine**

The U.S. ballistic missile defense program is a key part of the nuclear blackmail the U.S. imperialists have imposed on the world’s peoples since the infamies committed at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The U.S. drive to build up its missile defense systems in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific is part of increasing its capacity to conduct preemptive strikes and protect itself from retaliation.

### **Preemptive Strike Doctrine**

The George W. Bush regime articulated its doctrine of preemptive strikes in a June 1, 2002 declaration. Bush said, “If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.” He called for a military “ready to strike at a moment’s notice” and for Americans to be “ready for preemptive action when necessary.”

This was also reflected in the 2002 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review, a “legislatively-mandated review that establishes U.S. nuclear policy, strategy, capabilities and force posture” for a five-year period. At that time the Washington Post noted, “The review makes clear a turn by the Bush team to a strategy of preemption, including by nuclear weapons if necessary.” This was allegedly to protect against “rogue states,” and listed Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Libya and Syria as potential targets.

The Obama regime never repudiated this doctrine and its 2010 Nuclear Posture Review maintained the status quo. The

preemptive strike policy went unchanged and was given explicit justification in the case of “the evolution and proliferation of the biological weapons threat and U.S. capacities to counter that threat.” Brian Egan, the top lawyer at Obama’s State Department, rearticulated the legal justification for preemptive strikes most recently in an April 1 speech. Egan elaborated the concept of “imminent attack” to explain the circumstances in which the U.S. would legally justify preemptive strikes under the hoax of self-defense.

“The absence of specific evidence of where an attack will take place or of the precise nature of an attack does not preclude a conclusion that an armed attack is imminent for purposes of the exercise of the right of self-defense, provided that there is a reasonable and objective basis for concluding that an armed attack is imminent,” Egan said.

The Associated Press reported on June 4, 2015 that the Obama administration has drawn up plans for “counterforce” attacks using conventional missiles in preemptive attacks against Russian nuclear weapons, and “countervailing strike capabilities” for nuclear attacks on Russian military targets.

### **Development of U.S. Missile Defense**

Since the end of the Cold War the creation of ballistic missile defense systems has become a major preoccupation of U.S. imperialism. Previously, the size and scope of ballistic missile defense systems were limited by a U.S.-Soviet treaty signed in

## FIGHT FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT

1972. The U.S. withdrew from this treaty in 2002 and has since been rapidly increasing the scope of its program.

Current and planned U.S. missile defense systems include:

### Ground-Based Midcourse Defense (GMD)

There are currently four GMD interceptors located at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California and 26 at Fort Greely, Alaska. The GMD system is designed to destroy intercontinental ballistic missiles outside the atmosphere. It relies on radar stations in Alaska, California, the United Kingdom and Greenland and is connected directly to NORAD, the U.S. Northern Command, other bases in the U.S. and the Shariki U.S. airbase in Japan. The system has been in testing since 1997 and has cost roughly \$40 billion to date. Intercept tests to date have counted more failures than successes. The primary contractors are Boeing, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman.

### Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System (Aegis BMD)

This is a ship-based missile defense system designed to intercept “short-to-intermediate-range, unitary and separating, midcourse-phase” ballistic missiles. There are currently approximately 33 Aegis BMD vessels, with 16 assigned to the Pacific Fleet and 17 to the Atlantic Fleet. There are expected to be 43 Aegis ships by the end of 2019, and a total of between 80 and 97 by 2043. The ships use the Lockheed Martin Aegis Weapon System and Raytheon missiles. Out of 37 intercept tests between 1997 and 2015, 31 have been successful.

The Aegis system has also been deployed on land, referred to as “Aegis Ashore.” In May 2016 the U.S. Navy and U.S. Missile Defense Agency declared operational an Aegis missile defense site in Deveselu, Romania. It will be joined by an Aegis site in Poland to be completed by April 2018, both under U.S./NATO command.

U.S. ships with Aegis BMD systems include the USS Monterey, which was deployed in the Mediterranean and then the Black Sea in 2011. The U.S. again deployed the Monterey to the Mediterranean at the beginning of June 2016 along with two aircraft carriers and another Aegis ship, the San Jacinto.

### Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)

THAAD has been in development since 1992 and first deployed in 2008. It is designed to shoot down short, medium, and intermediate ballistic missiles in their terminal phase. It is said to be



capable of hitting targets in the upper part of the atmosphere and outside the atmosphere. The system can be vehicle-mounted and has been deployed in Hawaii, Guam and Wake Island. It is designed and built by Lockheed Martin. The commanding general of Army Space and Missile Defense Command announced in March 2016 that the THAAD system is to be deployed in Europe and the Middle East through U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and Central Command (CENTCOM), as well as in south Korea. The THAAD system was successful in most tests conducted between 2005 and 2012.

Along with the placement of nuclear weaponry in eastern Europe, the U.S. is building up its missile defense capacity and hence its capacity for preemptive strikes in the Baltic Sea through ship-based systems.

### Patriot Anti-Ballistic Missiles

The MIM-104 Patriot missile “has been the [U.S. military’s] cornerstone air-and-missile defense system for 40 years,” writes DefenseNews. It is the U.S. army’s primary “High to Medium Air Defense” system, and is expected to be widely used until 2040. There are more than one thousand launchers in U.S. service and nearly 200 have been sold to U.S. “allies.” U.S./NATO controlled Patriot systems are deployed in Poland and Turkey. The system was developed by Raytheon, and each missile costs roughly \$2-3 million.

**Visit our website: [usmlo.org](http://usmlo.org)**

# A Historic Countdown to the U.S. Nuclear Attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

*Greg Mitchell, asia-pacificresearch.com*

The following is a compilation of various articles from *Pressing Issues* that create a historical countdown, looking behind the scene at events of the days leading to the U.S. nuclear attacks on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively on August 6 and August 9, 1945. In examining the nuclear attacks on Japan, it is worth quoting General Eisenhower that “the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn’t necessary to hit them with that awful thing.”

## The Nuclear Countdown

### July 30, 1945:

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commander of U.S. troops in Europe, has visited President Truman in Germany, and would recall what happened in his memoir (*Mandate for Change*): “Secretary of War Stimson, visiting my headquarters in Germany, informed me that our government was preparing to drop an atomic bomb on Japan. I was one of those who felt that there were a number of cogent reasons to question the wisdom of such an act.

“During his recitation of the relevant facts, I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives. It was my belief that Japan was, at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of ‘face.’ The Secretary was deeply perturbed by my attitude.” In a *Newsweek* interview, Ike would add: “the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn’t necessary to hit them with that awful thing.”

• Stimson, now back at the Pentagon, cabled Truman that he had drafted a statement for the president that would follow the first use of the new weapon – and Truman must urgently review it because the bomb could be used as early as August 1. Stimson sent one of his aides to Germany with two copies of the statement. The Top Secret, six-page typed statement opened: “\_\_\_\_\_ hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on \_\_\_\_\_ and destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. That bomb has more power than 20,000 tons of TNT. It is an atomic bomb. It is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe.” Later, as we will see, the claim that Hiroshima was merely “a military base” was added to the draft.

• After scientists sifted more data from the July 16 Trinity test of the first weapon, General Leslie R. Groves, military head of the Manhattan Project provided General George Marshall, our top commander, with more detail on the destructive power of atomic weapons. Amazingly, despite the new evidence, Groves recommended that troops could move into the “immediate explosion area” within a “half hour” (and, indeed, in future bomb tests soldiers would march under the mushroom clouds and receive harmful doses of radiation). Groves also provided the schedule for the delivery

of the weapons: By the end of November more than ten weapons would be available, in the event the war had continued.

• Groves faced a new problem, however. General “Tooey” Spaatz on Guam urgently cabled that sources suggested that there was an Allied prisoner of war camp in Nagasaki just a mile north of the center of the city. Should it remain on the target list? Groves, who had already dropped Kyoto from the list after Stimson had protested, refused to shift. As it turned out, POWs died in both cities from the bombing.

### July 31, 1945:

• In Germany, Admiral William D. Leahy, chief of staff to Truman – and the highest-ranking U.S. military officer during the war – continues to privately express doubts about the bomb that it may not work and is not needed, in any case. (Gen. Eisenhower had just come out against using the Bomb.) Leahy would later write in his memoirs: “It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons.

“The lethal possibilities of atomic warfare in the future are frightening. My own feeling was that in being the first to use it, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children.”

• The assembly of Little Boy is completed. It is ready for use the next day. But a typhoon approaching Japan will likely prevent launching an attack. Several days might be required for weather to clear.

• Secretary of War Stimson sends semi-final draft of statement for Truman to read when first bomb is used and he has to explain its use, and the entire bomb project, to the U.S. and the world.

### August 1, 1945:

• Truman wrote a letter to his wife Bess talking about the atomic bomb (but without revealing it): “He [Stalin] doesn’t know it but I have an ace in the hole and another one showing — so unless he has threes or two pair (and I know he has not) we are sitting all right.”

Earlier, Stalin had promised to declare war on Japan around August 7. Now Truman writes that more consultation is needed. Truman had earlier pushed for the quick entry, writing in his diary “fini Japs” when that occurred, even without use of The Bomb. Now that he has the bomb in his “pocket” he apparently hopes to stall the Soviets.

• Truman has also approved the statement on the use of the bomb, drafted by Secretary of War Stimson and others, and ordered it released after the bomb drop. A line near the start has been added

## FIGHT FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT

explicitly depicting the vast city of Hiroshima (occupied mainly by women and children) as nothing but a “military base.” The president, and the drafters of the statement, knew this was false. An earlier draft described the city of Nagasaki as a “naval base” and nothing more. There would be no reference to radiation effects whatsoever in the statement — it was just a vastly bigger bomb.

- The Potsdam conference ended early this morning, with Truman expected to head back to the U.S. by sea tomorrow.

- The “Little Boy” atomic bomb is now ready for use on the island of Tinian. Under the direction of the lead pilot, Paul Tibbets, practice runs have been completed, near Iwo Jima, and fake payloads dropped, with success. Truman’s order had given the okay for the first mission later this day and it might have happened if a typhoon was not approaching Japan.

• Stimson writes in his diary about the decision today to release to the press, with Truman’s coming statement after the use of the bomb, a 200-page report on the building of the bomb, revised to not give too much away. Here he explains why they will release it at all: “The aim of the paper is to backfire reckless statements by independent scientists after the demonstration of the bomb. If we could be sure that these could be controlled and avoided, all of us would much prefer not to issue such a paper. But under the circumstances of the entire independence of action of scientists and the certainty that there would be a tremendous amount of excitement and reckless statement, [General Leslie] Groves, who is a very conservative man, had reached the conclusion that the lesser evil would be for us to make a statement carefully prepared so as not to give away anything vital and thus try to take the stage away from the others.”

### August 2, 1945

- Early today, Paul Tibbets, pilot of the lead plane, the Enola Gay (named after his mom) on the first mission, reported to General Curtis LeMay’s Air Force headquarters on Guam. LeMay told him the “primary” was still Hiroshima. Bombardier Thomas Ferebee pointed on a map what the aiming point for the bomb would be — a distinctive T-shaped bride in the center of the city, not the local army base. “It’s the most perfect aiming I’ve seen in the whole war,” Tibbets said. But the main idea was to set the bomb off over the center of the city, which rests in kind of a bowl, so that the surrounding hills would supply a “focusing effect” that would lead to added destruction and loss of life in the city.

- By 3 p.m., top secret orders were being circulated for Special Bombing Mission #13, now set for August 6, when the weather would clear. The first alternate to Hiroshima was Kokura. The second, Nagasaki. The order called for only “visual bombing,” not radar, so the weather had to be okay. Six planes would take part. Two would escort the Enola Gay, one would take photos, the other would be a kind of mobile lab, dropping canisters to send back scientific information.

- Meanwhile, three B-29s arrived at Tinian carrying from Los Alamos the bomb assemblies for the second Fat Man device (which would use plutonium, the substance of choice for the future, unlike the uranium bomb meant for Hiroshima).

- Japanese cables and other messages intercepted by the United



States showed that they were still trying to enlist the Soviets’ help in presenting surrender terms – they would even send an envoy – but were undecided on just what to propose. The Russians, meanwhile, were just five days from declaring war on Japan.

- Top U.S. officials were now centering on allowing the Japanese to keep their emperor when they gave up. In his diary Secretary of War Stimson endorses a key report that concludes: “The retention of the Emperor will probably insure the immediate surrender of all Japanese Forces outside the home islands.” Would offering that gain a swift Japanese surrender – without the need to use the bomb? Not considered.

### August 3, 1945

- On board the ship Augusta steaming home for the U.S. after the Potsdam meeting, President Truman, Joint Chiefs chairman Admiral Leahy, and Secretary of State James F. Byrnes – a strong A-bomb booster – enjoy some poker. Byrnes aide Walter Brown notes in his diary that “President, Leahy, JFB [Byrnes] agreed Japan was looking for peace. (Leahy had another report from Pacific.) President is afraid they will sue for peace through Russia instead of some country like Sweden.”

- Leahy had questioned the decision to use the bomb, later writing: “[T]he use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender. In being the first to use it, we adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children.”

- Our “Magic” intercepts show Japan monitoring the Soviets’ military buildup in the Far East (prelude to the declaration of war in four days). Also, Japanese still searching for way to approach Molotov to pursue possible surrender terms before that happens. Another Magic intercept carried the heading, “Japanese Army’s interest in

---

## ELIMINATE U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS NOW

---

peace negotiations.” War Department intel analysts revealed “the first statement to appear in the traffic that the Japanese Army is interested in the effort to end the war with Soviet assistance.” A segment of Prime Minister Togo’s message declared: “The Premier and the leaders of the Army are now concentrating all their attention on this one point.”

John McCloy, then assistant secretary of war and a well-known “hawk” in his later career, would later reflect, “I have always felt that if, in our ultimatum to the Japanese government issued from Potsdam [in July 1945], we had referred to the retention of the emperor as a constitutional monarch and had made some reference to the reasonable accessibility of raw materials to the future Japanese government, it would have been accepted. Indeed, I believe that even in the form it was delivered, there was some disposition on the part of the Japanese to give it favorable consideration. When the war was over I arrived at this conclusion after talking with a number of Japanese officials who had been closely associated with the decision of the then Japanese government, to reject the ultimatum, as it was presented. I believe we missed the opportunity of effecting a Japanese surrender, completely satisfactory to us, without the necessity of dropping the bombs.”

• Soviet General Vasilevskii reports to Stalin that Soviet forces are ready for invasion from August 7 on.

### August 4, 1945:

• On Tinian, Little Boy is ready to go, awaiting word on weather, with General LeMay to make the call. With the weather clearing near Hiroshima, still the primary target, taking off the night of August 5 appears the most likely scenario. Hiroshima remains the primary target.

• Paul Tibbets, pilot of the lead plane, the Enola Gay, finally briefs others in the 509th Composite Group who will take part in the mission at 3 pm. Military police seal the building. Tibbets reveals that they will drop immensely powerful bombs, but the nature of the weapons are not revealed, only that it is “something new in the history of warfare.” When weaponeer Deke Parsons says, “We think it will knock out almost everything within a three-mile radius,” the audience gasps.

Then he tries to show a film clip of the recent Trinity test – but the projector starts shredding the film. Parsons adds, “No one knows exactly what will happen when the bomb is dropped from the air,” and he distributes welder’s glasses for the men to wear. But he does not relate any warnings about radioactivity or order them not to fly through the mushroom cloud.

• On board the ship Augusta steaming home for the U.S. after the Potsdam meeting, President Truman relaxes and plays poker with one of the bomb drop’s biggest booster, Secretary of State Jimmy Byrnes. Truman’s order to use the bomb had simply stated that it could be used any time after August 1 so he had nothing to do but watch and wait. The order included the directive to use a second bomb, as well, without a built-in pause to gauge the results of the first and the Japanese response – even though the Japanese were expected, by Truman and others, to push surrender feelers, even without the bomb, with Russia’s entry into the war on August 7. Hence: assembly-line massacre in Nagasaki.

• General Douglas MacArthur, who directed the U.S. war in the Pacific, and would soon become the head of our occupation of Japan, had still not been told of the existence and planned use of the new bomb. Norman Cousins, the famed author and magazine editor, who was an aide to MacArthur, would later reveal: “MacArthur’s views about the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were starkly different from what the general public supposed. When I asked General MacArthur about the decision to drop the bomb, I was surprised to learn he had not even been consulted. What, I asked, would his advice have been? He replied that he saw no military justification for the dropping of the bomb. The war might have ended weeks earlier, he said, if the United States had agreed, as it later did anyway, to the retention of the institution of the emperor.” As we noted earlier, both General Eisenhower and Truman’s top aide, Admiral Leahy, both protested the use of the bomb against Japan in advance.

### August 5, 1945:

• Pilot Paul Tibbets formally named the lead plane in the mission, #82, after his mother, Enola Gay. A B-29 that would take photos on the mission would be named Necessary Evil.

• Also on Tinian, Little Boy is ready to go, awaiting word on weather, with General Curtis LeMay to make the call. At 3:30 p.m., in an air-conditioned bomb assembly hut, the five-ton bomb as loaded (gently) on to a trailer. Crew members scribbled words onto the bomb in crayon, including off-color greetings for the Japanese. Pulled by a tractor, accompanied by a convoy of jeeps and other vehicles, the new weapon arrives at the North Field and is lowered into the bomb pit.

• The bomb is still not armed. The man who would do that, before takeoff, according to plan, was Parsons. But he had other ideas, fearing that the extra-heavy B-29 might crash on takeoff and take “half the island” with it. He asked if he could arm the bomb in flight, and spent a few hours – on a hot and muggy August day – practicing before getting the okay.

• Pilot Tibbets tries to nap, without much success. Then, in the assembly hall just before midnight, he tells the crew, that the new bomb was “very powerful” but he did not mention the words “nuclear,” “atomic” or “radiation.”[...]

• Hiroshima remains the primary target, with Kokura #2 and Nagasaki third. The aiming point was directly over the city, not the military base or industrial quarter, guaranteeing the deaths of tens of thousands of women and children.

• The Soviets are two days from declaring war on Japan and marching across Manchuria. Recall that Truman had just written in diary “Fini Japs” when the Soviets would declare war, even without the Bomb. (See new evidence that it was the Soviet declaration of war, more than the atomic bombing, that was the decisive factor in Japan’s surrender.)

*(Greg Mitchell is the author of more than a dozen books, with three on the use of the bomb, including *Atomic Cover-Up* — on the decades-long suppression of shocking film shot in the atomic cities by the U.S. military.)*

### I • Venezuela Fights Back

---

11: “Forty-eight hours ago, without notice, a U.S. company called Kimberly-Clark, violating national laws and the constitution, fired almost 1,000 workers from its production plant, closed the door and left the country.”

Venezuela’s 2012 Labor Law strictly prohibits mass firings and factories that shut their doors illegally are liable to be reopened under workers’ control.

“Kimberly is now in the hands of the workers [...] and we are going to invest the necessary resources in order to consolidate [the plant],” Maduro added.

According to the Labor Ministry, the plant has a monthly output of 33 million diapers, 20 million sanitary pads, 27 million thin liners, and 17 million rolls of toilet paper -- all of which has been restored with the plant now operating at full capacity, the Ministry reported on July 12.

In a press statement, Kimberly-Clark claimed its difficulties accessing raw materials and U.S. dollars for imports were the reason for the closure. Several other firms — including Bridgestone, General Mills, and Procter & Gamble — have made similar claims and scaled back operations in Venezuela in recent months.

Venezuelan Industry Minister Miguel Pérez Abad confirmed on July 15 that warehouses belonging to Kimberly-Clark Corporation were found to be full of raw materials, despite the factory owners’ insistence that they could not produce goods.

“Kimberly-Clark will continue producing for all Venezuelans and is now in the hands of the workers,” said Labor Minister Oswaldo Vera. Industry Minister Perez Abad added that the

factory has enough raw materials to last until the end of the calendar year.

The president described these activities as “economic sabotage,” pointing to the vast amount of U.S. dollars they have received from the Venezuelan state in exchange for production or imports.

Maduro pointed out that the economic warfare waged by transnational firms and foreign states against his government includes the financial blockade by major banks, credit agencies, and international financial institutions. He gave the recent example of Citibank’s decision to close the account of Venezuela’s Central Bank (BCV).

“With no warning, Citibank says that in 30 days it will close the Central Bank and the Bank of Venezuela’s accounts,” Maduro said in a speech, noting that the government uses the U.S. bank for a range of international transactions.

Venezuela faces \$8.3 billion in bond payments due later this year, which international creditors have refused to renegotiate. “Do you think they’re going to stop us with a financial blockade? ... No one stops Venezuela,” said Maduro.

In February, Venezuela defied expectations by making a \$1.5 billion payment on the state oil company PDVSA’s bonds.

Over the last four months, the price of Venezuelan oil has steadily rallied from an historic low of \$24 a barrel in February, reaching an average of nearly \$40 a barrel in June. Venezuela’s economy is highly reliant on crude oil exports.

*(Venezuelanalysis.com)*

## Special Report: Hunger in Venezuela? A Look Beyond the Spin

*Christina Schiavoni and William Camacaro, Food First*

You may have seen the headlines about Venezuela — headlines that allude to food scarcity, rioting, people eating stray animals to survive, and a country on the brink of starvation. These stories are not only alarming, but perplexing, too. Is this the same country that was recognized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as recently as 2015 for having nearly eradicated hunger?[1] Is this the same country that has been the focus of international delegations and extensive alternative media coverage for its “food sovereignty experiment” involving agrarian reform, food distribution programs, and direct citizen participation in the food system?[2] What is going on?

There is a nuanced story behind the current headlines on Venezuela. It is a challenging moment for average working class Venezuelans as they navigate long lines at the grocery store, a lack of key food staples, and inflated prices in order to feed their families.

But there is not an overall food shortage — food is in abundance, with distribution being a bottleneck.

There are numerous explanations coming from both

government and citizens. What is driving the current “scarcity amidst abundance” in Venezuela? How did the present situation come to be? How dire is it, and what are the responses coming from communities, social movements, and the government? To what extent is the present situation being distorted in the media, and why? This article attempts to delve behind the headlines to address these questions.

### A Petroleum Economy and a Food System in the Balance

For nearly a century, Venezuela’s economy has centered around oil, which accounts for the vast majority of its foreign earnings — over 95 percent at present — and national budget.[3] Since the 1930s, the orientation towards petroleum also meant a shift away from agriculture, which came with a massive price tag. As both the state and private capital withdrew from the countryside, Venezuela’s peasant farmers and rural workers could no longer earn a living. Many flocked to Caracas and other urban hubs in search of work, making Venezuela one of the most urbanized

---

## VENEZUELA FIGHTS BACK

---

countries in Latin America, with upwards of 90 percent of its population living in cities today.[4]

Venezuela also became the first country in the region to be a net importer of food, as it was cheaper to import food with petroleum dollars than to produce it.[5] Such conditions facilitated development of a powerful food import and distribution complex, controlled by national and international corporate conglomerates.

As a producer of a high demand commodity and a voracious consumer of food imports, Venezuela became firmly inserted into the global economy in ways that have rendered it particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil and food prices and to domestic inflation. The companies responsible for food imports and distribution have been able to use these conditions to their advantage in certain ways. For instance, since 1983, when the Venezuelan bolívar suffered a sharp devaluation against the U.S. dollar, driving up inflation, a common practice has been to align product prices with black market currency rates as opposed to official (regulated) currency rates, further fueling inflation in the process.[6]

Venezuela's ability to import food through oil earnings in the past did not mean that its population was well fed. Indeed, the imports tended to be at prices well out of reach of the country's poor majority. In 1989, then-President Andrés Pérez signed a structural adjustment deal with the International Monetary Fund, causing abrupt surges in food and fuel prices; the price of bread rose by over 600 percent.[7] For the over 60 percent of the population already living in poverty, enough was enough. Hundreds of thousands of people poured into Caracas from surrounding impoverished hillside communities, protesting in the streets and looting shops. The government responded to this massive mobilization by ordering the military to open fire on the protesters. The official death toll was 276 civilians, with actual deaths estimated to be much higher.

### Efforts Toward Change

At the beginning of Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution in 1999, with still over half of the population facing hunger and poverty, both the government and citizens identified food production and provisioning as strategic priorities — and significant strides have been made in the years since. On the production end, the state has made substantial reinvestments in agriculture, including an agrarian reform process to redistribute large landholdings and support small- and mid-scale farmers and fishers. On the distribution end, strategies have included increased availability of basic food items at subsidized and regulated prices and provision of free meals via school and workplace programs as well as community-based feeding sites.

These efforts have made historic gains in food security, as recognized by FAO, but they are mainly [isolated] projects rather than systemic shifts. That is, even with domestic production reinvigorated and the population better fed, the country's powerful longstanding food import and distribution complex has remained largely unaltered. Today, Venezuela's food and medicine supply is mostly controlled by twenty companies,[8] and one of these,

Polar, is responsible for eight of the items in Venezuela's basic food basket, according to the Minister of Agriculture.[9] For instance, Polar is responsible for 62% of the market for pre-cooked corn flour used for corn patties, called arepas, that form an essential part of the Venezuelan diet.[10]

### Scarcity Amidst Abundance?

What is going on in Venezuela today? While periodic food shortages are nothing new, particularly at politically heightened moments, for more than three years the country has experienced ongoing shortages of particular basic food products in addition to shortages of medicines and personal hygiene items such as soap, toilet paper, menstrual supplies, and diapers. It is the particularity of the missing items that is essential — and often overlooked or distorted in media reports.

There is no overall shortage of food and other basic goods in Venezuela. What is missing from supermarket shelves are particular essential items, while others are in abundance. There is a lack of milk, while dairy products such as yogurt and cheese are available. There is a lack of pre-cooked corn flour, while other corn-based products such as porridge are available. There is a lack of coffee, another Venezuelan essential, while teas, hot chocolate, and other hot beverage mixes abound. The plot thickens when one leaves the supermarket and goes out into the streets. Prepared coffee is available on every street corner, and in every cafe. Areperas selling arepas with all sorts of fillings are ubiquitous.

Why, then, are essential items missing from supermarket shelves? The two most common arguments of the distribution companies are that a) the regulated prices set by the government to ensure accessibility are too low, providing a disincentive to distributors and b) with the plummeting of oil prices, insufficient dollars are available for import of necessary primary materials. When Venezuelan economist and Universidad Simón Bolívar professor Pasqualina Curcio put these claims to the test in her extensive investigation of the country's current economic situation, she had some interesting findings.[11]

First, several of the missing products have not been regulated since 2010, and among those that are regulated, the government has raised prices in an effort to incentivize distributors several times recently, but this has not resulted in increased availability.

Second, the shortages began to intensify in 2013, before oil prices plummeted and while dollars were still readily available. Even once oil prices dropped and dollars became less available, the government continued to prioritize dollars for food import, and by their own accounting, the production levels of Venezuela's major food companies have been stable or have even increased in that time. Curcio also found a correlation between intensity of food shortages and politically important moments, such as the lead-up to elections. Could it be that the shortages are manufactured? Many food sovereignty activists see it as no coincidence that Polar, the country's largest food company, responsible for many of the items missing from shelves, is owned by a well-known member of the political opposition to the government.

Regardless of what is driving the shortages, there is no doubt they are taking a toll on the population. For most people, the only ways to access basic products are to wait in extremely long lines when and where they are available — and it is important to note that this task falls disproportionately upon women. Another option is to buy basic products as contraband on the street through the parallel market, where they are sold at exponentially inflated prices. Here it bears emphasis again that the shortages are of specific products, so other food remains available.

For instance, Venezuela is largely self-sufficient in fruits, vegetables and root crops, which are mostly produced by small- and mid-scale farmers. As these are distributed through decentralized networks, they have for the most part been unaffected by the shortages and are abundant in street markets around the country. However, as people substitute available products for unavailable ones (e.g., cassava, potatoes, and plantains in place of corn flour, pasta, and other processed carbohydrates), increased demand, together with high inflation and speculation, is driving up food prices overall, both in shops and on the streets. The result is an immensely challenging and stressful situation for most Venezuelans as they strive to feed their families.

### A Look at Impacts

Beyond the psychological and economic impacts of the shortages, lines, and high prices, what are the physical effects? How are levels of hunger and nutrition being impacted? Here we will share both what we know and do not know. What we do know is that based on the most recent food intake statistics available at the end of 2015, Venezuelans were consuming a daily average of 3,092 calories, which is well above the FAO's recommendation of 2,720 for food security, but down from 2011 when average consumption was 3,221 calories.[12]

There are several reflections to be made. First, averages do not tell us about impacts on the most vulnerable populations. The flip side, however, is that Venezuela has a host of social programs specifically targeted at most vulnerable populations, which has likely contributed to keeping the caloric averages high. Second, averages also do not tell us anything about food quality. Some argue current conditions are driving people toward more limited and less healthy dietary options, while others argue just the opposite — that as processed options are less available, people are opting for more nutritious whole foods as replacements. Likely there is some of both happening, and data is not yet available to tell us much more. Finally, in the months since these statistics were released, shortages and price inflation have both intensified. Data is not yet available to tell us if average caloric intake has dropped further, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it likely has. According to the National Institute of Nutrition, however, the situation is being carefully monitored and Venezuelans' caloric intake as a whole continues to remain well above the recommended minimum.

The bottom line? Indeed, people are having a harder time accessing food right now in Venezuela. The situation is serious and needs to be addressed urgently. Is Venezuela in the midst of a humanitarian crisis? No, not according to Venezuela's



Local food and distribution networks (CLAPs) coordinate with government to organize distribution of food to those who need it.

Department of Health, international authorities such as the FAO, or our own observations and numerous interviews with community organizers and citizens. Are people eating dogs? We recently asked people in working class rural and urban communities in six different states about this rumor; a common response, after initial shock, was “well, hot dogs, sure “And rioting? So far riots have been isolated incidents and disproportionately in opposition-led areas, although the situation merits close monitoring and further investigation.[13]

Why, then, the extreme media distortion? Here it is important to look at the broader picture. While the media is painting a desperate situation in Venezuela, the opposition-controlled national assembly is calling for the ousting of President Maduro and the U.S. is calling to extend economic sanctions. Both are using the “humanitarian crisis” as justification — and the media is reflecting these claims rather than the much more complex reality on the ground.[14]

### Responses

While the government can still do more in its campaign to root out corruption in both the private and public sectors as well as implement further reforms in the currency exchange system, it certainly has not been sitting back in the face of the shortages. On the contrary, both the government and communities are taking the situation seriously, ramping up existing social protections while piloting new approaches. Among the latter are Local Provisioning and Production Committees, known as CLAPs, which have rapidly formed across the country in recent months. CLAPs are partnerships between grassroots organizations and the government to provide an alternative food distribution network in all 24 states.

CLAPs have a twofold purpose. In the immediate term, they are working to combat lines, shortages, and speculation by delivering basic food products directly to people. The government purchases goods directly from both private and state enterprises, which the CLAPs distribute house to house based on community

censuses. The project is seen as a temporary stop-gap solution to the current shortages, aimed at the most vulnerable fifth of the population. In the longer term, CLAPs are also intended to engage in local food production and processing. In tandem is a major push for urban agriculture, overseen by a newly formed Ministry of Urban Agriculture. A recent hundred-day planting campaign involving 29,000 urban productive spaces throughout the country aims to increase the amount of fresh produce, eggs, fish, and animal protein available locally.[15] These efforts are complemented by a renewed push for production in the countryside.

Meanwhile, social movements are seizing the moment to forge deeper transformation toward food sovereignty. Driven by necessity, unprecedented numbers of people are engaging and re-engaging in agriculture, from community farms to backyard patios, and in the process, exchanging seeds, bartering goods, and creating new local enterprises. A reduced supply of industrial agriculture inputs is also driving a transition toward organic practices and agroecology, in what some are likening to Cuba's special period. The shortages are also causing a shift from processed foods and a renewed appreciation of local foods and traditional foodways. Many activists see these developments as elements of a new food system, a project they have been trying to advance for many years.

This transformative vision is reflected in the country's newly adopted seed law, pushed forward by social movements, which bans GMOs while protecting locally-produced seeds of Venezuela's peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendent communities.[16] It is also reflected in the Feria Conuqera, a highly popular monthly alternative market held in Caracas, featuring agroecological and artisanal alternatives to many of the products missing from supermarket shelves, from arepa mixes made from plantains, cassava, and fresh corn, to homemade soaps, deodorants, and other basic goods.

Plan Pueblo a Pueblo, a grassroots project to forge direct people-to-people links between urban and rural communities, is also having success: in just over a year, this initiative has reached more than 40,000 urban families with affordable fresh foods while working to build a new food system across the urban-rural divide. A key mechanism enabling this effort to expand so rapidly is that it works through already established citizen-led social institutions known as comunas. According to food activist Gabriel Gil, "the current crisis is pushing us to organize — and the comunas are key vehicles for doing so."

### Questioning the Headlines

While hunger anywhere deserves high-level media coverage, it bears asking why Venezuela, a country which, by many indicators, has made important advances against hunger and poverty, is being targeted daily for dire coverage that does not reflect reality on the ground. Furthermore, why are the challenges being covered (albeit in a distorted manner), but not the many innovative and successful responses, from an explosion of urban agriculture, to an agroecological transition, to unprecedented levels of citizen organization around food production and

provisioning? The answers to this are multifold, complex, and subject to different perspectives and interpretations, but we hope readers are encouraged to seek out more information before taking current news reports at face value.

### Notes

1. FAO (2015) 'Venezuela and FAO create SANA, a new cooperation program to eliminate hunger.'
2. Schiavoni, C. (2015) "The Venezuelan Food Sovereignty Experiment."
3. Lander, E. (2014) "Venezuela: Terminal crisis of the rentier petro-state model?"
4. Wilpert, G. (2006) 'Land for People Not for Profit in Venezuela,' Rosset, P. Patel, R. and M. Courville, eds., Promised Land, 249-264. Oakland, CA: Food First Books.
5. Ibid.
6. Boza, T. (2014) La Guerra contra el Pueblo: Reflexiones para el Contraataque Popular. Maracaibo: Fundación Construyendo Ciudadanía.
7. Hardy, C. (2007). Cowboy in Caracas: A North American's Memoir of Venezuela's Democratic Revolution. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Books.
8. Curcio, P. (2016). "Apenas 20 empresas controlan la oferta de alimentos y medicinas en el país."
9. Edgard, R. (2016) "Los Clap: El resuelve de los pobres."
10. Curcio, P. (2016). "Apenas 20 empresas controlan la oferta de alimentos y medicinas en el país."
11. Personal communication with Pasqualina Curcio on 23 June 2016. Also see: Curcio, P. (2016) "Los CLAP'S: ¿camino para la paz económica?"
12. Personal communication with National Nutrition Institute representatives on 27 June 2015. See also "Memoria y Cuenta 2015, Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Alimentación (MINPPAL) -- Tomo I."
13. Misión Verdad (2016) "Cartografía de los saqueos: actores, tácticas y métodos."
14. See here. Also, for a news clip (in Spanish) of former commander of US Southern Command John Kelly saying that the US would consider intervening in Venezuela to avert a "humanitarian crisis" involving lack of food and water, see minute 3 of this video by CNN.
15. See here.
16. Camacaro, W., Mills, F. and C. Schiavoni (2016) "Venezuela Passes Law Banning GMOs, by Popular Demand."

*(Food First, also known as the Institute for Food and Development Policy, is a nonprofit organization based in Oakland, California. Founded in 1975 by Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins, it describes itself as a "people's think tank and education-for-action center." Food First strongly opposes the policies of institutions such as the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund. It also played an active role in the campaign against the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas.)*

# Reports of Attacks Against Food Distribution Trucks Increase in Venezuela

*Jeanette Charles*

Venezuelan media outlet Últimas Noticias reported July 14 that in the last three months there have been 18 robberies along the country's Central Regional Highway, negatively affecting national food distribution. The recent surge in attacks against producers and their distributors are allegedly carried out by bachequeiros, buyers and re-sellers of food as well as other products, in addition to organized gangs.

The Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) post in Tazón, Caracas officially documented the 18 robberies and five unsuccessful attempts against trucks carrying vegetables and fruits along the Central Regional Highway. In 2015, four trucks were the victims of robberies between September and December representing a significant spike in attacks.

Community Council "The Breeze" from Miranda State researched bachequeo networks in their own sector, Rebirth. Their study found that, "they [bachequeiros] have two trucks where they stock the food. They sell this food to informal workers and these [workers] re-sell the goods to the people of Ocumare del Tuy."

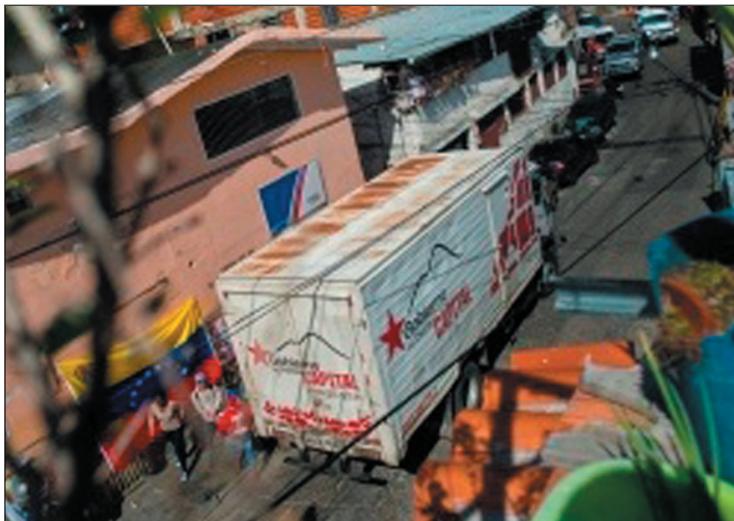
Arelis Prado, representative of the Collective "Awakening 2021" from Minas de Baruta has worked with national producers from Tachira State to deliver and distribute vegetables in their community. However, constant attacks along roads have caused delays he expressed.

"The first time the truck carried 150 bags of five kilos of different vegetables and fruits. They tried to rob the truck when it passed through Aragua State. They [the producers] decided to return and come two days later," he explained.

Not only have local networks been targeted but also government initiatives such as the Sardine Caravan coming out of Sucre state.

Enio Aguilera, an owner of a truck that was wrecked during an attack, reported that seven vehicles were damaged on their way to the Socialist Fish Fair with the Sardine Caravan. "It was direct sabotage because we could not transport the fish to other parts of the country in the following days," he explained.

Likewise, reports of damaged trucks and slashed tires but



untouched and unstolen food have arisen indicating that intimidation as well as re-selling are among the reasons behind attacks.

"The cruelty they show toward Sucre state is because we are the state with the greatest fish production and we are solving part of the food crisis due to the [U.S. instigated] economic war," said Aguilera.

Both of these former cases have been reported to the Socialist Fishing and Agricultural Institute (Insopesca), which has assumed part of the repair costs and is currently carrying out an investigation regarding the incidents.

Last month, 400 people were arrested in Cumaná, Sucre for ransacking local stores out of frustrations with the current economic situation and inaccessibility of certain goods. Since then, the government has signed agreements with Trinidad and Tobago to provide food and other basic goods to locations across the country, including the coastal state.

The national government continues to search for answers to resolve the ongoing issues facing the country's producers and distribution networks.

Vice president Aristóbulo Istúriz said earlier this year that, "[farmers] cannot produce in the countryside if there is insecurity. We will give special attention to the countryside in regard to all the work we are doing. This is a security issue that the State must resolve."

The Venezuelan government has implemented several strategies to address the country's access to food. Recent commercial agreements with neighboring countries along with local food distribution networks, known as CLAPs, have formed.

President Nicolás Maduro also confirmed the creation of the Great Sovereign and Secure Supply Mission, a national program targeted at promoting agricultural, industrial, and pharmaceutical production.

The government is also trying to crack down on bachequeo networks and corruption. Last week, 21 people were arrested in Mérida State, along the border with Colombia, for allegedly participating in a bachequeo network confirmed Venezuelan Secretary General Gerardo Molina. (*venezuela-analysis.com*)